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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, December 7, 2020

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayer

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1105)

[*English*]

CANADA PENSION PLAN INVESTMENT BOARD ACT

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP) moved that Bill C-231, An Act to amend the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board Act (investments), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a great and rare honour to be able to stand in the House of Commons to sponsor and present a piece of legislation for my colleagues to consider. I hope that between now and March of next year, when we will likely come to a vote, I can convince more than a few of my colleagues that this bill has merit and deserves to go to committee.

Today, I am pleased to kick off the debate on Bill C-231, an act to amend the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board Act. The behaviour of corporations around the world is coming under increasing scrutiny as more and more people are demanding action. Here in Canada we have also acknowledged the problem, most notably when the Liberal government decided to establish an ombudsperson for responsible enterprise, who is supposed to receive and review claims of human rights abuses arising from companies abroad in the mining, oil and gas, and garment sectors.

The NDP has long been a leader in demanding more corporate responsibility. Most recently in the final days of the 42nd Parliament, the member for New Westminster—Burnaby brought forward his bill, Bill C-331, which would have allowed for gross violations of human, labour and environmental rights to be brought before a Canadian federal court.

The idea behind my bill, Bill C-231, is the questionable investments that are funding bad corporate actors. It is an idea that many people in Canada have long been concerned with, and it led me to further research in order to put the Canada pension plan's investments under closer scrutiny.

The Canada pension plan is an important pillar of our country's retirement system. Every year, millions of Canadians pay into the

plan, which provides retirement, disability, survivor and death benefits to millions more. It is a sacred contract in recognizing years of hard work. Managing the careful balance between beneficiaries and contributors requires due diligence to the CPP fund, which is governed by the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board.

Through its careful investing strategy, the CPP fund is now valued at over \$400 billion and is one of the largest pension funds in the world. I also want to note that the members of the CPP Investment Board have reached out to me over the last couple of years about my proposed legislation and to talk about their policy on responsible investing, which “aspires to integrate [environmental, social and governance] factors into investment management processes”. However, the document goes on to state that the investment board does not “screen stocks or eliminate investments based on ESG factors.”

This is the crux of the matter. Nowhere in the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board Act is there any mention of ESG factors or ethical business practices. There is no mention of human rights, labour rights or environmental rights. All we are left with is a policy, which itself admits that ESG factors, while a strong guideline, are non-binding in its investment decisions. The overriding duty of the investment board is to maximize investment returns without undue risk of loss. This is clarified in section 5 of the Act.

It is here that people will probably want to stop me and say, “So what? That is fine, and we should leave it that way. After all, the board has managed to grow the fund in a spectacular fashion, putting its financial health for future beneficiaries on a good path.”

I agree the fund is in fantastic condition, and I have no doubt that the managers of the investment board are doing their utmost to continue this work, but, and it is a big but, when we take a deep dive into the investment holdings of the CPPIB, we find a laundry list of problematic investments.

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Before I get into the details of Bill C-231 itself, I think it would be helpful for members of the House to understand precisely what I am talking about when I refer to problematic investments. I am extremely grateful to the Library of Parliament for assisting me in this research, but I am also grateful to organizations such as Corporate Knights and various news outlets that have exposed CPP investment holdings, which many of us would find, at the very least, questionable.

Let us start with the Responsible Mining Index. The most recent data I have is from 2018, and it ranks companies on their performance on economic, social and governance practices. The companies are scored out of 36 points. The research I was able to obtain from the CPPIB's holdings shows that our pension dollars were invested in companies that scored in the low single digits. One company scored a 2.6.

KnowTheChain's 2018 Food and Beverage Benchmark Findings Report rates food and beverage companies on their efforts to address the risks of forced labour in their supply chains. The companies in their research are scored out of 100. Again, the research I was able to obtain from the CPPIB's holdings shows that our pension dollars were invested in companies that scored in the low single digits. One company scored a four; another scored seven, and that is out of 100.

From 2000 until 2015, Public Eye hosted awards of shame competitions intended for companies with poor social responsibility records. As it is stated on the website, all of them are corporations whose business activities have been characterized by human rights violations, environmental destruction, immoral tax practices or corruption. Again, the research I was able to obtain from the Investment Board's holdings shows that our pension dollars were invested in many of the companies listed there.

Corporate Knights is a publication that defines itself as the most prominent magazine in the clean capitalism media space. It defines clean capitalism as “an economic system in which prices incorporate social, economic and ecological benefits and costs, and [actors] know the full impacts of their...actions.” Its research shows that our pension dollars are exposed to companies engaged in blocking climate policy, blocking climate resolutions, forced or child labour, severe environmental damage and severe human rights violations.

We, of course, are all aware of the very real and imminent danger that climate change is posing to our world. It will be the defining issue of the 21st century, and our actions in the next 10 years will determine how we meet this challenge. Despite this fact, the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board continues to invest our pension dollars in major carbon emitters.

CDP's 2017 report on major carbon emitters compiled a list of the world's top greenhouse gas producers, and among the Investment Board's holdings were Gazprom, which was responsible for 3.9%, and Coal India, which was responsible for 1.9% of global industrial greenhouse gas emissions.

ShareAction is a charity that has spent the last 12 years building the movement for responsible investment. It is now taking the movement worldwide to transform the investment system and unlock its potential to be a force for good. It released a report in 2018

entitled “Pensions in a Changing Climate”, which assesses the pension sector's response to the recommendations of the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures.

It did an analysis of the world's 100 largest public pension funds and their approach to climate-related risks and opportunities, and they ranked the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board in 32nd place with only a CCC rating. This ranking shows that we are only starting to take action on climate risk. As the task force stated in its report, large global pension funds have a responsibility to manage their funds in the long-term interests of their members and beneficiaries, which includes building appropriate responses to climate change as a material investment risk.

There have also been new stories over the last couple of years showing that the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board invested in private American prison companies that were operating migrant detention camps along the U.S.-Mexico border. I could go on and on with even more examples of problematic investments. It certainly is a laundry list, but I must be mindful of the time.

What is clear is that the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board's policy on responsible investing has not prevented it from investing our public pension dollars in companies with extremely poor corporate social responsibility records. Bill C-231 would step in to amend section 35 of the act by providing that the investment policies, standards and procedures take into account environmental, social and governance factors, and that our investments cannot be held in an entity if there are reasons to believe it has performed acts or carried out work contrary to ethical business practices, including the commission of human, labour and environmental rights violations.

• (1110)

The bill also allows provides for no investment being allowed in a company that produces arms or munitions of war that are prohibited under international law, or in any company directing acts of corruption. It is important to note that nothing in my bill would change the mandate of the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board, which is to maximize investment returns without undue risk of loss. My bill also does not change the fact that the investment decisions are left in the hands of the investment board and that it is up to them, through the existing section 51 of the act, to explain how their investments were in accordance with the act in their annual report to Parliament.

There are numerous examples around the world, but let us start with one at home. Here in Quebec regarding pension law, we have the CDPQ, which manages 41 public and quasi-public organizations. It is governed by legislation in the province of Quebec, which requires that the board of directors adopt a socially responsible investment policy.

In Sweden, Sweden's national pension insurance funds, the AP Funds Act of 2000, requires state pension funds to take environmental and social considerations into account without relinquishing the overall goal of a higher return on capital. The funds must include environmental and ethical standards in their investment policies and annually report to the government how they would adhere to those practices. Those Swedish funds are worth approximately \$154 billion.

In Norway, the largest pension fund in the world, the Government Pension Fund Global is governed by regulations that were passed by its Parliament in 2004 to provide a legal framework emphasizing international human rights and environmental standards. Despite these being labelled as guidelines, the regulations are legally binding. For example, companies can be put under observation or be excluded if there is an unacceptable risk that the company contributes to, or is responsible for, serious or systematic human rights violations, such as murder, torture, deprivation of liberty, forced labour and the worst forms of child labour; or any serious violations on the rights of individuals in situations of war or conflict. As I said, Norway's pension is the largest in the world. It is valued at over \$1 trillion and it has these governing factors.

In the last couple of minutes that I have, allow me to conclude by saying this. We all know that money makes the world go around. It is a well-trodden phrase, but it is true. Trillions of dollars are invested in the companies that we buy from, that employ us and that shape the world we live in. A lot of this money belongs to ordinary people and we all have a stake in the way it is spent, but many of the decisions on how it is invested are made behind closed doors. The investment system can be a force for good, but only if these decisions are made openly and with more than short-term profit in mind. We do not want our pension funds to, in any way, cause human misery around the world.

I do not think we often realize just how lucky we are to live in a place like Canada where we enjoy the rule of law and have strong institutions and accountability measures in place to hold corporations to account for their actions. People around the world should have the right to live in a healthy and ecologically based environment. They should have the right to be fairly compensated and respected for the work that they do. They should have the right to life, liberty and security of the person, free from slavery and torture.

We can no longer remain silent on these issues and it is time to demand that our CPP funds do the same. I hope my colleagues will give their utmost consideration to the bill before them and I am looking forward to any questions they may have.

• (1115)

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

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Speaker, the federal government works in co-operation with the provinces. The reality is that it takes both levels of government to see things such as increases in premiums and so forth with CPP. To what degree does the member think that the provinces should have some input in terms of what the member is suggesting?

Secondly, RRSPs are supported by tax measures. When looking at RRSP investments through private investors, would the member apply those same principles to those types of funds?

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Madam Speaker, if the member looks at the wording of my bill, he will note that at the very end it has a section showing how this bill would come into force. It does specifically reference that the provincial legislatures would have to give their assent, much as they would have to for any changes to the act governing the Canada pension plan itself.

Given all of the examples I gave in my speech of the problematic investments that have been made by the CPP, it is quite obvious to me that we need something more. We need stronger legislation in place to ensure our pension funds are not promoting any kind of human misery around the world. With any RRSP or other kind of investment, we should certainly look at the rules governing those as well to make sure they indeed are meeting the interests of the Canadian people.

• (1120)

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his bill and his very inspiring speech.

It is often said that buying is voting, but investing is also voting. In my opinion, the least we can do is to ensure that our investments are ethical choices that correspond to our values and principles, the values and principles of a democracy.

Our investments should be ethical and respect our values. How is that not already the case?

[English]

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Madam Speaker, it is important to note that in the existing act it provides for the investment board to table an annual report to Parliament to explain how it is meeting these standards. As I said in my remarks, the largest pension fund in the world, managed by the Government of Norway, which has over \$1 trillion in assets, already has these guidelines in place. They are law. This fund has grown to over \$1 trillion and it is able to make money in an ethical way. We can look at such examples and follow suit.

I honestly believe that if we were to canvass the Canadian public and look at the evidence that I presented in my speech, none of them would support our pension funds funding any kind of human misery around the world. It is time to step up to the plate and ensure we put an end to these practices.

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Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, has the member had any discussions with the provincial entities with respect to the bill?

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: No, Madam Speaker, I have not had any discussions with provincial entities. Unfortunately, the resources afforded to me as a private member are fairly limited. I can tell the member that I have spent the better part of two years researching this issue and I am very grateful to organizations like Corporate Knights and the Library of Parliament that have outlined these problems.

Surely, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons can acknowledge, given the evidence I presented in my speech, that there is a problem, that the policy on responsible investing is not meeting its achieved goals. If he is happy with our investments causing human misery around the world, he can vote according, but I think the Canadian public would have something else to say. It is up to us to lead by example in the federal leadership role and encourage provinces to follow our lead.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise and address the legislation the member brought forward to the House today. I would like to acknowledge how important the CPP is to Canadians. The CPP is a leading example of a sound pension plan, through management and governance, that I believe is recognized around the world as being so.

The member made reference to the hundreds of billions of dollars we are talking about, and this is money that belongs to Canadians. It is money being vested to ensure when Canadians retire they have a better opportunity to live an enhanced lifestyle. It is meant to put food on tables and pay for a wide variety of bills. It is something Canadians hold very closely to their hearts.

Back in the early or mid-sixties, I believe it was Lester B. Pearson, a Liberal prime minister, who brought in the pension plan, believing at the time that Canadians needed to have such a plan to ensure once they retired they would have the funds necessary to enjoy retirement. We have seen it evolve into what it is today, a fund recognized around the world that continues to grow by billions of dollars every decade.

What the member is attempting to do here is indeed very noble. I have spoken in the chamber in the past about the social corporate responsibilities of doing the right thing, and at times that means one has to take action. I want to pose a very important question to the member: To what degree have the provinces been brought into this debate?

For years I sat in opposition and would challenge the Harper government as to why it was not working with the provinces to increase the CPP contribution. After years of no increases, I believed we were limiting the potential dividends being paid to people retiring once they hit the 60 or 65 age category. I realized back then that it took the support of the provinces, through negotiations, for any real changes to be made to the CPP. We can talk a great deal about it and debate it inside the chamber, but we need to be able to extend that hand to our provincial and territorial jurisdictions so we can have the dialogue.

I believe there is a very important gap that needs to be addressed. I am hoping to hear in particular from members supporting this legislation on the degree of work they believe should have been done in that area. We went through many years of Stephen Harper where there were no negotiations.

One of the things I talked about in the past is that shortly after forming government back in 2015, the Prime Minister mandated our ministries to look at ways they could reach out to the provinces and address the need to increase the CPP.

I am not 100% sure, but I think the Conservative opposition day motion coming up later today is actually in opposition to some of the increases we are proposing for CPP.

● (1125)

It is not easy to accomplish what this government has, in regard to increases in the CPP, so that people will have more disposable income when they retire.

If members talked at length with seniors in our communities, they would find that retirement funds are absolutely critical. That is one of the reasons we left the CPP increases with the provinces, in terms of the negotiations that took place, but we also looked at other pension funds, such as the guaranteed income supplement and the old age supplement. We saw increases shortly after we took office in 2015. We used those mechanisms during the pandemic to give additional one-time payments to seniors. These actions clearly demonstrate that the government has an interest in retirement pensions.

On the issue of how we invest in those retirement pensions, the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board has done well for Canadians for many years now. It has demonstrated that in the returns it has received for the monies collected through workers. I have immense respect for the work it has done. The investment board has a spectrum of things it considers prior to making those investments.

The types of changes the member is proposing we pass today need to be discussed with our provincial and territorial partners, at the very least. We are talking about over a quarter of a trillion dollars. That is literally hundreds of billions of dollars.

I floated a question to the member regarding RRSPs. We are talking about hundreds of millions, to billions, of dollars. Canadians invest in RRSPs, which are tax subsidized. Would the same principles that the member is talking about here be universally applied to those? When I posed the question to the member, his response was yes. If the answer is yes, then we are talking about other financial institutions: the big banks and those others that invest in RRSPs, and other forms of government assistance toward retirement. It opens into a new area of human rights. That is a much larger picture.

The member made reference to corporate social responsibilities. We could look at ways in which we have, through private member's bills and government bills, tried to influence corporate behaviour. It does not only apply here in Canada, but around the world for Canadian companies no matter where they operate. That is why I said, toward the beginning, that what the member is attempting to achieve is very noble. There is a much bigger picture we need to look at.

• (1130)

My time has expired and I am thankful for the opportunity to share a few words because I realize how important this issue is. Citizens of our country want the government to act where it can.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Madam Speaker, today I rise to address Bill C-231, which on the surface appears to be a noble attempt to direct our pension funds exclusively toward the common good, but the old adage is that the how is even more important than the what. The devil is in the details, and because the hon. member who proposes this bill is afraid of the devil he has avoided the details altogether in this bill.

The member proposes an amendment to the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board Act that would create a new requirement, which states:

The investment policies, standards and procedures, taking into account environmental, social and governance factors, shall provide that no investment may be made or held in an entity if there are reasons to believe that the entity has performed acts or carried out work contrary to ethical business practices, including...

...the commission of human, labour or environmental rights violations...

What is meant by all of the terminology the member puts in but does not define? We do not know what is meant because the member does not tell us, nor does he provide us with an arbitrator anywhere in the Canadian system that would determine when any such business practices have been violated or when human labour or environmental rights have been in some way offended. He leaves it to our imagination to determine what he means by each of these terms.

With respect to ethical business practices, we know there are some members of the NDP who consider it unethical for businesses to run a profit at all. Excluding profitable businesses from the CPP's portfolio would guarantee impoverishment to Canadians who rely on the fund's returns in order to live out a dignified retirement.

Let us move on to additional criteria the member said would exclude a company from receiving CPP investments. These are environmental violations. The member has written that it would be a violation to invest in oil and gas companies. I am quoting him here when he laments, "the CPPIB is investing billions of your pension dollars into the oil and gas sector", something he would presumably ban from happening if this bill were adopted. Our pension fund would be banned from investing in Canada's largest exporting industry: the oil and gas sector, which produces more jobs for indigenous Canadians than any other private sector industry. Our resource sector would be banned from receiving funds invested by our pension system at a time when Albertans are considering pulling out of the CPP altogether because of the fact they are demographically younger, and contribute more on a per capita basis, than the other eight provinces that are members of the fund. We are going to look

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Albertans in the eye and tell them they should stay in the CPP pension fund while that fund specifically bans its managers from investing in Alberta's biggest industry. What an insult to the men and women who have worked in that industry for so long and done so much good for our federation.

On the broader definition that the bill provides of "unethical business practices", I reached out to the CPPIB and asked what kinds of companies in Canada would be banned from getting Canadian investment under this legislation. It said only the 10 biggest companies on the Toronto Stock Exchange, all 10 of them by valuation, would be banned from receiving investment from the CPPIB. These are companies such as Shopify, Enbridge and the Royal Bank. On a combined basis, these 10 companies, which employ literally millions of Canadians, would be banned from receiving investments from their very own pension fund.

• (1135)

Whether that was the member's intention, I do not know. In fact, I rather doubt it, but that is not important. Writing laws is like programming computers: The machine does what it is programmed to do. If the CPPIB is programmed to ban all of these entities from receiving investment, that is what the managers will be forced to do. In fact, if the principles in this bill were actually applied, I wonder whether the fund would even be able to buy bonds in the Canadian government. CPPIB said that it would only be allowed to buy bonds in the Canadian government if the bill passed. I do not think it would even be allowed to do that.

Let us think about it. The Liberal government cannot provide clean drinking water to first nations people, which violates human rights. Now, because of the incompetence of federal ministers who cannot keep their word and provide clean drinking water, the government itself might be banned from receiving bond investments from the CPPIB. The government violated its own environment promises. It has not planted a single tree. This could be perceived as an environmental violation. The government signed off on letting the City of Montreal pour millions of litres of raw sewage into our waters, which is another violation of environmental rights. Could we possibly buy bonds in the City of Montreal or the Government of Canada when such violations have occurred? Of course not.

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Because of its poor drafting, this legislation, however well intentioned, cannot reasonably be implemented, even if it were desirable. However, it does give us an opportunity to discuss a new and growing risk that I have worried quietly about for a long time. The CPPIB was depoliticized back in the 1990s. It is a credit to the then Liberal government that it took what was a nearly bankrupt shell, which was highly politicized and whose funds were directed by politicians, and said that it was going to get the sticky fingers and incompetent hands of politicians out of the pensions of Canadians, and it was going to put it in the hands, effectively, of a group of private sector professionals to invest it and obtain a return.

Since that time, the fund has grown from insolvency to \$456 billion: almost a half a trillion dollars. Now, I hesitated to say that in this place, because a lot of politicians just got really big eyes, thinking, “Oh my goodness, what could we do with that.” Oh, the schemes they could come up with to deploy a half a trillion dollars. My goodness, they are rubbing their hands together. If only viewers back home could see it. There are politicians rubbing their hands together, thinking about that very thought right now.

Let me give an example of how our government is already leveraging that well. This Prime Minister constantly says that we have the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7. True, it was an inheritance and had nothing to do with him, but the only reason it is true is because that \$456 billion is deducted from our gross debt to get a much lower net debt and give the appearance that we have a low national debt.

Already, that money, which represents 20% of our GDP, is being leveraged in the minds of the government to justify its irresponsible spending. How long will it be, if the government keeps spending at this pace, before it starts to say, “Oh my goodness, we are out of money. We are broke, and now we need to start looking at that big pot of gold that Canadians had set aside.”

We on the Conservative side will fight tooth and nail to keep the hands of politicians off the pensions of Canadians. We see it already, with the former minister of the environment urging the CPPIB to invest in her pet environmental projects, similar to what happened provincially in Ontario when it almost bankrupted its electrical system doing the exact same thing.

• (1140)

We know many would like to defund our energy sector. We, on the Conservative side, will fight to keep the CPP depoliticized with the single purpose of giving an honest return to our hard-working Canadian employees and the retirees who depend on that fund.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, I first want to commend the member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford on his bill and his speech.

I will begin my speech by saying that the Bloc Québécois agrees with the spirit of this bill. No one can oppose efforts to prevent Canada's public nest egg from being invested in companies that behave unethically either here or abroad. We should not encourage companies that break the law either here or abroad. The managers of Canadian pension funds should be no exception.

This bill makes me want to question the leaders of the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board, or CPPIB. I would be interested in talking to them because I do not understand why the CPPIB is currently investing in corrupt companies.

This bill is worthwhile, but I would be surprised if it had much of an impact on the CPPIB's current investments. I will be talking not only about what passing this bill would mean, but also about some things that I would like to see added to it, should it be passed by the House.

First, I would like to talk about the \$600 million-plus invested in shares in oil and gas companies. In Canada, transportation and oil and gas development account for over half, or 52%, of our emissions. Alberta pollutes more than Quebec and Ontario combined.

Our retirement funds need to get with the program and stop investing in sectors that make it harder for us to achieve the Paris Agreement targets. The CPPIB should take its cue from the people in charge of the Quebec pension plan. The Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec, which is responsible for the Government and Public Employees Retirement Plan Fund, has a plan to reduce investment in polluting industries that is much more ambitious than the CPPIB's. In 2017, together with 11 partners from all over the world, the Caisse launched the Net-Zero Asset Owner Alliance, whose members are working to transition their portfolios to net-zero emissions by 2050. The Caisse also has a plan to reduce its carbon footprint by 25% per dollar invested by 2025. I see potential for a good conversation about this with the CPPIB, one that might persuade it to see the Caisse's strategy as a very viable option.

I would also like to talk to them about their decision to invest \$900 million in Calpine Corporation. As many people know, Quebec wants to become the battery of North America by exporting its hydroelectricity to the northeastern United States.

It is easy to imagine the positive impact this would have on reducing GHG emissions, increasing Quebec's collective prosperity and meeting the Paris targets. Everybody would benefit. This would be the equivalent of taking 700,000 cars off the road. However, Calpine produces electricity from gas. It has invested \$600 million to oppose Hydro-Québec's plan to build a high tension power line to provide Americans with clean, abundant and cheaper electricity. It is rallying the public to call for a referendum to block the project. It is unbelievable. Canadian taxpayers are investing their money in fossil fuels in the United States and, in the process, also financing a protest movement against a Quebec green energy project.

I would also like to address another topic with the board, and that is the fight against tax havens. Currently the government is being complicit by entering into non-double taxation agreements with countries that are known tax havens. It is being complicit by tinkering with the rules, such as allowing Barbados to be used as a tax haven under an obscure rule, which goes against the treaty signed between Canada and that small Caribbean country. While its economy is not very big, Barbados is one of the places with the most direct foreign investment coming from Canada. It is outrageous that the government is allowing this to happen.

During the last Parliament, I moved a motion calling for this loophole to be closed, but every Liberal, except one, and every Conservative voted against it.

I will quote the spokesman for Collectif Échec aux paradis fiscaux, Claude Vaillancourt:

At the height of the Panama papers scandal, the Prime Minister publicly boasted that he would be keeping an eye on Canadians who might be tempted by tax avoidance, but now he is refusing to take real action to close one of the biggest doors to tax avoidance. It is simply unacceptable. He needs to walk the talk.

Since the days when Paul Martin served as finance minister, governments have been spineless, and we must therefore continue to hope that leaders with influence, such as the board, will take action to change things. They must commit to no longer investing in companies operating in tax havens and to withdraw from these businesses as soon as possible.

Just because the federal government has made tax evasion and avoidance legal it does not mean that profiting from it is ethical. I believe that we must have this discussion because, if we continue down this road, our middle-class citizens and SMEs will continue to bear the burden of taxes. However, I have the impression that this will be a less than agreeable discussion.

• (1145)

This is how the CPPIB responded when it was rocked by the Paradise papers, and I quote: “We structure our foreign investments to maximize after-tax returns for our contributors and recipients.” This is from a Radio-Canada article. It did not even offer an apology by saying that it had been busted and would change its ways.

Since it is profitable to use questionable or even outright illegal schemes, they will continue to do so. If it is not possible to have a profitable pension fund that meets its actuarial expenses, something is rotten in the state of Denmark, as Shakespeare said, or, in this case, the state of Canada.

The article continues:

Pension fund managers claim that they comply with tax laws wherever they do business.

They point out that pension funds are not taxed in Canada. As is the case with RRSPs, taxes are paid by workers when they withdraw their benefits after retirement. The use of tax havens therefore does not have an impact on federal or provincial coffers.

Other countries have different tax rules. Pension funds structure their investments so as to legally limit the double taxation of their profits.

Basically, they use tax havens because they are easily accessible, good for their bottom line and, until the government fixes the problem, profitable. Some companies even specialize in these kinds of schemes and are sometimes very close to this government. One ex-

ample is Morneau Shepell—“Morneau”, as in Bill Morneau, the former finance minister who left in the wake of the WE Charity scandal.

To sum it all up, Canada signs agreements with countries where, for a few hundred thousand dollars, wealthy corporations can hire firms to avoid paying taxes. To increase their profit margins, the CPPIB and other pension funds take advantage of loopholes in the tax system to increase the funds' profits. Meanwhile, the government hunts down large and small tax evaders, but for the largest of the large, the door to tax avoidance has been left wide open.

Obviously, I sometimes get carried away when talking about tax havens, because this really irks me. I will now get back to the substance of the bill.

Another potential improvement would be the disclosure of investments with respect to the proposed paragraphs 35(2)(a), (b) and (c). I would also like to add investments in the immoral polluting economy to that list. This would enable all Canadians who contribute to a fund to know whether they are investing in these types of companies. It would also enable the CPPIB to identify successes and improvements.

As I already pointed out earlier, one cannot really disagree with this bill, but the bill is vague, which means that it lacks teeth. For example, the absence of a clause requiring that funds stop investing in fossil fuels and in tax havens shows that there is work to be done. This bill is a step in the right direction, but I think that it could be improved, and I am prepared to work with my colleagues here in the House to do so. This is truly a step in the right direction, and I think we are in a position to make some improvements without significantly altering the spirit of the bill.

• (1150)

[English]

Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is a great pleasure to rise to speak to Bill C-231. I am so glad to see the bill has been brought forward, as it addresses the very important issue of how money in federally sponsored plans will be invested in the interest of all Canadians. I would like to acknowledge my colleague from Cowichan—Malahat—Langford and his staff for all their hard work in bringing the bill to the House.

The bill takes the investment approach of the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board, which is responsible for managing the funds that will be used to pay CPP beneficiaries well into the future. The management of this fund is critically important to the future well-being of Canadian workers and retirees, but the no-holds-barred investment mandate of the fund managers requires some real common-sense tweaking.

Private Members' Business

I first became aware of the potential problems with the board's management mandate in 2016 when a colleague of mine, a member from Victoria, sent me an email detailing severe human rights abuses at a mining site in Eritrea that was owned by a Canadian mining company. The email further detailed that the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board was a significant shareholder in the Canadian mining company and was at least indirectly tied to the abuse occurring at the Bisha mining site in Eritrea. My staff and I were shocked as we unearthed more information about the abuses. Military personnel were being employed to basically keep the mine workers in a state of slave labour, and this included arbitrary arrests and detentions and even killing workers who were not producing desired results. I seriously wondered how this was possible. How could the fund that Canadians pay into to secure their retirement be used to support such obvious and tragic human rights abuses?

As my staff and I continued to study the question, the answer started to become clear. The mandate of the Canadian Pension Plan Investment Board, with a huge fund of over \$400 billion, 1,500 full-time employees and offices on three continents, was to make as much money as it possibly could through its investments, with very little holding it back. This is its mandate, as defined by the CPPIB Act:

(c) to invest its assets with a view to achieving a maximum rate of return, without undue risk of loss, having regard to the factors that may affect the funding of the Canada Pension Plan and the ability of the Canada Pension Plan to meet its financial obligations on any given business day.

As members can see, the only limitation, to put it in plain English, is this: Do not lose any money.

We thought there must be some certainty, with all these restrictions, on how this board could invest the monies of hard-working Canadians. We continued through the act and researched the board's internal documentation, but we could find no restrictions at all. What we did find were guidelines, committees and policies, none of which were binding and none of which seemed to have much of an effect on the enormous number of investment decisions made by the board. More and more, the board's investment oversight seemed to be a function of its PR department rather than anything related to the operational and investment departments.

Shortly after receiving the email from my colleague, I attended a meeting at the parliamentary finance committee at which the representatives of the CPPIB, including its president, were scheduled to appear. I decided to take some of my own concerns and questions directly to them. I asked them if they were aware the mining company they had invested in to the tune of one and a half million shares was engaged in supplying labour to the Bisha mine under conditions that have been described as slave labour. I also asked if they could describe the measures and procedures they have in place to ensure that they avoid investing in companies linked to human rights violations.

I think the CPPIB representatives were caught off guard and unprepared for such a line of questioning. The answers I received were what we would expect from a company president or a company lawyer when they really do not have a good answer: empty and hollow allusions to guidelines and good intentions. However, I did get a promise that someone from the board would follow up and

give me a more detailed answer in the days following the committee meeting.

What I ended up getting was a letter from their chief PR person. In this letter, he spouted some vague commitment to being good corporate citizens, but also said this:

Nevsun Resources represents one of approximately 2,500 public companies we are invested in around the world. As at March 31, 2016, CPP Investment Board held 1,519,000 shares in Nevsun Resources totalling a market value of \$6 million. We sold much of our position since our last reporting period and our current exposure to the company totals less than \$1 million....

● (1155)

I was a bit dumbfounded by this response. The letter seemed to be saying that, because it invested in so many companies worldwide, it could not possibly know what was going on with them. This hardly seems to be a reasonable approach. I was even more shocked by the dubious logic. It is like saying now we are only 20% responsible for investing in a company that is killing its workers, which does not add up and it defies any kind of common sense. I do not think it is something most Canadians would believe.

This is a very important bill. Right now, the CPPIB, which again is responsible for the fund that hard-working Canadians contribute to every year, is investing in companies involved in weapons manufacturing, private for-profit American prisons that detain immigrants and children, companies that are guilty of serious human rights violations and companies responsible for contributing to the global climate crisis.

Is it unreasonable to expect that an organization dedicated to investing public funds should do so with some types of ethical restrictions? I do not think so, and I think many Canadians would agree. What we want and what this bill seeks to do is to have the Canadian Pension Plan Investment Board take a proactive approach of due diligence in its investment policies, leveraging our more than \$400-billion pension fund by investing only in companies with ethical business practices and divesting from those that create weapons of war, contribute to climate change and other environmental problems or oppress people around the world through unethical labour practices and human rights violations.

It makes no sense to me, and I think to most Canadians, that the government should not be able to do something about questionable investments made by funds that are governed by acts of Parliament. The situation with Revera long-term care homes is a good case in point. Revera is a for-profit company, wholly owned by the Public Sector Pension Investment Board, an entity created by the federal government to manage pension funds from public sector workers. Revera has been roundly criticized for the mismanagement of its homes, especially during the pandemic.

During the first wave of COVID-19, its homes had the most number of deaths in the industry, and during the second wave, it is again seeing significant outbreaks in its homes across the country. CBC has just announced that Revera had another 100 outbreaks of COVID-19 this morning, including 50 of its workers. There is a course of complaints from its workers about understaffing, a lack of PPE, and overtime and pandemic bonuses are not even being paid.

The problems at Revera are the same that we have found throughout the for-profit, long-term care sector right across the country. It is a model that does not work for guaranteeing the safety of our loved ones. As with some other problematic investments of the CPPIB, it is a problem that the government can do something about.

As Canadians who pay into the fund, which is managed by the CPPIB, we are, by extension, all shareholders in the companies that benefit from the fund's investments. A lot of influence can be had by divesting from companies that conduct themselves in a way that we view as objectionable or unethical. By amending section 35 of the CPPIB Act, which is what this bill seeks to achieve, we can require the board to take a proactive approach to ethical investment, and I am sure that is what Canadians want.

Today, I have heard that a lot of people here believe in the bill in principle, and I encourage us all to work together. Let us move the bill forward and get it passed. I encourage all my colleagues to support the bill today.

• (1200)

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to contribute to this debate. Ensuring that Canadians have the ability to have a secure and dignified retirement is very important to the government.

The bill before us, Bill C-231, proposes to amend the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board Act to specify that the investment policies, standards and procedures established by the board of directors forbids investments in any entity that engages in certain practices.

Federal and provincial governments created the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board, or CPPIB, in 1997 as an arm's-length organization to prudently invest the surplus funds of the Canada pension plan to ensure its long-term sustainability. CPPIB is now recognized internationally as a leading example of sound pension plan management and governance.

More importantly, its governance structure was designed to allow it to operate free of political interference, while still being accountable to the federal and provincial governments that are the stewards of the CPP. That is to say that CPPIB works on behalf of Canadians

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and not for the government. This independent governance is widely recognized as a central feature of its success and effectiveness in achieving its mandate to maximize return without undue risk of loss and to manage amounts transferred to it in the best interests of contributors and beneficiaries.

CPPIB's investments have been consistently drawing above average rates of return—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Unfortunately, I must interrupt. The hon. member will have eight minutes the next time this matter is before the House. The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—MEASURES TO SUPPORT CANADIAN BUSINESSES

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Today being the last allotted day for the supply period ending December 10, the House will go through the usual procedures to consider and dispose of the supply bills. In view of recent practices, do hon. members agree that the bills be distributed now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC) moved:

That, given that, (i) Canadian businesses are in distress and need help to survive as a rapid testing and vaccination plan rolls out, (ii) according to the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, 46% are worried about the survival of their business, (iii) the federal government must support employment by removing barriers to job creation, such as taxes and regulation, the House call on the government to: (a) provide complete details on the Highly Affected Sectors Credit Availability Program by December 16, 2020, including criteria, when businesses can apply, which sectors are eligible, when repayment will be required, and how much forgiveness will be offered; (b) fix the Large Employer Emergency Financing Facility by reducing restrictions and amending the interest rate schedule; (c) postpone the increase of the Canada Pension Plan payroll taxes planned for January 1, 2021; and (d) postpone the increase of the carbon tax and the alcohol escalator tax planned for 2021.

• (1205)

[*English*]

He said: Madam Speaker, I rise today to propose that we move from the credit card economy to the paycheque economy.

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Let me tell colleagues what I mean by that by illustrating the difference in approach between the government and us here in the Conservative opposition.

Last week, the finance minister made an interesting observation. She told BNN, “I want to thank you, first of all, for really zeroing in on the preloaded stimulus idea”. That idea is the following: “[Households] do have quite a lot of money that they have saved because there has not been much to do in the pandemic. Certainly, it would be great if that money could go towards driving our recovery.... If people have ideas on how the government can act to help unlock that preloaded stimulus, I am very, very interested.”

Therefore, ladies and gentlemen, those who have money in their bank accounts should lock it away. They might even want to put it under their beds before the government finds out that it is there. The government thinks people are saving too much and wants to empty their bank accounts as the best way, it thinks, to get the economy started.

Now some will say that the minister did not mean what she said, and that what she was trying to say was that we need more consumer spending in this miserable economy. Certainly that debt-induced spending would create activity, but never confuse activity with achievement.

The CIBC has reported that a very large share of the government's COVID emergency spending has been leaking right out of Canada altogether, because the debt-funded money that consumers are spending is actually going to imported goods. All of those Amazon and Alibaba deliveries are of products imported from abroad, and when those products come in, our money goes out. That is how our economy has been functioning for the last five years. Five years in a row, there have been five trade deficits.

Here is what a trade deficit is: We buy more than we sell and we borrow to make up the difference. We buy from the world and borrow from the world. They get the money, investment and jobs. We are left with the debt. Day by day, we become more and more reliant on the People's Republic of China and other economic powerhouses that send us their goods so that we can send them our money.

More and more, our population becomes enslaved to debt. Our debt-to-GDP ratio is now 384% when households, businesses and governments are combined. This is a record-smashing level of debt. It is the second highest in the G7, behind only Japan. It means that for every one percentage point increase in the effective interest rate, we will have a 3.84% increase in the economic cost of our debt on the world stage.

The House will hear more of this from the member for Mégantic—L'Érable, with whom I am splitting my time. He too is concerned about the fact that money is the best servant but the worst master. If someone invests their money, it will serve them. If they borrow money, it will be a master over them. That is what is happening with Canadians today. This high level of debt to fund short-term consumption has only made us weaker and more vulnerable to the rest of the world. We do not need to come back out of this pandemic lockdown with even more debt. In fact, we need precisely the opposite.

We need Canadians to save, earn and invest. First we save to prepare for the future and a secure retirement, and then we invest. Much of those savings are converted either by being lent out by banks to small businesses or converted into TFSAs and RRSPs, into equities and other investments that build factories, dig mines and develop intellectual property and patented technologies.

• (1210)

Those assets then produce ongoing income to power our economy into the future. Instead of debt-fuelled consumption, we have investment-fuelled production. We are seeing none of that right now.

The Bank of Canada, which is pumping \$400 billion of printed money into our economy, inflating assets for rich people, while devaluing the wages of the working class, has reported that over the next three years investment will only grow by 0.8%. In fact, it will not be until at least 2023 that we get investment levels back to where they were in 2019. Meanwhile, consumption will grow by 4.7%, six times faster than investment. Of the growth over the next two years, 80% will come in the form of debt-fuelled government spending and consumer spending. Again, that means more debt and more vulnerability.

How do we make the switch from this credit card economy to a paycheque economy? We do it by unleashing the mighty force of our 20 million Canadian workers. Let us end the war on work, by which I refer to a tax and benefit system that claws back as much as 80¢ on the dollar of some people when they go out into the workforce and earn another hundred cents.

For example, if single parents get a job and earn an extra dollar from \$55,000 to \$55,001, they lose as much as 80¢ of that dollar to clawbacks and taxes. These penalties exist right across the income level and they ding the lowest-income people the hardest. Some people with disabilities lose more than a dollar of income for every dollar increase they have in wages. That is the war on work, punishing people for making an effort.

Let us reform our tax and benefit system so it always pays more to work. Let us reverse the insane system we have right now, which means that it takes 168 days longer to get a building permit for construction in Canada than in the United States. We are 34th out of 35 OECD nations in the delay to build a factory, or a plant or a mine, or a shopping centre. We should be number one. This should be the fastest and simplest place to get a building permit, to build a structure and to fill it with well-paid workers.

Let us knock down interprovincial trade barriers, so Canadians can actually buy and sell from one another instead of just importing cheap products from abroad. Let us speed up the recognition of the incredible skills and qualifications of immigrants who come here with knowledge in the trades and professions, so they can earn the full salary for which they are qualified rather than be forced into a low-wage job because regulators ban them from getting a permit to work. Let us open up our free enterprise system by removing red tape and shortening the amount of time our small businesses must spend filling out tax forms, so that resource can be dedicated to serving customers and hiring workers. Let us repeal Bill C-69 and Bill C-48, so we can unleash the force of our energy and resource sectors to bring tens of billions of dollars back into the country.

We have a \$14-billion LNG project awaiting approval in Quebec. We have a \$20-billion oil sands project sitting around waiting in northern Alberta. We have pipelines, we have rail lines and we have transmission lines that are ready to go as soon as the government gets out of the way. Therefore, let us get the government out of the way, open up our economy and transform ourselves from a credit card economy into a paycheque economy, so our 20 million brilliant and strong Canadian workers can stand on their feet and build our economy.

• (1215)

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Pickering—Uxbridge, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am glad to have a chance to ask the hon. member a question.

He speaks about a paycheque economy and not a credit card economy. In a previous speech he talked about the war on work. I am really curious to see how the member opposite is going to contort himself and twist himself into knots when I ask a question about when he was a member of government.

His government had the lowest unemployment rates since the Great Depression and what did it have to show for it? It had \$150 billion in debt. What did that government not have? A global pandemic that shut down economies everywhere.

What exactly does the member propose when the Conservatives added that much debt and had such a terrible unemployment record?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Speaker, I think the member accidentally told the truth when she said we had the lowest unemployment since the Great Depression. She was right that we did not have the lowest unemployment in the G7. However, we had the best record going through the great global recession, which is interesting. Now we have the second-highest unemployment in the G7. Only socialist Italy is higher, and the Italian socialist policies are the ones the government is working hardest to emulate. Even France, which used to be socialist, is reversing those policies and has now lowered its unemployment rate below Canada's.

In Canada, we see a government shutting down our economy, trying to nationalize economic activity and getting exactly the same kinds of predictable results that those policies always produce.

The member should look at the magnificent success and world-famous actions of the previous Conservative government to get us

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through that recession. The current government could learn a lot from that.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to be able to ask my colleague from Carleton a question. We have not had a chance to debate with each other for a long time.

Will the member not agree that there are some people who are shamelessly profiting from the pandemic? The president and CEO of Amazon, Jeff Bezos, could give each of his 876,000 employees a \$105,000 bonus and still be just as rich as he was before the pandemic started.

How much tax does Amazon pay in Canada? None.

At a time when we need funding for our social programs, how can someone earn billions of dollars and yet not have to contribute like every other company does, including SMEs in Quebec and Canada? What does my colleague think about that?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question.

This situation is outrageous, and it is one of the reasons we need to stop sending our money out of the country. That is the credit card economy. Canadians go into debt buying goods and services from other countries. We end up in debt while others become wealthy.

I would also like to point out that the central banks are printing money, which causes inflation and makes the rich richer. One of the reasons that billionaires are making the most money right now is that the central banks are printing money and handing it to the financial markets. This lowers the value of working-class wages while increasing the wealth of big billionaires like Jeff Bezos.

• (1220)

[*English*]

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Madam Speaker, what does the member think about the announcement in the fall economic statement that we would be pursuing the imposition of corporate income tax on these foreign company web giants, like the Amazons, about which he talked, ahead of what the OECD is planning. We think it is more important to get this done as soon as possible rather than wait on the OECD?

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Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Speaker, it is all fine, except the government's policies are enriching the Amazons and Alibabas of the world. The policy is to get Canadians to add more household debt in order to buy more cheap imported goods from Amazon and Alibaba, which enriches those foreign billionaires at the expense of Canadian households. The government's policy is to print money to pay the bills, which effectively inflates the asset values of the super rich at the expense of the wages of working-class people. We would do exactly the opposite of that.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise to speak to this motion that is important to all Canadian businesses.

I commend my colleague, the member for Carleton, who is our shadow minister of finance. He gave a great explanation of how we should be putting jobs ahead of credit cards. I think this is what brings us together today.

The government is having a hard time producing a vaccination plan and a recovery plan, which still do not exist. We got some bits and pieces this morning when we learned that Canada could be getting some vaccines by the end of December. That does not give our local businesses the assurance they need to resume operations and get through this period with the hope that something better is coming.

The motion before us today is very clear. It states: “given that, (i) Canadian businesses are in distress and need help to survive as a rapid testing and vaccination plan rolls out, (ii) according to the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, 46% are worried about the survival of their business, (iii) the federal government must support employment by removing barriers to job creation, such as taxes and regulation”.

Later on in my speech, I will come back to this and talk more about the many problems we have had during the pandemic dealing with all these regulations and all the delays that are causing businesses across the country to suffer and drown in red tape and debt. Unfortunately, as the Canadian Federation of Independent Business pointed out, 46%, or nearly half, of businesses are worried they will not survive the pandemic. That is why my colleague's motion rightly calls on the government to be upfront, lay its cards on the table and help businesses cope with the pandemic.

The motion urges the House to “call on the government to: (a) provide complete details on the Highly Affected Sectors Credit Availability Program by December 16, 2020, including criteria, when businesses can apply, which sectors are eligible, when repayment will be required,” which is very important to planning a business's survival, “and how much forgiveness will be offered; (b) fix the Large Employer Emergency Financing Facility by reducing restrictions and amending the interest rate schedule; (c) postpone the increase of the Canada Pension Plan payroll taxes planned for January 1, 2021; and (d) postpone the increase of the carbon tax and the alcohol escalator tax planned for 2021”.

With every business struggling, now is not the time to be taking even more from them by increasing these two taxes.

This motion calls on the government to be straight with businesses and let them know where they stand. Unfortunately, from day one, the government has been holding press conferences in front of the house and from behind a table, and that is how we get our information day by day.

Sadly, by proroguing Parliament, the government decided to put off measures that were absolutely necessary for helping businesses cope with the pandemic. It created even more uncertainty for them and made things even more difficult for those who want to get back up and running and who we hope will still be there thanks to the measures that will have been put in place.

The problem is that the government announces measures, but does not provide the details until too much later. I will talk about some of the situations encountered by companies back home that are having difficulty with all these programs.

First, not a day goes by that a business does not call us to say it is having problems because of delays in processing immigration applications for foreign workers, who are absolutely essential right now. This delays certain investment plans and the resumption of certain activities, causing unnecessary problems in the system.

● (1225)

For instance, a cheese factory in Mégantic—L'Érable reports that processing times for foreign worker permits have increased dramatically. An application for a cheese maker was submitted last April, and they are still waiting for a decision. That is unacceptable. How can we expect that company, which is essential because it is in the food sector, to do what it needs to do if it cannot meet its labour needs?

I have been working on a file that boggles the mind. Some companies, such as Princecraft and Fournier Industries, to name just a couple, have had problems with the application of the work-sharing program. At the beginning of the crisis, their employees were able to use the CERB, and rightly so, because the companies had to shut down temporarily. However, when they decided to reopen, those employees, who had been taking part in the work-sharing program, did not receive their wages for months. Why? It was because the systems were not coordinated.

The administrative delays were outright unacceptable. The companies had to wait for months and advance considerable sums to some of their employees to keep them in work. Some lost their employees because they just could not afford to pay them. Unfortunately, some employees were not paid from June to October, in the midst of the pandemic, even though these companies had decided to answer the government's call. They recalled their employees, but the government was nowhere to be found. It was the government that failed to pay the employees what they were owed. That is unacceptable.

I would like to talk about the Castech Plessitech Group, another business in my riding that found itself in a very difficult situation. Employment and Social Development Canada, which conducts labour market impact assessments, or LMIA's, claimed that the pandemic should make it easier for businesses to recruit employees. In the midst of a pandemic where many people are unemployed, businesses are trying to hire staff and are making job offers, but unfortunately, they get no response, because the assistance measures encourage people to stay home.

The businesses have therefore turned to foreign workers, as they used to do, but they are running into administrative delays. Sometimes the department is even refusing to give these businesses permits because it says that there are people available here in Canada, but that is not the case on the ground. It is not happening. No workers are available because people are receiving government assistance or are simply not available to work. That means that many businesses have had to turn down contracts.

It is time to do the right thing and give Canadian businesses the details of these programs by December 16 so that they know exactly what to expect and can get their operations back up and running properly. They also need to know when they will have to pay back the money that the government lent them.

Most importantly, I am asking the government to do everything in its power to ensure that rapid tests and vaccines are distributed across the country as quickly as possible. We still have not seen a real plan to help these companies get back up and running. As long as we do not have a real plan for rapid testing and vaccinations, then there can be no real economic recovery plan.

Above all, during this pandemic, I am calling on the government to reduce red tape for small businesses. We need to make sure that people can get back to work as quickly as possible. By adopting this motion, the House will send the government a clear message.

• (1230)

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I commend the hon. member on his very realistic-looking background. It felt like he was seated in front of me in the House.

I would like to know what the hon. member thinks of the comments by the Conservative finance critic, who claims that the Bank of Canada is printing money, which leads to inflation later. That is absolutely not the case. There is a distinction to be made.

The Bank of Canada is pursuing a quantitative easing policy. That is not the same thing. Bank reserves are being increased so that they can borrow money if they want to invest in projects that will increase the supply. We know that when the supply of products and services is increased, this plays against inflation because obviously the supply is greater.

Can the hon. member comment on the fact that his colleague does not seem to understand this distinction, despite being the finance critic?

Mr. Luc Berthold: Madam Speaker, I will never question anything my colleague, the member for Carleton, says. I think his interpretation of the government's plan is very astute. He is right to criticize the government's willingness and propensity to print money

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right in the middle of a pandemic, not because of the impact here and now, but because of the impact it will have for years and generations to come.

The government says it is borrowing over longer and longer terms to get the lowest possible interest rates. We know that is an illusion, a pipe dream. When one has very little and the interest rate rises just a little, that makes a big difference, but ultimately the impact is extremely minimal for Canadians.

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague a question.

Instead of the deregulation this motion proposes, why not ask the government to do sector-based investing? For example, it could invest in the aerospace sector, which provides 40,000 direct jobs and 100,000 indirect jobs in Quebec. We are still waiting. The Americans have already invested in aerospace. The French invested \$15 billion euros in it. Why not ask the Government of Canada to invest in aerospace? My riding, Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, is home to two companies, Héroux-Devtek and Pratt & Whitney, both of which are waiting for a signal from the government to move their projects forward.

I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on that.

Mr. Luc Berthold: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Longueuil—Saint-Hubert for his comments.

Millions of Canadians and Canadian businesses have been abandoned. The government is currently preparing to increase taxes at the expense of many of these companies, while some businesses that are key to the Canadian economy are still waiting for a clear signal from the government. We need to reduce red tape and taxes so that the programs are effective and give businesses the results they were designed to achieve.

[English]

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, in this motion there are many good things, but the Conservatives have to put in their poison pill, where they continue their attack and predatory approach on seniors' and workers' benefits and retirement security. We have watched seniors struggle to pay their bills and not make ends meet throughout this crisis. Conservatives continue to look at these investments as taxes. They are not taxes. These are investments in workers' retirement security.

When will the Conservatives stop their attack on workers' pensions? This is not a time to cut back. We heard from the PBO that CPP is vulnerable and that these strategic investments are needed. This is not a time for the Conservatives to prey on a crisis like this that is going to impact seniors and retirement security in the future.

• (1235)

Mr. Luc Berthold: I totally disagree with what the member just said, Madam Speaker. He is totally wrong. We are not attacking seniors or any pension plan.

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[Translation]

We are simply asking that the government postpone the increase of the Canada pension plan payroll taxes.

[English]

That is only what we are asking for and we are asking for it to help enterprises get through this pandemic crisis.

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance and to the Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure, as always, to take part in debates on the floor of the House of Commons, despite it being virtual as it has been for the last number of months.

The motion on the floor deals with various planned supports for small businesses. I did want to take a moment before I address the substance of the motion to more broadly address the importance of supporting small business, particularly during this unprecedented economic crisis.

The pandemic that is tied to COVID-19 has changed everything about the way that we live. It has changed the way we work. It has changed the way we socialize. It has caused us to give up many of the comforts we have for so long taken for granted.

Over the course of this pandemic, we realized very quickly that it was not just a public health emergency, but it posed an extraordinary threat to the well-being of our nation's economy, as well. Upon realizing the magnitude of this potential economic shock, our government quickly moved to establish emergency supports for households and businesses to ensure that we could mitigate against the seriousness of the economic consequences that would follow the pandemic, but also to ensure that we could set the stage for future growth.

We developed this plan by doing the simple thing: listening. We spoke to stakeholders who represent small businesses, medium-sized businesses and big businesses. I remember being on the phone through the night in the spring understanding what small businesses needed to survive so they could help contribute to the recovery on the back end of this pandemic.

Over the course of taking in this feedback and through consultation with experts, we have developed a plan. We realize that the first step to our plan has to be to keep Canadians safe and to defeat the virus. We know the most important policy, in terms of protecting our economy, is to protect the health and well-being of Canadians. We will not see an economic recovery until we have defeated this virus.

The second pillar of our plan is to ensure that while we work to defeat the virus, we extend emergency supports to households and businesses so they can weather the storm and make sure that on the back end of this pandemic, they are positioned well to help bounce back and contribute to the nation's recovery.

The final pillar of our plan, which was alluded to in the recent fall economic statement, is going to be to make certain important and transformative investments that are going to set the stage for long-term economic growth. The motion on the floor pertains to support for business, so I will focus my comments there.

It is important to keep in mind that more than \$8 out of every \$10 spent in response to COVID-19 has come from our government. We have worked with provinces, communities and different associations, but the reality is that we made the decision early on that the cost of inaction was too great and the federal government would be there to support households and businesses, and to make the investments necessary to help defeat the virus.

In particular, I want to draw the House's attention to certain business supports we have advanced over the past number of months. First and foremost, the Canada emergency wage subsidy is a program we developed after listening to businesses. They said the cost of keeping their employees on the payroll is too great and if they do not have support, we will have millions of Canadian workers without jobs.

We moved quickly, initially with a smaller version of the wage subsidy. When we heard that it needed to be increased, that is precisely what we did. We established a program that is covering up to 75% of the cost of wages for employees in Canada. This is keeping nearly four million workers on the payroll to date. This is important not only for providing the income support to those workers in the short term, but for maintaining that connection between the worker and their job so that when conditions allow, those workers cannot just be on the payroll, but can actually be on the shop floor so they can help boost the productivity of their employer and hopefully help them survive this pandemic.

In addition to the Canada emergency wage subsidy, we have put forward the Canada emergency business account. This is a small-business, interest-free, government-backed loan program that initially provided \$40,000 to small businesses and \$10,000 of that \$40,000 was forgivable if certain conditions were met, including paying it back on a particular schedule.

In the fall economic statement, we improved that policy. Not only did we expand its eligibility over time, but we took steps to make sure it became more generous. We added an additional \$20,000 to that loan program, \$10,000 of which is forgivable as well. This means that small businesses across Canada have access to \$60,000 in support, \$20,000 of which is forgivable.

This program was designed to help businesses do simple things such as pay their utility bills and literally keep the lights on so their employees, who might be benefiting from the wage subsidy, can actually have a place to come back to work. This particular program has now reached approximately 800,000 businesses across Canada and is supporting millions of Canadians in terms of keeping them employed throughout this time of unprecedented economic uncertainty.

• (1240)

However, we did not stop with those two programs. We have also advanced the new Canada emergency rent subsidy and a new piece of legislation. This program is essential because we heard, loud and clear, from businesses that they needed support, not only for their employees' wages, not just for the fixed costs of running a business, but also specifically for their rent. This commercial rent subsidy program is actually able to provide up to 65% of the cost of rent for businesses that have experienced a drop in revenue.

For those who have actually been shut down as a result of a public health order in order to keep our community members safe, we have created additional lockdown support, which means the federal government will cover up to 90% of the rent for businesses that have been shut down in order to protect public health. This may sound expensive, but it is the right thing to do because it has a public health outcome and also provides the emergency support to businesses to make it easier and more economically viable for them to do the right thing for our population's health.

We realize that there are certain businesses that may not have been covered by some of these programs, so we established the regional relief and recovery fund, which mirrors the emergency business account and provides support to businesses that may not otherwise meet some of the eligibility criteria. We invested in programs to extend liquidity support across the economy to ensure that the steady flow of cash would prevent massive deflation, leading to potential job losses and business shutdowns. These programs are taking hold.

However, it is not just the programs that have directly supported business. I did not even mention the many deferrals or remittance delays that we have allowed, to the tune of \$85 billion, to help businesses keep cash in their accounts rather than giving it to the government. It is important that we also draw attention to the personal income support through the Canada emergency response benefit, or CERB, which was designed to help Canadians who lost income as a result of this pandemic.

This program in particular has helped over nine million Canadian households keep food on the table and a roof over their heads. I bring it up in the context of supports for business, which this motion is geared towards, because it actually filled a gap for a lot of self-employed Canadians who did not have access to ordinary EI programs. When they lost income as a result of their business and they needed support, CERB was there for them, whether they were self-employed or not, to help ensure that they could continue to meet the costs of living despite the uncertainty that this pandemic has injected into their lives and throughout the economy.

I want to spend a few minutes on the importance of our health response to the success of businesses, both in the short term and the long term. We know in the long term that this pandemic will end with a vaccine. I was thrilled to see the announcement today that Canada expects, very soon, the first doses to arrive in Canada. As soon as next week, 249,000 doses of the Pfizer vaccine will arrive.

I would like to draw the House's attention to the portfolio of vaccines that we have procured. It is the most robust portfolio in the entire world, with more doses per capita than any other country. By casting a wide net, we improved our chances of having access to

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those vaccines that were to be approved first. Now that the Pfizer vaccine appears to be on the eve of arrival, we can also point to three other candidates that are in the regulatory process and should be approved, assuming Health Canada says it is safe, for rollout in Canada before too long.

The reality is we have been working with provinces and the Canadian Armed Forces to develop a distribution plan for these vaccines. This plan will ensure our population becomes inoculated as quickly as possible, so that Canadians can return to the new version of normal and continue to help businesses succeed on their own, rather than rely on these emergency supports over the course of the pandemic.

It is not just the vaccines that we have invested in to help keep Canadians safe. Through the safe restart agreement with the provinces, we have now injected nearly \$20 billion on things like testing and contact tracing. We have rolled out 5 million rapid tests throughout the country, in the provinces, to help ensure that they could be deployed in a way that would protect communities.

The reality is, if it is still unsafe to go out and eat in restaurants, visit a movie theatre, go to a sporting event or a local show at the theatre, these are the kinds of things that will help the economy rebound more quickly. Until Canadians feel that it is safe to actually be out in their communities, we cannot expect the rebound to reach its full potential. That is why we are making these investments, and they are taking hold in provinces across Canada.

If anyone wants an international comparator, over 80% of the jobs that were lost during the depths of this pandemic have in fact now returned in Canada, compared to a little more than half in the United States. The recent jobs report from Statistics Canada shows that in my home province of Nova Scotia, the last month has seen 10,000 new jobs created and our unemployment today is even better than it was a year ago.

• (1245)

That is due in part because of the responsible measures put in place by our local governments, and the public buy-in we have seen across this province to help keep one another safe, but we cannot take it for granted. If we want to expect to continue to see this kind of rebound, we are going to need to continue to follow public health advice and ensure businesses and people are supported when it is not safe to be out in our communities.

I want to direct people's attention to a few elements of the motion I find are problematic. First, although this is perhaps a smaller point, the Conservatives have demanded more information about our new credit program for highly affected sectors. This new program is going to provide loans of up to \$1 million. These loans are to be 100% government backed and have lower than market interest rates. They will ensure the hardest-hit sectors, which would otherwise be viable but for this pandemic, are able to have access to the supports they need so they are still here on the back end of COVID-19.

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The design work of this program is ongoing, and we are going to continue to consult with stakeholders, in particular the tourism and hospitality sectors, to make sure we get this program right. The motion puts a drop-dead deadline of I believe nine days from now to divulge the details of the program. I respectfully suggest we would be well served to continue our consultation with the stakeholders in those hardest hit sectors before we roll out details to ensure the program actually achieves its intended outcome and serves those who have been hardest hit.

The motion also draws attention to a financing program for large employers. We are always open to suggestions on how these programs can be enhanced, but with respect, this program is supporting thousands upon thousands of Canadians. It is helping their employers who, again, would otherwise be viable but for this pandemic, and is keeping them employed throughout this. The program was intended to be a last resort for businesses that have been looking for access to liquidity elsewhere and have been unable to find it. It is, in fact, keeping Canadians employed in real communities across our country today.

There are two shortcomings with this motion that are particularly important. The Conservatives have suggested that instead of continuing to put forward programs that support businesses directly during this time of emergency, what we should do is pause the increase to Canada pension plan premiums and do away with our price on pollution. I will deal with each of these in turn.

With respect to the Canada pension plan, I find it shocking the Conservatives' position is that we should finance the small business supports by denying access to a secure retirement for Canadian seniors. This is not the first time they made the suggestion that we not continue to properly fund the Canada pension plan. The reality is we can afford in Canada to dignify a retirement for our seniors by improving and investing in the Canada pension plan and support businesses at the same time. That is precisely what we have been planning to do.

We will not rob the retirement fund for Canadian seniors in order to fund support programs for Canadian businesses. We can do both. We can chew gum and walk at the same time. The reality is businesses need our support, but it should not come at the cost of the secure pensions of Canadian seniors.

The second fault I want to draw attention to will come as no surprise to those who were elected in the previous Parliament and who have seen me rise to my feet literally hundreds of times to defend our government's plan to put a price on pollution. This is perhaps the most important policy we have advanced, and which many countries in the world have advanced, in order to fight climate change.

The reality is this is not a cost we should be looking at because the program has been designed in a way that polluters pay and households benefit. I could go down the list of notable Conservatives who have defended this approach to fight climate change before, but because it is politically unpopular for some of our members of the House of Commons, they seem unwilling to even acknowledge the fact eight out of 10 Canadian households receive more through the climate action incentive than they would actually experience in an increased cost of living.

This is good policy that is going to help continue to reduce emissions in Canada so we can fight climate change. This, by the way, will not only help protect our economic interests and health outcomes in the long term, but it will also ensure households continue to receive more money in the climate action incentive than they are putting out as a result of any increased cost due to our price on pollution. The reality is we should not be taking money from households in this way in order to continue to support businesses. We can support households and businesses at the same time. This is not a zero-sum game. It is the right thing to do.

• (1250)

I would like to draw attention to some of the comments that were made by the hon. member for Carleton during his opening remarks. I found it surprising that he did not seem to draw his comments from the motion on the floor, nor did he seem to acknowledge that there is a global pandemic on the go.

The reality is, looking at the world that we live in today, if the hon. member wants to argue that we should be moving toward a paycheque economy, the very first thing he should do is realize that the paycheques have been interrupted for millions of Canadians, not because of decisions taken by the government, but because of the COVID-19 global pandemic. For public health reasons, provinces and, to some extent, the federal government have decided that the safe thing to do is to shut down our economies or reduce certain kinds of activities in our communities in order to save lives.

As I mentioned earlier in my remarks, we would be remiss if we did not acknowledge that the economy cannot rebound when people are afraid to go out to shops and restaurants, when people will not be booking travel and when people are afraid to go out to stadiums or to cultural venues. We need to do everything we can and spare no expense to do whatever is necessary to defeat this virus as quickly as possible.

When I hear the opposition members dig in and continue to focus on how much money has been spent rather than the value that is being provided for that money, I am more and more confident that I am on the right side of this debate on the government side of the House. The reality is that the best thing we can do for our economy is to continue to fund the fight against COVID-19. The second-best thing that we need to do is continue to extend emergency supports to households and businesses to ensure they can keep up with the cost of living and the cost of keeping their doors open so that they are still here on the back end of this pandemic.

I draw members' attention to the comments of Gita Gopinath, the chief economist of the IMF, who is on leave from Harvard University's department of economics. She has made the point that we need to continue to invest now. When we are dealing with economies that are in a potential prolonged liquidity trap and have a central bank that is at the lower effective bound of interest rates, by investing now we will serve our long-term interests. She has described this approach as not only being economically sound policy but also as the fiscally responsible thing to do.

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One of the things that we need to realize is that there is a cost to all things. Chief among them is inaction. The cost of failing to make these investments and focusing only on regulatory reform and reduced taxes will be paid for in the cost of businesses that are shuttered and households who cannot actually pay their rent or afford groceries.

The costs will be paid, at the risk of overstating things, with the lives of our loved ones. These costs are too great to ignore. We need to do the right thing and the fiscally responsible thing and make the upfront investments now to preserve the long-term interests of our economy.

The Conservatives have said repeatedly that they do not support this kind of approach to the pandemic. The finance critic himself has said that these are big, fat government programs and that they do not support them because they are Conservatives. It is high time that all parties in this House park their desire to continue to defend an outdated economic ideology and, instead, defend the Canadian households and business owners who have been on the phone with constituency offices of members of Parliament from every party and from every region of this country.

Our approach is paying dividends. We are seeing the benefits extend to reach households. We are seeing the benefits reach business owners. For the reasons I have stated during my remarks, I will be voting against this motion. I would be pleased to take whatever questions members of this House may have for me.

• (1255)

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Speaker, while I will not agree with much of what our hon. colleague said, I want to speak to him man to man, not MP to MP. We have seen 2017 wildfires, 2018 wildfires and catastrophic flooding. Tens of thousands of jobs in my riding and in our province of British Columbia have been lost due to the softwood lumber downturn and the failure of the government to secure a softwood lumber agreement. The investments are fleeing, not just our region and province, but our country, because of the policies of the current government.

I spoke with the member early on in this process about the owners of businesses such as C+ Rodeos ranch, Central Display & Tents, and Crossroads Brewing & Distillery. They were falling through the cracks of this funding and have still not received any of the funding. Therefore, when the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance talks about preloaded bank accounts, just whose preloaded bank accounts is she talking about?

Mr. Sean Fraser: Madam Speaker, before I begin, I want to extend my sincere congratulations to my friend and colleague on the recent addition to his family, which all members of the House had the benefit of hearing about during a recent episode in the chamber.

To address his question, I will not apologize for government policies that have put money directly into the bank accounts of Canadians during an emergency and that have allowed them to weather this storm. He referred to the proposed economic strategy of the Conservatives, which he indicates would lead to some new-found investment. However, the reality is they have tried those strategies before and failed. If we look at the economic record during the Harper government's years, we realize it had the slowest

growth rate since the Great Depression and \$150 billion of debt. Conversely, before this pandemic, the investments we made had Canada reach its lowest ever rate of unemployment, and we had the healthiest fiscal position in the G7.

We are going to continue to support Canadians, both households and businesses, to make sure they can weather this storm and help kick-start the recovery once it is safe to do so.

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, today we have heard the Conservatives bemoan big, fat government spending, and we have heard the Liberals talk about and tout all the investments they have made in people. However, the reality is that only about \$100 billion has been invested in workers. Despite all the rhetoric in the House, what nobody is talking about is the \$750 billion in the commercial purchase program that went straight to big banks and Bay Street.

I have a simple question for the hon. member. Why is it, and how can he reconcile, that \$750 billion went to the wealthiest corporations while big banks are paying out dividends to their shareholders?

Mr. Sean Fraser: Madam Speaker, for a simple question, I have a simple answer: That has not happened.

The reality is that the member is conflating two different concepts. There was direct support to households and businesses, with liquidity support. This has not provided public money directly to the banks, as he suggests, but has instead changed the rules. Sometimes this is done through the Bank of Canada or the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions, not through the government itself, to ensure that banks have the technical ability to extend money to Canadians in need.

For Canadians who may have benefited from a mortgage deferral, for example, some of the liquidity support that has been put in place has allowed the banks to do that. For Canadians who received, from their banks, support to help their businesses stay afloat, the liquidity support has helped banks do that. To suggest that the financial support provided directly to businesses and households is similar in any way, shape or form to a change in the rules that allowed our banking system to get money where it is most needed is simply false.

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Madam Speaker, according to Jonathon Gatehouse at the CBC, Kevin Page, at the University of Ottawa's Institute of Fiscal Studies and Democracy, "can hardly make sense of the recent 223-page fall economic update, saying an evening spent parsing its charts, graphs and verbiage left him feeling like he had a hangover." As Page says, "It's impossible to read. I have done this for years and I can't even follow the money." He wonders whether someone in government is trying to obscure the data and notes, "When we go out and tell people we can't follow the money, the trust is broken."

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The Parliamentary Budget Officer commented two weeks ago that “Parliamentarians...have no clear idea as to how much money is being spent.” The government is not even updating its fiscal accounts.

Why should Canadians trust the government when our independent institutions have told us we cannot trust you?

• (1300)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I remind the member that he is to address his questions and comments directly to the Chair.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Sean Fraser: Madam Speaker, the reality is that, from the outset of this pandemic, we have done our best to keep Canadians apprised, under emergency circumstances, of the nature of the government's spending. This involved special authorizations that were provided by Parliament to the government, and it involved biweekly updates to the finance committee through the finance minister. I was one of the individuals who provided the update to the committee on one occasion.

Since that time, we have continued to put forward, in Parliament, outlines of the spending decisions we have made, including the fall economic statement, to which the member has referred. I invite Canadians to read that document for themselves in detail, but if there is any misunderstanding of our strategy I will simplify it as follows: step one is to do everything we can to fight the disease and allow our communities to return to normal as quickly as possible; step two is to advance financial supports for households and businesses to allow them to weather this storm; and step three is to make the kinds of investments we need that will position Canada for long-term growth once this pandemic is a thing of the past.

[Translation]

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Madam Speaker, I have some concerns about the Conservatives' motion when it comes to postponing the increase in taxes and contributions.

However, with regard to the request for details about the assistance programs, does my colleague not agree that it is high time that the government provided that information since businesses are currently being forced to quickly change course and adopt recovery and COVID-19 testing plans?

That is having all sorts of consequences and companies need that information to operate properly.

Does my colleague not agree that it is high time that the government did what it said it was going to do?

[English]

Mr. Sean Fraser: Madam Speaker, if I understand the question correctly, it is about providing details so that businesses can better understand what supports are there and how to access them.

With great respect, for the vast majority of our programs, not only are the details available, but the supports are operational today. Canadians can go to their banks or credit unions anywhere in Canada and access the Canada emergency business account. Although the details of the Canada emergency wage subsidy have

changed over time in response to stakeholder feedback, it is a program Canadians can apply to now. It is the same thing with the new Canada emergency rent subsidy.

If the member is speaking specifically about programs such as the new credit availability program for hardest-hit businesses, there are some details to work out. Rather than prematurely disclosing what a program could look like, we wanted to continue our consultations with those hardest-hit sectors, in particular tourism and hospitality, to ensure that the program is a success from inception.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I wonder if my colleague could give his perspective as to why it was important for the government to provide support through the CERB, which increased the disposable income for Canadians, and why it was equally important for us to invest in small businesses through the wage subsidy, with thousands of jobs saved as a direct result. Could he give us a quick explanation as to why these things were so important to our economy?

Mr. Sean Fraser: Madam Speaker, I am reminded of 2008-09, during the global financial crisis, when we heard the phrase “too big to fail”. It was often used in reference to America's banking sector. We took the approach from day one that households and small businesses were too big to fail.

Our phones were ringing off the hook with real people in real communities living with real concerns. If the member's experience was anything like mine, he spoke to single parents who did not know how they were going to pay for groceries. He spoke to people who were on the verge of eviction. He spoke to small business owners who not only worried they were not going to be able to keep their business going, but worried about the well-being of their employees.

There has been a very human face to our government's response, and it is programs such as the CERB that have now helped nine million Canadian households keep food on the table. It is about programs such as the wage subsidy for business owners, who told us they would have had to lay off staff without access to a program to help them pay for wages. It has the federal government paying up to 75% of the wages for businesses across Canada that have had a drop in revenue. We should not let the remarkable nature of these programs be dismissed because they have been in effect for a number of months.

To answer the hon. member's question, the reason we created these programs is that people needed help and we wanted to provide help to them.

Business of Supply

• (1305)

[Translation]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, first, I would like to inform you that I will be sharing my time with my colleague from Thérèse-De Blainville.

I would also like to welcome back one of my staffers, who is also a friend, Philippe Guertin, who had to take a few months off because of a somewhat difficult personal situation. I am so glad to have him back in the office today.

That said, I would like to indicate that the Bloc Québécois does not support the motion before us. We agree with the preamble of the motion. Businesses, particularly SMEs, are indeed suffering considerably from the repercussions of the pandemic, and it is the government's responsibility to bring in programs to help them get through this crisis and maintain jobs.

However, we believe that the government also has a duty to safeguard the public good. In that sense, eliminating or delaying any regulations, such as the carbon tax for example, would be detrimental to the public good. There are other, more effective ways to support our businesses in these troubled times.

Quebec businesses have been weakened by the pandemic, the drop in consumption and the health measures put in place. Our businesses have insisted, and even more so in the past eight months, that the most effective, simple and transparent way to help them would be to create a sector-specific assistance program that has measures to cover fixed costs.

Will the federal government finally take action to mitigate the financial impact of fixed costs on our Quebec businesses, especially in the tourism, culture and restaurant sectors? SMEs in those sectors are still finding it difficult to obtain the financing they need.

That is what came out of the September 30 poll of 7,000 SMEs by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, which also shows that 50% of Quebec businesses believe that it will be difficult to survive a second wave of restrictions. This poll shows us that 27% of SMEs would survive less than a year with their current level of revenue. Quebec SMEs are saying that they need an average of \$25,000 to cover fixed costs just in December 2020. That is a lot.

Furthermore, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business's most recent survey of 4,200 businesses on October 28 illustrates quite clearly that we still have a long way to go to help businesses.

Allow me to share some statistics: 30% of Canadian businesses reported being partially open; just 24% of Canadian businesses reported making usual revenues for that time of year; 45% of businesses reported making up to half of their usual revenues for that time of year; 35% of Quebec businesses reported losing money for every day that they were open; between 23% and 25% of businesses in the hospitality and the arts and recreation sectors were actively considering bankruptcy; 10% of businesses reported needing the Canada emergency business account—which, I remind members, is a loan—but not being eligible; 11% of businesses reported needing the Canada emergency wage subsidy but not being eligible; 28% of

businesses reported needing the Canada emergency commercial rent assistance program but not being eligible.

There are nearly 25,000 small and medium-sized businesses in Quebec, which represents 93% of private-sector jobs in Quebec. We are talking about 2.3 million workers whose contributions will help revive Quebec's economy and raise their families' quality of life. Would we risk losing half of that?

I remind members that SMEs are vital to Quebec's economy. The Government of Canada really failed in helping our SMEs pay their rent during the first wave, with the program that ended on September 30.

• (1310)

SMEs waited eight long months before getting appropriate rent assistance. I would also like to mention that the initial versions of the SME assistance programs were not really tailored to the reality of entrepreneurs. It took several months before the government started offering programs that would finally support a larger majority of businesses.

We are therefore asking for more flexibility. We feel that there is a little more flexibility and openness in the federal government's current assistance programs than in the initial versions of the programs. In fact, many of the changes made by the federal government meet the recommendations of the Bloc Québécois and, more importantly, the needs expressed by entrepreneurs themselves.

The most recent expansions of the assistance programs are leaving fewer and fewer businesses behind, but we need to go a step further, because the federal government's assistance programs do not take into account real-life situations, economic diversification and the specific realities of the regions, the hotel industry, cultural enterprises and summer camps. The entire tourism industry, a vital component of our economy, has been hard hit.

The Canada emergency business account must be made more flexible in order to give start-ups and entrepreneurs who do not have a business number or who have non-deferrable expenses access to the program.

There should also be retroactive assistance to cover fixed costs that were not covered by the first version of the Canada emergency commercial rent assistance program, in which, you might remember, the vast majority of landlords refused to participate at tenants' request. When will the government finally present to the House a real assistance program for fixed costs that meets the real needs of SMEs in Quebec, as the Quebec government already has?

Quebec is setting an example. Many of the stakeholders I have met with have praised Quebec's effective programs, namely the concerted temporary action program for businesses and the emergency assistance to small and medium-sized businesses program. These programs are administered by Investissement Québec.

Business of Supply

Both of these programs were enhanced by the assistance to businesses in high alert regions component, which covers certain fixed costs paid out during the closure period. Fixed costs include municipal and school taxes, the portion of rent not covered by another government program, mortgage interest, public utilities such as electricity and gas, insurance, telecommunications costs, permits and association fees. Can the federal government do the same?

As I said at the beginning of my speech, it is up to the government to implement programs to help businesses survive this crisis and maintain jobs. However, we feel that the government is also responsible for protecting the public good. In this case, eliminating or postponing regulations, such as the carbon tax, would not be conducive to the public good. There are also a number of more effective means of supporting our businesses during this difficult period.

I will now take questions.

* * *

[English]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties and if you seek it, I believe you would find unanimous consent to adopt the following motion. I move:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order, special order or usual practice of the House, the deferred recorded division on the opposition motion standing in the name of the Member for Durham, currently scheduled at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions today, be further deferred to the conclusion of debate on motions relating to the Main Estimates later today.

• (1315)

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: This being a hybrid sitting of the House, for the sake of clarity I will only ask those who are opposed to the request to express their disagreement.

Accordingly, all those opposed to the hon. parliamentary secretary moving the motion will please say nay.

No one having objected, and the House having heard the terms of the motion, all those opposed will please say nay.

There being no dissenting voice, I declare the motion carried.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY**OPPOSITION MOTION—MEASURES TO SUPPORT CANADIAN BUSINESSES**

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in British Columbia, there are over 500,000 small businesses with 50 employees or fewer. I know Quebec also has a large forestry industry that has been hit hard with job losses. Through you to my hon. colleague, I would say the assistance has come late. Many of our small businesses are shuttering their doors in my

province. I know our hon. colleague is hearing the same in his province. Perhaps he can share more of the stories that he is hearing because of the failure of the government.

[Translation]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Cariboo—Prince George for his question.

I know what a devoted MP he is and, having heard many of his speeches in the House, I believe that the situations in our respective ridings are quite similar. I reach out to him on issues such as that of Nav Canada. These issues are essential to our SMEs and for our regional economic development, and they affect him as well.

We will have the chance to talk about it together, but an entire segment of economic development relies on air transportation. I know that this affects him as well. Then there is the forestry industry, from which the federal government has been essentially absent.

I would like to see assistance programs for SMEs and businesses that could be similar to the ones we see in Alberta for the petrochemical industry. Despite what people might think, we see that the federal government is very present when it comes to that industry. That is also true for the auto industry in southern Ontario.

For the forestry industry, Canadian programs seem geared more toward supporting companies in the member's neck of the woods, British Columbia, than those in Quebec. That deserves some thought. However, what we need are support programs and subsidies designed for things like R and D and diversifying—

The Deputy Speaker: We will give other members a chance to speak.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the member, reflecting on the motion we have before us, could provide a comment with respect to the price on pollution. Can he reinforce the Bloc's position on the issue of a price on pollution, as well as his thoughts on the Canada pension plan?

[Translation]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Winnipeg North for his question.

Pollution is an important issue for sure.

Bill C-12 is a step in the right direction for nature and the environment, but our generation is going to pay the price for pollution.

We need to be forward-thinking here. We need to hit the Paris targets, and I think focusing on 2030 is a much better approach, even from an economic point of view. Hitting those targets is a big part of it, rather than offloading things to the next generation by focusing on 2050.

I am deeply concerned about our environmental economy. We pay for pollution with our health care and other things, so we need to get serious about tackling economic and environmental issues head-on.

[English]

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, the way the last question wrapped up opened the opportunity for me to put on the record that there is much in this opposition supply day motion we would support as Greens, particularly the help for small business, but it is something of a poison pill to be asked to vote against the one piece of climate action regarding carbon pricing, which moves us in the right direction. The hon. member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue quite rightly points out how weak, at first reading, the climate accountability act is, pushing it down the road until later. I would ask him to reflect on this.

Would we not wish this was in several separate sections so we could vote for some but not all of it?

• (1320)

[Translation]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Saanich—Gulf Islands for her remarks.

Indeed, I think the environment is the crux of the matter, the key issue in this bill that makes it impossible for the Bloc Québécois to support it.

In response to the question from my colleague from Cariboo—Prince George, I would like to add that more and more mergers are happening between SMEs and businesses. Ownership is becoming increasingly concentrated in the hands of major players. All of this will also have an impact on the diversification of our economy and the future of our businesses.

On top of that, from an environmental perspective, can we invest in a renewable industry, such as forestry, for example, which has such incredible potential? I think there is a real future there for our SMEs, and the government and the House of Commons should consider that as soon as possible.

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Abitibi—Témiscamingue for his fine speech. I also want to say hello to his staffer who is just coming back to work. I would like to continue in the same vein as my colleague.

With respect to the motion we are studying, we can agree on the preamble, which states that Canadian businesses are in distress and need help. From the start of the crisis, we have been talking to all parliamentarians and the government about the need for targeted assistance.

However, I disagree with elements of the motion that say that we will help businesses by removing barriers to job creation, such as

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taxes and regulation; by postponing the increase of the Canada pension plan payroll taxes; and by postponing the increase of the carbon tax and the alcohol escalator tax planned for 2021. I will apologize right away to the interpreters but, in my opinion, with such measures we are shooting ourselves in the foot rather than helping businesses.

Not so long ago in the House, on November 3, I talked about—as does the opposition motion—the fact that businesses are having a hard time staying afloat.

On September 30, we learned from a survey by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business that 26% of businesses in the arts, recreation and information industry and 24% of businesses in the hospitality industry were actively considering bankruptcy as a result of COVID-19. It is safe to say that businesses are in trouble.

We could also talk about the aerospace industry, which was conspicuously absent from the throne speech. We are still waiting for answers. It is taking a long time for measures to be put in place. Companies are still struggling because the measures were poorly adapted to their reality during this crisis. Take, for example, the tourism industry, the hospitality industry and the arts, culture and entertainment industry. They have all basically been shut down for months.

If we want to support businesses, we first need to support those who keep them up and running, the workers. Millions of people are still out of work and are still waiting for measures to be taken. The Canada emergency response benefit had to be adapted to the situation and, still today, there are people out of work who are not getting a cheque because we are still waiting for direction and guidance to help these people properly transition from emergency benefits to either the new employment insurance benefits or the new recovery benefits. That does not make any sense at all.

If we want to support the recovery, I think we also need to support the efforts everyone is making for the public good. We are not going to revive the economy if we ask businesses to shirk their social obligations, such as contributing their share to the Canada pension plan.

Businesses have been telling us for a long time that we need to cut the excessive red tape. In order to do so, we need to support their social measures that contribute to the economy as a whole. That is where we need to act. If we do not, we will be depriving ourselves of some very important economic levers.

• (1325)

Seven provinces had to agree to amend and improve the Canada pension plan, and this had not happened in a long time. If we were to postpone the increase to the employers' CPP contributions, we would be taking that new pension plan away from workers. This is an important matter, and I think we need to be doing the opposite.

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They are talking about postponing the carbon tax. Do they want to postpone it so that they can get rid of it? We know full well that the Conservatives are not particularly fond of the carbon tax. However, it is practically our only means of achieving the Paris targets.

Surely everyone saw the article in *La Presse+* this morning about a report that just came out about climate change. The title of the article speaks volumes: “Le Canada parmi les cancrés”, or Canada lags far behind. In the report, released on Monday, we learned that Canada ranks 58th out of 61 on the Climate Change Performance Index, 56th out of 61 in terms of greenhouse gas emissions and 54th out of 61 in terms of renewable energy production; when it comes to global energy consumption, Canada comes in last.

Despite all of that, they want to postpone the carbon tax? That makes no sense. I think we need to keep the tax, because it encourages good practices to address climate change.

I know that the opposition will say that it is not asking that we abolish the carbon tax on businesses, but only that we postpone it. It would be a mistake to postpone the tax in order to abolish it. We need these economic levers to support things as basic as our social programs, such as pension plans. We also need them to support our efforts, late in coming, to counter climate change. We also have other solutions for supporting businesses going through hard times.

As someone said earlier, we need to adopt a sectoral approach. As we know, some sectors have managed to do well. Others, however, are still staring into the abyss, namely the arts, culture, tourism and restaurant and hotel services. Jobs in these sectors are occupied mainly by women, and that has an effect on families.

If we want to support employment, we must first support businesses’ ability to retain their workers until the recovery. What do we need to do in the period before the end of the crisis? We need to strengthen the wage subsidy and implement measures that will help businesses improve their situation.

As my colleague said, and as we have been repeating for months now, it took time before we came up with a response that meets businesses’ needs in terms of rent. We must also provide support for fixed costs.

We need a plan. We expressed our disappointment with the fact that the government’s measures did not include a plan to deal with the crisis. In our opinion, to help businesses, we must first have the ability to protect our economy and the public good. That is why we should not ask businesses to shirk their responsibilities.

• (1330)

[English]

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that the question of the carbon tax really comes to us federally as a question of jurisdictional responsibility. This federal government has sought to impose a particular approach to responding to climate change on the provinces, and many provinces have said that they should decide on the kind of environmental policies they use and deploy. The federal approach is highly prescriptive in an area that has generally been a provincial jurisdiction, with provinces setting taxes within their own area.

It is striking to me that the Bloc is opposing our call for the change to the timeline in this motion. Since we seem to be the ones in this case respecting provincial jurisdiction in an area that the Bloc is not, I would ask the member why the Bloc Québécois is failing to respect Quebec’s jurisdiction in this matter.

[Translation]

Ms. Louise Chabot: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his question.

I will answer by saying that Quebec has already adopted these types of measures. We agree with the carbon tax, because Quebec has already implemented a similar measure. We are doing better than Canada in our fight against climate change, although much remains to be done.

As my colleague mentioned, the carbon tax applies to the other provinces. It is up to the provinces to express their opinion, but that is not what the Conservatives’ motion is about. The motion very clearly asks for tax cuts to help support businesses. That is what we oppose.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen’s Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member makes reference to the government needing to have a plan, and we have indicated that there is a plan. She then asked about small businesses and jobs and people keeping those jobs.

I would like her thoughts on the following. Is it not a plan to support businesses with a wage subsidy, rent subsidies and other measures, thereby keeping many businesses afloat so once the pandemic is behind us we are in a much better position to keep the economy moving forward? Is that not part of a good plan?

[Translation]

Ms. Louise Chabot: Mr. Speaker, the plan had its faults.

We had to fight to increase the wage subsidy to an appropriate level. The emergency loan program also had to be modified to meet needs. The commercial rent program is recent. They are saying that they set aside \$3 billion, but that the money was not spent because the program was not adapted to businesses.

Having a plan and a vision is one thing, but the measures, however good they are, have to be adapted to reality and not get in the way.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her speech.

I find it interesting that she mentioned the study published this morning. It shows that the federal government truly lags behind most other countries in the fight against climate change. I think we rank 58th out of 61 on the Climate Change Performance Index.

She spoke of the price on pollution, the famous carbon tax, as a tool in our toolkit. Since this tool alone does not appear to suffice for the moment, what would she like the government to do to promote investment in renewable energy?

• (1335)

Ms. Louise Chabot: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his question.

It is indeed a tool, but it should not be the only tool. We need a far more ambitious plan for dealing with climate change. However, we should not deprive ourselves of this tool, since it can help improve things.

When it comes to climate change, we need to adopt a whole new vision, a much more robust vision. We will certainly not get there by planting 20,000 trees. I think that we need a paradigm shift, namely investing less in fossil fuels, thinking about employment transition and investing more in renewable energy.

[English]

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is a huge honour to participate in today's debate. First, I will be sharing my time with the member for Hamilton Mountain.

Today's debate is a very important debate, because we are obviously talking about issues related to the economy, around the pandemic and small business. It could not be more appropriate timing, as many small businesses are on the cusp of going out of business given that they have closed their doors to protect public health. In fact, small businesses truly are the unsung heroes in this pandemic, and we need to do everything we can to support them in this crisis.

There are many things in today's motion that we agree with. The Conservatives put forward a motion today with a couple of poison pills. I do not believe they actually want this motion to pass today, which is really disappointing. We have been waiting for the Conservatives, the official opposition to come forward with new ideas that could help support small business in the middle of a pandemic. One would expect that the Conservatives would come forward with ways to help support small business in a way that would make a meaningful difference. Instead, they are coming forward with old items that were on their agenda prior to the pandemic.

Sadly, I would say that the Conservatives are using the pandemic to leverage their political platform to attack workers' pensions, to slow down action when it comes to tackling climate change and doing our part, and it is extremely disappointing. They cite that 46% of Canadian businesses are concerned they are not going to survive. I do not doubt that.

The Liberals have rolled out program after program that have design flaws, and have left many people out, including the commercial rent assistance program. The NDP brought forward the concept of a commercial rent assistance program, and the last thing we thought was that it would be a landlord-driven program. We are glad to see the government finally fix that, but are disappointed that

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it will not backdate it to April 1. We do not understand why the Conservatives have sat idle, and have not joined us in calling on the government to backdate that program for the many businesses that were left out.

The Conservatives are talking about businesses that are concerned and are wondering how they are going to survive. We want them to join the New Democrats in calling on the government for what I think is really an injustice, by leaving out all of those tenants who were left out to dry. I am disappointed that that is not in this motion, calling on those who are benefiting and profiting from the pandemic the most, including the big banks and the biggest corporations, to pay their fair share. They are getting a free ride.

The Conservatives have put forward a motion calling for the postponing of the increase of the Canada pension plan and payroll taxes. It is like we are in one crisis and we are putting off a future crisis for seniors. We know that many of them were in crisis heading into this pandemic, without adequate supports and adequate safety and security in place, or retirement savings to get them through even the best of times.

We are seeing housing prices skyrocket in the middle of this pandemic. For a decade, we saw the Conservatives refuse to increase contributions to the CPP, which is really leaving seniors vulnerable today. Now they want to leave young people who are going to be the victims, carrying the debt load and the consequences of the pandemic and what it is going to do to the Canadian economy in the long run, to not have to contribute now, when we know that they deserve to have a retirement in the future, where they can retire with dignity.

Again, Conservatives are back on their track record of continuing to attack workers and seniors. We saw, under their regime, that they attempted to raise the retirement age from 65 to 67, and they refused to invest appropriately in the OAS. So the Conservative track record when it comes to pensions is pretty clear. What we do not want to do is use one pandemic as an excuse to have another crisis in the future, when it comes to seniors and retirement income.

The Conservatives are even calling it taxes. This is not taxes. This is about critical investments in people's retirement security. It is disappointing to hear the Conservatives say that they now support labour and workers, and they are changing direction. However, the Conservatives are now using words like "taxes" when it comes to increasing supports for income security for people in their retirement.

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• (1340)

The other part that I am deeply concerned about is the carbon tax. I have to give credit to the B.C. Liberals for continuing to move forward with the carbon tax in B.C., despite the economic crisis we were in 2008, with the understanding that if we did not do our part when it came to taking climate action, we would inevitably be in another crisis down the road that would cost us much more, whether it be in forest fires or flooding. We see the impact that it is having on our warming oceans and our salmon.

Right now is the time to ensure we follow through with climate action. Right now we are still lagging behind jurisdictions such as British Columbia on a federal landscape. We see the new administration from the U.S., in its mandate, committing to taking on the issue of climate change. It is not backing down.

We are seeing leadership. Maybe the Conservatives need to look at other leadership around the world or other Conservative governments, such as in Britain, Japan or Germany. We are seeing right-leaning governments understand that it is good economics to invest in climate action and clean energy, and that it is a huge economic cost to leave to future generations. They talk about the Liberals and their deficits, but really they keep neglecting the huge economic deficit they are looking at passing on to future generations.

I have huge concerns about the motion. I am disappointed that the Conservatives threw in the poison pill. We would have liked to have support it. Part of this motion is about ensuring there is more credit availability, which is very important in my riding, especially to the tourism sector. Resorts in my riding have had an incredibly difficult time. Many of them did not get access to the BCAP program. It was very challenging to do that.

I worry that when looking at the LEEFF program, the Conservatives are really trying to erode the important mechanisms that are in place, so we do not see CEOs and shareholders benefiting from government financing and supports during the pandemic, as we saw in 2008 under the Conservative government when it was in charge of the oversight of the economic downturn from the recession then.

These are some of the things that we have identified about which we are deeply concerned. We will continue to work with all parties to ensure there are improvements and supports for small businesses. We want to see the Liberal government follow through with its commitment when it comes to accessible, affordable and universal child care, so everybody has a chance to have early childhood education and be able to go back to the workforce.

I am disappointed to see that the Conservatives are not supporting these important investments. In Quebec, 70,000 women went back to work and the GDP grew 2% as a result of an investment in early childhood education. We have seen how important the CERB has been to support those workers and business owners who have been left out, such as musicians or artists whose businesses are gone. We would have loved to have seen the Conservatives bring forward a motion to invest in training, retraining or guaranteed liveable income to ensure that nobody would fall through the cracks in the future.

We understand that small businesses are under distress, that they need access to financing. We fought really hard to support the In-

igenous Tourism Association of Canada and get important economic supports and loans early on in the pandemic. We would like to see the government roll out a recovery plan to support those most vulnerable businesses, whether it be in the tourism sector or the whole economy. We have not seen the government come forward with a true recovery plan.

Therefore, we join the Conservatives in wanting to see what the plan is when it comes to rapid testing and a vaccination rollout, but also the economic recovery plan, which is critical.

Again, back to the importance of supporting small business, we need to be working together in a collective spirit and we need to be careful. I do not think it is the time for partisan approaches to putting a tax on really important supports for people. This is the time for us to recognize how inadequate the supports are for people and how sad our commitment to climate change is. We saw that in Bill C-12, which the government just tabled. There is a lack of priority by government when it comes to tackling climate change.

• (1345)

The New Democrats support some things in the motion, but we are deeply disappointed that the Conservatives had to throw a bunch of poison pills in it and really push what is a crisis now to future generations. We hope our colleagues will—

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments, the hon. member for Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon.

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, indeed, I agree with what the member for Courtenay—Alberni stated, that we need to work collectively for the best interests of Canada. I liked his comments on the recent news reports quoting Kevin Page at Ottawa University's Institute of Fiscal Studies and Democracy.

Mr. Page stated that he could hardly make sense of the recent 223-page economic update, saying that he spent an evening parsing through the charts, graphs and verbiage and it left him feeling like he had a hangover. He said, "It's impossible to read. I have done this for years and I can't even follow the money." Mr. Page went on to indicate that if we could not follow money, we could not trust the government of the day.

How can we trust the government when it is not being honest with Canadians about how much money is being spent and how that is going to impact future generations?

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Mr. Gord Johns: Mr. Speaker, my colleague has been a real trooper in standing up for wild Pacific salmon. I appreciate him joining us in the incredible challenge we are facing with the salmon emergency in B.C.

As the member stated, we do not know who is getting a lot of the money that has been rolling out the door and there needs to be transparency. There is huge concern from Canadian taxpayers that some of the beneficiaries are companies that are making huge profits off the back of this crisis.

He talked about Kevin Page, the former parliamentary budget officer. One thing the current Parliamentary Budget Officer noted last month was that the CPP was in huge trouble and there was a huge vulnerability for future generations. The importance of us continuing to increase investments in the CPP is critical right now. The PBO has identified this.

We agree with him that we need more transparency and that is something for which the New Democrats support and call.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member referenced the CPP. I wonder if my colleague could provide his thoughts on why, when dealing with the CPP, the Conservatives tend to want to call it a tax, I suspect trying to influence the debate. They have the same approach when it comes to the price on pollution when they again call it a tax.

Could he give his thoughts on why the Conservatives would do that in this motion?

Mr. Gord Johns: Mr. Speaker, we also wonder about that. These are investments in retirement security. Everybody deserves to retire with dignity, and we do not see that right now. Seniors are falling through the cracks.

The Liberal government failed to deliver. Its one-time payment to seniors falls far short of what is needed. Housing has skyrocketed, the cost of goods has gone up throughout this crisis and the government has failed to invest adequately in seniors to give them the support they need through this crisis.

In terms of climate action, we need to make these critical investments. They create jobs, take action and save future generations from shouldering huge debts that will be incurred due to the huge impacts from climate change and challenges we will face in the future.

• (1350)

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when I look at the motion, what I do not see is what I hear from a lot of small businesses in my riding. They need supports to be put in place to help them get through this time so they can be ready for the next step of rebuilding.

Could the member speak to the gaps in the motion?

Mr. Gord Johns: Mr. Speaker, the member always fights hard for small business and I appreciate her strong conviction. She understands the importance of job creators in our communities.

There are huge gaps. We have seen design flaws in every one of the government's program rollouts which have left people out. For example, start-ups have not received any support. They are left out of almost every program that the government has rolled out. It did not backdate the commercial rent assistance program. Those businesses are carrying that debt forward. They are steeped in debt or are in arrears with their landlords and this injustice is unacceptable.

We need to do everything we can to fix the existing programs and ensure businesses that have been left out get access to those programs. The government needs to look at ways it can support those businesses that might not check one of the boxes in their applications. They closed their doors to protect public health. They are the unsung heroes in our country. We need to do everything we can to support them.

Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have sat in the House now for five years, listening to the back and forth, the questions and answers, the proposals and counter-proposals. I have to admit, I am always amazed at how tone deaf and out of touch some motions are with the wants and needs of Canadians and their families.

Today's opposition motion is no exception and a good case in point. We entered a major national crisis from which all accounts is going to get worse before it gets better. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the lives of all Canadians. People are afraid and unsure. They are unsure about their own health and safety and the well-being of their families, children, parents and friends. Workers are concerned about their jobs and futures and how will they get by from day to day, month to month. They are worried about their kids' education, putting food on the table and maintaining the life they worked hard to build.

In short, most Canadians are afraid and unsure of how the COVID-19 crisis will affect their lives, their security and the well-being of their loved ones. Right now, more Canadians are looking at the governments, both federal and provincial, for support and protection. That is why it is beyond my understanding that the Conservative Party would bring forth the current opposition day motion.

The motion before us today makes it clear who just exactly is a priority. None of the measures in the motion would help Canadian workers and their families. They are all aimed at helping big business and their wealthy owners and investors.

Statements by Members

In this way, some of these measures are quite reckless, especially during a time of national crisis. The idea to postpone the increases to the Canada pension plan is one example. Who will this help? Will it be small business? Probably not so much. I have not heard from one small business in my riding that wants relief from its CPP obligations. Will it be big businesses? Absolutely. That is who will benefit. This could be a real financial boondoggle for big business, especially for those who are already making record profits off the pandemic.

Who will be hurt by this measure? All the workers who make regular payments into the Canada pension plan and who expect to see an increased pension when they retire. This kind of measure could end up reducing the benefits they expect to receive when they retire. This kind of measure would be done on the backs of working people and their families, and that is unacceptable.

What Canadians need and desperately want are ideas and solutions that will help them, their families and their loved ones weather the trials and challenges of this pandemic, help them get through the tough times they are facing. The motion before us today does none of that. There are no creative solutions being proposed in the motion, none that could help Canadians and their families. Instead, we do not see the motion having people pay their fair share of taxes.

I do not think anyone in the chamber or in the country would disagree that Canadian businesses are in distress. It is pretty easy to understand that the current health crisis has had and continues to have a devastating effect on the economy and especially on small business. I am sure all my colleagues are getting the same kinds of calls I am getting from local businesses so desperate to find a way to get through this difficult time to ensure their survival, their livelihoods and the jobs of their workers.

It is also easy to see that right now any barriers to employment are not taxes and regulations. The barrier is a national health pandemic, which has changed the lives of millions of Canadians. That is why we in the NDP have put our focus on fighting for people and helping to get us all through this pandemic. That is why we fought for adequate funding for CERB, the wage subsidies that would meet the needs of Canadian businesses and a rent assistance program for businesses that would effectively help the tenants and not just the landlords.

I am proud to say that the NDP will keep fighting for small business owners and their workers by pushing the government to improve the supports on which all Canadians rely. That is why the NDP continues to put forward creative and progressive ideas to help Canadian workers and their families get through these difficult times.

That is also why we believe that Canadian families should not have to pay for the pandemic and that those who have profited billions of dollars off the pandemic should help pay for the recovery. Many people actually benefit from the pandemic. Big business, their owners, CEOs and shareholders are making millions and billions, while Canadian workers and their families are struggling to get by.

• (1355)

Last week, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives released the profits reported by Canada's big six banks. The numbers are staggering: National Bank, \$2.1 billion; CIBC, \$3.8 billion; Scotia-bank, \$6.9 billion; Royal Bank of Canada, \$11.4 billion; and TD Bank, 11.9 billion. It is important to remember that these profits, made during the pandemic, happened while the banks were also receiving \$750 billion in government assistance.

Our research has also shown that Canadian billionaires are \$37 billion richer than when the March 2020 COVID lockdown started, and not a single one of these top 20 billionaires in Canada has suffered a decrease in their overall wealth in the emergence of COVID-19. Furthermore, Canada's wealthiest 87 families now have 4,500 times more wealth than the average Canadian family. Together, they collectively own the same amount as the lowest-earning 12 million Canadians or as much as everybody in Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, combined.

Meanwhile, workers in Canada continue to bear the economic brunt of the crisis. In the latest labour force data, 1.1 million fewer people were employed in Canada compared with before the pandemic crisis. Another 713,000 workers have lost half or more of their casual pre-pandemic hours, and low-income workers have been hit the hardest by the pandemic, with women and racialized Canadians being overrepresented in that wage group.

That is why the NDP has developed a suite of proposals that would make sure the richest elites and the most profitable corporations pay their fair share to help pay for the help we need to deliver to those who are struggling. Our 1% wealth—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Unfortunately, I just want to let the member know that we have to get to Statements by Members. The hon. member will have three minutes remaining when we resume this debate after question period.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

VOLUNTEERISM

Ms. Kate Young (London West, Lib.): Madam Speaker, today I want to call attention to a very special member of the London West community, Ellen Lundberg. Ellen has long been a cherished volunteer at the Museum of Ontario Archaeology and is a prolific quilter. Since the pandemic began, instead of turning fabric into beautiful handmade quilts, she has been turning fabric into equally beautiful handmade face masks.

Statements by Members

Since March, Ellen has made and donated more than 5,000 masks to help keep people safe. She has handed them out free of charge to people from across our local community, including making Winnie the Pooh masks for children at a local hospital. Like a single patch on a quilt, Ellen's masks are just one part of a much larger pattern. Ellen is part of the London-Middlesex chapter of the national group, Canada Sews, which has donated thousands of masks to help health authorities in northern and remote communities.

I hope all my colleagues will join me in recognizing the efforts of Ellen and Canada Sews in helping all Canadians mask up to help stop the spread of COVID-19.

* * *

● (1400)

ROYAL COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, today we celebrate 50 years since the tabling of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women report. This groundbreaking report included recommendations on updating the legislative system to better reflect women's rights and covered crucial areas for women including poverty, family law, the Indian Act and the need for a federal representative for women.

It led to the creation of the ministry of the status of women, now called Women and Gender Equality, and the status of women committee. This report was the springboard that led to increasing equality for women in Canada, but we still have much work to do, especially on matters of pay equity and workforce participation. We are right now at the risk of losing 30 years of progress on women's workforce participation due to caregiving issues during the COVID-19 pandemic. We cannot let that happen.

I thank the Royal Commission on the Status Women for its vital-ly important work for Canadian women, and I am happy to continue that work alongside my fellow MPs.

* * *

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

Mr. Churence Rogers (Bonavista—Burin—Trinity, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to wish my constituents in Bonavista—Burin—Trinity a joyful holiday season and a very merry Christmas. I would also like to extend these greetings to my parliamentary colleagues and to all Canadians.

It has been a difficult year and holiday celebrations may not look the same as in other years, but I am inspired by the generosity and festive spirit I have seen so far from many people across my riding.

I also had a tip from a friend of mine, Nick, in the North Pole, that there are many children from Bonavista—Burin—Trinity who are on the nice list this year. Therefore, they should not forget to put out some milk and cookies for the man in red.

I hope everyone has a safe and fulfilling holiday season, a magical Christmas no matter how they are celebrating, and that they continue with their generosity in supporting local charities. I wish all goodwill and good cheer.

[*Translation*]

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Madam Speaker, yesterday, December 6, we remembered the 14 women who were gunned down by a killer who did not like feminists. For the past 31 years, the sombre anniversary of the femicide at École Polytechnique in Montreal has provided an opportunity to condemn violence against women and gun violence.

As a woman, as a feminist, as a Quebecker and on behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I add my voice to those of the PolyRemembers survivors, and I urge the government to keep its word and do more to curb these forms of violence.

The government needs to prove that its promise to ban military-style assault weapons and implement a buy-back program was not just lip service, but rather a real desire to bring about change. The safety of our constituents is at stake.

Together, let's keep the memory of those 14 women and all other victims alive through our fight to end violence against women and gun violence.

* * *

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Outremont, Lib.): Madam Speaker, on December 6, we commemorated the Polytechnique massacre, as we do every year.

As I do every year, I thought about the young girl I was when my father came home from work and told me what he saw when he was on the École Polytechnique campus that evening. I asked him why 14 women were killed. He told me that it was because they were women.

As happens every year, 14 beams of light lit up the sky over the greater Montreal area. Rather than gathering on the Mont-Royal belvedere in Outremont, we participated in an online ceremony. The Prime Minister and his wife attended, and I am sure many other members of the House did too.

I wanted to pay tribute to the 14 women who died and the many who survived. I am thinking in particular of Nathalie Provost, who was wounded during this femicide and who has since dedicated her life to the fight against firearms. I want loudly and clearly reaffirm in the House our government's determination to advance this cause, which is also our own.

Statements by Members

• (1405)

*[English]***CHRISTMAS GREETINGS**

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Christmas season is upon us. It is a time of great cheer and festivity. For many, this joyous season is a time of cherished family traditions. Though some of this year's traditions may look a little different, the spirit of the Christmas season shines just as bright. Christmas is rooted in a message of eternal hope. It is a hope that overcomes darkness and difficulties.

Every Christmas, Christians around the world rejoice as we celebrate the birth of our Saviour, Immanuel, God with us. Christ is truly God's greatest gift to humanity, and I hope all experience the blessings of this season. May everyone's hearts be filled with great love, peace and joy.

I wish you, Madam Speaker, all members of the House and all Canadians a very merry Christmas and a happy and healthy new year.

* * *

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Mr. Arif Virani (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.): Madam Speaker, December 6, 1989, is a day many Canadians recall vividly. I was in my final year of high school and I remember panicking with my parents until we heard from my sister, who was attending university in Montreal at the time.

Some of my sister's female counterparts in another part of Montreal were not so lucky that day. Fourteen women were shot dead at École Polytechnique in an attack fuelled by misogyny, by the anger of a man directed at women who had the audacity to seek to become professional engineers.

Thirty-one years have passed since that horrific day but not enough has changed. Gender-based violence is still far too common. In fact, its frequency has only increased during the pandemic because women have been required to remain at home, often with abusive partners.

This cycle has to stop. We need more funding and tougher rules on accessing firearms, but most of all we need a fundamental change in attitude, particularly the attitudes of those of my gender, men, who perpetuate, condone or turn a blind eye to violence against women.

Let us all get to work.

* * *

*[Translation]***CITIZENS OF NICKEL BELT AND GREATER SUDBURY**

Mr. Marc Serré (Nickel Belt, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am sincerely grateful to the people of Nickel Belt and Greater Sudbury for their hard work and sacrifices throughout this pandemic. Things are hard for families, seniors, businesses, students and essential workers.

They have to keep following health measures, limiting their non-essential activities and getting information from reliable sources.

The pandemic is exacerbating anxiety and worry. Many people are struggling with mental health and addiction issues. Resources are available. People do not have to suffer alone.

[English]

Our government has introduced measures to support individuals and businesses and will continue to prioritize health and safety. We have to be optimistic; a vaccine is around the corner.

I would like to give a big shout-out to the students of St. John elementary school in Garson for launching a campaign to support homeless individuals. An act of generosity makes a big difference. I thank all residents of Nickel Belt greater Sudbury for caring for each other.

* * *

OPEONGO LAKE HERO

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the heroic efforts of local teacher Glenn Wallace.

On October 10, Glenn and his wife Krista were out kayaking on Opeongo Lake when they spotted an overturned canoe. Glenn investigated and found three people struggling in the water. An experienced kayaker, Glenn was able to assist two of those in the water to shore while the weather worsened.

The final canoeist in the water had been pushed further out from shore, and once Glenn got to him the winds made it nearly impossible to get to the closest shore. Glenn did everything humanly possible, but the third canoeist succumbed to exposure. Glenn paddled close to 40 kilometres during the rescue. He risked his own life to save strangers.

I wish to thank Glenn and the others who assisted in the rescue, including first responders and employees of Algonquin Outfitters. Their selfless commitment to helping others in need reflects the spirit of the people in the upper Ottawa Valley, and why we love to call it home.

* * *

*[Translation]***VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

Ms. Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.): Madam Speaker, on December 6, 1989, 14 women in the prime of life woke up to start their day, which they thought would be a day like any other. A few hours later, their lives were taken from them, in a senseless act of hatred and unspeakable violence. All their dreams, accomplishments and hopes were destroyed. In the wake of their tragic loss many lives were completely torn apart and an entire country was shaken.

Thirty-one years later, still with a heavy heart and sadness in our souls, we are still trying to understand a heinous and inexplicable act. The loss of these 14 women must never be in vain. We must remain vigilant when it comes to violence against women, which, to our dismay, continues to take countless victims daily.

Uniting as a society to defeat and denounce all forms of hatred and violence is the best way to pay tribute to the Polytechnique victims.

* * *

• (1410)

[*English*]

ROYAL COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

Ms. Nelly Shin (Port Moody—Coquitlam, CPC): Madam Speaker, today marks the 50th anniversary of the report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada, which was tabled in Parliament on December 7, 1970. It addressed issues related to women and poverty, family law, the Indian Act and the need for federal representation for women.

Status of Women Canada became a federal department agency in 1976. As we commemorate this special day, I celebrate the work of Canada's trail-blazing women who paved the way to ensure equal opportunities for women in all aspects of Canadian society.

While we continue to make progress on some fronts, we still have much more to do to end gender-based violence. According to the Canadian Women's Foundation, half of all women in Canada have experienced at least one incident of physical or sexual violence since the age of 16. This is unacceptable.

As a member of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, I will continue working, together with my colleagues, to empower women and combat violence against women.

* * *

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Madam Speaker, our first duty is to our own conscience. Former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau recognized this by enshrining conscience rights as the very first delineated in the charter.

Tens of thousands of doctors truly and wholeheartedly believe that taking part in a physician-assisted suicide breaches their calling to do no harm. As access to euthanasia expands, they may be forced to either violate their conscience or leave the careers to which they have dedicated their lives.

For the last five years, there has been no federal law to prevent the violation of this inviolable right. This must change. Parliament created a legal void and has a moral responsibility to fill it by passing a law that vigorously defends this pre-eminent charter right for our medical professionals, because, first, we must do no harm.

* * *

ROYAL COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Madam Speaker, today marks the 50th anniversary of the Royal

Statements by Members

Commission on the Status of Women. In that time, women in this country have implemented incredible progress towards equality, yet the work is still unfinished.

One gap is in valuing all roles in our communities and in our families. Children and seniors are cared for still mostly by women, taking care of our future and treasuring those who built our country. Those jobs are sacred, yet these roles are underpaid and undervalued. In Canada, women still have an unfair pay gap, and lack of child care means women are left out of the economy and their ability to build for their retirement. This cycle continues. Today, we know that single women seniors are the most impoverished in Canada. Now, during COVID-19, many women are being forced to leave the job market, face more domestic violence, and fear for an increasing and unstable future.

Let us use this year's anniversary to remind us of how far we have come and how far we still have to go.

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[*Translation*]

HOLIDAY GREETINGS

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Madam Speaker, on behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I want to wish everyone a very happy holiday season.

The year 2020 has been extraordinary in many ways, and the holiday season will be no exception. That is why we must remember that we can all count on one another, that we are a strong, resilient and caring nation, and that we can get through these difficult times and continue to move towards a better future. That is what we Quebeckers are known for.

Whether by Zoom, email, text, telephone or even fax, let us cheerfully connect Sherbrooke to Fermont, Gaspé to Val-d'Or, Rivière-du-Loup to Montreal, Saint-Jérôme to Chicoutimi, so that despite being kept apart by the pandemic, everyone will experience the joy and warmth of the holiday spirit.

I wish all Quebeckers a merry Christmas and a happy new year. We really deserve it. I wish everyone health, love and prosperity.

Oral Questions

• (1415)

*[English]***ROYAL COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN**

Hon. Diane Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): Madam Speaker, things have indeed changed a lot in the last 50 years since the first Status of Women report was released. These changes have taken place in business, in the public sector and even in politics.

Believe it or not, in 1970, Canada had only one female MP and six female senators. Today, we have 100 female MPs, almost one-third, and 47 female senators, fully half of that upper chamber. By 1970, we had never had a female Governor General, and since then, we have had four.

Glass ceilings are shattering across this great nation. While we still have a ways to go to reach true parity, today I honour the great women who have come here before me, who are here now and who will be here in the future.

* * *

MEMBER FOR TORONTO CENTRE

Ms. Marci Ien (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise today as the newly elected member for the riding of Toronto Centre to thank the people who got me here: my family, my friends and my team, who supported and guided me, but most importantly, the people of Toronto Centre. Through the by-election campaign, they told me loud and clear that they were worried about navigating life through COVID-19. Would they and their community be okay? Would the small businesses they worked so hard to build survive?

A couple of months ago, I was a journalist. I had done that job for almost 30 years. I heard the stories of thousands of people across our country, and in doing so, I saw the need and I saw it up close: young people looking to belong and to find their way; indigenous people fighting for their rights; women wanting equality; and people of colour fighting to break through systemic barriers.

I heard and I reported on all of these things, but now I can do more than just listen. I can serve the people of my great constituency. It is the reason I am here, to be their voice and their advocate, and what an honour it is.

ORAL QUESTIONS*[English]***HEALTH**

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Madam Speaker, over the weekend, Canadians saw news of countries, like the U.S., the U.K. and Australia, outlining detailed plans for vaccinating their citizens, including dry runs, with many of them starting to vaccinate in the next few days.

Meanwhile back in Canada, it is continued confusion, inconsistency and deflection. Today the possibility of 125,000 vaccinations was announced, but the fact is there are almost two million Canadians over the age of 80 alone, so that is not enough.

When will the government end the uncertainty, give Canadians the hope they desperately need, and tell us when every Canadian who wants the vaccine will get it?

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Madam Speaker, today is a great day for Canada and for Canadians. Today is the day when we can assure Canadians that we will have early doses of the Pfizer vaccine in this country, and millions and millions of other vaccine doses are going to roll out in this country over the weeks and months to come, pending Health Canada approval.

What a wonderful day for Canada. The light at the end of the tunnel is clear.

* * *

JUSTICE

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Madam Speaker, on another very important but very difficult topic, The New York Times reported this weekend of the abuse, rape and torture of young girls being videotaped, and then uploaded and put on porn websites through a company located in Montreal.

The Prime Minister has actually known about this since last March when an all-party caucus reached out to him and asked him to do something to help these young girls.

Why has the Prime Minister done nothing to stop a despicable practice that is victimizing young girls and is allowing it to happen right in his own backyard?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the sexual exploitation of children is a heinous and serious crime. In fact, it is a crime in Canada. The Criminal Code is clear. It is a serious offence to make available, distribute, possess or access child pornography. Those who break the law will face punishment to the fullest extent of the law.

In addition, there are laws in place requiring Internet service providers to report suspected breaches to law enforcement to aid in their ability to pursue investigations.

This is serious, and we are treating it seriously.

• (1420)

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister has known about this at least since March when he received an all-party letter from a non-partisan group of members of Parliament. They all came together to ask the Prime Minister to do something about this.

The Minister of Justice received a letter just this past November, a few weeks ago. There has been no action on this.

We are seeing young girls, as young as 14 and 15 years old, being raped and abused. Those acts are being recorded, uploaded and viewed millions of times, and it is happening here in Canada.

Will the government use the tools it has available today to stop this from happening?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we are taking it very seriously. We have tough laws in place. We expect those laws to be enforced.

In addition to the concerns raised, we are also proud of our government's efforts to advance Canada's digital charter, which will help us to fight these kinds of crimes online. We have taken this seriously. We are taking this seriously. We expect law enforcement to enforce Canada's laws. We have received these letters. We will continue to look, to see if there are gaps or lacunae in the law. We will look at that seriously. We take this most seriously.

* * *

[Translation]

AIR TRANSPORTATION

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Madam Speaker, many Canadians had planned vacations before the pandemic, and they unfortunately had to cancel their plans once the pandemic hit.

Travellers are waiting for their refunds.

Where is the plan?

[English]

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we have worked hard with the industry and with Canadians. We want to make it clear to Canadians that there will not be sector-specific funds until airlines start providing refunds to Canadians.

[Translation]

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Madam Speaker, the airline industry has been hit hard by the pandemic. Hundreds of workers have lost their jobs. The sector needs a plan.

Will the government confirm that this plan will not include compensation for executives?

[English]

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we are working hard. We have heard from Canadians their concerns about refunds. Again, before we spend one penny of taxpayer money on airlines, we will ensure that Canadians get their refunds, that regional communities retain air connections to the rest of Canada, and Canadian air carriers maintain their status as key customers of Canada's aerospace industry.

* * *

[Translation]

HEALTH

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ): Madam Speaker, at the meeting that will be held on Thursday, all of the

Oral Questions

provincial premiers and the Premier of Quebec will be calling for a sustainable, unconditional increase in health transfers. All of the parties in the Quebec National Assembly are calling for this. The House of Commons is calling for this. Canadians and Quebecers are calling for this. The Liberal Party of Canada is the only one against it.

The Prime Minister is isolated and has no allies. Instead of leading a one-man crusade against Quebec's health care system, will he finally listen to reason on Thursday and announce an increase to health transfers?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Madam Speaker, all levels of government are working together to keep Canadians safe.

As part of our response to COVID-19, we announced the \$19-billion safe restart agreement with the provinces and territories. This funding complements the \$40 billion we are providing through the Canada health transfer.

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ): Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister justifies his refusal to increase health transfers by saying that his priority is, and I quote, "to help Canadians get through this crisis". However, the crisis he is referring to is a health crisis.

Quebec and the provinces are the parties responsible for health care. They are asking for more money to care for people. That is how the federal government can help people "get through" this crisis.

At the first ministers meeting on Thursday, will he announce an increase in health transfers?

• (1425)

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we have supported Canadians. Now it is time for the provinces to step up their efforts.

We announced the \$19-billion safe restart agreement with the provinces and territories to help our health care system deal with COVID-19. Now the provinces need to invest that money to ramp up testing, contact tracing and data collection.

Oral Questions

[English]

WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, a woman went in labour in a porta-potty and no one noticed. A dead baby was later found in the portable toilet. Another woman appeared to be getting sexually assaulted in broad daylight and no one came to her aid. Community advocates are witnessing an increase in violence against women, yet safe places for women in the Downtown Eastside have been reduced due to COVID restrictions. Increasingly, violence against women in the Downtown Eastside is accepted and normalized. This cannot be allowed to continue.

Will the Prime Minister commit to work collaboratively with advocates in the Downtown Eastside, and develop and fund an immediate action plan to end violence against women?

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Rural Economic Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the short answer is yes. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Angela MacDougall and the Feminists Deliver coalition in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver. We have been working with them since before Feminists Deliver, and we recognize that COVID has only exacerbated existing issues. We have increased funding by 70% to front-line organizations. We understand that investing in them is the best way to advance gender equality. We recognize we have unfinished business to do, and we will work with them every step of the way in the development of a national action plan.

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, the national action plan for murdered and missing indigenous women and girls was due in June and the government used COVID as an excuse to delay it, but violence against indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQIA people has increased during the pandemic. It is 400 times higher in some places. What has the government announced in response? What former chief commissioner Buller said it “isn't a lot of money.”

When will the government release a national action plan and provide the resources necessary before more loved ones go missing or are murdered?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question and her ongoing advocacy. Our hearts are with all of the survivors and families of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, and two-spirit and gender-diverse people. This national public inquiry is working with a core working group of over a hundred indigenous women and two-spirited people toward a national action plan that will be effective and accountable for its results. With last week's fall economic statement, \$781.5 million has been put toward this. We know we still have to do more.

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HEALTH

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, last week we found out that the entirety of the American population is scheduled to be vaccinated by June. By the end of December, that number is about 10%. Today, we found out that the number in Canada is 0.003%. Last week, the Prime Minis-

ter said that it did not matter the start, what mattered was the finish. Now we are getting this very dismal news for Canadians.

My question is for the Minister of Public Services and Procurement. Did the Prime Minister instruct her to negotiate the small dose amount to deflect from the fact that we have no date on when Canadians will be vaccinated?

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Madam Speaker, on the contrary, we have the largest portfolio of vaccines in the world and the highest number of doses per capita in the world. What today signifies is that the arrival of those doses, millions of doses, is going to begin this month and continue in waves throughout 2021 so that all Canadians will have access to a vaccine when it is approved by Health Canada.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, the reality is that our neighbours to the south have certainty and hope for when they can reopen their businesses and see their family members. May or June is when a vaccine will be available to every American. We do not have that information here in Canada. We do not have that certainty. What we have is 0.003%. That is ridiculous. We are a G7 country.

When is every Canadian going to have access to the vaccine, and will it be at the same time as the Americans?

• (1430)

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as I said, Canadians have access to the most diverse portfolio of vaccines in the entire world and those vaccines are going to roll out to Canadians beginning this month and continuing into 2021. That is assurance. That is a good-news story for Canadians, and I am so proud to be part of a government that has allowed and enabled this to occur.

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AGRICULTURE

Ms. Lianne Rood (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Madam Speaker, in March at the agriculture committee, the minister suggested that farmers' carbon tax payments are less than 1% of their expenditures, but obviously that is not the case. It is far more than that. The Parliamentary Budget Officer released a report showing that farmers will pay \$226 million over the next four fiscal years for using propane and natural gas on their farms.

Will the minister admit her mistake and ask the government to extend the on-farm carbon tax exemption for natural gas and propane?

Oral Questions

[Translation]

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I can reassure my colleague that we are very aware of what our farmers need. We also have very important environmental obligations.

When it comes to the price on pollution, we have granted exemptions for farm fuel. We have granted exemptions for greenhouses too, and we are monitoring this file closely together with our Environment Canada colleagues.

[English]

Ms. Lianne Rood (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Madam Speaker, make no mistake: Extending the carbon tax exemption to propane and natural gas could make a real difference on Canadian farms, and across Canada. Propane and natural gas are used not only to heat barns but, if there is no other option, also for grain drying.

Why are the minister and her cabinet colleagues dragging their feet to make a small change that could make such a big difference for Canadian farmers?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Madam Speaker, our pollution pricing policy is designed to grow a clean economy. To support the sector, we have put in place the following measures: emissions from livestock and crop production are not priced, farm fuels and fuels from cardlock facilities are exempt, and there is a partial rebate for propane and natural gas used in commercial greenhouses.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Madam Speaker, last month, respected former Supreme Court Justice Bastarache reported on sexual harassment in the RCMP. It is serious and urgent and requires immediate action from the public safety minister, but the justice said, “I haven’t heard anything from him”, and “there should be a stronger reaction”. The scale is huge: it covers over 600 interviews in four years, and 2,300 victims of various criminal acts. The report makes 52 recommendations.

Does the minister think that the report at least deserves a real response and action from him?

Hon. Bill Blair (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Madam Speaker, first of all, I appreciate the importance of the question because the behaviours that were outlined in Justice Bastarache’s report are deeply concerning and completely unacceptable. We know that, for far too long, women in the RCMP and members of the LGBTQ2S community have experienced unacceptable workplace harassment.

These issues are long-standing. They need to change, and that is precisely why the government has explicitly mandated the commissioner of the RCMP to ensure that all employees are protected from this type of harassment and violence. We have spoken with the commissioner and we remain committed to responding appropriately to Justice Bastarache’s report.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Madam Speaker, this is the minister’s job and that was not an answer. The Liberals al-

ways blame everyone else, except they have been in power for half a decade and as majorities for 18 of the last 30 years.

The justice says he has spoken to the commissioner and she is working on it. He also said if the minister actually “read the report, he would know what needs to be done and take action.” What is worse, the report is the 16th of its kind. Victims deserve answers.

Will the minister tell the more than 2,000 victims which recommendations will be implemented and when, or, like all victims always, will they have to fight the Liberals to get results?

● (1435)

Hon. Bill Blair (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Madam Speaker, quite contrary to what has been asserted by the member opposite, we are absolutely committed to ensuring a workplace free of violence, harassment and discrimination by all members of the RCMP and, in fact, in all government workplaces. We are doing this work with the RCMP and we take this responsibility very seriously.

We recognize that the recommendations of Justice Bastarache provide an excellent guide to a way forward, and the commissioner of the RCMP has assured me of her commitment to implementing all of his recommendations.

* * *

[Translation]

GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Madam Speaker, the federal government is abandoning new mothers who lose their job while on parental leave. Because they did not accumulate enough working hours while they were taking care of their newborns, they are not entitled to EI. Ottawa is not even allowing them to collect the Canada recovery benefit. They are simply being left to fend for themselves.

Will the government immediately announce that new mothers qualify for the Canada recovery benefit?

When will they be able to apply for it?

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Canadians expect and deserve an EI system that is flexible and responsive to their needs. We have spent the last five years modernizing EI, giving parents a choice between 12 and 18 months of parental leave, but we recognize that because of COVID-19, many parents have not been able to accumulate the hours they need. That is why we gave them the one-time credit. We have made this credit retroactive to March 15. I am very aware of the issue that the member is speaking about. We are looking into it, and we will make sure that parents have the support they need.

[Translation]

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Madam Speaker, this was already a problem before the pandemic. It is unacceptable that new mothers are not entitled to EI if they lose their employment at the end of their parental leave. They are workers like any other and deserve to be supported.

In some cases, it is already possible to count weeks worked in the past two years instead of the past year in order to qualify for EI. That is the case for prisoners.

Will the government do the same for new mothers?

[English]

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we know that we have to modernize and have an EI system that is reflective of the way that workers work today. Certainly this pandemic has highlighted specific challenges in the EI system, particularly as it relates to supporting parents, and mothers in particular. That is why we have spent the last four years taking steps to modernize, including, as I said, letting parents have the choice between 12 and 18 months and introducing the new parental sharing benefits. As we move forward, we will ensure that EI supports everyone.

[Translation]

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Madam Speaker, the problem is that EI has never been adapted to the Quebec parental insurance plan. The mothers being abandoned by the federal government are Quebeckers. Because Quebec is feminist and has a more generous program so that Quebec women can balance work and family, Quebec women are being abandoned when they lose their job.

This government claims to be feminist. Will it fix EI so that it stops penalizing mothers who are benefiting from a feminist parental leave program?

[English]

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we know that Canadians expect and deserve an EI system that is flexible and responsive to their needs. Since 2006, the Province of Quebec has provided maternity, parental and adoption benefits to its residents. We have an agreement with the province for other EI benefits. Regular and caregiver benefits were made available.

We are aware of the QPIP recipients who are experiencing problems. We are working really hard to address these cases on a priority basis to ensure that claimants are paid as soon as possible. There is more work to do, but I am on this and we will keep working to ensure that EI is there for everyone.

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*[Translation]***OFFICIAL LANGUAGES**

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, Canada's rich history is celebrated in our culture and in our French and English languages, but minority communities are still having trouble getting services in the language of their choice.

This government promised to introduce a bill to modernize the Official Languages Act. The year 2020 is drawing to a close, and nothing has been done.

Will the minister commit to introducing a bill before Christmas?

● (1440)

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it goes without saying that we must always protect our two official languages.

I find it very surprising and even hypocritical when I hear the Conservatives say that there are problems with the French-language services offered by the Government of Canada and even those offered in linguistic communities.

The bottom line is that the Conservatives are the ones who made cuts to French-language services for years. We will be there with the communities to help them.

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, the COVID Alert messages are being sent in English only, online meetings and presentations for public servants are being held in English only, and a \$900-million contract was given to a company that is unable to provide services in French. There are many examples of this government's failure to protect the French language.

When will the minister introduce a bill to modernize the Official Languages Act?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we have been there, we are there, and we will be there.

We were there by making the largest investment in official languages in Canadian history; by creating an action plan; by doubling the Canada Council for the Arts' budget; by saving CBC/Radio-Canada from Conservative cuts; by protecting the Royal Military College Saint-Jean; and by supporting the bilingual Ottawa initiative. We have also helped organizations get through the pandemic, and we are going to be there with language reform.

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, when I was at the Royal Military College, less than 10% of the students were women. We were not welcome, and we were given every incentive to drop out. Little has changed in the 30 years since. Women are still under-represented in the forces, and there is still discrimination.

When will this government take action to retain more women in the Canadian Forces?

[English]

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Canadian Armed Forces are working extremely hard to promote more women in the Canadian Armed Forces. In fact, we have designated that 25% are to be included in the Canadian Armed Forces. We will continually assess the progress and make changes as necessary. We will not stop at 25%. We will continue until we have reached full parity.

[Translation]

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: Madam Speaker, the interpreter says the sound is really bad.

[English]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I remind members that they need a headset with the boom down to ensure the interpreters are able to translate. Headsets are a must for all goings-on in Parliament.

I will have to go to the next question, since the minister does not have his headset.

The hon. member for Churchill—Keewatinook Aski.

HEALTH

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Madam Speaker, the back-and-forth between the Liberals and the Conservatives on the vaccine shows what is wrong with our politics. They are blaming each other while leaving Canadians in the lurch.

It is rare that I say this, but they have a point. When the Liberals say the Conservatives privatized and ravaged our national capacity for production, they are not wrong. When the Conservatives point to the decades of Liberal austerity that got us here, they are also not wrong. However, it is Canadians who are paying the price.

Lives are at stake. When will the government invest in the publicly owned national production of the vaccine so that Canadians get what they need?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we are very proud of our innovators, entrepreneurs, researchers and scientists. That is why we made significant investments in made-in-Canada solutions. We invested \$35 million in VIDO-InterVac, in Saskatoon. We invested \$173 million in Medicago, in Quebec City. We also supported the National Research Council's facility in Royalmount with \$44 million.

Oral Questions

We will continue to support made-in-Canada solutions and support local manufacturing capabilities.

● (1445)

TAXATION

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, the banks are making record profits, and big corporations and their CEOs have gotten richer during the pandemic. Instead of going after the ultrawealthy, instead of implementing a wealth tax and instead of shutting loopholes for offshore tax havens, the Liberals are now making the self-employed pay back the support they received in good faith through the CERB.

It is weeks before Christmas. Instead of taxing the ultrawealthy, why are the Liberals acting like the grinch and stealing Christmas from those who can afford it the least?

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance and to the Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, let me correct the record. When it came to supporting low-income and middle-income Canadians through the course of this pandemic, we were there for them. Nine million Canadians took advantage of the CERB to help keep food on their tables and a roof over their heads. When it came to supporting small businesses, we did the same thing.

If the hon. member is so concerned about taxing the wealthy, I suggest she talk to her NDP colleagues in the last Parliament who voted against the Canada child benefit, which is putting more money into the pockets of nine out of 10 families, and voted against our plan to raise taxes on the wealthiest 1% so we could cut them for the middle class.

WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY

Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, 50 years ago today, the report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women was tabled in this place. The report called for many measures to help achieve gender equality, something our government continues to work toward.

Could the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Rural Economic Development please share some of the progress we have seen made for women in Canada since that report was tabled 50 years ago?

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Rural Economic Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, 50 years ago today, there would not have been enough women in the House to ask the question and then answer the question. Here we are, 50 years later, and there are 100 of us in the House.

Oral Questions

Our job is to honour and thank those whose shoulders we stand on, to protect the fragile progress that has been made, to protect the hard-won gains we have all made and to commit to focusing and staying united to complete the unfinished business of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women report.

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Madam Speaker, on December 8, 2015, the government launched an inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. Fast forward five years and it still has yet to deliver its promised action plan. The government, at best, has instituted a lack of action plan that can be seen in the most recent updated economic statement, which was really just a patchwork of spending that should have been targeted.

When will the government share a proper plan?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have always had difficulty, because this was rejected by the former government and was for decades fought for for the families and survivors and by the families and survivors. We will not let them down.

We launched the first-ever national public inquiry and now have over 100 indigenous women and two-spirited people working together for an effective plan that will be accountable for its results. I believe the investment last week of almost \$800 million is adding to all of the work we have been doing for the last five years. We will get there.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Conservatives have always put a priority on an action plan for murdered and missing indigenous women and girls. However, this government has a history of not delivering on its promises. Last week, it was about not delivering on clean drinking water. This week, it is about failing to address violence against indigenous women and girls.

Instead of establishing a real plan, the minister is simply throwing money at the tragedy. When will the minister announce a national action plan with the dollars targeted toward that plan?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as the member well knows, this is a national action plan. It requires all of the provinces, territories and indigenous governments, all of the partners, to work together to make sure that there will be a national action plan.

Yukon will be coming forward with its approach this week. We will get there together, and it will be effective and accountable, as we have been with the \$30 million going forward over the next five years to make sure the plan is working.

* * *

JUSTICE

Ms. Jag Sahota (Calgary Skyview, CPC): Madam Speaker, recently a Financial Post article on MindGeek detailed a well-known 2015 case in the United States involving one of Pornhub's partner channels. It was successfully sued by 22 victims of sex trafficking

whose videos were published on Pornhub. These videos received over 670 million views.

The victims pleaded to have their videos removed, yet as recently as last week, MindGeek was still allowing these videos to be uploaded.

Why has Canada become a tech haven for online exploitation of women and girls?

• (1450)

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Madam Speaker, online platforms are central to our everyday communications and allow us to connect with the world. However, we are extremely concerned that they are used to endanger the safety of individuals, including vulnerable persons and children. This is why our government is actively working to create new regulations that would require online platforms to eliminate illegal content, including hate speech, child sexual exploitation and violent extremist content.

I hope that the official opposition will work with us and vote in favour of this legislation when we bring it forward.

Ms. Jag Sahota (Calgary Skyview, CPC): Madam Speaker, the minister's mandate letter instructs him to ensure websites remove illegal content and online harms such as hate speech, incitement to violence and exploitation of children.

Canada's MindGeek is a big tech monopoly that owns the vast majority of the world's online explicit sites. It profits off sexual exploitation and racism. The minister indicated that he wants to take on big tech companies. Will he start in Canada's own backyard with MindGeek?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we intend to introduce these regulations as early as the beginning of the session in 2021, and we have already started tackling online platforms. I tabled Bill C-10 just a few weeks ago.

I hope Conservative Party members will vote in favour of the bill to start tackling online platforms. I hope they will also vote for the bill that we will be bringing forward to tackle online hate and child pornography.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoulu, BQ): Madam Speaker, inexplicably, the government has not yet awarded the contract for the *John G. Diefenbaker* icebreaker to Davie. That ship should have been built three years ago. Ottawa even had to take the contract away from the company that had won it because it could not start construction. To this day, the feds stubbornly refuse to give the contract to Davie.

As the Liberals well know, Davie is the only shipyard in Canada capable of starting construction now. Davie has the capacity to do it.

Will the government finally announce that it is giving the *John G. Diefenbaker* contract to Davie?

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

The Davie shipyard is a strong and reliable partner for our government. We have worked with Davie on several occasions in the past.

As for her question, we have been working hard with Davie, and we will continue to do so over the coming months and years.

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoulu, BQ): Madam Speaker, Davie has received less than 3% of the contracts to date. Ottawa withdrew the *John G. Diefenbaker* contract from Seaspan because it was unable to complete it. In exchange, the government awarded Seaspan a contract for 16 small vessels.

Davie can fulfill this contract now, but Ottawa would rather give the contract back to the company it took it away from. That makes no sense. It is doing everything it can to squeeze out Quebec.

Why is Ottawa so bent on depriving Quebec of 2,000 jobs and \$1 billion in investments?

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have already said in the House, all Canadian shipyards had the opportunity to respond to a request for information that expired on March 13, 2020.

The responses received by Public Services and Procurement Canada and the information collected through this process will enable the Government of Canada to determine the best practices for the coming months and years.

* * *

[English]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Liberals boldly promised to bring in over 400,000 new permanent residents into Canada next year. Meanwhile, there are over 10,000 permanent residents abroad who were approved to come to Canada. They sold their homes, quit their jobs and pulled their kids out of school, yet they have been stranded in their country of origin for over nine months. They have had little to no com-

munication of when they can finally come to Canada, as promised by the Liberal government.

How on earth is the government going to process and bring in hundreds of thousands of new immigrants next year when it cannot even give dignity or certainty to the thousands it has approved this year?

• (1455)

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am happy to take the question.

The answer is simple. We have a plan that is focused on jobs. We have a plan that is focused on economic recovery, and we have a plan that is focused on long-term prosperity. We are investing additional resources. We are leveraging technology. We have a plan that is going to drive this country forward.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Madam Speaker, exporting businesses need certainty and stability, yet exporters have no idea what January 1 will look like for them, regardless of whether the government signs an agreement with the United Kingdom or not.

We were told at the trade committee by exporters that this does not make them feel comfortable, and customs brokers are saying that small businesses are coming to them looking for advice, and they have no idea what to say.

The U.K. is our third-largest export market, so when will the minister disclose to businesses what the plan is? There are only 16 days left.

Hon. Mary Ng (Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade, Lib.): Madam Speaker, our absolute priority is to provide predictability and stability for Canadian businesses that export to the United Kingdom. We are very pleased that we have reached a successful transition continuity agreement with the United Kingdom. This will largely preserve the terms of CETA, which was an ambitious agreement with a 98% reduction in tariffs, protection for Canada's supply managed products, and the maintenance of our high standards for consumers, workers and the environment.

I look forward to getting support from members on all sides of the House, so we can provide this predictability and stability for Canadian businesses.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Minister of Foreign Affairs told Canadians threatened by those acting for Communist China to call their local police. Is that what I should say to Father Soo, the Richmond priest whose parishioners were photographed during a baptism? How about the pro-democracy advocate who was beaten up in Surrey?

Oral Questions

Sure police can respond after the fact, but what active steps is the minister taking to stop the harassment from Communist China within our borders?

Hon. Bill Blair (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we know that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on the country. It has created uncertainty that foreign actors, such as the Government of China, and ideologically motivated violent extremists have exploited it to further their own interests.

I want to assure the member and this House that our security agencies are vigilant and actively investigating all threats of foreign interference while working with domestic and foreign partners, such as the Five Eyes. Over the course of the pandemic, our security agencies have also worked very proactively with businesses, research entities and other orders of government to ensure that they have the information and tools they need to secure intellectual property in the interests of all Canadians.

* * *

[Translation]

COVID-19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Ms. Annie Koutrakis (Vimy, Lib.): Madam Speaker, some businesses in Vimy and across Quebec continue to suffer financially as a result of the pandemic.

Could the Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance explain how the highly affected sectors credit availability program will help businesses in the tourism, travel, arts and culture sectors survive and recover from the pandemic?

Hon. Mona Fortier (Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Vimy for her hard work on behalf of her riding and for her work on the Standing Committee on Finance.

The highly affected sectors credit availability program is a new measure for the hardest-hit businesses, including those in sectors like tourism, hospitality, arts and entertainment. The program will offer 100% government-guaranteed financing and low-interest loans of up to \$1 million.

We will do everything we can to support workers and businesses through these tough times to help ensure they remain viable and in place to drive future economic growth.

* * *

● (1500)

[English]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, earlier this year the Prime Minister said, “We need to get our resources to new markets safely and securely and that's why I've always advocated for the Keystone XL pipeline.”

As the Prime Minister knows, Keystone XL would be a huge advantage to indigenous communities. It would generate prosperity in our country by developing energy in an environmentally friendly

capacity. It would create jobs during a time when unemployment is through the roof.

My question is very simple. Could the Prime Minister simply outline three very tangible steps he will take in the next little while to get this project done?

Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we have supported this project, as the Prime Minister has said, unwaveringly.

We have always supported this project for many of the reasons that the hon. member cites. One of the strongest arguments for this project is that we have a government that is fighting climate change, putting a price on pollution, committed to net-zero emissions by 2050, and making investments to help our energy sector become more sustainable than ever. That is the record we will be able to present to our partners in the U.S.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mrs. Tamara Jansen (Cloverdale—Langley City, CPC): Madam Speaker, Roger Foley lives with a neurological disorder requiring him to live in hospital entirely dependent on caregivers.

Four times the caregivers he depends on for everything suggested he consider MAID, telling him that his care is too expensive. Roger told the justice committee, “My blood will be on your hands if you allow the...Truchon decision to tear down our laws...and there will be thousands of wrongful deaths.”

Why did the Liberals vote against our amendments to protect Canadians with disabilities?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice, Lib.): Madam Speaker, medical assistance in dying is a profoundly complex issue with deeply held beliefs. We are trying to respect all of those in this proposed legislation, including protections for the vulnerable, which we have built into this legislation after having consulted across Canada, as well as holding a massive online consultation. We have built-in protections for the vulnerable in order to balance freedom to choose, the autonomy to choose, with protection.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Liberals are frustrated that my colleagues and I have been so diligent in vocalizing the concerns of disabled Canadians and medical professionals in regard to Bill C-7. However, the Liberal government ignored its own legislation to review Bill C-14; held the House hostage in May and June; prorogued Parliament in August; limited the justice committee to four hearings, blocking written submissions; and chose not to appeal the deadline imposed by the Quebec superior court.

Why does the Prime Minister not want to create legislation that shows compassion for all Canadians?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice, Lib.): Madam Speaker, a legislative review is, in fact, envisaged in the bill that was passed in 2016. That is still part of the government's plan. It has always been announced as part of the government's plan and as part of the steps introducing this particular piece of legislation.

All that the Conservative Party is doing right now is delaying and causing more people to suffer. We therefore are asking all parliamentarians on all sides of the House to pass this bill as expeditiously as possible.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT

Ms. Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.): Madam Speaker, many Canadians educated abroad, particularly those in the health care field, are ready to contribute to Canada's pandemic effort, but cannot because it is not easy to have their credentials recognized. At the same time, newcomers to Canada, many of whom arrive with high-quality training and years of experience, face the same difficulty.

Could the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion tell the House how investments announced in the fall economic statement will help to ensure those educated abroad can work in their fields sooner?

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Madam Speaker, attracting skilled newcomers from around the world is critical to Canada's economic growth and recovery. The foreign credential recognition program helps address specific barriers faced by skilled newcomers, such as the length and cost of credential recognition.

To scale up these supports, our government is proposing to invest \$15 million in 2021 into the program, benefiting up to 15,000 skilled newcomers. Our government will continue to take strong and decisive action to support skilled newcomers and keep our economy growing.

* * *

HEALTH

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Madam Speaker, every year, six million Canadians cannot visit the dentist when they need it because of the cost, and women are less likely to have access to dental care because they are often in part-time or precarious employment with no benefits. A lack of child care during the pandemic has meant that women who had benefits lost them when they had to leave their jobs to stay home with the kids, and many single moms were already struggling to afford dental visits for themselves and their children. The Liberals say that they will take action to help women hardest hit by this pandemic, but they continue to ignore their needs.

When will the government ensure that all Canadians get the dental care they need?

• (1505)

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the member opposite for highlighting the difficulty that many Canadians are facing in terms of their loss of benefits. That is

Points of Order

why we have been working so hard at bringing forward a national pharmacare plan, because every Canadian deserves the right to have access to medication in a timely way and in an affordable way.

As I have said before in the House, we are always interested in exploring new programs. I would suggest the member opposite work with colleagues in the House to study the issue.

* * *

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Ind.): Madam Speaker, my constituents in Don Valley East are concerned about the new challenges that the pandemic has created. These are families of newcomers to Canada that are looking to complete their path to Canadian citizenship. They are eager to know what innovation has been made so they can become part of our Canadian family.

Could the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship provide the House with the details of the plan to allow citizenship tests to be taken online?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Madam Speaker, throughout the pandemic we have adapted quickly so we can continue to welcome new Canadians, while upholding the integrity of Canadian citizenship. We moved citizenship ceremonies online this spring, and have welcomed more than 43,000 new Canadians through the process. We also launched a new platform so citizenship tests could resume online.

We know that the citizenship process is a significant milestone for newcomers and we look forward to more measures and good news on this front.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTIONS

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Madam Speaker, today, the Minister of National Defence was asked an important question that we wanted an answer to and he was not able to answer because he did not have a headset. It is important that we all make the commitment.

We have been in this virtual Parliament now for some time. If ministers are going to be part of questions and answers, it is important they are wearing their headsets so they can answer the question, whether it is in the House of Commons or on committee. We have seen this other times and the translators are not able to translate and the questions go unanswered.

Routine Proceedings

Therefore, I would ask the Liberal House leader and the Liberal whip to speak to their ministers and ensure they have the proper equipment if they are going to be participating in virtual Parliament.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I appreciate the input that the hon. member has provided. It is not just for ministers. It is a responsibility of all parliamentarians to ensure they have the proper headsets. They are able to obtain some from the IT department, but also they can purchase some. It is imperative that every member of Parliament use those headsets to ensure all parliamentarians are able to hear what is being said and what is being asked, and in order to ensure that everyone is able to hear the questions and answers.

I want to thank the hon. member for raising this very important point of order.

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I do have a headset on. Unfortunately it is one that was not working properly. I will get another and ensure that it is working properly.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I do appreciate the intervention by the hon. minister. Maybe if headsets are not functioning properly, then I would ask that they ask another one of their colleagues to answer the question in the future.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Madam Speaker, I would like to table, in both official languages—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would like to ask the President of the Treasury Board whether he is wearing his headset and, if not, whether he can please put it on.

The hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent on a point of order.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Madam Speaker, that is too bad.

I have a lot of respect and regard for the President of the Treasury Board, who is also a member from Quebec and my neighbour. Unfortunately, the rules apply to everyone, particularly after the point of order we witnessed earlier during question period.

We, the 338 parliamentarians, need to abide by certain standards so that we can do our job properly.

• (1510)

[*English*]

If we need a headset, we need a headset. Unfortunately, if the President of the Treasury Board does not have a headset, we need to move on.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the point has been made and we will attempt to get the headsets necessary in order to ensure we get the document tabled, if not now, a little later in the day.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8)(a), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's responses to 10 petitions. These returns will be tabled in an electronic format.

* * *

[*Translation*]

WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Rural Economic Development, Lib.): [*Minister spoke in Ojibwe, Anishinabe and Arabic as follows:*]

Boozhoo, aaniin, as-salaam alaikum.

[*Translation*]

Madam Speaker, it is a great privilege for me to stand here on traditional Algonquin land.

[*English*]

Fifty years ago on this day, a report was tabled in this House. I will be tabling a copy of this report in both French and English here today. The report was tabled after three years of hard work, heart-breaking testimony and courageous conversations. It was a report that was tabled in this House long before there was a charter of rights and freedoms, long before the famous phrase, "women's rights are human rights" was ever uttered, long before a gender-balanced cabinet and long before an intersectional and gendered lens being applied to the budget.

The Royal Commission on the Status of Women was chaired for the first time by a woman. CBC journalist Florence Bird took the helm. She took the lead. While the commission was mocked at first, it became really difficult for journalists to mock women's first-account experiences of rape, incest and challenges in the welfare system. I would like to thank those who pushed for this report, Florence Bird, Judy LaMarsh as the only woman in cabinet at the time, Laura Sabia and the two million women who threatened to march to Parliament Hill if the commission was not granted. I would like to thank all those who made it happen and all those who have pushed relentlessly for the progress that has been made.

The report was tabled at a time when a woman could not qualify for a mortgage without her husband's signature on the mortgage application. We have come far. We owe it to those who have come before us to ensure we protect the progress they struggled and fought so hard for. We owe it to those who have come before us to protect the fragility of the progress, but also unite a sisterhood of feminists to ensure we finish the unfinished business of that report.

Here we are 50 years later. When that report was tabled there was only one woman in this House. Today, for the first time ever, there are 100 of us in the House of Commons and gender parity in the Senate. There are more women at the table than ever before. I would like to think and work together to see what we can achieve together.

Though we have come far, when the report was tabled the gender wage gap was at 40¢ between women and men; we are now at 87¢. When the report was tabled, none of the 167 recommendations mentioned violence against women. Yesterday, though we were not able to come together as a country and mourn École Polytechnique and the Montreal massacre, we were still able to mourn together in solidarity. There may be seats for women and gender-diverse folks across the country, but only 5% of Canada's CEOs are women, and of those women at those tables, they earn 68¢ on the dollar that men earn for the exact same role.

We may be applying an intersectional and gendered lens to our budgets. We may be creating and enhancing tens of thousands of child-care spaces. We may be moving forward with the universal early learning and child-care system. However, COVID threatens all those hard-won gains. Of course, so does the inevitable backlash that comes with every step we take forward in advancing equality, women's rights and gender justice.

Today, we get to stand up in this House, one after another, all of us women working to better the lives of everyone in Canada. I hope we can reflect on that unfinished business, commit to working together in unity, focus on ensuring women are safe, their families are cared for and they are working and paid their worth. We owe it to those who have come before us to ensure that we make things better.

Yes, progress has been uneven. It has been slow. At times, the movement we all belong to, a movement that has existed long before any of us existed, a movement that will continue long after we are gone, has been divided. We owe it to stay together, stay united, focus on the common denominators, ensure we do right by those who have come before us and ensure this great country reaches its potential.

● (1515)

I encourage Canadians to mark this anniversary by recognizing women of impact in their own communities, women like Lynn Zimmer, who helped start the first women's shelter in Canada. She did so three years after the report was tabled in this House.

Individual actions matter. When she opened that shelter, she had no idea somebody like me would end up staying in one of her shelters some day, and I would not have known that somebody like me staying at a shelter would go on to support women's shelters and Canadians across the country.

All of us are here because someone has opened the door for us. All of us get up every day because we want to make things better for the young and the young at heart. All of us have worked tremendously hard, particularly during the pandemic, to make the most of the opportunities these seats have provided.

As we move into the next 50 years of the history of the feminist movement, let me thank those who have struggled and let me thank those who have opened doors for us. Let me thank our male colleagues, allies, accomplices, cheerleaders and mentors who have enabled the rest of us to step up and do what we can.

I will know we have reached gender equality when women are safe, including politicians who put their names on a ballot in the

pursuit of duty and care. I will know we have reached gender equality when we close the gender wage gap. I will know we have achieved gender equality when women and gender-diverse folks can go outside without fear for their lives.

Routine Proceedings

Ms. Jag Sahota (Calgary Skyview, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am honoured to rise in the House to speak on the 50th anniversary of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women, not just as the MP for Calgary Skyview or the Conservative shadow minister for women and gender equality, but as a woman, who, until 1920, could not be elected to this House.

The royal commission was established in 1967 with a mandate to inquire into and report on the status of women in Canada and to make recommendations to the federal government to ensure equality for women in all aspects of society. It received over 468 briefs and over 1,000 letters and testimonies. The extensive amount of evidence and engagement from Canadian women highlighted the widespread problems women faced across Canada.

On December 7, 1970, the commission tabled its report in Parliament with 167 recommendations to the federal government on issues such as pay equity, maternity leave, family law reform, higher education and access to higher-paying jobs. The commissioning and tabling of this report in Parliament gave many women from coast to coast to coast a political voice and by the 1980s, with many of its recommendations implemented, women's lives had been greatly enriched.

I am proud to be a part of the Conservative caucus that has strived for and continues to see women breaking glass ceilings. It was the Conservative Party of Canada that elected the first woman to be the leader of a political party, who later became Canada's first female prime minister, the Right Hon. Kim Campbell.

It was the Conservative former interim leader, the Hon. Rona Ambrose, the minister of the status of women, who started the campaign to establish the International Day of the Girl Child, a day where we publicly remind everyone that there are girls and women around the world who still do not have a voice, who do not have rights or access to education and who are treated as property. The International Day of the Girl Child is a day where we get to use our voice as women to be their voice, like the women generations before were the voice for us today.

In the Conservative caucus, we have a lot of firsts. On the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, the Conservative women have all accomplished firsts. The hon. member for Richmond Centre was the first Chinese Canadian woman to be appointed to serve in cabinet, a position where she was able to advocate for seniors, especially the views and opinions of senior women.

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The member for Sarnia—Lambton is the first woman to be elected to the House with a degree in engineering, something she has in common with Elsie MacGill, who sat on the royal commission. The member for Port Moody—Coquitlam is the first Korean-born member elected to the chamber and I am the first Sikh woman elected from Alberta. This is only possible because of the hard work, social cause and peaceful protests that generations before us stood for.

Without them, we would not have been able to attend higher education, have a bank account in our own name, not be discriminated against in job postings based on sex or marriage, access maternity leave, have the right to vote or be elected to the House of Commons, just to name a few. While we are grateful for the royal commission, the hard work put in by the members, the evidence submitted by Canadians from across this great country and the recommendations to the government, many of which, to varying degrees, have been acted on, there is still much more work that needs to be done, particularly when it comes to gender-based violence, an issue that is very dear to my heart.

Just last week in this chamber, we reminded ourselves of the heinous crime committed in Quebec just 20 years after this report was tabled. Fourteen women with dreams and their whole lives ahead of them were murdered at École Polytechnique in 1989 solely because they were women attending school. This should have never happened then and it should never happen again.

• (1520)

This pandemic has highlighted many challenges that women still face today. Throughout this pandemic we have heard organizations from across the country tell us that calls to women's shelters have increased and they have had to send women away because they do not have the funds needed to help them. It is truly heartbreaking that women have to remain in their homes with their abusers because we cannot help them. They are living in personal prisons.

Organizations have been calling on the government to create and establish a national action plan to address gender-based violence, yet all we seem to get from this government is empty promises. The Liberals' platform in 2019 said they would develop an action plan to address gender-based violence, yet still nothing. Women are not looking for a document with catchy phrases. They are looking for concrete action. Women need help now, not two, five or 10 years from now.

The Royal Commission on the Status of Women was undeniably a catalyst for social change. It united Canadians across this great country and gave women a political voice that they did not have before. All we have to do is look around this chamber and see the women here from all parties. We are strong advocates for what we believe in and for women in this country. I am proud to be a part of this group as we lend our voices to work towards a more equal Canada.

I am looking forward to future generations looking back and being proud of our accomplishments and being able to build upon them. The work to build an equal Canada is never really complete. Laying the path for gender equality, we can help the next generation and the generations after that. Let us continue building the path towards a Canada that our daughters, nieces and sisters can be proud of.

• (1525)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, 50 years ago, on December 7, 1970, the report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada was tabled in the House. The 488-page report contained 167 recommendations to the federal government to help reduce gender inequality. Among other things, it addressed pay equity, maternity leave, the right to abortion and access to education.

The commission was chaired by a woman, journalist Florence Bird. At her side worked women and men, including eminent McGill University law professor John Humphrey, who, in 1946, helped draft the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights; Eleanor Roosevelt, another great feminist, called it the “Magna Carta for all mankind”.

There were also Quebeckers on the commission, including literature professor Jeanne Lapointe. Lapointe had been a member of the Parent commission in Quebec, a cornerstone of the Quiet Revolution that would lead to the fundamental reform of Quebec's education system and help make education accessible to all Quebeckers, male and female, at every level. There was also sociologist Monique Bégin, one of the founders of the Fédération des femmes du Québec and one of the first three Quebec women to be elected to the House in 1972.

Every defining moment in the history of the women's movement in which real gains were made in terms of changes to laws and policies was preceded by the mobilization and demands of women who fought to advance women's rights. The Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada was no exception. It was women, in particular Ontario activist Laura Sabia, and their campaign to improve the status of women who convinced Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson to create the commission in 1967.

In Quebec, during and after the Quiet Revolution, feminists fought for gender equality in education and employment, as well as in other areas. They spoke out about poverty among women and procreative choices, as well as violence against women and the unacceptable attempts to justify it, including within the context of marriage. The time had come to speak out against the perception of women, their biological functions, their bodies and their social role. Women were forced to demand the right to control their own bodies.

Legal and civic equality was an important milestone achieved through the struggles of the first feminists in the 20th century. From that point on, the central purpose of the struggle had to be the true liberation of women. Quebec's women activists came together, got organized and penetrated the public political sphere up to the highest levels of government, achieving real results over the years, including one woman who even became premier. I salute Quebec's first female premier, Pauline Marois.

The history we are commemorating is about successive generations of women who have fought to advance women's rights and put an end to gender discrimination and gender-based violence on a long march towards equality between women and men. The struggle we face today is one of de facto equality, real equality. Whether we are talking about domestic violence, the mental load, invisible work or economic vulnerability, particularly among senior women, we need only look at the pandemic's disproportionate impact on women to remind ourselves that the gains that have been made are fragile and that the fight for equality is not over.

In addition, the Pay Equity Act is a major issue that has not yet been resolved, and the same goes for the problem of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls and the national action plan to end gender-based violence.

We also need to recognize that inequality has morphed. In all social spheres—arts, business, science and politics—some women are accomplishing things and reaching great heights, while other women's hopes and aspirations are being dashed because they are marginalized by virtue of their social class, their economic status or their ethnic or cultural background. We will not achieve equality until we can ensure equal opportunity for all.

• (1530)

While we take this opportunity as we commemorate an historic moment in the women's movement to better appreciate the path that has been taken and the challenges that lie ahead, I cannot ignore the recent revelations on the sexual exploitation of minors, human trafficking, questionable sexual practices and, let's say it, rape that is still included in online content on pornographic sites, which are available to everyone. The story in the news about Pornhub is a brutal reminder of that.

The fact is, virtual reality is not a separate reality. What is happening has real consequences and the moral implications are the same. We now have a duty to find real solutions to counter child pornography and all forms of sexual exploitation online.

It is not the most joyful way to end a commemorative speech, but I believe our duty to remember, like our moral duty, requires us to deal with the problems of our time head-on. I have hope that as women and feminists we will work with all our allies and draw on the memory of those who came before us and find the courage we need to take swift action to protect the most vulnerable and build a longer-term just future, free from violence and respectful of human dignity.

As vice-chair of the Standing Committee on Status of Women, I am particularly proud to rise to speak today. I cannot help but think of the feminists who came before me, including my mother, the first feminist I knew. She was involved with AFEAS, a women's

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advocacy group, which gave me an early introduction to the importance of these issues.

I am also thinking about those who marched against women's poverty in the bread and roses march in Quebec in 1995, because 50 years later, we still have a lot of work to do and we still have glass ceilings to break; because 100 women is good, but even more is better; and because I will be a feminist as long as it takes. Now is the time for action.

[English]

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Madam Speaker, progress, change, equality and fairness are things slow and hard to achieve and maintain. Of course, women have achieved some progress, some equality and some fairness, but some certainly is not good enough. That is what it all comes down to: It is not enough. Until women achieve complete equality and we in this institution create laws and programs, and provide the leadership for that complete equality, we cannot stop.

Today, I stand in the House because some progress has been made for women, but it is not enough. Today, women make up only a third of the MPs in the House. Canada ranks 64th in the world for its participation of women in Parliament.

It was 50 years ago, because of countless trail-blazing women, that the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada was formed. The commission's report contained 167 recommendations to the federal government on such issues as pay equity, the establishment of a maternity leave program, a national child care policy, birth control and abortion rights, family law reform, education and women's access to managerial positions. A large section also addressed issues specific to indigenous women in the Indian Act.

The Royal Commission on the Status of Women was undeniably a catalyst for social change. It united Canadian women and gave them a voice in shaping gender-responsive policies. These victories today may have been considered foregone conclusions; however, women are constantly forced to fight to maintain what they have already won. Women are told they have access to reproductive medical treatment, but it is not consistent, it is not universal and it is constantly being challenged even in the House. Now, 50 years later, women still go to rallies and declare that it is their body, their choice.

Women are confronted every day with violence. Yesterday was the 31st anniversary of the tragedy at École Polytechnique. Last week in the House, we commemorated that tragedy of 14 women murdered because they were women, yet approximately every six days, a woman in Canada is killed by her intimate partner. The majority of these violent acts, more than 80%, go unreported. These too are tragedies.

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Throughout COVID-19, women have had to deal with an additional and increasing threat of domestic violence, or what is being called the invisible or shadow pandemic. The overcrowding of shelters and the additional strain on other resources has made it harder to get help. Women are more likely to have lost their jobs and income during the pandemic, making it even harder for them to leave violence. Lack of affordable housing keeps women in dangerous situations because there are no safe options.

We know that indigenous women and girls are more likely to face violence and are more likely to be killed, yet the calls for justice from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls were delivered 18 months ago, but we still see no action. Transgender and racialized women continue to face terrible levels of violence and abuse. They are often victimized again by the justice and health care systems that too often question their identity or use offensive stereotypes. Women and girls with disabilities are far more at risk for violence and abuse. As many as 60% will experience violence in their lifetime.

Women are still expected to shoulder the responsibility of violence. We are blamed. We are told that we have provoked it or that we were asking for it.

With all these facts, how can we say that we are making progress? It is not enough.

It was 50 years ago when the royal commission called for pay equity. Today, by law, women should be paid the same amount of money for the same amount of work as men, but we are not. In 2018, the government finally introduced pay equity legislation, but just a few weeks ago, the Parliamentary Budget Officer issued a report saying that legislation still has not been implemented. Again, 50 years ago, the royal commission called for the creation of a national child care system, and still women are waiting. Even the announcements by the government last week are mediocre and will not create a universal, affordable child care system.

A second wave of COVID-19 will force more lockdowns and will cause the rise of virtual schooling and a scarcity of affordable day care. Between February and October, 20,600 Canadian women left the labour force, while almost 68,000 men re-entered or entered it. Women exiting the labour force face the risk of an erosion of skills, which may further exacerbate the gender wage gap that existed prior to the pandemic.

A 2016 study from the OECD found that Canadian families spend almost one-quarter of their income on child care, one of the highest amounts worldwide. It is unacceptable that there is still no universal child care system, and constant empty promises are not good enough.

• (1535)

Despite all the feel-good feminism, the sad truth is that government after government has kept women waiting when it comes to taking action on systemic injustices. Unaffordable child care, unsafe long-term care facilities, never-ending and increasing levels of poverty, expensive unattainable housing, high rates of domestic and gender-based violence, unachievable pay equity, a woman's right to choose and access to services are still in question in Canada. We allow so many to fall through the cracks. We have allowed poverty

rates to skyrocket and for the gap between the rich and the poor to grow. We have not followed the advice of the royal commission and are seeing the consequences of that, especially now.

While the challenge before us can be daunting, women have never been afraid to fight. We stand on the shoulders of giants before us, and just like those trailblazers 50 years ago, together here in the House we can stand united and say we are not doing enough, we must demand more and we must fight for more. Hopefully the people here will show the political will, strength and courage to make the changes necessary so that it will not take us another 50 years to achieve real progress, real fairness and real equality.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I request the unanimous consent of my colleagues to allow the Green Party to reflect on the 50th anniversary of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): This being a hybrid sitting of the House, for the sake of clarity, I will only ask those who are opposed to the request to express their disagreement.

[*English*]

There being no dissenting voice, it is agreed.

The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, it is a real honour to join the voices of the hon. Minister for Women and Gender Equality, the hon. member for Calgary Skyview, the hon. member for Shefford and the hon. member for London—Fanshawe, marking this occasion with all women's voices in the House.

I have the great honour to speak to the House from the traditional territory of the WSÁNEĆ peoples. I raise my hands. *Hych'ka siem.*

It is an honour to speak to the House virtually, although I think, like all of us, we miss seeing each other.

This is an extraordinary occasion to reflect on the 50th anniversary of the very first-ever royal commission headed by a woman, dealing with the issues that affected women. I want to draw some parallels between the political realities of when this Parliament started and when the royal commission started.

The Royal Commission on the Status of Women, as the hon. minister mentioned, was the result of pressure on the then Liberal prime minister Lester B. Pearson in a minority government. Lester B. Pearson was told by Laura Sabia, then president of the Canadian Federation of University Women, who led this charge for an examination of the rights of women in Canada, that if he did not agree to a royal commission, two million women would march on Ottawa.

There are remarkable women feminists in this story. One of them needs to be mentioned again, as the hon. minister mentioned, one woman member of Parliament, only one in 1967, but a formidable feminist, Judy LaMarsh. She was also in the cabinet of Lester B. Pearson. She had been part of the extraordinary efforts of that minority Liberal government, with strong NDP pressure, that brought in universal health care, the Canada pension plan and unemployment insurance; in other words, at a time of transformational change in our society, one woman MP.

By the time the report was tabled in 1970, there was still only one woman MP, but the Liberals were in majority. The prime minister was Pierre Trudeau and the one woman MP was not in his caucus. It was Grace MacInnis of Vancouver Kingsway. She was, of course, a New Democrat Party member.

The government lost the opportunity to have a woman in cabinet to do anything with these recommendations. The recommendations were powerful, but when we think about the time and the way the media covered the royal commission, I found this gem and I really have to share it. It is from Maclean's magazine in January 1968, writing about the chair of the commission. So far today everyone has referred to her the way she is mostly referred to in historical literature, as Florence Bird, but she was known as a journalist, under her professional name of Anne Francis.

In January 1968, Maclean's magazine wrote:

Above all, Anne Francis is not a feminist; not one of the New Suffragettes who lobbied the Liberal government until it finally appointed a Royal Commission on the Status of Canadian Women, with Anne Francis as chairman. Her husband — and her husband's friends — say she is a wonderful wife.

I guess she could not have been a feminist. It was a strange time, 1968.

The Toronto Star and Le Devoir decided to collect public opinion about the status of women, publishing its surveys to only have responses from men. The majority of men responding to the survey in the Toronto Star said that a woman's place was in the home. We now know a woman's place is in the House, but it is the House of Commons, and there are now 100 women in the House of Commons, including our Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and women leadership through all our caucuses.

Let us look at what the report demanded of government. Let us consider it would not have been acted upon if it was still a Liberal minority under Lester B. Pearson with Judy LaMarsh instead of a majority with no women in cabinet. They demanded, as we have heard, legal abortion rights; an end to the wage gap; that women's rights be respected throughout society; that we have universal child care; and this gem, which has not been mentioned yet today, they called for a program of guaranteed annual income and that it should start in providing guaranteed annual income to single parent families that needed the help and were living in disproportionate levels of poverty. They mentioned as well the disproportionate levels of poverty and the high infant mortality among indigenous women.

• (1540)

The report obviously suffers from time. It does not look through a lens with intersectionality, it does not look at violence against women, but it was pretty progressive.

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My challenge to all of us now in 2020, 50 years later, is that with 100 women MPs in the House of Commons, should we not be capable of doing 100 times more than the one woman, Judy LaMarsh, in Lester B. Pearson's cabinet?

Should we not be capable of saying now is the time to bring in a guaranteed liveable income, now is the time to bring in universal child care and now is the time for real climate action, now in a minority Parliament before the unreceptive typical 100% of the power of a first past the post false majority takes over? We need to do more now.

In memory of all those wonderful feminists, such as Florence Bird and her professional name Anne Francis, Laura Sabia, Judy LaMarsh and Grace MacInnis, and in the name of all the women who have gone before us with so much less at their disposal to push for change, let us do more now. Let us finish the job the royal commission started 50 years ago.

• (1545)

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The President of the Treasury Board on a point of order.

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DEPARTMENTAL RESULTS REPORTS 2019-20

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the Chair for recognizing me.

I have the honour to table, in both official languages, on behalf of the 88 departments and agencies, the departmental results reports for 2019-20.

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[*English*]

PETITIONS

BRAZIL

Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP): Madam Speaker, it is an honour and privilege to table petition e-2957, which was promoted by Greenpeace Canada and has 4,359 signatures.

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The petitioners are concerned about the dramatic increase in deforestation and fires in the Amazon since President Bolsonaro came to power in Brazil and the threat this represents to humanity by accelerating climate change. They note the Brazilian government has dismantled environmental regulations, enforcement and indigenous rights protections and that indigenous people in Brazil are experiencing especially high levels of violence, land appropriation and other human rights violations.

The petitioners call upon the government to immediately terminate the Canada-Mercosur free trade deal negotiations and make a public statement that the Bolsonaro government's assault on the environment and human rights is unacceptable to Canada.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, once again I rise to present a petition from young people from across my riding and the adjacent riding of Kootenay—Columbia.

They are concerned about the accelerating impacts of climate change. They point out that the targets and actions of the government are completely inadequate. They want jobs that are sustainable, not for short-term gain at the cost of future generations.

The petitioners ask the government to support their future with a detailed climate strategy and science-based targets that are accountable in law. They want to eliminate fossil fuel subsidies and redirect those funds to renewable energy systems, energy efficiency, low-carbon transportation and job training.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to table a petition highlighting the horrific abuses of Uighurs and other Turkic Muslims in China. This is an ongoing concern. Media reports have highlighted the various ways, such as through forced repression of births. In the view of the petitioners and many others, this constitutes a genocide.

The petitioners call on the government to recognize that and they also call for the use of Magnitsky sanctions targeting those involved in gross violations of human rights, noting that Magnitsky sanctions have not been used at all in the context of China. They want to see them used in the particular context of the horrific abuses of Uighurs.

BLOOD DONATION

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, I rise today to table e-petition 2757, which I was proud to sponsor. The petition signed by more than 1,500 Canadians is part of a national campaign organized by a group called All Blood is Equal.

The petitioners call on Parliament to end the unscientific ban on blood donations from gay men, men who have sex with men and trans women, as this policy only contributes to blood shortages and perpetuates homophobic stereotypes.

The petitioners note that this is particularly egregious during a pandemic and call on the House to support my Motion No. 41, which in turn calls on the government to introduce behaviour-based

rather than identity-based blood donation guidelines as more 17 other nations have already done.

• (1550)

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to present a petition dealing with the ongoing issues on Wet'suwet'en traditional territory.

The petitioners call for the government to respect the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, to respect the Wet'suwet'en views regarding the Coastal GasLink project and to withdraw efforts to force that project to completion.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 159, 161 and 166.

[Text]

Question No. 159—**Mr. Kyle Seeback:**

With regard to the Large Employer Emergency Financing Facility (LEEFF) program announced by the Prime Minister on May 11, 2020: (a) what is the total amount of financing provided by government through the program; (b) how many large employers have applied for financing through LEEFF; (c) how many large employers were provided with funding under LEEFF; and (d) what are the details of all financing provided, including (i) name of large employer, (ii) amount of financing, (iii) type of financing?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Canada Enterprise Emergency Funding Corporation, CEEFC, a subsidiary of the Canada Development Investment Corporation, CDEV, formed to administer the large employer emergency financing facility, LEEFF, began accepting applications to the LEEFF on May 20, 2020.

The LEEFF program is one of the many measures our government has put in place to support Canadian businesses during this pandemic, including the Canada emergency wage subsidy, the Canada emergency business account and the Canada emergency rent subsidy.

Given the economic uncertainty surrounding COVID-19, it is unclear how many large employers will apply to the LEEFF or receive funding. CEEFC maintains an updated list of approved LEEFF loans, and funds disbursed, on its website at: www.ceefc-fuec.ca/approved-loan.

Question No. 161—**Mr. Blaine Calkins:**

With regard to Requests for Proposal (RFP), Invitations to Tender (ITI) and Notices of Proposed Procurement (NPP) put forward by Public Works and Government Services Canada since March 11, 2020: (a) how many times has the national security exception been invoked; (b) for each RFP, ITI or NPP in (a), what was the (i) publication date, (ii) closing date, (iii) solicitation number, (iv) title, (v) reason given for national security exception, (vi) competitive procurement strategy, (vii) procurement entity, (viii) end user entity; (c) for each item in (b), was (i) the list of interested suppliers for the tender publicly available, (ii) the successful firm or vendor and contract value publicly disclosed; and (d) for contracts already awarded in (a), what was the (i) vendor, (ii) date the contract was awarded, (iii) value of the contract?

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement and Accessibility, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the national security exception provided for in all of Canada's trade agreements allows Canada to exclude a procurement from some or all of the obligations of the relevant trade agreement(s), where Canada considers it necessary to do so in order to protect its national security interests.

That being said, there is no identifier in PSPC's centralized database to identify contracts that received a national security exception. As a result, PSPC concluded that producing and validating a comprehensive response to this question would require a manual collection of information that is not possible in the time allotted and could lead to the disclosure of incomplete and misleading information.

Question No. 166—**Mr. Rob Moore:**

With regard to judicial appointments made by the government, and the CBC report on October 20, 2020, that stated "[t]he Liberal Research Bureau also participates in the background checks on judicial candidates, according to federal sources and an internal government email": (a) what role does the Liberal Research Bureau have for the government with regard to background checks for judicial candidates; (b) who in the government provides the names of potential judicial candidates to the Liberal Research Bureau; and (c) has the government provided secret security clearance to anyone in the Liberal Research Bureau so that those individuals are legally allowed to possess the names of candidates and, if so, (i) who was granted clearance, (ii) when was the clearance granted?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government has put in a place an open, transparent and accountable process to identify and appoint highly meritorious jurists. The independent Judicial Advisory Committees make recommendations based on the merit and quality of the candidates who apply. We have appointed more than 400 jurists, women and men, to the bench. The diversity of these appointments is also unprecedented. Of the judges appointed under the new process since 2016, 55% are women, 10% are visible minorities, 5% identify as LGBTQ2, 3% are indigenous and 1% have a disability. These jurists not only meet the needs of our courts, but are also reflective of Canada's diversity.

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[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Lead-

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er of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, if the government's response to Questions Nos. 154 to 158, 160, 162 to 165 and 167 to 169 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 154—**Mr. Brad Redekopp:**

With regard to videos produced by the government for usage on government websites or for internal usage, since February 1, 2020: (a) what are the details of all such videos, including (i) date, (ii) duration, (iii) title, (iv) purpose, (v) intended audience, (vi) government website on which the video was displayed, if on a public website; and (b) for each video in (a), what were the total expenditures, broken down by type of expense?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 155—**Mr. Brad Redekopp:**

With regard to videos produced by the government for public distribution, since February 1, 2020: (a) what are the details of all such videos, including (i) date, (ii) duration, (iii) title, (iv) purpose, (v) intended audience; (b) for each video, what were the total expenditures, broken down by type of expense; and (c) through which Internet sites, social media platforms, television stations, or streaming sites was each video distributed?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 156—**Mr. Pat Kelly:**

With regard to the COVID-19 pandemic response programs, the efficacy of such programs, and the extent of coverage of such programs: (a) how many Canadian businesses applied under each program, including the Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance, the Canada Emergency Business Account, and the Business Credit Availability Program (in both the Export Development Canada and the Business Development Bank of Canada branches of the program); (b) of the applicants in (a), how many were approved; and (c) what proportion of total Canadian businesses do the successful applicants in (b) represent?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 157—**Mr. Pat Kelly:**

With regard to the various programs offered by Export Development Canada and the Business Development Bank of Canada under the Business Credit Availability Program umbrella: (a) what is the dollar value of funds disbursed to date under each program; and (b) what is the average dollar value per successful applicant of loans issued under the programs in (a)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 158—**Mr. Pat Kelly:**

With regard to the Canada Emergency Business Account program: (a) how many calls have the call centres received on each day of the program's operation; (b) of the calls in (a), how many did the call centre respond to and how many were missed or unable to connect to an employee; (c) what is the average number of calls to the call centres per successful applicant before its application was approved; and (d) do any of the call centres employees possess experience or training in the business operations and requirements of farms?

(Return tabled)

*Business of Supply***Question No. 160—Mr. Dan Albas:**

With regard to the government's promise to protect 25 percent of land area and 25 percent of marine area by 2025, and 30 percent of land area and 30 percent of marine area by 2030: (a) how much land and marine area is now protected; (b) how much land or marine area was protected every year over the past 20 years, broken down by year; (c) what is the historical timeline for first looking at a piece of land or marine area and when it is ultimately protected; (d) what are all the classifications for land or marine area that the government considers to be protected; (e) what is the historical timeline for consultations with First Nations peoples before a piece of land or marine area can be protected; (f) has the government identified enough specific areas of land and marine area to reach the 25 percent level by 2025 and, if so, what specific areas has it identified to meet the target; (g) has the government provided the provinces, territories, and First Nations with a detailed map or plan indicating which areas they plan on protecting and, if so, what are the details, including (i) date the plan was provided, (ii) recipients, (iii) description, including locations and square kilometres of areas planned for protection; (h) will natural resource development be banned on all areas protected to meet the 25 percent by 2025 and 30 percent by 2030 commitment and, if so, what are the details of any analysis, including findings, on such a ban; (i) will transportation of extracted natural resource products be banned on all areas protected to meet the 25 percent by 2025 and 30 percent by 2030 commitment and, if so, what are the details of any analysis, including findings, on such a ban; (j) what level of economic development will be allowed on land that is protected under the commitment to protect 25 percent by 2025 and 30 percent by 2030; and (k) does the government project meeting the 25 percent by 2025 target for protecting lands under this commitment?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 162—Mr. Blaine Calkins:

With regard to Public Safety Canada's Request for Proposal (RFP) 202101232-1 Project Manager for Firearms Buyback Program: (a) what was the (i) publication date, (ii) closing date, (iii) competitive procurement strategy; (b) if the closing date in (a)(ii) has passed, (i) what were the names of the vendors that submitted a proposal, (ii) what was the name of the vendor selected; and (c) if the government contacted vendors to request they submit a proposal, (i) what was the name of the company solicited, (ii) the date of the initial contact, (iii) the reason the vendor was selected for solicitation?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 163—Mr. Blaine Calkins:

With regard to the consultation undertaken for Order in Council P.C. 2020-298, dated May 1, 2020: (a) what were the names of the stakeholder organizations consulted; and (b) what are the details of each consultation in (a), including (i) name and title of the individuals who represented the organization, (ii) date, (iii) method (in-person, email, telephone, etc.), (iv) location, if the consultation took place in-person, (v) recommendations or advice provided by the organization?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 164—Mr. Blaine Calkins:

With regard to the moose cull in Cape Breton Highlands National Park since 2015, broken down by year: (a) what was the total cost incurred by (i) the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, (ii) Parks Canada; (b) for the costs in (a), what costs were incurred for (i) overtime, (ii) fuel, (iii) accommodation, (iv) meals or per diem, (v) equipment rental and maintenance, (vi) the use of all vessels such as trucks, aircrafts and boats; and (c) how many animals were harvested?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 165—Mr. James Bezan:

With regard to the Australian F-18 Hornets purchased by the Department of National Defence: (a) how many total flight hours have the Australian F-18 Hornets flown for the Royal Canadian Air Force since the purchase was made, excluding aircraft operating for the Aeronautical Evaluation and Test Establishment; (b) how many operational flight hours have the Australian F-18 Hornets flown since the purchase was made, excluding aircraft operating for the Aeronautical Evaluation and Test Establishment; (c) on what date are the Australian F-18 Hornets expected to be put into regular service alongside the CF-18s; (d) how many Australian F-18 Hornets will be upgraded with the APG-79(v)4 radar; and (e) on what date is the upgrade of radar systems expected to be completed?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 167—Mr. Colin Carrie:

With regard to applications for approval submitted to Health Canada by ventilator manufacturers since January 1, 2020: what are the details of all applications, including (i) name of company, (ii) model, (iii) date of application, (iv) date of approval or rejection, (v) whether the application was approved or rejected, (vi) reason for rejection, if applicable?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 168—Mr. Colin Carrie:

With regard to all monetary and non-monetary contracts, grants, agreements and arrangements entered into by the government with the WE organization, the WE Charity, ME to WE, Imagine 1 Day International, Marc Kielburger and Craig Kielburger, since November 5, 2015: what are the details of such contracts, grants, agreements, or arrangements, including (i) date, (ii) amount, (iii) minister or government official who authorized it, (iv) start and end date, (v) summary of terms, (vi) whether or not the item was made public through proactive disclosure, (vii) dates and locations of related events, if applicable, (viii) specific details of goods or services provided to the government as a result of the contract, grant, agreement or arrangement?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 169—Ms. Leona Alleslev:

With regard to advance contract award notices (ACAN) published by the government since January 1, 2020: what are the details of all ACAN published by the government, including (i) date of notice, (ii) date by which any potential competitors were required to submit a statement of capabilities, (iii) pre-selected vendor, (iv) contract value, (v) summary of goods or services, including volume, (vi) reason the government believed the pre-selected vendor was the only one capable of offering the goods or services, (vii) number of competitors who submitted a statement of capabilities, (viii) vendor awarded with the contract, if different than the pre-selected vendor?

(Return tabled)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I would ask that all remaining questions be allowed to stand at this time.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—MEASURES TO SUPPORT CANADIAN BUSINESSES

The house resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. James Cumming (Edmonton Centre, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes. It is a great honour to speak to this opposition motion today.

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When the world caught the news that multiple vaccines for COVID-19 had finally been approved, that this horrible year was finally about to come to an end, there was great relief and a sigh from across the world. That was until we realized that help was on the way for many of our close international partners including the U.K., U.S.A., Germany and Mexico and their economies might be able to reopen and their citizens would start to engage in normal life again, but Canada would have to wait. Granted, today's news was great. It is fantastic news that we will see the first vaccines coming to Canada, but certainly for our economy to re-engage we absolutely need to see far more, as soon as possible.

The government spent \$44 million on upgrades to the National Research Council's Royalmount vaccine production facility in Montreal, and that is despite the Prime Minister saying that there would be no vaccine manufacturing in Canada. Unfortunately, the upgrades at that facility still are not finished and are not projected to be finished until 2021, so that really lagged our ability to produce vaccines and thus put us further behind many other countries.

Most people need some kind of certainty, and "as soon as possible" just does not work. With the variety of vaccines that have been announced and the contracts that the government has put in place, it seems entirely reasonable to ask, once they are approved, what the timing would be when Canadians can expect to see these vaccines, and to give the provinces the latitude to know what is coming down the pipe so they can start making arrangements for these vaccines that Canadians so desperately need to land at their pharmacies or to whatever execution method each of the provincial governments would use.

Our opposition motion today highlights the unequivocal fact that a lot of Canadian business owners are in distress and I am sure many of the members have heard this. Business owners need help just to survive while waiting until some form of rapid testing or a robust vaccination plan rolls out. They are really struggling.

Forty-six per cent of business owners are worried about the survival of their businesses. We hear a lot about essential services. For many of the business owners whom I speak to, their businesses are essential to them. They are essential for their livelihood. They are essential for them to look after their families and to generate incomes. It is essential for them that they get back to work. Some are working at reduced activity, and I really admire their ingenuity in trying to make the best of what is a very difficult situation.

As early as March, 56% of business owners said they had no more capacity to take on debt during this emergency. That is a phenomenal number, and even debt does not necessarily solve the problem. During the first wave, the government determined which were considered essential and non-essential businesses. Their businesses were absolutely essential for their livelihoods. A lot of large corporations, such as Costco and Walmart, would still be able to benefit and sell products that a lot of small businesses sell as well, so the small business owners really want to get back to work.

A simple fact is that there will be no recovery if there are no businesses left, so the government has handed out about \$240 billion in the first eight months of the pandemic. Not to say that we should not have been spending money, but that is about \$952 million a day between March 13 and November 20.

While the government members had been starting to talk about their great reset stimulation and other singular-driven goals, we are spending virtually more than any other country in the G7, but we have the highest unemployment, so it is obvious that some of these programs are not working for their intended people. The Liberals have been stingy in regard to spending on what Canadians need, but what people really want is to get back to work and earn a paycheque.

The federal government must support employment by removing barriers to job creation, such as taxes and regulation. This is something that we could do that does not cost anything and creates that opportunity for businesses, particularly around interprovincial trade barriers.

The government needs to fix the large employer emergency financing facility, the LEEFF program, by reducing restrictions and amending the interest rate schedule. As of today, there are only a couple of companies that actually have used this particular program that the government has put forth. It strikes me that it would be time to fix this, do something with it and make sure that it is more accessible for companies.

● (1555)

Postponing the increase of the Canada pension plan payroll tax plan for January 1 again is a tax burden on businesses that they just cannot afford. They are not in a position to increase their input costs and, quite frankly, they have nowhere to pass it on. Postponing the increase of the carbon tax and the alcohol escalator tax plan for 2021 is not to say that we should not have the increase, it is just that these small businesses cannot have this kind of input cost in their businesses at this time.

The motion also calls for complete details on the highly affected sectors credit availability program by December 16, including criteria when the businesses can apply, when the sectors are eligible and when repayment will be required. Giving details like this should not be a battle. The government often announces these programs, but with details to follow. I can say from what I hear from businesses that they want certainty. These plans are clear as mud, there is a bunch of smoke and mirrors and the Canadian public needs to know.

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We have the hangover. Kevin Page, who served as the PBO for five years, says he can hardly make sense of the 223-page fall economic update, saying after spending an evening going through the charts and all the verbiage, he had difficulty even understanding where it is at. We cannot sit idly while the rest of the world recovers. We cannot sit by while the world starts to move along. We need a plan. We need a timeline. We need to understand when vaccines are going to arrive and when we are going to be able to get back to business.

Ultimately, we know that the long-term cure for the ailing economy cannot be sustained by government programs no matter how many are provided to help small business. Whether the government wants to believe it or not, the debt we are accumulating, in excess of \$1.1 trillion, will be unsustainable. If we continue along this path, we will effectively ruin any chance for future generations, our children and grandchildren, from realizing the immense possibility that once lay before us when we were their age.

We need a plan that will unleash private sector companies. Let them get back to work and create jobs. The investment plan that the government talks about I hope is in assets that will help improve productivity and our export potential. Canada, at the end of the day, is a relatively small country that has enormous potential and resources and it needs to be able to sell to other people in the world. There is a tremendous opportunity to unlock the IP that many companies in this country have and put policies in place that would support that export capacity. Handouts are not the answer. All of the businesses I talk to want to be able to execute their plans, but they want the government to put policies in place that encourage them to invest and do not stop them from investing.

We need to recognize and support our strategic sectors, allow them to grow and make sure we understand what our strategic advantage is. As nice as it would be to rely solely on ourselves for economic growth, the hard reality is that in order to flourish economically, limiting our recovery efforts by internal selling, selling to ourselves, will never get us out of this hole. We need to get focused on what we can do to make sure we can get people back to work and create an environment where Canadian companies are competitive and able to sell their goods and services all over the world. That is what they want to do, that is what they want to focus on and that is what we need the government to get focused on.

The vision of growth and prosperity after this pandemic must include a recovery for all. It has never been more important than now. It is important for creating opportunities for Canada's youth now and in the future instead of burdening them before they even have a fighting chance.

• (1600)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have heard a number of Conservatives talk a lot over the last several weeks about the unemployment rate in Canada. That seems to be one of the economic factors of the pandemic that they seem to want to talk about. The member brought it up, too. They always talk about how high it is. In reality, if we look at the numbers, we are less than half a point higher than the United States in terms of our unemployment rate, yet we have one-third of the death rate per capita in the United States.

My question to the member is very easy and very specific. Does he think that having an increased unemployment rate of less than .5% is a good trade-off for having a death rate that is one-third of what we are seeing in the United States?

Mr. James Cumming: Madam Speaker, that would suggest there is a direct correlation between the programs that are put in place and what the provinces are doing to try to limit the spread of this horrible health crisis. I acknowledge that we have a significant issue with the health crisis.

However, the point I was trying to make to the member was that we should do a comparative of the programs we put in place and the amount of money we are spending versus the unemployment rate, and then compare that to other countries. Other countries actually have results that are comparable, if not better, than ours when it relates to illness during the pandemic. It still strikes me that these programs could be more efficient and more effective, and that we could get more people back to work while keeping them safe.

• (1605)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member made reference to our needing a plan. He said that we need to be focused and we have to get people back to work. Those are the words the member was using. I would say to him that this has been the case.

Let us stop and think about it. What do people think the wage subsidy program is about? That has protected jobs that may have been lost if the government did not provide the wage subsidy. The same thing applies in terms of the rent subsidy program. Here we are protecting our businesses and our workers so that, when we get past the coronavirus, we are better able to get the economy going quicker.

Would the member not agree that is, at least in part, a plan?

Mr. James Cumming: Madam Speaker, in fact we have supported many of the programs that the member talks about. The reason we have supported them is that we realized that, when the government shuts down the economy, there has to be a reaction to that.

What the member missed from what I was saying was that there is a lack of certainty and a plan for how we will start to move out of this. The government announced 100 billion dollars' worth of potential stimulus spending with no details or concrete plan. Businesses need to understand the strategy, how we are going to grow our exports and how we are going to grow our economy. The time is now. It is not to wait another six months and then start to develop it. The time is now.

We should get moving and we should see a budget so that we can better understand where the government is going and in what direction it expects to go forward.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, we agree with the preamble of the motion, which states that businesses are the first to be affected by the pandemic.

I am thinking of the Val-Jalbert historical village, which is in my riding and cannot access the wage subsidy. That is completely unfair. We have been working with different departments, but they have been passing the buck for several months. We hope to find a solution that will make this site retroactively eligible for the wage subsidy. That is the kind of action we can take to help our businesses.

However, the Conservative motion talks about putting the brakes on the carbon tax for the time being. Does my hon. colleague believe that this opens the door to the possibility of permanently cancelling this tax? Is that what the Conservatives want?

[English]

Mr. James Cumming: Madam Speaker, the reason the carbon tax is an issue at this point in time is that businesses can barely afford to have added input costs into the production of their goods and services. That is the issue. This is not a discussion around the environment. It is purely that they cannot afford it. If the member looked at the statistics I mentioned earlier in my remarks, many are going to fail. One thing they cannot afford is added taxes and burdens going into the future.

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to join the debate today. I am joining from Brockville, Ontario.

We are discussing a very important matter. The measures that are proposed in our opposition day motion have been mentioned by the previous speakers and my colleagues, and they are incredibly important. The reason they are important is that we are hearing from businesses about the growing uncertainty that we have moving into 2021.

The year 2020 has been unprecedented, and it has required the government to move fast. The current government has enjoyed unprecedented support from the official opposition. There was, perhaps, a risk at some point this year that we might have to change the name of the official opposition, because we unanimously agreed to so much of what the government put forward so that we could quickly help Canadians.

However, in that process we also proposed a number of changes to the proposed legislation that we believe would have been of better service to Canadians and to businesses. In some cases, they were not adopted by the government, and in other cases they were. An example of the types of proposals we made that we now know, at the first introduction by the government, would have been helpful to Canadians writ large is the CERB back to work bonus, which we proposed as one measure. Of course, giving Canadians the opportunity to earn beyond the lowest threshold, while getting them back to work and allowing businesses to continue to operate, would have been immensely helpful to businesses.

The same is true of the first iteration of the emergency wage subsidy. It was originally proposed at 10%, but requests by the opposition for that amount to be raised to 75% has likely had the greatest

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effect on businesses and Canadians' livelihoods and lives from coast to coast to coast. I hear from my constituents that the 75% number has been the difference. Not every business has been able to access that program, but this is the type of program that was responsive to the calls of business groups and independent businesses. I am very pleased that was one change the government made.

The Canada emergency commercial rent assistance program was quite flawed and underutilized in its initial iteration. Businesses were frustrated by that. The relaunch of that, following the suggestions and the intervention of the opposition, resulted in a program that will hopefully be able to allow more businesses to stay open and to keep the lights on, but for many that assistance will come too late.

When we are moving so quickly on all of these programs, and speed was a necessity in 2020 to help address these gaps, some of the mistakes that were made were made while there were better options and other perspectives at the table. We had questions around the emergency rent assistance program and how it ended up with CMHC as its administrator, and questions around connections and conflicts of interest, when it had been proposed, at the time, that the CRA ought to be able to administer the program.

The same is true with the now famous and scandal-plagued summer employment program proposed by the government. It was widely panned by folks who work in that industry. At the same time, Conservatives were calling for more funds to be invested in the Canada summer jobs program, which is a successful program.

While we were moving quickly, the government, in a few instances, looked like it wanted to reinvent the wheel, instead of investing, with the support of the opposition, in existing programs and leveraging Canada's public service, which was able to ultimately, in the end, deliver on those programs anyway.

● (1610)

At the beginning of the pandemic there was concern among opposition parties and Canadians when there was a proposal by the government to be able to tax and spend without parliamentary oversight. We could only look to the government's better angels and imagine it wanted to move quickly and was worried that it would not have opposition support; however, the government continued to enjoy opposition support after we were able to draw the attention of Canadians to that troubling matter.

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I raise that issue because we find ourselves now at the end of the year, in December. It is hard to believe it is December. We had an opportunity this summer, when the official opposition, the Conservative opposition, called for the House to continue to meet throughout the summer in a hybrid format, as it is meeting today, to deal not just with COVID-related measures but with the business of the House. I have heard concerns from government members about the opposition slowing down legislation, when in fact the opposition proposed that the government continue to operate and meet throughout the summer.

At the end of the summer, and the four days that we ended up having for these special sittings of the House, Parliament was prorogued for six weeks. During those six weeks, let alone the summer period, there would have been all kinds of time for the finance, government operations or other committees to review the spending to date and the planned spending going forward. That is not what we saw. That gives my colleagues and me pause. Canadians wonder who is keeping an eye on the register while all this is going on.

Once we did come back, following prorogation, we had a more than 30-hour filibuster at the finance committee with respect to a question of privilege. This was not an ideological difference between members. This was very much a procedural issue that bogged down a committee that should have been doing a lot of heavy lifting during the pandemic, when businesses and individuals were looking for real support from the government and looking for Canada's parliamentarians to do the heavy lifting.

We know rapid testing would have been a real boon to businesses and to the economy, to be able to bolster testing efforts and to track and trace COVID-19 throughout this year. We were slow. As a country, we were slow to get those tests out to the provinces. Today, we heard good news. There is going to be a very limited release of COVID vaccine in Canada, but Canadians wonder what the timetable looks like for next year. When are they going to be vaccinated? Who is going to be vaccinated first? How are those vaccines going to be administered? We are looking for a plan from the government on those measures.

While we are expecting the government to be able to deliver in response specifically to the pandemic with things like rapid testing and vaccine distribution, we are also looking for it to turn its eye to the small businesses that have had an incredibly difficult year, an unparalleled year with respect to how bad it was. We need the government to take a look at planned tax increases for small businesses, hit the pause button, let people catch their breath and let businesses start to earn in what we hope to see in 2021: a return to normal, as vaccines roll out and we better understand COVID-19.

This is really the nature of what we are looking for regarding this opposition day motion. When we look at increases to CPP, the carbon tax and planned escalator taxes, businesses want to see a signal from the government that Canada's Parliament has their backs. Canada's official opposition, the Conservatives, want to let businesses know we do have their backs and we are looking for all members in the House to join us in sending that very important signal to Canadian businesses.

With that, I believe my time is running out. I am thankful for the opportunity, and I look forward to taking questions from colleagues.

● (1615)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank my neighbour to the east for his intervention today. I am just a bit farther down the 401 than him, but we are both very fortunate to share a part of Ontario that attracts a lot of tourism and brings a lot of people from around the world to both of our areas.

I mention that because he discussed a number of the programs the government has set up, but one thing I did not hear him talk about, and I apologize if I missed it, was the regional relief recovery fund. This was the \$1.5 billion fund to support businesses. It is so important because it really supported a lot of local tourism businesses, with 25% of the funds going to local tourism. It helped secure over 100,000 jobs. I wonder if the member can comment on what he thinks of this fund and the fact that, in the fall economic statement, there was a commitment to increase that by half a billion dollars.

Does he see that as a win for his riding, my riding and other ridings that support tourism?

Mr. Michael Barrett: Madam Speaker, what businesses want are details, as I said early on. I did not give an exhaustive list of the programs that were introduced this year. Some of them have been helpful and some of them held promise, but were introduced too late or with details that were light. Of the ones that have helped businesses, I have heard thanks and requests for more from constituents and businesses here, but we need to have a plan going forward and to have that legislation in place before the new year.

We have heard a few times this past year that legislation arrives on the eve of the expiry of a program and the government is looking for unanimous consent of the House to pass it. It does not give us the opportunity to give that oversight and does not give us the opportunity to hear from stakeholders to allow local businesses, such as here in the Thousand Islands region, to give their input to committee. That is what we are looking for: more details and more of a plan.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, my question is regarding some of the supports we have had for small businesses. In my riding of Edmonton Strathcona, a number of small businesses have really suffered because they were not able to access the rent subsidy program. Like the member said, the program was improved and made much better in the second iteration, but it did not help those who needed the help going back to the beginning of the pandemic.

Would the member agree it would be appropriate to backdate the rent relief program for small businesses to the beginning of the pandemic?

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• (1620)

Mr. Michael Barrett: Madam Speaker, thanks very much to the member for Edmonton Strathcona for the question. I know the city well, having lived there when I served in the Canadian Armed Forces. This speaks to the speed at which programs have rolled out. In the beginning, the Conservative opposition was looking for more direct support in terms of returning GST remittances from the government right back into businesses' pockets to allow them to prepare for the storm.

Now that we are through the first part of the storm, maybe through the eye of it, and we are into the second wave, we need to see from the government a concrete plan and costing. We need to know what it has in store. More taxes are not going to help businesses even before we look at backdating programs that are already in place.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Speaker, not to be a spoilsport, because I am not that kind of person, but there is something I am having trouble understanding about the Conservatives' desire to opt out of the carbon tax.

A time of recovery is usually an opportunity to make transitions. The government announced that it intends to pursue a slightly greener recovery. I do not see how abolishing the carbon tax would support the economy. I think that the only winners would be the oil and gas industry. That seems to me to be a provision tailored to the oil and gas industry.

I would like my colleague to tell me something. Who besides the oil and gas industry would benefit from postponing the carbon tax?

[*English*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member has 10 seconds.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Madam Speaker, in my riding, farmers and people who have to travel long distances do not have the benefit of public transit. They would all benefit from freezing the carbon tax. The abolition of the carbon tax is not specifically proposed in this motion, but I must say, a strong Canadian natural resource sector is good for the whole world. We have the best resource extraction and we produce the cleanest oil—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am speaking to the House from my home, a little farther down the 401 than the last member, from Kingston and the Islands.

Before I go any further, I want to thank all the people behind the scenes, who are making this hybrid session of Parliament possible, for their incredible work. I was thinking of this as I was sitting here watching them control this Zoom meeting. The fact that so many people are contributing to making this work really says something about the incredibly dedicated people on Parliament Hill on and off site who are assisting with this.

Today I will be sharing my time with the member for Brampton North.

I will touch on my position on this opposition motion as best I can, and give some insight as to why I am not supporting it. This probably does not come as a surprise to members as it seems as though, based on what I have been hearing today, none of the parties other than the one that moved the motion will be supporting it.

In particular, I have trouble with two clauses toward the end of the motion. The first was postponing the increase of the Canada pension plan adjustments. For starters, just because there is a pandemic right now does not mean people suddenly do not have to plan for their retirement anymore, and that the government does not have to play a role in that. I would argue that now, more than ever, people have anxieties surfacing about how they are going to be retiring and whether there is going to be security there for them.

Especially in the economy we live in right now, where there are more precarious workers and more people are moving between jobs throughout their careers, we need to make sure they are properly taken care of. A strong, robust Canada pension plan is the way to do that as we continue to move through the changes our economy is facing, so I have an issue with that.

The next issue, and I have risen in the House on a number of occasions to speak of it, is specifically with respect to the carbon tax, as the Conservatives like to call it. I have said many times in the past that it is not a tax, because all of the money is returned to people. It is a market mechanism: a way to incentivize the market to make certain choices. I am always baffled by the fact that Conservatives do not get this. They have always claimed to be the champions of economic policy, and that they would know better than anybody if that was the case, which I think more people are questioning now than ever before. They would know, if that was the case, that incentivizing the market by putting tools in there to help people make choices is the only thing in a free and open market that can actually have a good lasting impact on that market.

That is why the government never chose to use the opportunity to tax. A tax would take that money, put it into general revenues and utilize it for other purposes. Instead, this is a tool to collect money and then redistribute that money back out, in particular benefiting those who are having the least environmental impact possible. Of course, that takes time. These things take time to change, but at the same time we will see the price on that continually increase. Rather than happen all at once, it was scheduled to slowly be ramped up so it could have that impact in the marketplace to encourage and incentivize consumers in the market to make different choices.

Because this motion completely talks about government support of small businesses, it is appropriate to discuss the plans that have been put in place: the various programs that the government has set up and executed over the last several months that have supported small businesses. I would start this discussion by referring back to the fall economic statement.

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• (1625)

In a question to the member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, I asked about tourism, which came up in the fall economic statement. I asked specifically about support for the tourism sector, which has been hit really hard during this pandemic. Tourism represents a large part of the economic activity in my riding, as is the case in his riding, and no doubt we have seen a tremendous impact given the way the pandemic has affected small businesses in the Kingston area.

That is why I was pleased with the government's regional relief and recovery fund. It is \$1.5 billion specifically to support businesses that were unable to access other federal pandemic support programs. It has supported over 100,000 jobs and 14,700 businesses, but had a really important impact on the local tourism sectors in my community of Kingston and the Islands. To date, it has provided \$202 million in support to more than 2,800 tourism-related businesses.

I was very happy to see, in the fall economic update, the Minister of Finance commit an additional half a billion dollars to this particular fund. These are the businesses that are going to be impacted by this pandemic the longest, in my opinion. Tourism, unlike some other sectors, will not immediately start up again in the strong state it left off. That is because there is going to be a lot of concern among people who are looking to travel. I do not think the confidence right after the pandemic will be as high as it was before the pandemic, and there will be less desire to immediately get on a plane and go to other parts of the world.

This sector, therefore, is going to be hit longer than some other sectors that might be able to bounce back relatively quickly, and this additional half a billion dollars really gives the opportunity to make sure everyone is taken care of for the long term. There are a number of other programs as well.

One thing I like to do often when I am speaking, because I think that sometimes we can get lost in the details of only talking about what is going on in Canada, is to compare Canada with some of the other countries in the world. That is what I want to do for the last two minutes I have today.

According to the Canadian Federation of Independent Business's October 2020 survey, 66% of Canadian businesses are fully open and 3% are fully closed because of the pandemic. This was as of September 20. I raise this because I want to compare it with what is going on in the United States, where 100,000 businesses have fully closed. About 60% of businesses that have shut down in the U.S. since the start of the pandemic will not be reopening. Canada, to date, has recovered 80.9% of the jobs that were lost between February and April, versus only 60% in the United States.

Those two stats show Canada's performance throughout the pandemic, and based on the supports from various levels of government, Canada's response, comparatively speaking, has been stronger.

I will not stop at the United States. I would also like to reference the United Kingdom very quickly.

The U.K. government has a program called the job retention scheme, which is equivalent to the Canada emergency wage subsidy. Just for comparison purposes, as of November 5, it had spent 43 billion pounds, which is roughly \$73 billion Canadian, and we had spent \$50 billion Canadian. We have spent about \$23 billion less than the U.K., but it has double our population.

When we look at the amount of money that has been spent by the federal government specifically on businesses, I would argue that this government has had a robust plan to support businesses throughout the entire pandemic. I have no doubt, and I have the greatest degree of confidence, that we will be there right through to the other side of this so that we can come back in a much stronger position than we would have been had we not helped out Canadians and small businesses.

• (1630)

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am glad tourism in the member's area is doing so well. While he was giving his speech, I got a text from the CEO of Tourism Saskatoon asking for an urgent meeting with me. Things are not going well in Saskatoon. It lost the Junos, which was a \$9-million hit, on March 15, and it has never recovered from that.

The hon. member talked about how well things are going in his riding, but that is not the case all over this country. Saskatoon is one place that I can tell him is in deep financial trouble right now and may never recover from it.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I do not think the member was listening to me. I did not say the tourism sector in my riding was doing well. I said the tourism sector represented a lot of the economic activity in my riding and, in fact, is being hit extremely hard by the pandemic. I also said the government has invested so much in supporting the sector and continues to do so, as indicated in the fall economic statement.

I encourage him to reach out to the economic adviser or the chamber of commerce that reached out to him and report back the good news that the federal government is going to continue to be there for tourism and has just recently announced in the fall economic statement an additional \$500 million to support this sector through the pandemic.

• (1635)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Kingston and the Islands for his speech.

I really liked some of the words that he repeated several times, including the word "tourism". I am the proud Bloc Québécois critic for tourism, and I think that I have a good handle on the file.

I think that \$500 million for tourism across Canada is peanuts for an industry that has been hard hit since the beginning of the crisis and was subject to the lockdown. It will take a lot of time for this industry to recover because, as we know, it will still be some time before we have a vaccine. That means it will be difficult for people to stay in hotels and attend events, so it will be difficult for the tourism industry to recover.

Business of Supply

The Alliance de l'industrie touristique du Québec asked for two things before the economic update, and I was even able to ask the government representatives in the House about them. Those two things are an additional extension of the Canada emergency wage subsidy and assistance for fixed costs to free up more cash flow.

In April, the Deputy Prime Minister, who is now also the Minister of Finance, announced that the government was committed to increasing liquidity support, but nothing has been done to date.

The only announcement the government made for the tourism industry in the economic update was that it will now provide 100% government-guaranteed financing for businesses. There are limits to what it is willing to do for the tourism industry, and what it is doing is not enough.

Does my colleague really think that he is going to help the tourism industry by letting it go further into debt?

[English]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I am sure the member, being the critic, knows a lot about this. However, as an MP who represents a riding that has a lot of tourism in it, I also know quite a bit about this subject matter. I can tell him that there are individuals with small businesses who are continually asking the government, as I mentioned during my speech, to continue to support them through the economic recovery fund that was specifically designed for businesses such as theirs.

I do not know why the member would suggest there was nothing in the fall economic statement that referenced this. As I said during my speech, and I believe I even brought it up in the answer to the first question, an additional half a billion dollars is being put into a fund that supports more businesses in the tourism sector than any other sector.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I will continue with the tourism theme. What anchors the tourism industry in the Okanagan Valley is the wine industry, and there is one thing among the laundry list of questions in the opposition day motion that jumps out at me and I can support. It is postponing the alcohol escalator tax for 2021.

When is the member's government going to come up with something to replace the excise tax exemption that the government took away and that the industry really needs for its survival?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I do not know when. I think that was a rhetorical question, because the member would know that.

The increase in the excise taxes, specifically with respect to inflation, is in keeping with what many of the provinces and territories are doing throughout the country. That is where the increase comes from.

Ms. Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to debate the motion brought forward by the hon. member.

Canadian small and medium-sized businesses—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I remind the hon. member to use her headset, for the interpreters.

Ms. Ruby Sahota: Madam Speaker, Canadian small and medium-sized businesses are the core of our economy. They represent 99.7% of businesses in Canada and employ over 15.8 million Canadians from coast to coast to coast. They are the main street businesses that Canadians frequent day in and day out. They are the businesses that fill Canadian towns and cities' business parks. They are the engine of our economy.

Our government knows that supporting these very businesses is critical to Canadians and to Canada. That is why we acted immediately in early March, when the COVID-19 pandemic was in its early days, to roll out a series of support measures to help Canadian SMEs through the sudden economic shock they were facing. We continue to be there to support SMEs through the ongoing difficulties they are experiencing so they can get through this to the other side.

We also know that capital is critical to small and medium-size businesses to help them pay their bills, continue to keep their staff and to keep their doors open to provide the goods and services Canadians need through this difficult period. That is why the government has rolled out, adjusted and updated a series of programs to provide liquidity supports to our SMEs. Capital is the lifeblood of businesses and we leaned in to help Canadian businesses.

One of the key programs I am proud that our government has introduced is the regional relief and recovery fund, or the RRRF, which my colleague was just referring to. The RRRF allows our government to support businesses that are not able to access other emergency funding. To date, we have already provided more than \$1.5 billion in assistance to businesses and communities that may require additional supports to cope with and recover from the pandemic.

In the fall economic statement, we announced that we would be adding another \$500 million to the program, bringing the total to more than \$2 billion. This funding is being delivered through Canada's regional development agencies and community futures network to mitigate the financial pressure experienced by businesses and organizations and allow them to continue their operations, including paying their employees.

The RRRF has also supported projects by businesses, organizations and communities to prepare now for a successful recovery. To date, this program has protected more than 102,000 jobs and supported more than 14,700 businesses, including more than 8,500 clients in rural areas and 5,100 women-owned businesses. This is just one of the many programs our government has introduced to help businesses and entrepreneurs during this time of crisis.

We introduced the Canada emergency business account, or CE-BA, which provided \$40,000 to eligible small businesses at zero interest until December 31, 2022. For businesses that can repay early, 25% of the amount is forgivable. That amounts to a direct injection of \$10,000 for each [*Technical difficulty—Editor*].

Business of Supply

• (1640)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I will interrupt the hon. member for a moment.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Jonquière on a point of order.

Mr. Mario Simard: Madam Speaker, the audio is out, and so are the video and the interpretation.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The Wi-Fi cut out. I think we all noticed.

[*English*]

Could the hon. member try again?

Ms. Ruby Sahota: Madam Speaker, I am very sorry for the connectivity issues.

It has delivered nearly \$32 billion to Canadian businesses from coast to coast to coast.

We know that as long as this pandemic continues, our work is not done because many businesses continue to be in crisis due to the pandemic. Knowing that businesses in certain sectors continue to struggle disproportionately from the pandemic, our government is providing further liquidity support as announced in the November 30 fall economic statement.

The highly affected sectors credit availability program is a new stream of liquidity support for those businesses that need it most. Delivered by the BDC, it will provide 100% government-backed loan support for businesses that have experienced significant revenue loss as people stay home to fight the spread of the virus. The interest rates will be lower than those offered under the business credit availability program and beneath typical market rates for the businesses that have been hardest hit. BDC is working hard with financial institutions to finalize these details to make this program available to SMEs as soon as possible in the new year.

I would like to draw attention to the fact that, in addition to these direct government support programs, two government financial Crown corporations, the Business Development Bank and Export Development Canada, have stepped up to be there and support Canadian entrepreneurs and businesses. The BDC, which has a counter-cyclical mandate to help even more when SMEs need it most, undertook a series of measures to help entrepreneurs through the pandemic at no additional cost to government.

In the initial weeks of the pandemic, the BDC deferred payments for its clients, waived fees and facilitated access to working capital for Canadian SMEs through its online financing platform. It proactively worked with its clients and quickly onboarded new businesses to provide them with financial support. As of October 31, BDC's direct COVID support lending totals \$2.5 billion. The BDC also adjusted the advisory services it offers to help entrepreneurs and small businesses pivot. Finally, the BDC worked to support the venture capital sector through its new BDC bridge financing program by increasing access to capital by matching financing rounds to eligible Canadian start-ups. As of October, BDC has authorized \$160 million across 56 companies through its program.

For its part, Export Development Canada, through temporary domestic market powers, has also stepped in through a series of measures to support Canadian businesses. It has enabled Canadian businesses to continue to operate and export. It has also deployed its expertise and knowledge to help entrepreneurs navigate these difficult times, and it has helped Canadian start-ups through venture capital investments.

Through all of these liquidity measures, this government has facilitated access to financing to Canadian businesses to support them through this crucial time. We have clearly shown our commitment and we will continue to do, because small and medium-sized businesses are the backbone of our communities. We need them as they will play a crucial part in Canada's economic recovery, and they will help us build the future.

• (1645)

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Madam Speaker, many businesses across the country and in my riding are really struggling as a result of this pandemic. Many seasonal businesses, such as tourism, camps and northern airlines, have not been able to access a lot of the government programming that has been brought forward. Part of what we are proposing in our opposition day motion today is to postpone tax increases on the carbon tax and the escalator tax, which would impact many businesses, particularly those in the tourism and hospitality sectors.

The debate today really has indicated that the Liberals will not support our motion. I would like to ask my colleague for Brampton North if she believes that right now is a good time to be increasing taxes on many struggling businesses.

Ms. Ruby Sahota: Madam Speaker, that is a fair question. Through the various supports I have outlined in my speech and so many others that have been provided to businesses, our government knows that businesses need support at this time. We have provided wage subsidy supports. We have provided CEBA, for example, which has gone to many of my local businesses. They have reached out saying that this, with the commercial rent assistance, really is what has kept them afloat.

I know the member's question regarding the excise tax is a fair one. However, we should also keep in mind that consistency is also important when it comes to the business climate. This is an annual increase that goes in place every year. Some tax fairness should be kept in mind and we should have consistency when it comes to taxes across the board. However, we will continue to deliver the supports these businesses need to make sure they are supported at this time.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, we agree with the motion's preamble.

Business of Supply

We do indeed need to do more to help businesses in distress. However, we do not agree with the motion's proposals for how to do that.

My colleague talked about the wage subsidy. Certain businesses and not-for-profit organizations were not eligible for the subsidy even though they should have been. One example is the Val-Jalbert village historical village. This is completely unfair.

Other organizations have been deemed eligible, however. Just off the top of my head, there is the Liberal Party of Canada. It was deemed eligible for the wage subsidy. It has not repaid the money it got. The Liberals told us they would stop collecting the wage subsidy but would not pay back the money they got. In other words, claiming the subsidy was wrong, but they are going to keep the money anyway.

Does my hon. colleague believe the money the Liberal Party got from the wage subsidy should be given to businesses that really need it?

• (1650)

[*English*]

Ms. Ruby Sahota: Madam Speaker, through the wage subsidy program, our government has been able to protect 3.5 million jobs across this country. At the end of the day, it is jobs that we are concerned with. If this support were not available, employees would fall back with no other hope in sight. What is most important and what we are focused on when it comes to the wage subsidy is the various types of non-profits and businesses we have been able to support. Those 3.5 million jobs show why my colleague stated we have done better at retaining our jobs or bouncing back and recovering jobs than even our neighbour to the south. It is supports like this that have helped us have that recovery.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, I agree with the overall sentiment of the motion the Conservative Party has moved, which is that businesses are indeed struggling across this country. However, it is important to note that not all businesses are. It is being referred to as a K-shaped recovery, where there are a number of businesses that are actually doing very well during this period of time and are in fact reaping record profits. Of course, there are many other businesses that are not and are facing bankruptcy and survival.

The piece I want to ask my hon. colleague about is the Conservatives' call to postpone the increase of the carbon tax. Those in the NDP on this side of the House believe that there is an intense, serious climate crisis that is not waiting for a pandemic or for this particular economic exigency. We need to take action now.

Does the member agree with the Conservatives that we should postpone a carbon tax increase that is intended to help us get a grip on climate change and, by the way, consumers and businesses can avoid by reducing their carbon?

Ms. Ruby Sahota: Madam Speaker, my colleague's question is a very important one because in the post-pandemic recovery what is going to be really important is making sure that we spur new innovation. Not only does the carbon tax bring down our emissions, but it also helps small businesses and businesses come up with new innovative ways and will help grow our—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Unfortunately, the time is up.

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 Calgary Rocky Ridge, Small Business; the hon. member for Courtenay—Alberni, Indigenous Affairs; and the hon. member for Edmonton West, Government Accountability.

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Madam Speaker, I plan to split my time with the member for Northumberland—Peterborough South.

I am very pleased to rise to speak in strong support of the motion put forward by my friend, the shadow minister for finance and the hon. member for Carleton. I am very proud to be seconding the motion, a motion that could not be more timely as we approach the Christmas season and as workers and businesses right across Canada are dealing with unprecedented challenges 10 months into COVID.

That is what this motion is about. It is about calling on the government to provide certainty to businesses and workers by providing the details of the highly affected sectors credit availability program. It is nice to make an announcement, but the devil is in the details. That is why the motion calls on the government to provide those details by December 16.

The motion further calls on the government to fix the failed LEEFF program for large employers. This is a program that was announced on May 11. It was not until recently that a mere two applications were approved. There have been at least 17 applications, and many large employers simply are not applying because they find the eligibility criteria to be cumbersome.

There is no question that the challenges faced by small businesses and all businesses across Canada are significant. To that end, to underscore the level of concern within the business community, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business undertook a sizable survey of small business owners, wherein 46% were worried that their business could not survive. In that light, the motion calls on the government to provide assurance to struggling businesses by not increasing taxes and by removing job creation barriers, including taxes and regulations, so that as we transform and move past COVID into a COVID recovery, we can unleash the great Canadian workforce and transform, as the member for Carleton stated, from a credit card economy to a paycheque economy.

According to the CFIB, 51% of businesses are concerned about cash flow, 46% are concerned about debt, and approximately 15% are contemplating filing for bankruptcy or entering receivership as we speak. According to the CFIB, some 220,000 small and medium-sized enterprises may not make it through COVID. That represents 19% of SMEs. The CFIB's best estimate at present is that 158,000 SMEs may not make it through COVID, representing 14% of the SMEs across Canada.

Business of Supply

• (1655)

When we talk about SMEs, we are talking about 99.7% of all businesses. They account for more than 70% of private sector employment, according to the Canadian Chamber of Commerce. It really is staggering to see those numbers.

In the face of that, surely the last thing a responsible government would do, as businesses are struggling like never before, would be to raise taxes on businesses. Evidently, across the way we have an irresponsible government, because that is precisely what the government is proceeding to do, starting with a payroll tax increase on January 1.

When we talk about payroll taxes, it is important to recognize that they are cumbersome from an administrative standpoint, particularly for small and medium-sized businesses. They have to be paid regardless of the profitability of the business.

According to a study from the University of Toronto's policy and economic analysis program, 64,000 jobs are projected to be lost as a result of the government's payroll tax hikes. That estimate was prior to COVID-19. I would submit that that number is probably significantly higher now, considering the enormous challenges small and medium-sized businesses in particular are facing due to COVID. Very simply, now is not the time to increase payroll taxes for struggling small businesses.

As bad as a payroll tax hike is, it gets worse, because businesses are going to be hit with a Liberal double whammy in the way of a hike to the job-killing tax on everything, the Liberal government's favourite tax, the carbon tax. It is a tax that disproportionately burdens small businesses. Indeed, small and medium-sized businesses pay more than 50% of the carbon tax and get only a fraction of the rebates.

In the face of that, we are calling on the government to do the responsible thing and support struggling businesses. Supporting them will allow them to keep more money so they can invest, address cash flow issues, pay down debt, and keep their lights on and their doors open.

I hope the government heeds the advice and follows through on what we, on this side of the House, are proposing to do. It is eminently reasonable.

• (1700)

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as parliamentary secretary for small business, I certainly have, at heart, the interests of our hard-working entrepreneurs and small businesses right across the country. I would like to point out that in the member's home province, there are 500,000 employees being supported by our emergency wage subsidy.

There are thousands of businesses, 800,000 across the country to be exact, that have used our loan program, which includes a grant. When the member talks about the importance of our entrepreneurs not having too much debt, here on this side of the government we heard that plea and we have created programs in consequence.

When it comes, however, to his request that we effectively abolish the price on pollution, I think this government has shown that we can support our small businesses and our private sector, while at the same time attacking climate change and continuing the fight against climate change.

Does the member opposite suggest that we should completely abandon the crisis that is literally at our doorstep when it comes to the environmental catastrophe we will find ourselves in if we do not continue to take action based on science, as we have with the price on pollution?

Mr. Michael Cooper: Madam Speaker, very simply, the motion calls on the government to put a pause on the carbon tax hike in the face of businesses facing an unprecedented challenge at this particular time.

The member sounded the alarm about climate change. Let me remind the hon. member that the government is about 99% off its targets for 2030, so we see a lot of rhetoric from that side, but not a lot of action in terms of delivery.

With respect to my home province, the government has wholly failed the people of Alberta, including in its abandonment of the energy sector.

• (1705)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

The Conservatives want to postpone or eliminate the carbon tax and the alcohol escalator tax. Based on my calculations, that would cost the government \$2 billion in revenue.

The carbon tax is what worries me. This government has targets that it plans on meeting, but it has not announced any real action, aside from maybe the carbon tax.

How would my colleague suggest that we recoup that \$2 billion in lost revenue? We agree that this money is needed right now. Furthermore, how would my colleague suggest we replace the carbon tax in order to meet our greenhouse gas reduction targets?

[*English*]

Mr. Michael Cooper: Madam Speaker, I would submit that the government being 99% off its 2030 targets demonstrates the carbon tax does not work. The carbon tax is just another tax. It is quite interesting that, while the government is 99% off its 2030 targets, it is ready to propose even more ambitious targets for 2050. This again illustrates there is a lot of rhetoric on the other side but not a lot of delivery.

The policies of the government have been very harmful to small businesses. It has been slow out of the gate and needs to do better.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I hope my colleague and neighbour from St. Albert—Edmonton will indulge me. I want to ask a question about supports for women. We know investment in small businesses that include women is at about 2.2%. Women are 51% of the population and about 2.2% of the investment.

Business of Supply

Today is the 50th anniversary of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women, so it is a good time to talk about this. When I speak to the small business members, the people who are working in small business in my community, one of the things they talk about is investment for women in all kinds of different initiatives. I do not see that in the motion, and I would like to hear my hon. colleague's comments on that.

Mr. Michael Cooper: Madam Speaker, let me concur with the hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona. I agree with her that women entrepreneurs are vital, and we need to support them and all entrepreneurs. That is what this motion speaks to by holding the line on taxes and ensuring the government provides clarity regarding supports for businesses.

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise in the House virtually, as they say, to speak to the motion today.

Small businesses are without a doubt the lifeblood of our economies. They support our front-line workers, provide the services our communities depend on, give back to charities, contribute nearly a third of our nation's GDP and employ 70% of the workforce in the private sector.

Our economy, though, and our small businesses were unfortunately suffering even before the pandemic. Growth in the real domestic GDP had slowed to 0.1% in the fourth quarter of 2019. The annual growth rate of the real GDP in 2019 was only 1.6%, down from 2% in 2018. By comparison, real GDP in our neighbour to the south was 2.3%.

Unfortunately, the story does not get better economically as we faced the pandemic. Canada invested the most of any G20 country in its stimulus program at 16.4%. I will respectfully remind members of the government that 16.4% comes from the taxpayers, not from the government.

Despite this record spending, we continue to hold among the highest unemployment rate. At the start of COVID, our unemployment rate was 13.7% while the OECD average was 8.7%. Fast-forward to August, and our unemployment rate was at 10.2%, while the OECD average was 7.4%. That is about a 3% difference, but it literally represents millions of Canadians who should have had a job but did not because of the government.

We need economic policies that will help our economy grow quickly. Our workers need jobs, our small business owners need clients and, quite frankly, our governments need tax revenue to help the most vulnerable. There is really only one cure for all of these challenges, which is pure, unadulterated economic growth.

When economies have faced challenges in the past, whether they were world wars or other pandemics, history has shown over and over again that those who choose to rely on their workers and citizens are able to recover faster than those who rely on government-based, socialist policies.

In the United States, JFK and Ronald Reagan were able to create conditions for unparalleled economic growth by slashing tax rates and reducing needless, burdensome regulation. When we contrast the American record to those of the Soviet Union and other Com-

munist countries during the same time, we see they had high levels of poverty and poor rates of growth.

We often hear from members on the other side of the aisle about the Harper legacy and the Harper economy. I am going to tell them the facts, and I will ask members to remember what I said earlier about our recent recovery from the global pandemic and how we were laggards. Here we were the heroes.

From 2009 to 2015, Canada's GDP grew 13%, which was number one in the G7. We also had, from 2009 to 2015, job numbers that grew the most compared to all the G7 countries. Contrast that to now, where we are now second last coming out of this pandemic.

The evidence is overwhelming. To build back Canada stronger, we need economic policies that unleash our Canadian workers and liberate our job creators from excessive taxation and regulation. Let us get specific. Let us talk about some of these programs.

As we know, certain areas of the economy were impacted more than others during the pandemic. Tourism has had a terrible time. Hospitality has had huge challenges. For the highly affected sectors, the credit availability program was no doubt welcomed by those sectors that have struggled immensely under the weight of this pandemic.

However, we have no details. I heard members from the other side talk about the fact that they just announced the program so how could they have the details. The reality is we are nearly a year into this pandemic. The time for messing around and getting programs wrong in this iterative process is over. We need to get it right and we need to get it right out of the box. We have had enough time.

There are Canadians in a mental health crisis. There are businesses going bankrupt. There is an opioid crisis. We cannot be messing around. We need to get this right, and we need to get it right at first go.

Speaking of getting it wrong, we have the large employer financing facility. This was meant to help workers, which was a laudable goal no doubt, by injecting liquidity into some of our largest companies. Unfortunately, due to the poor design, this only had two successful applicants as of November, despite the fact there was over \$5 million paid to consultants. There was \$5 million paid to consultants with two successful applicants. What does this tell us? Liberal insiders do well, while the rest of Canada suffers.

Business of Supply

• (1710)

When we talk about postponing the increase in the Canada pension plan and the payroll tax increase, I am surprised there is not more conversation in the media and otherwise. As of January 1, every small business owner, every employee will have a reduction in their take-home pay, this during the middle of a pandemic or coming to the end of a pandemic. We are reducing everyone's net income.

I heard members from the NDP make some excellent arguments that we needed to maintain the integrity of the CPP. Quite frankly, I agree with them. We need to ensure that program protects seniors for generations. Now is just not the right time. Maybe we could increase it in the future. I share their commitment in maintaining the sustainability of the CPP.

The next thing I would like to talk about is the postponement of the increase to the carbon tax and the alcohol escalator tax. There has been a lot of discussion on this. Members on the other side have discussed the fact that we are talking about eliminating the carbon tax. That is not in this motion. What is in the motion is to get rid of the automatic escalator. To my mind, automatic escalators have no place in Canada. What that says is that we will pass this once, but by that act, we will increase the taxes every year, in some occasions, for many years. There is a tax increase without getting parliamentary consent. I do not think that is right. In particular, in this case it is a challenge.

The Prime Minister has said, in responding to a question about tax increases to pay for pandemic spending, that the last thing Canadians need to see is a tax increase right now. I agree 100% with the Prime Minister. Despite this, on April 1, the alcohol escalator tax went into gear. That meant that in 2020, the cost of beer, wine and other alcohol increased in price in the middle of a pandemic.

We know the impacts of the COVID pandemic have been devastating for the hospitality and tourism sectors. Many of these restaurants and bars survive on the sale of alcohol, their high-margin items. Now we have increased the cost of that to their consumers and to them. We are penalizing them again.

I would ask the members on the other side if they really think the pandemic is a good time to increase taxes on the hospitality and tourism sectors.

Then there is the carbon tax increase. Once again we are talking about escalators. We can have the broader debate about the carbon tax on another day. Right now we are talking about whether this the time to increase the carbon tax on Canadians. Is this really the time to increase any tax on Canadians?

As many may know, I have a private member's bill. I had the PBO cost it. My private member's bill is a very modest exemption in the carbon tax on one sector, the agricultural sector. That very modest exemption in one sector of the economy will cost farmers over \$250 million over the next five years, and part of that is because of the escalator.

When we broaden that out beyond the agricultural sector, beyond the small modest exemption for which I am asking to help farmers,

the same one that the NDP, provincially, gave to farmers in B.C., that is \$250 million. Just imagine the impact of that during the pandemic.

Canadians are hurting. The pandemic has caused incalculable harm to our physical and mental health and has significantly damaged many Canadians' finances. To help us through COVID-19, the government took a loan from the world to help them bridge the pandemic to a better day. Unfortunately, too many of these dollars were siphoned off by Liberal insiders instead of helping people in need.

However, good news is on the way. Better days are now in sight. If we want to limit the damage of the pandemic to our country, we need to expedite the defeat of this most horrible virus. The health and indeed the very lives of Canadians are at stake. The path to eliminating the virus is now clear. It depends on an effective strategy for procurement and distribution of rapid tests and—

• (1715)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We have to proceed to the member to questions and comments.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade.

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I certainly appreciated what my colleague had to say at the end of his comments, as in other comments in the House earlier, regarding the need to continue to help people and to spend money to help real Canadians, real people. This government has spent significantly, I believe upward of \$325 billion, to help real people. I hope the Conservatives remember that when they come back several months from now to say that it was too much. On this side of the House, we think the important thing to do right now is to continue to invest in Canadians.

I would like to come back to the carbon tax, only because I am not sure I fully understood my colleague's position on this very important point. I believe I heard him say that the price on pollution was not something the Conservative Party, or at least he, was against; that he was simply asking for a pause in the increase. Is it now the Conservative position that the price on pollution is a good idea?

• (1720)

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Madam Speaker, the member is one of the best orators in the chamber, so I appreciate that.

Business of Supply

No, that is not the Conservative Party's platform. With respect to this motion and only this motion, it is about the escalator. It is not about the carbon tax in total. I said that we could have that debate another day. In fact, I look forward to having that larger debate. With respect to the motion, it is an eminently reasonable proposal to stop the escalators during the pandemic.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Speaker, honestly, all of the rhetoric on the carbon tax this evening has been so destructive and boring that I might as well be at the dentist getting a root canal.

Even before the crisis, the Conservatives presented a number of motions to restrict the scope of the carbon tax. This has nothing to do with the crisis. Let's be frank: Eliminating the carbon tax will just encourage polluters. The oil and gas sector generates the most greenhouse gases in Canada. This is yet another attempt to support that industry.

I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on this, because in the past four years, the oil and gas sector has received \$24 billion. If he does not think that is enough, I think he needs to re-examine his priorities.

[*English*]

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Madam Speaker, I am sorry the member does not have time for small business owners and farmers. I can show him bills from my farmers, which are tens of thousands of dollars. Farmers and business owners are barely able to survive. I am sorry we have taken him away from his other important duties. I have no idea what would be more important to him than the Canadian people, farmers, small business owners and workers. Quite frankly, I am disappointed.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, I found my hon. colleague's last answer to be basically a rush to refuge in rhetoric to some very important points that were made by my hon. colleague and by the parliamentary secretary. I found myself confused by my hon. colleague's position as well.

This motion is a jumble of different taxes with different purposes. For instance, the carbon tax is something that is intended to help deal with the pressing issue of climate change, which is not stopping. In fact, it is accelerating and it is also an avoidable tax for many people.

With respect to the Canada pension plan, there is only one way that people will have a secure retirement and that is to put away a bit of money for a long period of time. Any financial planner will tell us that this must be done all the time, through thick and thin. That is the only way we will have a well-funded retirement.

Could my hon. colleague clarify for the House if he is in favour of a carbon tax increase at any time or is he hiding behind this motion? The Conservative Party has a well-known aversion to any taxes at all for any purpose at all. Is he just using this motion to cover up that basic political philosophy?

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Madam Speaker, I am in favour of Canadians and I am in favour of the government getting out of the way. Canadians are the key to fighting climate change, are the key to fighting this pandemic and are they key to recovering our economy.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, a good place to start is with the statement the member just made, that he believes the Canadian government needs to get out of the way. In fairness to the member, he is likely not alone. A lot of Conservatives have that sort of mentality, that the government needs to step aside and does not need to get engaged. I will highlight the difference between Conservative thinking quite often versus what the Liberals talk about.

When we think of the coronavirus and the pandemic, it is not unique just to Canada, as we all know; it is happening around the world. Different governments respond in a different fashion. People are very much aware that prior to the pandemic, the government's focus was on Canada's middle class and those aspiring to be a part of it. Many of the policy initiatives were there to support Canada's middle class. Along came the pandemic and we did not forget the primary objective of the government, as mandated by our Prime Minister.

During the pandemic, I am sure people can understand and appreciate why the government needed to focus attention on that. I suspect there was a great deal of resistance by the Conservatives with respect to the degree the government needed to get involved. Therein lies a fundamental difference between the Government of Canada, headed by the Liberal Prime Minister, versus a Conservative opposition.

We understood how important it was to be there in a very real and tangible way for Canadians and businesses. That is the reason we took the actions we did as early as we did. I believe most people in the chamber, especially with hindsight, would understand and appreciate why it was so important. We have even seen some facts that clearly demonstrate we are on the right track.

For example, if the government had not provided the supports back in March and April, what would have been different? Millions of Canadians would not have had the disposable income they required to pay their bills on a monthly basis. Whether people are employed or unemployed, their utility bills, grocery bills and mortgage payments do not stop. What would the population have done? In good part, those who were positioned well would have been able to get financing to sustain themselves and there would have been much higher personal debt at a much higher interest rate. Many talk about banks making great profits. That would have meant banks would have made that much more profit.

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What about the individuals who did not have access to additional funds? They may have asked a family member or a friend for support. Many of them would have ended up with all sorts of social issues, everything from suicide to family breakups to different forms of mental illness to an increase in social services at a lower level. It would have been fairly profound. That was why CERB was developed by this government right from the beginning, and it was a program that was developed from nothing.

• (1725)

We can take a look at businesses. I can remember working very closely with the former government House leader, who is now the Minister of Small Business, and she would talk about small businesses being the backbone of our society. The government, right from the Prime Minister's Office to all of my Liberal colleagues, will talk about how important small businesses are to our economy.

What would have happened if government had not been there for that group in our society? Many of those businesses would have gone bankrupt. Some of them would have closed their doors and given up. The outcomes would have been very harsh. We can imagine the hundreds of thousands of businesses that could have possibly been lost as a direct result of a government not taking the actions it needed to in order to have those jobs at the time when, in many cases, those businesses would be able to reopen. Much of that support allowed them to stay open so that they could continue employing people. The program allowed that to take place, and without that program, we would have had a more difficult time restarting the economy. It is a lot harder to get new companies up and running versus companies that have been established but are going through difficult times because of the pandemic. If we can save those companies, the opportunity for us to recover quicker is there, and it is very real.

I mentioned that we have facts to demonstrate that the policies are working. We can take a look at Canada versus the United States in terms of employment but, more specifically, at the employment numbers back in January 2020 and the number of people who lost their jobs during February, April and going into May. Of the people who lost their jobs, how many were able to recover them by November? Members will find that Canada seriously outpaces the United States by 15% to 20% in terms of people who had lost their jobs and are now back at work. I believe it is a direct result of the programs that the Canadian government introduced.

In the beginning, the Prime Minister talked about needing to have a team Canada approach in dealing with the pandemic, and it was encouraging. For the first number of months, here in the House of Commons, the Bloc Québécois, the New Democrats, to a certain degree the Conservatives, the Greens and, of course, members of the Liberal caucus, were all wanting to contribute in a positive way. I genuinely believe that many of the modifications to programs that we saw in the months that followed were as a direct result of what members of this House from all political parties brought to different ministries in the form of ideas and recommendations. I can recall very clearly that when the Prime Minister was first elected as prime minister, he reinforced that it was important that members of Parliament take ideas from our constituencies and bring them forward.

• (1730)

I think we saw a great example of that, especially in the first few months, but if we take a look outside of the chamber, I think that we can be even more encouraged. Those who are following the debate, whether it is today or over the past number of weeks and months, can take a great deal of encouragement from the degree in which society as a whole recognized what we needed to do in order to minimize the negative impact.

We saw different levels of government, provincial governments, indigenous governments, municipal governments and even school boards, come to the table and recognize that we all have a collective role in order to put into place policies that are going to help our population and ensure that the damages to our economy are minimized.

Again, I would point to some facts. The biggest one that comes to my mind right offhand is the provincial restart program. The provincial restart program was \$19 billion, coming from Ottawa, going to provinces and territories. That money was based on a series of discussions and dialogue between ministers and provincial jurisdictions in order to know how Canada can assist the different provinces and territories and indigenous communities in dealing with the COVID-19 crisis.

We all knew, back in April and May, that we were going through the first wave and there would be a second wave. No one was surprised, at least not the different levels of government. That is why there was the development of that team Canada approach to make sure that we would be in a better position to be able to deal with the pandemic. We learned a great deal from the first wave, so we were in a much better position to be able to deal with the second wave.

I have some numbers of the personal protective gear that was necessary. Members should keep in mind that we did not have that capacity here during the first wave. The educational curve was fairly steep, and as a nation we did exceptionally well. I do not mind comparing our economy, the state of mind of our society and how it is that we have managed through this, but let me provide some numbers.

With regard to face shields, we had 52,984,000 as of November 16, 2020; gloves, we had 626,923,000; gowns for hospitals, 115,324,000; hand sanitizer, 20,646,000 litres; N-95 respirators, the special masks, I am not 100% sure, but I believe that is what it is, we had 70,163,000; non-medical masks, 28,945,000; cloth masks, 8,553,000; surgical masks, 309,902,000; ventilators, 7,761; and there are still more to come.

These are the types of things the government, during the first wave, going through the tendering process, was able to materialize and to ultimately distribute, working with other levels of government.

• (1735)

The restart program was of great help to our provinces and territories. It provided almost an additional \$420 million to Manitoba. When we ask what that \$420 million went toward, there is a fairly long list. For example, it allowed Manitoba to triple the number of tests for COVID-19, among many other things.

We understood, across Canada, that there were a lot of nervous parents as the school year began in September. The government, working with others, came up with a \$2-billion program of which about \$85 million went to Manitoba. Whether it was Manitoba, British Columbia, Quebec, P.E.I. or Ontario, all provinces and territories benefited from that restart money. We all benefited by the way we were able to acquire the important tools necessary to keep our population safe.

Let us fast-forward to where we are today. We are in an excellent position in terms of vaccinations. Months ago during the summer, we were able to successfully negotiate seven agreements that will put Canada at the front in terms of the number of vaccinations we are going to be able to provide. We will have enough to provide more doses than we have people in Canada.

We did not know which company was going to be first. Today, yes, we know, but two or three weeks ago, we could not predict it. We now know that from Pfizer this month, we are finally going to receive some vaccinations. It is because of the hard work of civil servants, health experts and so many others who put Canada in a good position that we are able to have that.

We have passed legislation already that further expands programs such as the wage subsidy program and the rent subsidy program for our businesses. We have been able to accomplish a great deal by working together. When members ask where the plan is or to show them the specifics, there is a plan that is there. Maybe it is not quite in the format that members would like to see, but there is a plan there. We will continue to move forward, in particular with the vaccines.

The area I am disappointed with in terms of the Conservative motion is dealing with the CPP. I am a big fan of the CPP. In opposition for years, I sat when the Harper government chose to do nothing in terms of increasing it so that when people retire, they would have a better quality of life. We finally achieved that several years ago shortly after winning in 2015. I am also disappointed that the Conservatives still do not understand what all Canadians understand and that is the importance of our environment and why they would go on the offensive on the price of pollution yet again. We have many provincial jurisdictions that already have it in place.

● (1740)

The price on pollution is not universally applied in every province, because many provinces already have it in place. However, they will not let it go. That means there is still room for improvement.

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Winnipeg North for his insightful comments. I think I speak for all of us on this side of the House in saying that we always appreciate when he joins the debate and gives his thoughts on the issues impacting our country.

In listening to the member opposite give his remarks, what struck me was the difference between what he is saying, in terms of the support for businesses that the government has brought forward, and the reality I am hearing on the ground, particularly from tourism operators and seasonal businesses that have been hurt throughout the pandemic. They have not had the opportunity to

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qualify for a lot of the government support that has been brought forward.

Going forward, we know that we need a plan for rapid testing, we need a plan for vaccines, and we need a plan to support businesses to get our economy back on track. What we are proposing today in our motion is a plan to reduce taxes and reduce onerous regulations on businesses.

Would the member support that today?

● (1745)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his kind words.

In regard to the question itself, when we talk about the CPP, Conservatives often talk about it in the form of a tax. I do not see it as a tax. The way I see it is as an investment in workers for their retirement. Not all workers have the company pension that we will have when we retire, which will be a fairly good pension. Many would suggest it is the Cadillac of pensions. I do not know. I have not asked exactly what it is.

Having said that, I believe that the CPP is a very important aspect of retirement for workers. For many years, we were not getting the money that was necessary. Now, the increase to CPP is going to allow Canadians to have a better quality of life when it comes time to retire.

I do not see that—

The Deputy Speaker: We will continue on with questions and comments. The hon. member for Trois-Rivières.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Louise Charbonneau (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank the parliamentary secretary for his speech.

He talked about vaccination and said that the Liberals had a plan. I have a plan. I am 70 years old and an MP. Will I be entitled to the vaccine that is coming?

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, it is important that we recognize the national government is not going to determine whether that member is going to be receiving the vaccine.

Ottawa is responsible for acquiring the vaccines, putting out the tender, making sure that we have the agreements necessary to get the millions of vaccines that are going to be required, and then ensuring that there is distribution to the provinces. The provinces will ultimately determine who is going to be receiving the vaccine and when.

That specific question might better be asked on the floor of the National Assembly of Quebec.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, earlier in this debate we were talking about tourism. It is a very important part of the economy in my riding. We have already lost more than 20% of the tourism-related small businesses in my riding. It is a great concern. Almost half of them are teetering on the brink.

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As I said before, what anchors tourism in my riding in the Okanagan Valley is the wine industry. One of the few things that I can support in this motion is the clause that mentions the escalator tax: the excise tax. This is a tax that Canadian wineries did not have to pay at all a year ago, but the Liberal government forced them to start paying it as of this summer. It made that decision. We have been waiting for a government decision on something to replace that, so that these wineries can survive.

We need a trade-friendly replacement for supports to give them the support they need and to replace the excise tax they now have to pay.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I do not drink wine, but I suspect that the region produces some of the best wine in the world. That is why I think that our aggressive trade policies and the number of trade agreements that we signed should hopefully support those small businesses. When we think of tourism in Canada as a whole, there is no doubt that it has been affected. There has been a huge effect on the tourism industry.

I am a big fan of Folklorama in the city of Winnipeg. I see real benefits. That is one of the reasons why I was so pleased when the Folklorama board met with our Prime Minister over Zoom. The tourism industry continues to lobby and get the attention of the government and all members of the House, I suspect, because we recognize that some industries have been hit harder than others. By the way, if one were to talk to the organizers of Folklorama, they would say how good the wage subsidy program was in terms of enabling them to keep their doors open.

• (1750)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to comment on one of the elements of the opposition motion today, which is unfortunate because there is much in it that I would like to support.

The hon. parliamentary secretary spoke about the price on carbon. I wanted to ask him about this key point. Carbon pricing requires that as the amount of carbon goes down, the carbon price goes up. It is not an escalator clause, as one member represented. It is actually the only way in which it works. When the Christy Clark government in British Columbia stalled the carbon price and refused to raise it, as had been originally planned by Gordon Campbell, it stopped working.

Can the hon. parliamentary secretary comment on the essential nature of continuing to increase the cost? It is not unpredictable. Businesses know exactly how much it is going up per year. When does he think we will see a real climate plan that takes us to our targets?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, we have a climate plan that will achieve net zero by 2050. I had the opportunity to speak on that bill. I know the former leader of the Green Party is not necessarily a big fan of that piece of legislation, but it is a plan in regard to climate action.

With regard to the price on pollution, Manitoba is one of the provinces where Ottawa has a price on pollution. What amazes me is how Conservatives try to portray this as a tax, yet a majority of

the constituents I represent have a net benefit. They get more money as a direct result of the price on pollution.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I agree with some of the things my hon. colleague said in his speech, including the spirit of co-operation that he mentioned.

It is true that, at the beginning of the pandemic, the opposition parties and the government worked together and implemented measures like the wage subsidy. That is a very good example. It was the Bloc Québécois that came up with that idea and I tip my hat to the government for implementing it and co-operating with us. Unfortunately, that co-operation eroded after that. Of course, it was hard to work together when the Liberals locked the doors of Parliament for six weeks.

My colleague spoke about real and tangible help. That is true. It was so real and tangible that even the Liberal Party of Canada took advantage of the wage subsidy to fill its coffers. When we ask my hon. colleagues about it, they always answer by talking about the benefits of the wage subsidy and telling us how much money was paid and how many businesses benefited from it.

My hon. colleague is known for being extremely intelligent so I am sure he will understand my very simple and basic question and not sidestep it. Does he believe that the Liberal Party should pay back the money it received under the wage subsidy program?

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to say that the wage subsidy program enabled tens of thousands of businesses in all regions of our country to keep people employed. That program has been highly successful. The proof is in the pudding: all one needs to do is to look at the piece of legislation that we passed a couple of weeks ago. We received the unanimous support of the House. Every member of every political party said yes to the wage subsidy program. I see that as a positive thing.

• (1755)

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Cloverdale—Langley City.

As the member of Parliament for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, I thank my hon. colleagues in Canada's government-in-waiting for today's supply day motion. I also thank the people of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke for their support as we work together for a better future.

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There is no doubt in the minds of Canadians that the Liberal government has failed to be open and transparent regarding Canada's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Canadians have been denied timely and factual information to give small business owners an element of certainty. Today's motion requires the government to share the timing of the plan to get the COVID-19 vaccines to Canadians.

It is unacceptable that Canadians still do not have critical information to know when lockdowns might end, such as when every Canadian will have access to a vaccine, how many people will receive vaccines each month, how vaccines will be safely delivered, stored and distributed, where Canadians will be able to get vaccinated, how the government plans to distribute vaccines to members of the Canadian Armed Forces and veterans, who fall under federal jurisdiction, when other vaccines will be available in Canada, and, at what point the government expects we will achieve herd immunity.

From the very outset of this pandemic, the Prime Minister has been disrespectful of Canadians, starting with parliamentarians. What has been particularly predictable has been the tactic by this Prime Minister and his disciples to try to pass off blame for his government's failings. His attempts to smear former Prime Minister Stephen Harper over the current government's lack of action are pathetic and dishonest.

Canadians should not be surprised to learn that the reason Canada does not have any capacity to manufacture its own vaccine is a direct consequence of the policy of the Prime Minister's father, Pierre, when he eliminated patent protection for drug manufacturers. This policy produced short-term gain for the long-term pain Canadians find themselves in today. The short-term gain was the drop in drug prices when the patent protection was reduced. The pain was felt more slowly. When the Liberal Party changed the patent protection on new drugs in 1969, it led to a brain drain. There was an exodus of major drug companies that used to do their research in Canada.

The University of Toronto was world renowned as the place Banting and Best did their Nobel Prize-calibre research leading to the discovery of insulin. Montreal had a vibrant research community. This proud legacy has been lost. What Canada received in its place were knock-offs: cheap generic drugs that rely on the work of others.

It was not until the election of a Conservative government in 1984 that a real attempt was made to reverse the damage. During legislative committee hearings, the deans of the leading medical schools pleaded with Conservative parliamentarians to fix Pierre's mistake. If a gifted Canadian medical researcher wanted to continue in his or her field, they were forced to leave Canada. This fact was noticed in our medical schools.

For every successful discovery of a miracle drug, there are a hundred failures. The money for failures comes from the successes. The pharmaceutical companies could not afford to have their research stolen by generic companies. It made sense to do their drug research where they manufactured the drugs. The Patented Medicine Prices Review Board that was formed could not bring back the companies that had fled Canada. Whenever government interferes in the marketplace, a price must be paid. The price today

is Canada has no domestic capability to manufacture its own vaccine. This leaves Canadians and its enterprises where we are today.

The economic statement, the great reset budget, or however else the Prime Minister refers to the plan that was peddled to Canadians, follows the same muddled thinking of reducing drug patent protection for short-term gain. It does not measure the future consequences that the ill-thought-out actions will have on tomorrow. The Liberal government promises to borrow, borrow, borrow and spend, spend, spend on items that have nothing to do with getting a safe vaccine so Canadians can get their lives back. This country will remain in lockdown for months, if not years, after the rest of the world will be in recovery.

● (1800)

Is it not strange how the things that were unaffordable before the COVID pandemic suddenly are now affordable?

The Liberal response to the pandemic has left this country poorer. The Prime Minister's uncontrolled deficit spending had savaged this country's finances before COVID hit. While the green finance minister would like Canadians to dismiss the \$400 billion added to the national debt, the fact remains years of previously unimaginable deficits lie ahead. No wonder a career public servant, the deputy finance minister, promptly resigned the day after the budget statement.

Our supply day motion is a request from Canadians who are struggling: Please, no more tax increases. If we really are all in this together, as his apologists in the bought media are paid to say we are, how about treating us with a little respect? Tell us what the plan is so that we can plan and so that our small businesses can plan. That is all Canadians are asking for.

The Prime Minister's now revealed hidden agenda, a great reset, is based on the false assumption that magically massive public spending and deficits can generate economic growth. That is an act of deception. That plan has never worked. Ask the people of Greece or Cyprus if that plan worked for them.

The next act of deception is what this reset budget means to older people, the ones who built this country. It used to be a common perception that the 18- to 35-year-old age group would be stuck with the bill for today's spending, including the pre-COVID deficits. That is no longer the case. The older generation is just as condemned as its children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren to paying for the government's mistakes as long as the Liberals remain in power.

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Canadians owe it to themselves to become informed about what the great reset is all about. I am grateful to quote from a piece written in *The Post Millennial* by Dr. Leslyn Lewis, who has big shoes to fill as the member of Parliament for Haldimand—Norfolk after the next election. She wrote:

The devastation brought on by COVID requires our united efforts in protecting Canadians. It is not a time to capitalize on our vulnerabilities by utilizing our tax dollars to usher in one man's vision of a "greener," more "sustainable" and "inclusive" economy. All of these words sound benevolent on their own, but what are the actual policy changes that this Liberal government believes are necessary and plan to implement? Without presenting budgets or plans to the House of Commons, this remains a mystery, to put it kindly. We need all hands on deck to survive this pandemic, and there should be no hidden agenda.

The Great Reset is using the pandemic to create a post-COVID era that redefine industries, work, and even how we are taxed (creating new streams for future taxation (for example: working from home tax, home equity tax, carbon footprint tax.)....

Canadians owe it to ourselves to get educated about the Reset and assess whether our government's post-COVID policies reflect the "Reset" policies. One should not succumb to being bullied or shamed into not asking questions about why our government has touted several post-COVID policies on the environment, economy and social inequality within the book. Similarly, we should not accept our prime minister feigning ignorance over the Reset after he has adopted reset policies and bragged about this approach at the United Nations. As citizens, we must decide on the kind of post-COVID country that we envision, and not allow the pandemic to be used as an opportunity for any leaders to remake Canada in his own image. In the end, we must remember that governments can only implement this kind of economic, societal, and 4th green industrial revolution with the consent and the mandate of the electorate.

A government that is controlled by the people is a free society. Labelling concerned citizens "conspiracy theorists" and claiming that...the prime minister [did not say what he did] at the United Nations...is sheer bullying. This form of disenfranchisement and silencing of people is intended to instill fear so that we won't hold our elected officials accountable. Our key to freedom and upholding democracy is knowledge, action, and civic involvement.

• (1805)

I am honoured to put that quote on the parliamentary record.

Today's opposition motion is a reasonable request for Canadians. It is time for the government to act like we are really all in this together.

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I must say I am a bit puzzled by my colleague's speech. I believe I heard her say we are saddling future generations with an enormous deficit and we must stop the spending. At the same time, I consistently hear the Conservatives saying we need to continue to help our small businesses and make sure nobody falls through the cracks. The money we are spending today is ensuring our businesses stay open. The money we are spending today is ensuring that families do not take on additional debt, which they and their children would be saddled with.

We are borrowing at an all-time low interest rate at the moment as the Government of Canada, and we are doing so in order to protect our citizens. Which program specifically would this member like us to cut, the CERB, the small business loans, the wage subsidy?

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Mr. Speaker, there it is. The government member is saying it does not matter that we have debt. The member is only looking at today, not what the future could bring, such as higher interest rates. In the motion, we are asking the government to stop adding more to the tax burden on Canadians and businesses,

for example, the carbon tax, the increases and the new fuel directive. Grain farmers are already paying tens of thousands of dollars more because of these taxes just to dry grain. The grain then has to be transported and there are taxes on the fuel. That is why a basic thing, like the cost of bread, is going through the roof. People cannot even afford bread because of these supposed green policies, which do nothing but funnel money to Liberal insiders.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my colleague talked about the CPP contributions being a tax. I and the people in my riding see it as an investment in retirement security and how important that is. We see seniors right now who cannot make ends meet and are struggling on the current CPP they are getting. I have not had a single call to my office with someone concerned about the CPP rate going up in the new year. Rather, I have heard more about the broken designs of government programs, including the commercial rent program, which the government will not backdate to April 1 for those whose landlord would not apply. I do not understand why the Conservatives have not joined the NDP in calling on the government to backdate the program so that those who were denied access to that important program, good business owners and taxpayers, can keep their businesses afloat.

Why are the Conservatives not getting behind backdating that program?

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Mr. Speaker, I did not call the CPP a tax. What we are saying is to hold off on the increases so that the deductions for people who still have paycheques do not lower their pay even more, not to mention the small businesses who have to match those deductions every month. They are struggling to survive so that people have jobs to go to. We are not saying do not do it. We are saying, eventually do it, just not now.

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk a bit about the certainty the member mentioned very early on in her speech. I know many businesses in my riding across the north, particularly many seasonal operators, have really spoken about the certainty they need from the government on what this next season might look like and what the plan moving forward is for the government to get our economy back on track.

I wonder if the member could speak a bit more to how important having that certainty is and the failure of the Liberal government to provide that to small businesses.

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Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Mr. Speaker, small business owners need to know how much more to take out of their retirement savings, their retained earnings, and how much more to risk. If they are going to have to continue on doing this, carrying a business with no revenue, they are going to deplete their retirement fund. Thank goodness the Conservatives opposed the part of the 2017 budget wherein it was going to tax the retained earnings of small businesses. Those retained earnings are what is keeping businesses alive right now. They need certainty. They need to know when the lockdowns are going to end so that they can bring their people back to work. They want to work. They do not want to sit at home. They want to be productive, active members of society.

• (1810)

Mrs. Tamara Jansen (Cloverdale—Langley City, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Cloverdale—Langley City is becoming a ghost town. After a recent strengthening of restrictions announced for the Fraser Valley region, most people retreated back into isolation: no visiting, no travel, no gym, no church. We were urged not to venture out at all for anything, so this week we saw a huge run on live Christmas trees and toilet paper while people prepared to be locked in their homes for Christmas.

We sit and watch the daily COVID updates with health officials showing us charts and graphs that demonstrate the science that drives this bus, and then they ban parking lot church services conducted via FM radio, lock seniors in their rooms without the loving touch of their families and encourage us to download COVID apps that do not even function in many of the provinces across the country. Is it any wonder that people are becoming cynical and starting to lose hope?

This government has stumbled from the very beginning of this tragic moment in our history. It sent mixed messages about lethality and transmissibility from day one: Masks do not work; masks do work. Asymptomatic people do not transmit it; asymptomatic people do transmit it. Rapid tests are snake oil; rapid tests are on the way. One can collect rent relief if one's landlord is willing to apply, but the majority were unwilling. One could collect CERB if one is self-employed, but now one has to pay it all back because of a three-letter word the government neglected to mention, so sell the truck and tools, Mr. Small Businessman, as there is until December 31 to pay it back.

People are not only losing hope. They are losing their homes. They are losing their livelihoods and their lives because of consistent bungling of programs like testing and tracking, vaccine procurement, financial support programs and the list goes on. Canadians are tired of hearing the meaningless platitudes coming from the tent of commons, given in the Prime Minister's best late-night DJ voice. It is clear that we are not all in this together.

For example, on a recent Zoom meeting with independent travel agents, it was obvious that the tourism and travel sector are barely holding on by a thread. This recession, or should I say she-cession, is tearing the supports out from under many women who have built their own small businesses over the years, providing top-notch travel advice and service. It all began for them when airlines began cancelling flights due to COVID-19. People were fighting hard to get home from abroad and leaned on the army of ladies who

booked their original tickets. Thousands of hours were spent, unpaid, trying to help clients find their way home.

Then, the next wave hit. Again, without receiving a dime in compensation, these same ladies worked tirelessly to help clients find ways to alter or cancel their 2020 bookings, which were no longer valid due to travel restrictions. As large airlines began to refuse cash refunds and travel insurance companies did the same, these women, many of whom are the single breadwinner in the family, in an attempt to do their best on their clients' behalf, gave up thousands of dollars of commission in order to secure a refund for their frustrated customers.

Keep in mind that the commissions being clawed back are based on a service, booking flights and hotels, which they had provided but which the airline and tour operators were unable to fulfill. Imagine the incredible stress they are enduring right now with the threat of chargebacks by credit card companies as angry customers demand refunds for tours they cannot take. These chargebacks are going straight against the small business owner and can range in the thousands of dollars, thousands of dollars that these women cannot afford.

We are clearly not all in this together. The travel and tourism sectors have been begging for targeted assistance from the beginning, but their cries have fallen on deaf ears. Now as we approach Christmas, these wives and mothers want to know if they are going to be able to afford Christmas at all this year. They need to know who the newly announced highly affected sectors credit availability program will be helping. Is it only for the big players or is there relief in sight for them? What criteria will be in place? When can they apply?

• (1815)

They need details now, not later. We have seen this sort of pandemic program rollout time and time again: There are big announcements and then months of waiting, while women wait and hope against hope that there is help on the horizon.

Business of Supply

Small business owners are drowning in despair right now. They are having a hard time keeping their doors open under the weight of the restrictions that keep changing without warning. Forty per cent of small businesses fear they will not survive. They pivot and they pivot again. They cut costs where they can. They call sons, daughters, uncles, aunts, nieces and nephews to help with the work, while they struggle to find employees willing to come back. CERB payments encourage people to stay home rather than exceed their allotted hours. This caused a lack of labour availability for restaurants and the service industry across Canada.

Pandemic relief measures were supposed to help businesses get through the pandemic, but the fact is that the government gave households nearly \$7 for each \$1 of lost private sector income. Rather than investing in job creation, these programs are enabling one-time consumption of offshore goods, and now the government is set to add insult to injury to small businesses by adding payroll tax increases in January to their already overburdened shoulders. However, there is more. Over behind door number three, we find yet another lovely addition to the tax portfolio by way of a carbon tax increase.

If, as we hear endlessly from the Liberals, we are all in this together, why are small businesses bearing so much more of the burden than bureaucrats, politicians and wealthy elite? Are we truly prepared to crush the backbone of our economy: the corner store, the coffee shop, the nail salon and every small endeavour in between? It is times like these that remind me of a quote from Ronald Reagan about how the government views the economy: “If it moves, tax it. If it keeps moving, regulate it. And if it stops moving, subsidize it.”

Jack Mintz recently urged the government to spur on private sector growth, without which we will not be able to recover from pandemic-related economic decline. As he said in his *Financial Post* article:

One thing this pandemic has taught is that it's the private sector that delivers tests, vaccines, telecommunications and groceries to Canadians. Canada's lost output from 2020 to 2025 will total \$730 billion. That won't be made up without a resilient private sector. Public spending is not a magic wand. It can even be a malevolent wand: high deficits and looming tax hikes can rattle investor confidence, leading to capital flight.

The finance minister indicated that she wants to pour up to \$100 billion into building back better, using task forces and government departments that will be deployed on every ideological platform she can think of. It is all about the reset that the Prime Minister boasted about back in September to the UN.

Canadians do not want a reimagined economy. They want help to fight COVID. They want rapid tests and vaccines. They want science-based solutions that do not change with the direction of the wind. They need clarity so they can make their own plans to survive this crisis. We must let them get back to what they are good at. They know how to keep their customers safe. That is what they do every day they open their doors.

Rex Murphy recently highlighted the snobbery that is implicit in the statement “we are all in this together”. He said:

Everyone bears the health risk of the current moment. Not everyone faces losing their employment or their business. The latter deserve better thoughts, maybe more

understanding, than have been shown by the better off and more comfortably situated.

I am here to speak on behalf of truckers, plumbers, carpenters, taxi drivers, furniture movers, waiters, bus boys and janitors. They are bearing the weight of this pandemic far more than those of us in the House, who are deciding their futures. They need a plan that is concrete and fixed.

They are not looking for a brave new world. They are looking to have a Christmas dinner with their family and friends without fear of being fined. They are looking for a way to attend Christmas mass or Handel's *Messiah* in peace. The Liberals offer a robust portfolio of vaccines that will not arrive in our local pharmacies until next September. Does the government honestly think Canadians can wait that long?

• (1820)

Mr. Maninder Sidhu (Brampton East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, many of us know that science and health advice evolves as we learn more about COVID-19. I would like to know if the member opposite believes in science and health experts' advice, because it certainly sounded like she was questioning our health experts' advice in her remarks.

Mrs. Tamara Jansen: Mr. Speaker, I most certainly do believe in science, as do most Canadians. We want to make sure that we are changing based on science, not based on ideology.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a lot of the concerns and issues the member raised brought something to my mind. When I look back at the last 10 months, the New Democrats were the ones who were able to get the wage subsidy up to 75%; the New Democrats were the ones who got historic sick days for Canadian workers; and the New Democrats were the ones who were able to keep the CERB at \$2,000. We were the ones who were able to do all of these things for workers because, just as the member does, we speak for the working class. I speak for truck drivers, taxi drivers and all the people who have suffered so deeply during this pandemic. However, the Conservatives would not even support a 1% wealth tax on the ultrawealthy.

I am wondering what proposition the Conservatives have brought forward during the pandemic that actually helped working-class Canadians?

Business of Supply

Mrs. Tamara Jansen: Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives have been working very hard on behalf of small business. We see that the government has given households \$7 for every \$1 that went to small business, and it almost reeks of vote buying. We need to make sure that small businesses, which are the backbone of our economy, are supported with good programs that actually help them get through the pandemic.

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am hearing a bit of a refrain from the Conservative Party: Spend more, but my goodness there is an uncontrollable deficit. I find there is a contradiction in a lot of the speeches I heard today.

I caution against some of the fearmongering with regard to scaring away investors. The last I saw, three out of the four major ratings agencies still had Canada at a AAA standing. I believe it is only Fitch that has us at AA+. We are in a very good economic position in order to recover after the pandemic.

With respect to the member's eloquent remarks about the importance of the "she-cession" we are facing and supporting women entrepreneurs, I would like to ask point blank if she is willing to support us on spending additional money to support women entrepreneurs through, for example, the first-ever women entrepreneurship strategy, which we put in place as a government.

Mrs. Tamara Jansen: Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives would like smart programs that do what they are supposed to do. People from my riding who have small businesses and are self-employed are calling me to say they have just been told they have to return the entire amount of the CERB simply because the government forgot to give a little detail about who actually qualified. This is outrageous. This has happened time and time again with these programs, and we are begging the government to stop and think carefully when they make these programs so that people are not harmed, but helped.

• (1825)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I certainly hear the same concerns from Canadians who wonder how the rules change and how we can follow public health advice.

The member reflected on the new rules in British Columbia and went on to attack the federal government. I want to clarify, although I am sure she is aware of it, that the public health rules that guide people's conduct in British Columbia do not come from the federal government. When we can go into stores, how many of us can gather or what churches can be open is not up to the federal government. I am wondering if she wishes it were.

Does the hon. member for Cloverdale—Langley City want the Emergencies Act used so that all decisions about lockdowns and constraints on behaviours emanate from the federal government as opposed to the provinces?

Mrs. Tamara Jansen: Mr. Speaker, federal flip-flopping has led to poor leadership on behalf of the provinces. What is really important is that we get consistent and stick to the right leadership plan, because doing otherwise causes chaos for everybody.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to have this opportunity to participate in the debate on the Conservative Party motion about measures to support small businesses because I completely agree with my opposition colleagues. This is a very important issue, and it is the focus of what I do every day as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Small Business.

Every day since this public health crisis began, I have been talking to women and men in my riding and across the country who have invested money in their businesses and poured their hearts into them. I believe that hearing what they have to say is crucial to ensuring that our support programs really meet their needs.

Everyone here in the House knows just how deeply the pandemic has affected small business owners and employees. These businesses create good local jobs as well as a sense of local pride. They are the backbone of our economy and our communities. Our government immediately recognized the importance of helping our small and medium-sized businesses weather the crisis and acted fast to launch the largest suite of economic support programs in Canadian history.

[*English*]

I know that we have heard many speeches today, and I will briefly go through some of the very important programs we have put in place.

The Canada emergency business account provides an interest-free loan that includes a non-refundable portion. Why? It is because myself and colleagues right across the country, representing their constituents, heard from small business owners who were worried about taking on too much debt. As I have mentioned numerous times in the House, this has become one of the most significant programs for our small businesses. That is why we recently announced an increase, a \$20,000 top-up, to this important loan program, half of which, once again, can be non-refundable.

We also have the Canada emergency wage subsidy, which is helping to subsidize nearly four million Canadian paycheques.

For the rent subsidy program, I point out that this is normally within provincial jurisdiction, but our federal government was asked to take the lead to help our entrepreneurs with what is essentially one of their most significant fixed costs. Thanks to the feedback that my colleagues and I received, we changed this program to ensure that the subsidy went directly to tenants and small business owners themselves.

Business of Supply

We also know the importance of going digital. That is why we have put in place several programs and partnerships to help our entrepreneurs go online and sell their goods and services, often for the first time.

[*Translation*]

I would also like to mention the regional relief and recovery fund, or RRRF, a special fund implemented by the six regional economic development agencies, federal government agencies that are literally on the ground across Canada. They work with key partners such as community futures development corporations, or CFDCs. Thanks to the RRRF, we have been able to provide financial and technical support to thousands of businesses.

• (1830)

[*English*]

The Deputy Speaker: It being 6:30 p.m., pursuant to an order made Monday, April 20, 2020, and this being the final supply day in the period ending December 10, 2020, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the opposition motion.

The question is as follows. Shall I dispense?

Some hon. members: No.

[*Chair read text of motion to House*]

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on the motion. If a member of a recognized party present in the House wishes to request a recorded division or that the motion be adopted on division, I invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I would request a recorded division.

The Deputy Speaker: Accordingly, pursuant to Standing Order 81(18) the division stands deferred until later this day.

* * *

[*Translation*]

MAIN ESTIMATES, 2020-21

CONCURRENCE IN VOTE 1—FOREIGN AFFAIRS, TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (for the President of the Treasury Board) moved:

That Vote 1, in the amount of \$1,897,264,276, under Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development — Operating expenditures, in the Main Estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2021, be concurred in.

[*English*]

Ms. Kamal Khara (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to speak virtually from my constituency office in Brampton West about the work of Global Affairs Canada.

Before I delve into the important work that Global Affairs Canada does on behalf of Canadians every day, I would like to take a moment to recognize the individual contributions by Canada's diplomats on behalf of all of us. Whether Canada-based or locally engaged, Global Affairs Canada's political officers, the trade commissioners, development professionals, counsellors and staff work

tirelessly to advance Canadian prosperity, security and influence in an evermore difficult and complex world.

Many of them worked in places plagued by violence, conflict and natural disasters. These staff are largely unsung and unknown except every few years when events propel them into the minds of Canadians and this is such a year. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of them on behalf of all Canadians and all members of the House.

In 2020, Canadians from all walks of life realized the benefits of the work done by Global Affairs Canada. Small and medium-sized businesses saw their export opportunities increase because CUSMA, CETA, CPTPP and their rights protected as Canada fought protectionist measures and advocated for a rules-based trading system.

Canadian security was enhanced because of international assistance investments made. To build peace and to eradicate poverty, to counter terrorist organizations and to combat foreign interference in our democracy, Canadians' values were reinforced through advocacy, at multilateral institutions and in standing up to the autocratic regime. Thousands of Canadian families were supported when they and their loved ones needed help getting shelter or transportation, stranded by the pandemic, while others needed to be visited or have remains of their loved ones repatriated.

The rule of the ministry of Global Affairs is fundamentally to project the values and culture of the people in the world, to protect the country's economic, political and security interests and to foster the relationships necessary to achieve these things. That responsibility has perhaps never been so significant as it is in the fraught, geopolitical and economic landscape that we currently face. I can confidently say that Global Affairs is admired for the work it accomplishes and the manner in which it does it and achieves value for taxpayer dollars daily.

The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic has shaped our world in profound ways we have yet to fully understand. It changed the lives of Canadians in ways that we could not have imagined a year ago. The scope and scale of this pandemic has tested every community, every country and international institution. As I said previously, we are living without question through a once-in-a-generation moment.

Even as COVID-19 was emerging as a global pandemic at the beginning of this year, 2020 was already an extremely hard year, with significant implications for Canadian foreign policy.

Between January and March, Global Affairs was already managing several concurrent flashpoints, including the heightened and persistent tensions between the U.S. and Iran, which directly and dramatically impacted on our country when Flight PS752 was downed near Tehran, killing 85 Canadians; fraught relationships with China, with the arbitrary detention of two Canadian citizens, and significant unrest in Hong Kong; trade and economies' tension, including the persistent threat of the U.S. trade actions on steel and the oil price shock prompted by the price war between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Russia; the persistent acute humanitarian stresses in Venezuela, Syria, Afghanistan, Myanmar, Bangladesh; and an ongoing social unrest in jurisdictions important to Canadian interests, including several democracies where Canada has been engaged.

The pandemic did not occur in a vacuum. Indeed, the crisis is amplifying and exacerbating existing global trends, including geopolitical competition among significant economic and political powers, rising protectionism, increased inequality, challenges to democratic values and threats from climate change.

• (1835)

It is against this backdrop that the Conservatives stand here today to propose to cut the budget of Global Affairs Canada. It would be surprising for most, but I am not surprised at all. We all remember that it was the Conservative Party that pledged to cut foreign aid by 25% in the last election. We are in the midst of a global pandemic that requires global solutions, yet the Conservatives want Canada to play a smaller role. Simply put, we strongly disagree with that.

One of the reasons for this is that Canadians want their government to have a strong presence abroad, given that every year there is an average 200,000 requests of assistance from Canadians abroad. This past year, we saw the importance of this very clearly in some key examples.

First is the department's response to the flight PS752 tragedy. From the very first moment, the commitment to supporting families of victims has not wavered. The department continues to lead the international coordination group, which Canada founded, working closely with the governments of the U.K., Ukraine, Sweden and Afghanistan, to push for transparency, to seek justice and accountability and repatriations for families of those affected.

Second, through its response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Global Affairs Canada delivered the largest and most complex peacetime repatriation of stranded Canadians in history. Beginning in January, the department organized to safely repatriate hundreds of Canadians from China and hundreds more returned home from the Diamond Princess cruise ship in Japan.

As the virus spread, the extraordinary public servants at Global Affairs Canada mobilized every asset in creating new tools, such as a COVID-19 emergency loan program, to ensure that the needs of Canadians could be met. At headquarters and through Canada's network of 178 missions in 110 countries, the focus was on providing critical, on-the-ground support to Canadians despite the risk to their own well-being. All missions remained opened, arranging and negotiating flights, ground transportation, permission letters, quarantine exemptions, urgent shelter and filling prescriptions for folks who had not expected to need more.

Business of Supply

I have a few numbers to give an idea of the magnitude of our efforts. Since March, Global Affairs Canada has facilitated the safe return of over 62,580 Canadians and brought 692 flights from 109 countries. This was a consular crisis management at a level never seen before, a real-time illustration of the network and contacts cultivated by Global Affairs Canada staff and their resilience and commitment to serve Canadians.

COVID-19 also featured in the departments bilateral, plurilateral and multilateral efforts this past year. Canada demonstrated this necessary and valued real-time leadership in convening diverse partners to shape global efforts to respond to the global health implications of the pandemic, to sustain open supply chains, to support the most vulnerable as economies recovered.

The far-reaching impacts of COVID-19 underscore the importance of countries working together and addressing the pandemic and showcase Global Affairs Canada's strengths in carving out spaces for dialogue and enabling international co-operation and action.

For example, Canada co-hosted a pledging conference on vaccines and therapeutics alongside the EU and Japan, which raised \$8 billion U.S. to better test, treat, protect people and to prevent the further spread of COVID-19 in vulnerable countries.

In partnership with the Jamaican prime minister and the U.N. Secretary-General, the Prime Minister co-convened a special U.N. high-level meeting to identify and to advance solutions to the economic crisis and development emergency precipitated by the pandemic.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs established a ministerial coordination group on COVID-19 at the very start of this pandemic. Initially set up as a venue to coordinate our responses to multiplying travel restrictions, this forum has become a key channel for exchange on multilateral responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, which includes trade and emergency measures, which includes maintaining air, land, marine transportation links and supply chains. It also includes coordinated support for international institutions, especially the U.N., the WHO, and particularly in addressing the particular challenges facing Africa and small island developing states.

Business of Supply

• (1840)

These efforts have been complemented by the minister of trade's support for Canadian businesses during the extraordinary time of global uncertainty and tightening credit conditions. Through our leadership role at the Ottawa Group and WTO reform discussion, the Minister of International Development has also been at the forefront of international efforts on issues such as providing equitable vaccine access, preventing food insecurity due to supply chain disruptions, enabling continued education for children in developing countries during the pandemic, facilitating women and girls' continued ability to secure sexual and reproductive health services, and mitigating violence against them. The minister also jointly established, with the U.K., the development minister's contact group.

The department's efforts are framed by three strategic pillars for action where Canada can make immediate and direct impact. First is fighting the pandemic by strengthening capacities to deliver the health-related, sustainable development goals supporting access to COVID-19 testing, treatments and vaccines. Second is seeking to manage financial stresses and stabilize economies through the restored global supply chains, enabling financial equity and stability for developing countries. Third is supporting the most vulnerable and reinforcing recovery through our humanitarian response, support for food security and education, and by addressing longer term, socio-economic impacts of the pandemic.

To date, Global Affairs Canada has been responsible for deploying some \$1 billion in response to the pandemic to support the poorest and the most vulnerable in partner countries. This has meant working with Canadian NGOs, the international organization partners, to adjust program approaches to be flexible and to encourage innovative practices. These efforts reflect a belief that none of us are safe until all of us are safe from this virus. We can build back better to advance sustainable development goals going forward to encourage an inclusive and green recovery.

While the pandemic has been an overarching preoccupation for our department, many other geopolitical challenges have nevertheless also required the ongoing attention of Global Affairs Canada. We have managed our important relationships with the United States, the EU and China, sought solutions to protracted political crises in the Ukraine and Venezuela and in the Middle East, and reinforced democracy and human rights in Belarus. All these circumstances required on-ground assessments from embassies and headquarters personnel, the development of options for cabinet consideration, implementation of policy and actions.

Global co-operation facilitated by effective and accountable international institutions relies on nimble alliances, new partners and partnerships. That is why the department has continued to manage key relationships and to reinforce ties with traditional allies, while pursuing new collaborations with emerging partners.

I already talked about the leadership role the Minister of International Trade took in response to the global pandemic. Let me review in more detail the recent achievements of Global Affairs Canada in advancing Canada's prosperity, enabling them to continue to benefit from diverse trade and investment opportunities.

Trade accounts for nearly two-thirds of Canada's economy and supports 3.3 million jobs, which is one out of every six jobs. Open,

rules-based trade creates opportunities for businesses and entrepreneurs, and ensures that people have access to essential goods and services, like food and medicine. COVID-19 should not and cannot be used as an excuse to stop trading or to turn inward with protectionist policies. Global Affairs Canada works to enhance market access to increase opportunities that flow from trade agreements and to further diversify our trade.

This year, we have worked closely with international partners from the G20, WTO, APEC and others to ensure that our supply chains remain open, our businesses continue to work, and their crucial goods and services flow. Canada's leadership of the Ottawa Group on WTO reform demonstrated our commitment to shape the future of multilateral, rules-based trade, which is really key to global prosperity. Now more than ever, we must continue to strengthen our rules-based global trading system so that it is robust and resilient.

• (1845)

I have addressed the significance of the work Global Affairs has done to respond to the international assistance dimensions of the COVID-19 pandemic and how the health and prosperity of Canadians is intertwined with an effective and coordinated global response and recovery. Until we have solved this crisis globally and contributed to building a more resilient and sustainable socio-economic system, we will continue to be impacted by it domestically.

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, many countries were challenged to achieve inclusive and sustainable economic growth, maintain social cohesion and manage crises. While tangible gains were made to reduce extreme poverty with Canadian support, including increased access to education, health and nutrition, not everyone was benefiting equally. The more than 1.3 billion people living in poverty faced multiple and interrelated challenges, often exacerbated by inequalities, and in many cases, protracted humanitarian crises or the impacts of climate change.

Given this, Global Affairs has continued to work hard to implement the feminist international assistance policy, which provides an essential framework not just to meet the needs of this unprecedented pandemic, but to build a more peaceful, inclusive and prosperous world.

Business of Supply

We have focused on helping the poorest and most vulnerable, especially women and girls and those living in fragile states and conflict-affected states, to achieve peace and stability and promote dialogue for conflict resolutions. This includes country-specific peace building and stabilization initiatives for countries such as Afghanistan, Colombia, Myanmar, South Sudan, Syria, Ukraine and Yemen.

The ministers' and the department's work with the UN agencies, the Red Cross movement, and Canadian and international NGOs has helped to provide humanitarian assistance to meet the needs of more than 135 million people in 62 countries and territories.

The department also effectively and responsibly managed more than \$6.3 billion in grants and contributions programming. These resources have reduced poverty and increased opportunities for people around the world, saved lives, increased sustainable livelihoods and increased peace and security.

Let me conclude by stressing again a principle lesson of the COVID-19 pandemic, which is the absolute necessity of effective international co-operation. This was true when Global Affairs was first established more than 100 years ago, and it is true today. Through a diplomatic presence, consular services, trade support and international development programs, the department works hard to deepen Canada's engagement with the wider world to advance and protect Canadian interests and values.

In a time of profound change, complex challenges and considerable opportunities, Global Affairs staff delivers, and will continue to deliver, necessary thought leadership on the world stage. They seek to play a constructive role in shaping the rapidly evolving global order for the benefit of all Canadians, not just today but for the long term.

• (1850)

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for her speech outlining all the things the Government of Canada is doing around the world in reference to the main estimates.

Earlier this week, Canada's former parliamentary budget officer indicated that we cannot make sense of how taxpayer money is being spent right now. In fact, he said it was so bad that he cannot make sense of any of the numbers, and that we cannot even trust the government because it is being so unclear and untransparent with how funds are being spent.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer indicated as much as well. Can the member please clarify how we can trust the government when our public accounts are not being updated, when Canadians are not getting updates on how much money is being spent and how those expenditures, which we have not received information on, will impact future generations and our ability to help other people around the world?

Ms. Kamal Khera: Mr. Speaker, I do not find it surprising the Conservative Party wants us to cut our Global Affairs budget during a global pandemic. One thing we have learned from this pandemic is that more than ever we need global solidarity. I also know this is the party that pledged to cut foreign aid by 25% in the last election.

We are a government that has secured the largest and most diverse portfolio of vaccines per capita in the world. We are the government that committed to working bilaterally and multilaterally with other countries to ensure vaccines get to those who need it the most. It is why we are not only helping support Canadians, whether it is our businesses, families or students, here in Canada, but also doing that around the world.

• (1855)

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I hope for a brief indulgence from the hon. member. I know she does not like to blow her own horn, but I wanted to thank her for her work as a registered nurse during the COVID crisis. She went back into her community and worked as a nurse in a long-term care facility, truly giving back and being a leader in her community. I wanted to take this public opportunity to thank her.

The member mentioned that this is a global pandemic. I was hoping she could expand on that. Canada has a diverse portfolio of vaccines, with hundreds of millions of doses. What does that mean to Canadians if the crisis continues elsewhere, if COVID-19 is elsewhere? I was hoping she could expand on that and the role of the Government of Canada is to play as we move forward after Canadians get vaccinated.

Ms. Kamal Khera: Mr. Speaker, allow me to thank my friend for his kind comments. I was quite grateful and an honour for me to get back to the front lines when I volunteered at a long-term care facility in my community in Brampton, which was hard hit by the COVID crisis. It was an honour for me to work alongside our Canadian Armed Forces and be able to give back to my community in any way that I could. I thank the member for that.

I would also like to reiterate the fact that one thing this pandemic has shown us is no one is safe until everyone is safe. It truly goes to show that it does not matter where this virus came from, it will impact us. It is a threat that knows no borders and will only be overcome through a coordinated and robust global action. We cannot simply beat this virus in Canada if we do not beat it everywhere around the world.

That is why not only are we diversifying our vaccine portfolio here in Canada, we are also making sure we are working alongside our international community and global partners. We are part of the COVAX and the ACT-Accelerator to make sure we are not only supporting Canadians but are also committed to ensuring there is equitable access to successful COVID vaccines for people around the world, especially those who are the most vulnerable.

Business of Supply

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the many comments my colleague has made with respect to how important this is. Over the years, Canada has paid a very strong leadership role at the world level. Being in a pandemic, we can appreciate the fact we were very successful at negotiating seven agreements, which is going to help our country through the vaccination process, but there are also other countries around the world that will be challenged to get the vaccines.

Canada does have a role to play there with respect to supporting some of those governments, directly and indirectly. I wonder if she could highlight her thoughts regarding the important role, whether it be Canada, the United States or the United Kingdom, western countries have to play in ensuring worldwide health and safety.

Ms. Kamal Khara: Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague is right. As I mentioned earlier in my comments, COVID-19 is a threat that knows no borders and can only be overcome through a coordinated and collaborative response, which Canada has been taking a leadership role in on many fronts. Whether it is the Minister of International Development, the Minister of Foreign Affairs or the Minister of International Trade, we need to continue to work alongside our global partners to make future vaccine treatment options available, accessible and affordable for every single person.

Canada's commitment to the global coronavirus response will allow us to do that and protect the health and safety not only of Canadians but also the most vulnerable populations around the world. On this side of the House, we are absolutely committed to a robust global effort to stop COVID-19 and address its sudden devastation on health, social conditions, the economy and human rights for people around the world.

• (1900)

Mr. Chris Bittle: Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to get a second opportunity to ask my friend a question.

It does not surprise me that the Conservatives wish to cut foreign aid spending by up to 25% and reduce Canada's role in the world. We have seen the Conservatives wishing to eliminate our leadership in things like the environment and climate change, and this type of cut would be devastating overall. I wonder if the hon. member could discuss what types of impacts such a vast cut on Global Affairs could have on Canada's place in the world.

Ms. Kamal Khara: Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague is right. It was very unfortunate when we saw, in the last election, the Conservative Party of Canada pledge to cut the foreign aid budget by 25%. Here, we are fighting every single day to get more support for international development and international aid. Because of this COVID pandemic, we are simply going to reverse all the gains that we made if we do not invest.

We have played a leadership role this year with \$1.1 billion in support that we have been able to give in our global COVID response. It does not surprise me, from the party that does not believe in science and does not believe in vaccines. When we see, from the official opposition, support for a petition questioning the science of vaccines and silence from the Leader of the Opposition, it is quite unfortunate.

As someone who worked as a nurse who has seen patients die in long-term care facilities this year, I can tell members why it is so important to continue to follow public health guidance, to continue to wear a mask and, when vaccines are available, not spread this misinformation that we see from the opposition.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles.

Forty-four million dollars is what the Liberals wasted in a failed deal with China's CanSino, \$44 million that could have gone a long way to help struggling Canadians. It could have stayed in their pockets in the first place or it could have gone to crucial priorities like clean drinking water or mental health and recovery resources, support for victims or front-line law enforcement to fight crime and gangs. What is galling is that all of those tax dollars are all for naught and Canadians now know the Liberals do not take the warnings of Canada's own security and intelligence officials seriously.

Is it surprising? Unfortunately, it is not, because it is already clear that the government fundamentally does not take hostile foreign influence and interference in Canada seriously either. The Liberals have potentially politically exposed persons sitting in their own caucus and have refused to answer questions about it. Meanwhile, the Liberals refuse to add the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps to the list of terrorist entities even though Parliament voted overwhelmingly to do so two years ago.

Security and intelligence officials of course have been raising red flags about Huawei. All of Canada's allies in the Five Eyes intelligence-sharing group have already banned Huawei. The Liberals promised a decision last year, but continue to dither, even while allies warn a failure to ban Huawei will harm Canada's security and intelligence-sharing relationship with the U.S., the U.K., Australia and New Zealand.

The Liberals also will not tell Canadians what they are doing to combat foreign interference in Canada from Chinese government agencies in the so-called Operation Fox Hunt. Chinese Canadians are being targeted and threatened by China's Communist regime and the government cannot even say what its plan is or its actions are to fight back and protect Canadians.

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On November 18, this House voted for the Conservative motion that orders the government to table its decision on Huawei and for a new plan to combat escalating foreign interference in Canada from China, but it is alarmingly clear that if Liberals listened to and acted on the cautions, insight and recommendations of Canada's own security and intelligence officials and other experts, this could have been anticipated and avoided. Last week it was reported that executives at CanSino worked in a Chinese government program that has been targeted by CSIS and our other intelligence allies.

The reality is that the Government of China's thousand talents plan has been recruiting researchers and scientists to infiltrate western research organizations for the deliberate purpose of bringing sensitive intellectual property back to China. Last year, a U.S. Senate subcommittee on homeland security looked into the thousand talents plan and identified it as a threat to national security. The U.S. Senate committee found that some thousand talents plan members stole intellectual property, engaged in fraud and violated research values and ethics. They even sold proprietary information on U.S. military jet engines.

In August, CSIS warned Canadian institutions and research groups about the thousand talents plan and that China was using the program to obtain new information and technology for its own economic and military advantage. The fact is that as far back as May, CSIS was warning that Canadian institutions are at a heightened risk of intellectual property theft from China and Russia specifically and explicitly with regard to COVID-19 research.

The *Globe and Mail* stated the CSIS spokesperson warned, "These corrosive tactics, which are done to advance the economic and strategic objectives of hostile states, come at the expense of Canada's national interest, including lost jobs, revenue for public services and a diminished competitive global advantage." Therefore, even after these serious warnings from Canada's intelligence agencies, after exposure of the U.S. experience and warning, why on earth would the Liberal government proceed to sign a deal with CanSino to partner with Canada's National Research Council on vaccine development? Why did the government take \$45 million in taxes and just give it to China while putting Canadian intellectual property at risk? There just is not a good answer.

In fact, former CSIS officials said that the Canadian government should have seen the red flags. Another former CSIS official said what is becoming glaringly and alarmingly obvious is that the government does not have a coordinated plan to counteract risks in partnering with China. *Global News* highlighted that officials cautioned, "The right hand doesn't know what the left hand is doing, and [the National Research Council] has been abused by China before in this way, and that is why this case is so offensive.... In this case it looks like what China did, is they got what they needed (from Canada) and they stopped the vaccine shipment."

This makes the government's actions unconscionable. Even worse, once delays in the programs were identified this summer, the Prime Minister continued to publicly defend the deal. How naive is the Prime Minister and the Liberal government?

- (1905)

Let us just examine the facts. The intelligence community constantly warns against intellectual property theft from the Govern-

ment of China. The Liberal government signs a deal with China-based CanSino, which has executives who have been linked to the Chinese Communist government's thousand talents plan, which is the very program that engages in intellectual property theft. Canadian researchers work with those same Chinese researchers on vaccine development. China delays sending shipment to Canada. The Prime Minister doubles down on his support for the deal in Canada. Intelligence officials again warn about hostile foreign interference related to intellectual property theft. China refuses to send the vaccine to Canada—shocker—and the deal is scrapped, wasting \$44 million of taxpayers' money and an unknown amount of Canadian intellectual property.

It is truly unreal. It actually seems like it could hardly even be true, but it is true. Despite all the warnings from officials across the board, the government still went full steam ahead. It is frankly incredibly frustrating to watch, and even more frustrating that the government will not give Canadians straight answers to basic questions about the deal, or basic answers and information that could be shared about what the government is actually doing to combat foreign interference and protect Canadians' national and personal security.

Conservatives have asked multiple times if the government was briefed by security officials before signing this deal. The only response is talking points about listening to security officials, so that must mean the government was briefed. It was briefed and then chose to ignore the evidence and advice. If senior decision-makers were not briefed, that is a major problem. Either way, the deception about it is, too.

Another former CSIS official says that China was also trying to gain leverage over Canada in the Meng Wanzhou extradition case. The official said, "blocking the vaccine shipment also sends the (geopolitical) message...if you really want to work with us, you need to toe the line".

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The government is racking up unsustainable record deficits right now. That said, I do believe many Canadians, small businesses and communities needed efficient, effective and expeditious support during these months. I bet what most Canadians will not understand is that their federal government took \$44 million, basically gave it over to China and received absolutely nothing in return.

The Chinese government set a trap, and despite all the warning signs, all the intelligence reports and all the proof throughout the recent history of China's escalation against Canada, such as detaining Canadians in China, violating their rights there and at home, threatening Canadians about Hong Kong there and at home and escalating against our free and democratic allies and against vulnerable developing countries and around the world, the Liberal government walked right into it.

The government had other options, but for whatever reason, the Liberals signed off on this \$44-million deal and now that is money Canadian taxpayers will never get back. Conservatives are opposed to this spending measure in the estimates, and for the sake of future Canadian taxpayer dollars, Canadian intellectual property and the safety and security of all Canadians, I really do sincerely hope it is the last time these Liberals make the same mistake. After seeing how they acted over the last number of months, I just cannot say I am optimistic.

● (1910)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I find it difficult at times to appreciate what members in the Conservative Party are saying because they tend to mislead in different ways, whether it is this member or other members of the Conservatives. An example is when they were saying, about the agreement she is referencing, that the government started to have negotiations with other companies after that agreement went south. We know that is factually incorrect.

The reality is the Conservatives seem to have two faces when it comes to China. When Stephen Harper was the prime minister, he went to China and got a wonderful trade agreement. When he came back to Canada, he said that China received him so well that it was going to give him two pandas to bring to Canada.

Could the member reflect on why there is inconsistency in the treatment toward China today versus when Stephen Harper was prime minister?

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to reflect on how disheartening and really brutal it is to see a senior member of the Liberal cabinet refuse to actually answer any of the serious issues raised in my remarks tonight and what is being publicly reported, which are security, safety, cybersecurity and intellectual property threats to Canada and to Canadians.

It is escalating by China around this issue, around the world and with other countries, and that senior member gets up and says this. I will remind him of the facts again. The intelligence community has constantly warned against intellectual property theft from the Government of China. The Liberal government signed the deal with China-based CanSino and those executives have been linked to the Chinese Communist government's precise plan specifically to en-

gage in intellectual property theft for its own military and economic advantage.

That member should ask Canadians about that and answer—

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments, the hon. member for Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon.

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Lakeland for her remarks this evening.

In the House today I have heard my Liberal colleagues talk about the Conservatives as if Conservatives do not support small business, and as if we did not support any of the programs. I would say that we were there to support Canadians. What we are concerned about in these estimates is all that other money that has been put in the budget and all those other plans that we have not heard about. It is not me saying this: it is our independent institutions. It is our Auditor General, who does not have enough money to do her job. It is the Parliamentary Budget Officer, who says he cannot make sense of how the government is spending money.

I would like to ask the hon. member for Lakeland what she thinks about how the Liberals are approaching this important debate today, and what she believes we can do as a party to make progress on the China file.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his comprehensive outline of why it is very difficult for Canadians to trust anything that the Liberals say. Frankly, I think during these complicated months, the lack of trust, the lack of confidence and the lack of clarity coming from the Liberals is damaging, and it is extremely concerning.

I am very concerned that the Liberals have blown through their commitments on spending. The issue that I raised today, the \$44 million given to China for virtually nothing in return, is an example of the massive amount of Canadian taxpayers' dollars that could have been put to better use to support Canadians now or put back in their own pockets.

Here is what we have called on the Liberals to do: answer the questions about how many people have been charged and arrested in Operation Fox Hunt, where Chinese Canadians are being threatened and harmed; tell Canadians exactly what their new plan is, because they must have a new and coordinated plan to combat the escalating foreign interference from China in Canada; ban Huawei; pull the money from the Asian Infrastructure Bank; get serious about protecting Canadians against the real foreign interference from China, as well as from other autocratic regimes; and take the advice and recommendations that are resounding from intelligence officials and security advisers.

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• (1915)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to speak to some of the votes in the main estimates that we oppose. I will be speaking to the votes relating to foreign affairs, including \$44 million for a transaction with a Chinese company.

First, however, I would like to talk about this government's relationship with China. Everyone knows that this Prime Minister has expressed his admiration for the Chinese communist system. In 2013 he even said, and I quote, "There is a level of admiration I actually have for China. Their basic dictatorship is actually allowing them to turn their economy around on a dime." It was already clear, then, where our Prime Minister was headed and what he envisioned for Canada's relationship with China.

In committee today, we once again heard the rhetoric that Stephen Harper tried to build a relationship with China in 2008 and 2009. That is true, but it was a different time. That was nearly 12 years ago. Canada had a business relationship with China at the time, but there were some concerns. Also, China was different, so much so that, in his opening remarks before the Special Committee on Canada-China Relations, the Minister of Foreign Affairs made it clear that the China of 2020 is not the China of 2015, when this government came to power. He even clearly said that we needed to pay attention. Even the minister was sending the message in his speech before the committee that we have to be careful when it comes to China.

I will come back to the matter before us, the votes or expenditures that this government is asking us to approve. I will talk about one transaction between this government and CanSino Biologics, a Chinese company. The amount of \$44 million was put on the line as part of an agreement with that company for the development of vaccines, even though the government knew that the company had direct ties to the Chinese communist regime. As the Minister of Foreign Affairs stated, the China of 2020 is not the China of years past. Once again the government decided to take \$44 million of Canadian taxpayers' money for an agreement with a company that has direct ties to the Communist Party of China.

Last week, the media also revealed that the company's founding members had direct ties to the Communist Party of China and that Canadian researchers had been recruited by the Communist Party as part of the thousand talents program. This program was established to send information directly to the Chinese government. The Prime Minister knew how it worked and still went ahead with an agreement with CanSino Biologics using taxpayers' money, our money.

In the end, the Chinese government stole our intellectual property. Under this agreement, Canada had to transfer the intellectual property to CanSino Biologics, which then cancelled the agreement and kept the information. Once again, this is proof that we cannot trust the Chinese government. Of course that does not apply to the Chinese people. That is altogether different.

There are many examples of this with China. Everyone knows, and everyone talks about it. One example is Falun Gong practitioners. These people have been fighting non-stop to protect the Chi-

nese people from ideological conversion, forced re-education, forced labour, torture and organ harvesting programs. Everyone is aware of this.

The problem with China is that it is such a big economic power that people are afraid to stand up to it. Just look at what the current Prime Minister said in 2013 about China. However, the opposition and the Conservative Party have a duty to say that enough is enough and we need to stand up to this.

• (1920)

I am going to speak about another recent relationship between the government and a company owned by the Chinese communist regime, Nuctech. The Canadian government, through the Canada Border Services Agency, signed an agreement for equipment, which has already taken effect. The government also recently gave this company a contract to install X-ray machines in our embassies around the world.

Some members opposite have started saying that those machines were not connected directly, that it was not dangerous and so on, but that is not the issue. The problem is that Nuctech is known worldwide for fraud and corruption. All sorts of measures have been taken against this company around the world. It works directly with the Chinese People's Liberation Army to conduct espionage.

Perhaps the machines intended for our embassies were not connected directly, but who is to say that someone could not enter an embassy somewhere in the world when the equipment needs maintenance and install an electronic device in the machine to transmit information?

The biggest problem is that the government is doing business with Nuctech, a security equipment company that operates around the world and whose only mission is to collect intelligence and transmit it to the head of the Chinese Communist Party. A \$6.8-million contract was on the table. Without the work of the media and the opposition parties, the government would probably have sent \$6.8 million to Nuctech, and that company's equipment would be in our embassies.

Security officials and agencies tell us this relationship needs to end. Everyone says so. Major changes need to be made to the way Canada buys equipment. The government must not give Canadian taxpayers' money to companies controlled by the Chinese Communist Party. That is all there is to it. It is not Conservative ideology. I think the Bloc Québécois agrees and the Liberals know it, but their hands are tied because their leader sees things differently. That is the Liberals' problem at the moment.

It is all there. We have damning evidence and security reports from all over. Even security agencies working for the government send briefings about this, and there are public reports about it all. I am not talking about state secrets. I am talking about public reports.

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We therefore oppose this \$44-million expenditure in this year's estimates, when hundreds of billions of dollars have already been spent to deal with COVID-19. At some point, it has to stop. Some might argue that \$44 million is not much compared to billions, but it is still a lot of money. Did anyone think about how many taxpayers it takes to raise \$44 million? A taxpayer who earns \$50,000 a year pays \$20,000 in taxes. It takes a lot of people, who are giving their money away for nothing.

As a final point, I would like to mention Huawei, which poses the same problem. For two years now we have been saying that this company must be banned from Canada's 5G network for the same reasons, namely, security and economic reasons. If China manages to steal our intellectual property, it is the whole of Canada that loses.

When we look at the facts and at how this works, it is obvious to us that the Prime Minister is saying yes and the Conservative opposition is saying no. It is as simple as that.

• (1925)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, first of all, I am thinking in terms of the budget. The members talk about the one contract, and I do not believe that it goes through global affairs. I think it goes through industry, so I am questioning why they would bring it up under global affairs. Maybe the member could respond to that.

I appreciate when the member talks about there being better times with China. If we look at the last 20 years, there have been highs and lows in the relationship between Canada and China. Many of the agreements, for example the trade agreement signed by Stephen Harper when he was Prime Minister, had an impact for generations. It carries over.

I am asking the members to recognize that the Conservatives have not been consistent on the issue of China. Since they have been in opposition, they have been far more negative. I think there have been concerns with China for many years that even go back to the Harper times.

[*Translation*]

M. Pierre Paul-Hus: Madam Speaker, I would say to my colleague that the \$44 million in question are simply listed under the Department of Foreign Affairs.

There is no doubt that approval happens there, and then Industry Canada proceeds with procurement, just like with Nuctech. That company caused a problem that we sorted through at the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates. The Department of Foreign Affairs needed equipment for its embassies. The contract was signed by Public Services and Procurement Canada, but there was a communication problem. It cost us \$250,000 to get Deloitte to try to understand what went wrong. This is an example of the complexity of the machine whose components do not always talk to one another.

As for the point raised by the parliamentary secretary related to former prime minister Harper, I would remind him what I said in my speech, which is that the current Minister of Foreign Affairs clearly said that the China of 2020 is not the China of 2015. He was referring to the early days of the Liberal government and we are not even talking about the Harper years.

What we are saying is that there has been a radical change in Chinese policies in the past five years. It has become more aggressive in terms of expansion and taking control. There is no use talking about the Harper years. We are talking about the past five years. It is not necessarily Canada's fault. China is the one that has decided to do things differently in the world. As for us, we also have a decision to make on how we want to react to this.

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Parliamentary Budget Officer said that we have no idea of the exact amounts that have been spent by this government during the pandemic.

How can we trust this government when it will not tell us how much it is spending?

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question and his excellent French.

Obviously this is a widespread concern, not just for the official opposition, but also, I think, for many Canadians. The nation's finances are out of control. The Parliamentary Budget Officer said as much, and many observers are saying that we must get it back under control.

The government needs to provide the information, lay its cards on the table and tell us exactly where we stand, because it is my children and grandchildren who will be footing the bill.

[*English*]

Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP): Madam Speaker, I am just noting that China is not the China of 2020. It is not the China of 2012 when Stephen Harper signed the Canada-China FIPA, and it is not the China of 1989.

To lock this country into a 31-year FIPA agreement is outrageous. If the hon. member read the FIPA agreements with all of the other countries we have signed FIPA agreements with, he would see that there is a "get out" clause after one year. We have been locked into a 31-year agreement and I think the Conservatives did this so that Sinopec and PetroChina, which have invested in the tar sands, could get their pipelines and product out of this country and invest in strategic resources, and to make sure there was a poison pill if we ever tried to stop pipelines that we do not want running through British Columbia.

• (1930)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Madam Speaker, every era has its challenges.

At the time, the Harper government did what it thought was best. Now it is 2020. It is up to the current government to look at the situation and find solutions. We are here to help this government if it needs help.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, the pandemic has shaken us all. It has revealed a lot about our situation. I am thinking of Quebec's health care system and those of all the provinces. We have seen the extent to which our health care system has been compromised.

The pandemic has also revealed that Canada was very ill-equipped for various pandemics, even though there had been at least a few dress rehearsals in the past, such as H1N1 and SARS. Year after year, there has been a decline in funding for the equipment and expertise needed to prepare for pandemics.

We saw the same thing with the health care system. If we go back a few decades, Ottawa had an agreement with Quebec and the provinces to split the costs of the health care system equally. This ratio made perfect sense, because taxpayers pay around the same amount in taxes to Ottawa and to Quebec or the provinces.

However, over the past few decades, the federal government has been consistently decreasing its share of funding. The largest drop was in the mid-1990s. Shamefully, this was part of Ottawa's response to the lost referendum in Quebec. Ottawa decided that it would cut funding to the provinces, slashing funding to Quebec so that it would no longer be able to do things on its own.

This created a certain paradox. Quebec's health care system, among other things, was underfunded. The same thing happened in the other provinces. Quebec made an ingenious move, in my opinion, and implemented a pharmacare program that, admittedly, does have room for improvement. That said, with little financial capacity, Quebec managed to do something ingenious. The same is true when it comes to family policy and the child care system or paid parental leave, all of which helped bring poverty down to a level below what it would have been without those measures.

A number of economists have even said that Quebec's child care system provides a net benefit because it makes it possible for women to remain active in the workforce. That is a plus. They keep their jobs and pay taxes, and children in the child care system get a high-quality early childhood education.

However, Ottawa chose to cut funding to the health care system, which has weakened it. This has become clearer than ever in this pandemic. One example is the terrible situations in our long-term care homes.

This Thursday, the Prime Minister is going to meet his Quebec and provincial counterparts to talk about health care funding. In my opinion, it is time to change course and try to catch up. The government needs to provide more funding for the health care system.

As the Parliamentary Budget Officer has indicated in study after study, Ottawa is the one with the flexibility. That explains why the bulk of the extraordinary spending that occurred during the pandemic was done by this level of government. The flexibility is here, and that is significant. It relates to the fiscal imbalance. What

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caused the fiscal imbalance? It was Ottawa withdrawing funding for health care, post-secondary education and social services.

It is time we changed course. We can no longer afford to have such a fragile health care system. That is what we have learned from the current pandemic. We knew it before, but now it has become blatantly obvious, particularly when we think about the plight of the thousands of people living in Quebec's long-term care facilities.

● (1935)

The federal government could have played a very important role in health care in addition to funding it. Let's hope the government will have some good news about that to share with us at the meeting on Thursday. As I said before, properly funding a health care system, making sure our health care system is not vulnerable, is an investment. When crises like this one arise, that investment enables us all to get through it and get back on our feet faster. It pays off in the end. Let's not forget that, fundamentally, this is also a social equity issue. In our wealthy society, quality health care is a right. It should not be a privilege.

The government could have made things better on the health front by securing a dependable COVID-19 vaccine supply. We are now realizing that the government appears to have made bad decisions ever since the start of the pandemic. Worse yet, it appears to have dragged its feet.

We see that other G7 countries, specifically the United Kingdom, are preparing to administer their first vaccines. Countries around the world are announcing that immunization is imminent. Despite the good news we heard today—that we could have a few doses, a symbolic few unfortunately, before the end of the year—it looks like we will have to wait months longer than other countries. It is truly appalling.

It would be interesting to know how much it would cost society to delay vaccination by one month. I asked the Minister of Health this question, but of course she did not have an answer. As we know, absolutely crucial restrictive health measures were put in place to try to stop the pandemic from spreading further, but what is the cost of delaying vaccination by one, two, three or six months? These are questions that need to be asked and that the government needs to answer, because it seems to have been dragging its feet at the beginning of the pandemic. It appears that we will be vaccinated later than citizens of other countries.

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Even worse is that just a decade ago, Quebec had a very strong pharmaceutical industry. We know that in the late 1980s and 1990s, Quebec became a pharmaceutical powerhouse. Working hand in hand, Ottawa and Quebec City managed to put in place a framework that would allow pharmaceutical companies to emerge, proliferate and thrive on Quebec soil, and it was a success. In just a few years, Quebec managed to attract five multinational pharmaceutical companies that have all developed a promising vaccine or are on their way to doing so. We had top-notch researchers and production capacity, including for vaccines, back home in Quebec. A few decades later, there is almost nothing left, nothing but dust.

I obviously commend the government's intention of investing in laboratories. These investments that were announced this fall come a bit too late, in my opinion, because it will take a few years to build the production capacity. This will not help us deal with the current pandemic.

Why did the government neglect this lucrative system that we could be proud of and that gave us expertise that we could have used during this pandemic?

In fact, there is every reason to believe that we could have received vaccines earlier. They might even have been developed here, whether in the greater Montreal area, Laval, Quebec City or Sherbrooke. That did not happen because Ottawa decided to abandon this sector, change the rules, and change the system. Even though Quebec redoubled its efforts to keep this expertise, it was not enough in this highly competitive environment.

● (1940)

Walking away from all that is unacceptable. I am so disappointed and upset. This must never happen again. We will see what the future holds with regard to vaccines.

I would like to raise another point about vaccines. I will go back a little further in time and talk about a company that manufactured quality vaccines. Why did Ottawa decide to drop this internationally renowned, publicly owned company that supplied vaccine strains to almost every country in the world? Why did Ottawa allow this company to be dismantled and then sold?

I am referring to Connaught Laboratories, which was located in Toronto. Connaught was established in 1913 and had a rich history. Unfortunately, in the early 1970s, it was sold to a Crown corporation and ceased its previous activities before being fully privatized in the late 1980s. That is what happened under past governments of different stripes. Connaught had the ability to produce vaccines at little cost and had an international reputation.

The bad decisions made in the past partly explain the delays we are going to experience. These are important issues. We must reflect on them. Perhaps history will teach us not to repeat these unfortunate mistakes.

A number of sectors were left out of the government's pandemic response, but there were some positives. I will come back to that in a moment. In my opinion, seniors were largely forgotten by the government.

Seniors are the ones who have been most isolated during the pandemic. They are really struggling, and we are thinking of them.

They often live alone and will likely not be able to celebrate the holidays. They have been isolated for months. On top of that, they are staying home and having their groceries delivered, since they have been warned that seniors are at greater risk. All of this contributes to an ever-growing grocery bill.

This segment of the population has been forgotten for years, even decades. Many social policies have been adopted and implemented for families and young people, which I will say is great. However, there have been few or no meaningful policies to support the well-being of seniors, even as their cost of living has increased while their purchasing power has decreased.

I am thinking about old age security, which has not kept up with inflation and is therefore not where it should be. Even before the pandemic, when we would go visit people in seniors' residences, we saw it and heard about it; people would tell us that the cost of the rooms, the rent, and the cost of everything was going up while their incomes were going down, thereby reducing their purchasing power.

It had gone down so much that during the last election, the Liberal Party committed to increasing old age security. We did too, but while the Liberal Party promised to do that only for people 75 and older, it was out of the question that we would create two categories of seniors. The increase had to apply to everyone 65 and older because they all deserve it. We owe it to them, because they have helped us so much their entire lives. It was the least we could do to ensure tax equity and fairness.

After a very lengthy tug-of-war, we managed to wrest a symbolic cheque out of the government in early summer. A second cheque was to follow, but it has yet to materialize, much like a complete reform. This needs to change.

That being said, I must commend the good the government has done. From day one of the pandemic, it has implemented several income support economic policies.

We do not want to act like our neighbours to the south and pretend that the pandemic does not exist. That has had serious consequences and made health care costs go up. In Canada, we decided to quarantine and bring in measures that would reduce activity—

● (1945)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I think we lost our Internet connection. We cannot really hear the member.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Madam Speaker, can you hear me now?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We can hear you, but we cannot really see you. The image is fuzzy.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Madam Speaker, that is a shame. I can see you very well. I will stop speaking now.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Let us move on to questions and comments and hope we can hear your answers.

The member for Louis-Saint-Laurent.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Joliette, who once again delivered a very interesting speech.

I recognize and always welcome the relevance of his remarks, although I do not always agree them entirely. One example that comes to mind is when he talked about the “lost referendum”. The majority did win. It depends on whether we see the glass as half full or half empty. More specifically, I want to commend the soundness of the member's arguments, which are always fact based, so I wanted to point that out.

He outlined a number of problems that arose during the pandemic and how they were dealt with. One of those problems had a much more serious impact that we might have expected. In 2000, Canada distinguished itself by creating an organization to monitor health-related matters, including pandemic preparedness. Should a pandemic unfortunately occur, that organization was supposed to detect problems before they could affect our daily lives too much.

That organization served us well. Unfortunately, the current government dismantled it in 2019 and handed over its responsibilities to international organizations, which, as the New York Times reported, were in China's pocket, with all the negative repercussions that entails.

What does my colleague from Joliette think of that?

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Madam Speaker, I hope that my connection is working better than it was a few minutes ago. I thank my colleague from Louis-Saint-Laurent for his question.

We do sometimes disagree. With regard to the 1995 referendum, I would say that, in my opinion, all of Quebec lost, but it was mainly the yes side that failed to convince the majority. As a good democrat, I respect the results of the people's vote.

It is unacceptable that the government shut down the monitoring agency and closed glove and gown warehouses. It made no sense for Canada, a G7 country, to lose its expertise on pandemics and public health crises. Yes, multilateralism is important and we need to work with all the other countries. Let us participate in all that. However, it was certainly a rookie mistake to shut down that monitoring agency.

For the sake of the national interest and a strategic vision, we need to keep those kinds of tools. I hope Quebec will always work for the national interest. I often criticize the fact that Ottawa does not do the same for Quebec's interests. If my connection had been better, I would have talked about the aerospace industry.

● (1950)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I disagree with the member when he tries to give the impression that the Canadian government has not done well on the vaccination issue. In fact, I would challenge the member to tell me what other country has provided the vaccine before the month of

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December. My understanding is that Canada will be providing some vaccinations as early as this month.

When we take a look at the portfolio of vaccines, I would ask the member to tell me what other country in the world has a larger portfolio than Canada in regard to agreements with pharmaceuticals and others, ensuring that the Canadian population is being well served by the hard work of civil servants and other stakeholders. Canada is going to be well served when it comes to vaccinations.

[Translation]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Madam Speaker, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and I had this discussion during questions and comments on another day.

Essentially, we do not need to have 10, 12, 15 or 20 different vaccines per person. Canada is number one in that sense. What we do need is to get one good vaccine quickly for everyone. Canada does not seem to be number one on that score. In fact, it seems to be the only G7 country in this situation. Apparently even Mexico will vaccinate its population before Canada. All the better for Mexico, as it did the right thing. It seems that Canada's government dragged its feet at the start of the pandemic, then signed multiple agreements, thinking that this would allow it to say that it had done a good job.

As I said to my colleague when he asked me this question, we will have the final answer in a few months. That said, based on what we are hearing and reading and according to the experts we have consulted, it seems that Canada's population will be vaccinated a few months after the U.S. and most European countries. That is—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Drummond.

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, thank you for interrupting my colleague so I could ask him a question. I was glad to see that his Internet connection has been working well for the past few minutes, and I was eager to take advantage of that too.

I would like to talk to him about this issue, because we are wondering whether the government has managed the crisis well. We know there are other very important priorities we could be debating.

For example, one of the priorities we all agree is of vital importance is high-speed Internet access, especially in remote regions. It will be crucial to the recovery, and it is essential now during the crisis.

What does my colleague think of the way the government is handling the critical high-speed Internet rollout file? Does he think the funds allocated to the various programs are adequate? Does he think the timelines are fast enough? I would like to hear his thoughts on that.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Drummond for the important question.

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At the beginning of my speech, I spoke about how weak our health care system has become, but this pandemic has also highlighted how fragile our telecommunications infrastructure is. It is outrageous.

Every household needs good-quality high-speed Internet access, but that is not happening. This is 2020, and it will soon be 2021. This issue came up in 2000, and it was called unacceptable and outrageous. That was 20 years ago, and what has happened since then? Development is still slow and has been left up to the private sector. It is so slow and so inefficient that I would say if electricity were a federal jurisdiction, we would still be living by candlelight in 2020.

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank my Bloc Québécois colleague for his speech.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer has said that we have no idea exactly how much this government has spent during the pandemic.

Does the Bloc Québécois member think that this government is doing a good job managing our public finances?

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

Indeed, that is very worrisome. We, the parliamentarians, the lawmakers of the House, need the Parliamentary Budget Officer's analyses. I would like to commend him and his team. They are doing a fantastic job. They have been working crazy hours during the pandemic. It is ridiculous. They are telling us that they are unable to assign a precise dollar figure to everything and that they cannot access everything they need to give us a clear picture.

We make our decisions based on what the Parliamentary Budget Officer tells us. That is unacceptable. The government must be more transparent.

The government is spending astronomical amounts. It is spending like it never has before, at least in peacetime.

Unfortunately, as I was saying in my speech—I am not sure if I was able to make my point before my Internet connection gave out—the least we can do is compensate businesses and individuals for lost income due to health restrictions. For things to get back to normal, what economics from the last century tell us is that we need effective stabilizing mechanisms.

However, the money has to be spent effectively and smartly. What we saw this spring and summer was people who said that they could go work in acceptable health conditions, but that it was more lucrative to not work and stay home. That does not work. It is a disaster from an economic standpoint.

• (1955)

[*English*]

Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP): Madam Speaker, I am curious as to whether the member has been receiving calls from constituents who have been told that they need to pay back the CERB. I have a lot of self-employed people, single moms and people with disabilities who thought that the gross income counted. Now they are finding out that it was the net income. Some of their

expenses are household expenses like their utilities and part of their rent for their self-employment.

I wonder if the hon. member is hearing from his constituents in Joliette that they are being threatened by the CRA to pay back \$14,000 in CERB by December 31.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Nanaimo—Ladysmith for his question.

Yes, we often get these calls, and it is really troubling. When we saw the programs that were brought in, we sent a householder to my constituents to let everyone know that it was a gross amount and that tax would not be deducted at source. People were advised that they might have to pay a lot of it back. We know that people live on very tight budgets and that paying it back could be really difficult. We are asking for an agreement to ensure that people can pay this money back later.

The whole issue of self-employed workers is also of great concern. We can talk about it again.

[*English*]

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Vancouver East.

I am really pleased this evening to speak to the main estimates. I am going to start with some remarks I imagine perhaps only the member for Edmonton West will get excited about as they have to do with the estimates process. In fact, members may recall from the last Parliament that I was quite involved in some discussions around the estimates process.

We are considering the main estimates far later than would normally be the case under the rules of the House. One of the things that was surprising to me when the main estimates were retabled this fall was that they were in exactly the same form that they were when they were tabled just prior to the pandemic, because obviously the pandemic has had significant consequences for government spending.

The point about the process that I would like to make is on one of the take-aways from the discussion around the estimates process in the last Parliament. There was widespread agreement that ideally, if the budget and the estimates could be presented at the same time, if the government could undertake to change its internal process so that those two documents were presented together and in tandem, we would have a far better and far more transparent financial process in the Parliament of Canada that would give Canadians and parliamentarians a far better understanding of how their money is spent.

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One of the major obstacles to that was the government's refusal to allow for a fixed budget date. I and others made the argument at the time that, in the case of a really extraordinary event that prevented the government from being able to deliver a budget according to a fixed timeline, Parliament would very likely be willing to make accommodations for that. We saw this year, despite the fact that there are fixed dates for the estimates process, in extraordinary circumstances Parliament was willing and able to arrange for the government to not meet those deadlines and, nevertheless, be able to flow funds in ways that were needed and to continue, as we are now, to have an examination of the estimates in due course. I submit that the same would be true in the case of a budget.

For those who are interested in this process, they should note that this year's experience shows very well why we can have a fixed budget date in order to be able to sync, so to speak, our estimates and the budget so that we can have a well-functioning financial process that is not kind of ridiculous. Under the normal process we have, in a normal year we would be considering estimates that are already out of date pretty much as they are tabled. I wanted to put that on the record for the benefit of parliamentarians who continue to take an active interest in how the government spends money and the important oversight role that Parliament plays with respect to government spending.

We have heard many references tonight to the massive spending that the government has undertaken and, indeed, the government has spent a lot of money as part of the pandemic response. I do not object in principle to the government having spent a lot of money. It was important that the government be there to support Canadians who were struggling and it is important for members of the House to remember that when the government spends money in Canada, its deficit is somebody else's surplus.

There were some problems this year and Parliament rose to the occasion in terms of holding the government to account. It was a problem when the government's deficit was to be a sole-sourced surplus for the WE Charity. It was a problem when the government's deficit was to be a windfall for former MPs like Frank Baylis, without proper oversight and scrutiny, but let us make no mistake that the overwhelming amount of the government deficit was a surplus for Canadian households.

Until the pandemic, over 50% of households were within \$200 every month of insolvency because they did not have enough money to pay the bills. That was a product of a social security net and an economy that already was not working for Canadians and had no allowance for a stress test. The pandemic most definitely stressed the Canadian economy and Canadian households, and it was important, as it will continue to be important, for the government to step up and support Canadians.

- (2000)

I am quite proud of the track record of the NDP in terms of making sure that an important percentage of government spending went directly to Canadian households and Canadian workers who needed that support, instead of, as we saw in 2008, going predominantly to banks and large corporations in the hope that somehow it would trickle down to Canadian households. The NDP played an active

role in negotiating an adequate CERB, in getting workers paid sick days and a number of other initiatives that I have put on the record.

One of the things that continue to be a problem when we talk about government spending is the distinct lack of concrete dollars and a concrete plan for child care. We have heard the government announce it recently once again, and not for the first time. Liberal governments in Canada talk a good game when it comes to child care, but the evidence is really in the follow-through and it is about the money they are willing to commit. We have main estimates that we are considering with no real commitment to child care spending, because these are estimates that were tabled prior to the pandemic.

This is indicative of the complete lack of understanding that we had on the government benches, at least in cabinet, about what a crisis Canadian child care was in. The pandemic has really highlighted that. It is another Canadian system, for lack of a better word and I think it is speaking pretty loosely to say we had or have a child care system in Canada, that just had no ability to survive any kind of stress test. We saw that in the pandemic.

I am glad to hear commitments, but it would be much better to see action, to see the federal government convene meetings with the provinces to talk about how we put a proper child care strategy in place across the country, how we fund it, what that looks like and what dollar amounts the federal government is willing to commit to that strategy, not just one time this year because we are in extraordinary circumstances but ongoing year-to-year dependable funding. I do not mean the kind of dependable funding that was promised in the initial years of health care across Canada, where the federal government first came to the plate and then slowly dialed down its commitment to funding health care. That is another problem in terms of the general course of the government, which has been to continue a pattern and a long-term trend of not providing enough leadership on health care funding.

We need it on child care. We need a framework and a strategy, but we also need it when it comes to health care. We have seen now, particularly as a result of the pandemic, just what a strain and how fragile and vulnerable our long-term care system is. However, before that we knew that Canadians were having serious trouble accessing the prescription medications that they needed to be healthy. We know and have known this for a long time. Once again Liberal governments in the past have committed to doing something about this and then did not get the job done. In some cases, they have not really taken meaningful steps. We have seen some steps, at least rhetorically, in the direction of pharmacare by the current government over the last five years, but that says it all. It has been five years, four years in which the government had a majority and no pandemic to contend with.

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Many Canadians would have been far better off had the Liberal government in the last Parliament actually done what it often said it was going to do, which was to get a national pharmacare plan in place. That would have meant that the millions of Canadians who lost their jobs during the pandemic, and subsequently also lost their drug coverage, would have at least been able to have some support to continue getting the prescription drug coverage that they so desperately needed. We are proud of our health care system and the fact that access to basic health care does not depend on a person's employment situation, but prescription drugs are basic health care and that continues to be a function of employment for far too many Canadians.

• (2005)

I would be remiss if I did not add that were we to implement a national pharmacare program, this initiative would save money to Canadian taxpayers. What appears as a deficit on the federal ledger, appears as a surplus elsewhere. It appears as a surplus in provincial government budgets, which are asking for more money from the federal government that has not held up its end of the bargain when it comes to health funding. It appears as a surplus in the household budgets of Canadians who right now are paying exceptionally high costs for prescription drugs.

Likewise, with child care, we know that child care is one of the best returns on investment spending decisions that a government can make because it helps a lot of workers, particularly women, get into the economy and earn wages on which they then pay taxes.

When it comes to government spending, we have work to do on how the government spends and reports on its spending. We can do that good work as parliamentarians. We have a long way to go to have budgets and spending programs that really reflect the priorities of Canadians and put money back in their pockets without robbing them of the services they need.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, on the member's comments in regard to the pharmacare program, virtually since the last federal election, the government has taken significant actions toward it. With the then minister of health, literally hundreds of millions of dollars were saved by the national government getting involved and working toward that bulk buying aspect of it. It also established, through the health standing committee, the goals and objectives of moving toward a pharmacare program. Having we been moving as fast as we would like? Ideally, I would have liked to have seen it faster, but some things take time.

This is where I would ask something of my friend from Elmwood—Transcona. The biggest challenge we have to overcome to have the optimum national pharmacare program is to have provinces and territories onside. We cannot achieve that without them. We emphasized that point in the September throne speech.

On the issue of health care and getting a national pharmacare, could the member provide his thoughts on the importance of getting the full co-operation of provinces and territories.

• (2010)

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Madam Speaker, of course it is important to have the provinces onboard for a national pharmacare plan. I was proud of the NDP motion in the last Parliament that called on the federal government to call a meeting within a year where it would invite all provinces to the table for the express purpose of talking about how we could institute a national pharmacare plan in Canada. I watched as members of the Liberal Party, including that member, vote that motion down. The meeting has not happened.

I do not know how the member thinks the federal government can show leadership and get the provinces onboard if it does not even have the spine to call a meeting to say it wants to do this, that this is a policy objective of the government and gets the provinces onside. That meeting has not happened. I will believe it when I see it.

In the meantime, we will keep working to form a government with a party that means it, instead of taking over 20 years to get it done and having nothing to show for it.

Mr. Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC): Madam Speaker, my colleague mentioned that he was supportive of the amount of money that was spent directly to Canadians. I agree that most of the pandemic response should have been put directly toward Canadians.

Could the member comment on what percentage of the response to the pandemic should be in that category, as in direct to Canadians? My understanding is it is less than half of the deficit we have incurred to date this year.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Madam Speaker, I do not think it is so much a question of what the percentage is. It is a question of whether people are getting the support they really need. We know there continue to be people who have fallen through cracks in these programs. I have written to the government on this, and I am waiting for a response.

I am thinking of a lot of parents, particularly mothers, who have been caught in the cracks between employment insurance and the Canada recovery benefit. They are being told that it depends on the arbitrary date of their child's birth, whether before or after September 27. If it is after September 27, they can qualify for the CERB or the minimum payment on employment insurance of \$500 a week. If it was just the day before, they do not qualify. If that means their employment insurance benefit is quite low in a context where they have not been able to get the hours they need to get a higher benefit, which was part of their plan some time ago when they chose to start a family or grow their family, then too bad for them. I do not think that makes sense. I do not think it is a good way to support young families through this pandemic.

For as much as there is a fair bit of spending on Canadian households, there continue to be people who fall through the cracks. We are here to advocate for those people.

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Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Elmwood—Transcona for his excellent remarks on how we spend money in Canada in the main estimates process.

He might have read recently, via the CBC, the comments put forward by the University of Ottawa's Institute of Fiscal Studies and Democracy. Kevin Page, the former parliamentary budget officer, said that reading the government's 223-page economic update gave him something like a hangover. He went on to state, "It's impossible to read. I have done this for years and I can't even follow the money."

I would like the NDP member to comment. How can we trust the government, when it is not being transparent with us about how much public money is being spent?

● (2015)

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Madam Speaker, this is a major issue. Members of Parliament and parties can disagree about how much to spend and how to spend it, but we cannot have a cogent debate about that unless we know what is being spent and where it is being spent. That is why these things that some people maybe do not find interesting around process are very important. They enable us to get to the real heart of the matter when it comes to having those debates, which are the important ones, about how we spend money and where we spend it.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, the COVID-19 pandemic has wrought unspeakable devastation on the Downtown Eastside community in the heart of my riding.

The Downtown Eastside is one of the oldest neighbourhoods in Vancouver, and the diversity of its community members reflect its rich history. It is a community that has remained strong and deeply resilient despite the many challenges and struggles that come with poverty and a long history of colonization. The stigma against the people who live in the community is so strong, especially for those who are drug users or those who are homeless, that their struggles, their lack of access to basic human needs like housing, that the violence committed against them and even their deaths have been normalized to the extent that people no longer seem to care.

Recently, a disturbing video emerged where women appeared to be sexually assaulted in broad daylight, yet nobody did anything to help. Similar stories of horrific tragedy have emerged from the Downtown Eastside throughout the pandemic. A woman gave birth in a portable toilet and no one had noticed. The baby did not survive. Another woman was held captive and screaming in a tent for 15 hours, and no one intervened. Countless other reports of violence against women emerge from the Downtown Eastside, always tragic and always accompanied by apathy.

Similar apathy seems to exist for people who are struggling with substance misuse. More than 1,000 people have died in B.C. from overdose this year to date. This is an average of five deaths per day.

Street homelessness continues to increase amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Public health officials have made it clear that one of the most effective measures to stop the spread of the COVID-19 virus is to stay home, keep social distance and wash our hands frequently. Needless to say, people without homes or adequate housing can-

not self-isolate and cannot maintain the level of hygiene to keep themselves and others safe.

The Downtown Eastside now has one of the highest COVID infection rates in the city and the community members are suffering from violence, homelessness and the devastating impact of the overdose crisis at the same time.

The government says that addressing violence against women is a priority, that addressing homelessness and the opioid crisis are priorities, but its actions echo the apathy that have allowed these horrific deaths and acts of violence to perpetuate in our communities.

As 230,000 Canadians experience homelessness each year, the government continues to repeat the tired lines of 3,000 units of housing under the rapid housing initiative when the homelessness problem is so much bigger. The national housing strategy only aims to build 150,000 units of affordable housing over 10 years, effectively saying that it is acceptable to leave close to 100,000 Canadians without homes.

With this attitude, is it any wonder that homelessness has become accepted and normalized? The government has still not committed to the 50/50 cost-sharing with the Province of B.C. Nor has it committed to the recovery for all policy recommendations to end homelessness in Canada or the CHRA's indigenous caucus call for indigenous by indigenous calls for action. These commitments would truly make a difference in the lives and safety of Canadians.

With the opioid overdose crisis killing more people in B.C. than the COVID-19 pandemic, the government still has not committed to decriminalization as called for by the City of Vancouver. While all advocates of decriminalization, myself included, acknowledge that decriminalization is not a silver bullet, it is an important measure to help stem the tide of overdose deaths. Importantly, decriminalization is an important step to ending the stigma against drug users, a stigma that allows for the deaths and struggles of drug users to be normalized.

Every year, the Megaphone Magazine, sold on the streets by the homeless and low-income vendors, produces a beautiful calendar called "Hope in Shadows". The photos in the calendar are taken by the magazine vendors and are beautiful images of the community seen through the eyes of community members themselves. The photos in the calendar capture images of children, friends, families and their pets. They live, work and play in the community. Other photos feature images of community activism, art, front-line workers and acts of caring. The calendar showcases the Downtown Eastside, a community that truly, once the stigma is removed, is a community of vibrant people, each with loved ones, hopes and dreams.

Business of Supply

● (2020)

It is time for the government to take leadership in treating the community as such and to show, with concrete urgent action, that we care about the community and that our community members are not dispensable.

One urgent order of action is ensuring the availability and priority of COVID-19 vaccines for community members. In a briefing provided to MPs, we were informed that the priority vaccines would be given to individuals of advanced age, health care workers, first responders and indigenous peoples. I am deeply concerned that this list of priorities misses many people who are equally vulnerable and in need, many of whom reside and work in the Downtown Eastside.

The Downtown Eastside has the highest COVID infection rate in the city. Many residents have pre-existing conditions and other health concerns that make them especially vulnerable to the virus. The lack of safe, adequate and affordable housing in the community makes other safety measures, such as self-isolation and frequent handwashing, nearly impossible.

At the same time, I am deeply concerned about the safety of front-line workers in the Downtown Eastside. Front-line workers play just as much of an important role in fighting the pandemic as workers in health care settings, but they work in environments where it is extremely challenging to keep sanitary and safe.

Just today, we learned that there will only be enough vaccines to cover approximately 125,000 people later this month. That is not even enough to cover the 225,000 seniors in long-term care homes. Until there is a vaccine available for everyone, the government needs to do more to keep people safe.

A second urgent priority action for the government is to address violence against women in the Downtown Eastside. Three women's groups in the Downtown Eastside have called for the immediate creation of a task force to end violence against women in the neighbourhood. I call on the government to take immediate action and commit to lead that work. Gendered violence and violence against women are not new. Just yesterday, we commemorated the 14 women killed in the École Polytechnique massacre. With the COVID-19 pandemic, gendered violence and intimate-partner violence have increased exponentially. A women's crisis line in my riding reported early in the pandemic that crisis phone calls increased by 400% in the first months of the pandemic.

Long before the pandemic, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission identified access to safe housing and safe spaces as fundamental to the safety of women and girls and 2SLGBTQ people. The pandemic has further eroded access to the safe housing and safe spaces that were already scarce before the pandemic. The government must meet immediately with these groups, work collaboratively with advocates to establish the task force in the Downtown Eastside, and develop and fund an immediate action plan to end violence against women.

The government must also immediately respond to the City of Vancouver's request for an exemption from the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act within the city's boundaries. In fact, I would

urge the government to go even further and enact a nationwide exemption to jump-start the process of decriminalizing drug use to save lives.

For any of these measures to have lasting impact, people's basic needs must be met. For people to be safe from violence and disease long term, every Canadian must have access to safe housing. The government must act immediately and commit to fifty-fifty cost sharing with B.C. and to the recovery for all policy recommendations to end homelessness in Canada.

The COVID-19 pandemic is an unprecedented health emergency that has deeply impacted the lives of Canadians across the country. At the same time, it has exacerbated crises that existed before the pandemic, including gendered violence, the opioid crisis and the homelessness crisis. None of these crises can be addressed alone. If we truly want to successfully address these crises together, we need a coordinated intersectional response enacted with the urgency of our crisis response to the pandemic and delivered with a firm commitment to the indispensability of every single person living in Canada.

There have been too many deaths and tragedies already. We must leave no one behind. We can do this. It takes political will. It takes courage. It takes all of us to realize the realities and the value of every single person in our community. Humanity is what is needed at this time of crisis, and we need to recognize that no community is dispensable. Everyone is someone's mother, someone's daughter, someone's son, someone's aunt. We all have to—

● (2025)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I am sorry. We have to leave time for questions and comments.

Questions and comments, the hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Government of Canada has been working with many communities and investing hundreds of millions of dollars in dealing with homelessness. The pandemic really does reinforce the importance of us continuing to do that work.

My question to the member is related to her comments with respect to the decriminalization of drugs. I wonder if there is any limit regarding drugs that should be left in the Criminal Code, or whether she is advocating that all drugs be decriminalized. Is that the New Democratic Party's position?

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Madam Speaker, on the issue of housing, the member must know that a national housing strategy back-end loads the flow of the money. In the face of this pandemic, the government has only announced 3,000 units for the rapid housing initiative when there are some 230,000 Canadians who experience homelessness every single year. That announcement does not even begin to address the crisis.

With respect to decriminalization, I invite the member to listen to the experts and the medical science. Dr. Bonnie Henry, from my own community here in Vancouver, British Columbia, has called for decriminalization. She just issued a report. I ask the member to read that report and tell his Liberal government to follow her advice.

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Madam Speaker, my colleague from the NDP spoke a lot about issues impacting women. She mentioned missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. Unfortunately, these are issues that are near and dear to many people in my riding. In my riding, we have high rates of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, human trafficking and many social issues impacting people across the region. I find too often the government creates very big programs, spends lots of money and celebrates all the dollars it has spent. I know on this side of the House we do not celebrate dollars spent. We celebrate practical results to help people in need.

I wonder if the member has any comments on that and where the government's programs and services have missed the mark to help those who truly need that support.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Madam Speaker, with respect to the issue of the missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, as the member knows, we had a national inquiry. We had the calls to justice. The Liberal government promised that a year from the tabling of the inquiry recommendations it would take action. Of course, it has not fulfilled that recommendation either. In the meantime, we see horrific violence against women taking place in my own community and elsewhere, and indigenous women and girls continue to go missing, so I call on the government to stop talking about it and take the action that is required. We need indigenous communities and women's organizations to lead the action. The government needs to facilitate the process and get on with it.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her assessment of the Liberals' national housing strategy. I wonder if she would take a moment to speak to some of the benefits of getting going with those investments in public housing, in terms of benefits to the people who can be housed, to those who would be employed in building the housing, and to the climate if there is public sector leadership and real standards are put in to ensure that new housing is built in a way that reduces emissions.

• (2030)

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Madam Speaker, the member absolutely hit the nail on the head. If we address the homelessness crisis, not only do we house people, treat them, humanize the issue of homelessness and value every single life in our community, we also create jobs at the same time. If the government embarked on the recovery for all initiative, we would create the necessary COVID recovery. At the same time, the government could put in a variety of measures to ensure that, in building and retrofitting housing, we also contribute to the climate emergency measures. It is a win-win-win solution. To my dismay, the Liberal government has slow-walked this and the national housing strategy is a—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The time has expired.

Business of Supply

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—STATUS UPDATE ON COVID-19 VACCINES

The House resumed from December 3 consideration of the motion.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): It being 8:30 p.m., pursuant to order made on Friday, December 4, 2020, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the business of supply.

Call in the members.

• (2145)

[*Translation*]

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

(*Division No. 28*)

YEAS

Members

Aboutaif	Aitchison
Albas	Alghabra
Alleslev	Allison
Amos	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arnold	Arseneault
Arya	Ashton
Atwin	Bachrach
Badawey	Bagnell
Bains	Baker
Baldinelli	Barlow
Barrett	Barsalou-Duval
Battiste	Beaulieu
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	Benzen
Bergen	Bergeron
Berthold	Bérubé
Bessette	Bezan
Bibeau	Bittle
Blaikie	Blair
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)	Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Block	Blois
Boudrias	Boulerice
Bragdon	Brassard
Bratina	Brière
Brunelle-Duceppe	Calkins
Cannings	Carr
Carrie	Casey
Chabot	Chagger
Champagne	Champoux
Charbonneau	Chen
Chiu	Chong
Collins	Cooper
Cormier	Cumming
Dabrusin	Dalton
Damoff	Dancho
Davidson	Davies
DeBellefeuille	Deltell
d'Entremont	Desbiens
Desilets	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Doherty
Dong	Dowdall
Dreeshen	Drouin

Business of Supply

Dubourg	Duclos	O'Toole	Patzer
Duguid	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Paul-Hus	Pauzé
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duvall	Perron	Petitpas Taylor
Dzerowicz	Easter	Plamondon	Poilievre
Ehsassi	El-Khoury	Powlowski	Qualtrough
Ellis	Epp	Ratansi	Rayes
Erskine-Smith	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Redekopp	Regan
Falk (Provencher)	Fast	Reid	Rempel Garner
Fergus	Fillmore	Richards	Robillard
Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock)	Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Rodriguez	Rogers
Finnigan	Fisher	Romanado	Rood
Fonseca	Fortier	Ruff	Sahota (Calgary Skyview)
Fortin	Fragiskatos	Sahota (Brampton North)	Saini
Fraser	Freeland	Sajjan	Saks
Fry	Gallant	Samson	Sangha
Garrison	Gaudreau	Sarai	Saroya
Gazan	Généreux	Savard-Tremblay	Scarpaleggia
Genuis	Gerretsen	Scheer	Schiefke
Gill	Gladu	Schmale	Schulte
Godin	Gould	Seeback	Serré
Gourde	Gray	Sgro	Shanahan
Green	Guilbeault	Sheehan	Shields
Hajdu	Hallan	Shin	Shipley
Harder	Hardie	Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Harris	Hoback	Simard	Simms
Holland	Housefather	Singh	Sloan
Hughes	Hussen	Sorbara	Soroka
Hutchings	Iacono	Spengemann	Steinley
Ien	Jaczek	Ste-Marie	Strahl
Jansen	Jeneroux	Stubbs	Sweet
Johns	Joly	Tabbara	Tassi
Jones	Jordan	Thériault	Therrien
Jowhari	Julian	Tochor	Trudeau
Kelloway	Kelly	Trudel	Turnbull
Kent	Khalid	Uppal	Van Bynen
Khera	Kitchen	van Koeverden	Van Popta
Kmiec	Koutrakis	Vandal	Vaughan
Kram	Kurek	Vecchio	Vidal
Kusie	Kusmierczyk	Viersen	Vignola
Kwan	Lake	Virani	Vis
Lalonde	Lambropoulos	Wagantall	Warkentin
Lametti	Lamoureux	Waugh	Webber
Larouche	Lattanzio	Weiler	Wilkinson
Lauzon	Lawrence	Williamson	Wilson-Raybould
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier	Wong	Yip
Lefebvre	Lehoux	Young	Yurdiga
Lemire	Lewis (Essex)	Zahid	Zann
Liepert	Lightbound	Zimmer— 329	
Lloyd	Lobb		
Long	Longfield		
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	Lukiwski		
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacGregor		NAYS
MacKenzie	MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Nil	
Maguire	Maloney		
Manly	Martel		PAIRED
Martinez Ferrada	Masse		
Mathysen	May (Cambridge)	Nil	
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	Mazier		
McCauley (Edmonton West)	McColeman		The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.
McCrimmon	McDonald		● (2150)
McGuinty	McKay		[<i>English</i>]
McKenna	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)		OPPOSITION MOTION—MEASURES TO SUPPORT CANADIAN BUSINESSES
McLean	McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)		The House resumed consideration of the motion.
McLeod (Northwest Territories)	McPherson		The Deputy Speaker: The next question is on the opposition motion relating to the business of supply.
Melillo	Mendés		● (2220)
Mendicino	Michaud		(The House divided on the motion, which was negated on the following division:)
Miller	Monsef		
Moore	Morantz		
Morrison	Morrissey		
Motz	Murray		
Nater	Ng		
Normandin	O'Connell		
Oliphant	O'Regan		

(Division No. 29)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif	Aitchison
Albas	Alleslev
Allison	Arnold
Baldinelli	Barlow
Barrett	Beaulieu
Benzen	Bergen
Berthold	Bezan
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)	Block
Bragdon	Brassard
Calkins	Carrie
Chiu	Chong
Cooper	Cumming
Dalton	Dancho
Davidson	Deltell
d'Entremont	Diotte
Doherty	Dowdall
Dreeschen	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Epp	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Falk (Provencher)	Fast
Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock)	Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Gallant	Généreux
Genuis	Gladu
Godin	Gourde
Gray	Hallan
Harder	Hoback
Jansen	Jeneroux
Kelly	Kent
Kitchen	Kmiec
Kram	Kurek
Kusie	Lake
Lawrence	Lehoux
Lewis (Essex)	Liepert
Lloyd	Lobb
Lukiwski	MacKenzie
Maguire	Martel
Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McColeman	McLean
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	Melillo
Moore	Morantz
Morrison	Motz
Nater	O'Toole
Patzer	Paul-Hus
Poillievre	Rayes
Redekopp	Reid
Rempel Garner	Richards
Rood	Ruff
Sahota (Calgary Skyview)	Saroya
Scheer	Schmale
Seeback	Shields
Shin	Shipley
Sloan	Soroka
Steinley	Strahl
Stubbs	Sweet
Tochor	Uppal
Van Popta	Vecchio
Vidal	Viersen
Vis	Wagantall
Warkentin	Waugh
Webber	Williamson
Wong	Yurdiga
Zimmer — 121	

NAYS

Members

Alghabra	Amos
Anand	Anandasangaree
Angus	Arseneault

Business of Supply

Arya	Ashton
Atwin	Bachrach
Badawey	Bagnell
Bains	Baker
Barsalou-Duval	Battiste
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	Bergeron
Bérubé	Besette
Bibeau	Bittle
Blaikie	Blair
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)	Blois
Boudrias	Boulerice
Bratina	Brière
Brunelle-Duceppe	Cannings
Carr	Casey
Chabot	Chagger
Champagne	Champoux
Charbonneau	Chen
Collins	Cormier
Dabrusin	Damoff
Davies	DeBellefeuille
Desbiens	Desilets
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Dong	Drouin
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Duvall	Dzerowicz
Easter	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Ellis
Erskine-Smith	Fergus
Fillmore	Finnigan
Fisher	Fonseca
Fortier	Fortin
Fragiskatos	Fraser
Freeland	Fry
Garrison	Gaudreau
Gazan	Gerretsen
Gill	Gould
Green	Guilbeault
Hajdu	Hardie
Harris	Holland
Housefather	Hughes
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Ien
Jaczek	Johns
Joly	Jones
Jordan	Jowhari
Julian	Kelloway
Khalid	Khera
Koutrakis	Kusmierczyk
Kwan	Lalonde
Lambropoulos	Lametti
Lamoureux	Larouche
Lattanzio	Lauzon
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lefebvre	Lemire
Lightbound	Long
Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacGregor
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney
Manly	Martinez Ferrada
Masse	Mathysen
May (Cambridge)	May (Saanic—Gulf Islands)
McCrimmon	McDonald
McGuinty	McKay
McKenna	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod (Northwest Territories)	McPherson
Mendès	Mendicino
Michaud	Miller
Monsef	Morrissey
Murray	Ng
Normandin	O'Connell

Business of Supply

Oliphant	O'Regan	Besette	Bibeau
Pauzé	Perron	Bittle	Blaikie
Petitpas Taylor	Plamondon	Blair	Blanchet
Powlowski	Qualtrough	Blanchette-Joncas	Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Ratansi	Regan	Blois	Boudrias
Robillard	Rodriguez	Boulerice	Bratina
Rogers	Romanado	Brière	Brunelle-Duceppe
Sahota (Brampton North)	Saini	Cannings	Carr
Sajjan	Saks	Casey	Chabot
Samson	Sangha	Chagger	Champagne
Sarai	Savard-Tremblay	Champoux	Charbonneau
Scarpaleggia	Schiefke	Chen	Collins
Schulte	Serré	Cormier	Dabrusin
Sgro	Shanahan	Damoff	Davies
Sheehan	Sidhu (Brampton East)	DeBellefeuille	Desbiens
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Simard	Desilets	Dhaliwal
Simms	Singh	Dhillon	Dong
Sorbara	Spengemann	Drouin	Dubourg
Ste-Marie	Tabbara	Duclos	Duguid
Tassi	Thériault	Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duval
Therrien	Trudeau	Dzerowicz	Easter
Trudel	Turnbull	Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Van Bynen	van Koeverden	Ellis	Erskine-Smith
Vandal	Vaughan	Fergus	Fillmore
Vignola	Virani	Finnigan	Fisher
Weiler	Wilkinson	Fonseca	Fortier
Wilson-Raybould	Yip	Fortin	Fragiskatos
Young	Zahid	Fraser	Freeland
Zann— 209		Fry	Garrison
		Gaudreau	Gazan
		Gerretsen	Gill
		Gould	Green
		Guilbeault	Hajdu
		Hardie	Harris
		Holland	Housefather
		Hughes	Hussen
		Hutchings	Iacono
		Ien	Jaczek
		Johns	Joly
		Jones	Jordan
		Jowhari	Julian
		Kelloway	Khalid
		Khera	Koutrakis
		Kusmierczyk	Kwan
		Lalonde	Lambropoulos
		Lametti	Lamoureux
		Larouche	Lattanzio
		Lauzon	LeBlanc
		Lebouthillier	Lefebvre
		Lemire	Lightbound
		Long	Longfield
		Lotis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)
		MacGregor	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
		Maloney	Manly
		Martinez Ferrada	Masse
		Mathysen	May (Cambridge)
		May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	McCrimmon
		McDonald	McGuinty
		McKay	McKenna
		McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod (Northwest Territories)
		McPherson	Mendès
		Mendicino	Michaud
		Miller	Monsef
		Morrissey	Murray
		Ng	Normandin
		O'Connell	Oliphant
		O'Regan	Pauzé
		Perron	Petitpas Taylor
		Plamondon	Powlowski
		Qualtrough	Ratansi
		Regan	Robillard
		Rodriguez	Rogers
		Romanado	Sahota (Brampton North)

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

* * *

MAIN ESTIMATES, 2020-21

CONCURRENCE IN VOTE 1—FOREIGN AFFAIRS, TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT

The House resumed consideration of Motion No. 1.

The Deputy Speaker: If a member of a recognized party present in the House wishes to request a recorded vote, or that the motion be adopted on division, I invite them to rise and so indicate to the Chair.

● (2225)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I would ask that a recorded vote be put to the question.

● (2300)

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

(Division No. 30)

YEAS

Members

Alghabra	Amos
Anand	Anandasangaree
Angus	Arseneault
Arya	Ashton
Atwin	Bachrach
Badawey	Bagnell
Bains	Baker
Barsalou-Duval	Battiste
Beaulieu	Beech
Bendayan	Bennett
Bergeron	Bérubé

Business of Supply

Saini
Saks
Sangha
Savard-Tremblay
Schiefke
Serré
Shanahan
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Simard
Singh
Spengemann
Tabbara
Thériault
Trudeau
Turnbull
van Koeverden
Vaughan
Virani
Wilkinson
Yip
Zahid

Sajjan
Samson
Sarai
Scarpaleggia
Schulte
Sgro
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simms
Sorbara
Ste-Marie
Tassi
Therrien
Trudel
Van Bynen
Vandal
Vignola
Weiler
Wilson-Raybould
Young
Zann— 210

Shiple
Soroka
Strahl
Sweet
Uppal
Vecchio
Viersen
Wagantall
Waugh
Williamson
Yurdiga
Sloan
Steinley
Stubbs
Tochor
Van Popta
Vidal
Vis
Warkentin
Webber
Wong
Zimmer— 118

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

● (2305)

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos moved:

That the Main Estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2021, except any vote disposed of earlier today and less the amounts voted in the Interim Supply be concurred in.

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on the motion. If any member of a recognized party present wishes to request a recorded division or that the motion be adopted on division, I would invite them to rise and indicate so to the Chair.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I would request a recorded vote.

Hon. Mark Holland: Mr. Speaker, it is my very sincere and deeply held hope that, if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent of the House to apply the results of the previous vote to this vote, with Liberal members voting in favour.

Mr. Blake Richards: Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives agree to apply the vote and will be voting against.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois agrees to apply the result of the previous vote and will be voting yes.

[*English*]

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Mr. Speaker, the NDP agrees to apply the vote and will be voting in favour.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, as the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, on behalf of three Green MPs, in the virtual vote, we agree to apply and will be voting yes.

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi: Mr. Speaker, I agree to apply and will be voting yes.

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould: Mr. Speaker, I agree to apply and will be voting in favour.

Mr. Marwan Tabbara: Mr. Speaker, I agree to apply and will be voting yes.

[*Translation*]

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

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif
Albas
Allison
Baldinelli
Barrett
Bergen
Bezan
Block
Brassard
Carrie
Chong
Cumming
Dancho
Deltell
Diotte
Dowdall
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Fast
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Généreux
Gladu
Gourde
Hallan
Hoback
Jeneroux
Kent
Kmiec
Kurek
Lake
Lehoux
Liepert
Lobb
Maguire
Mazier
McColeman
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Moore
Morrison
Nater
Patzner
Poilievre
Redekopp
Richards
Ruff
Saroya
Schmale
Shields

Aitchison
Alleslev
Arnold
Barlow
Benzen
Berthold
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Bragdon
Calkins
Chiu
Cooper
Dalton
Davidson
d'Entremont
Doherty
Dreeshen
Epp
Falk (Provencher)
Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock)
Gallant
Genuis
Godin
Gray
Harder
Jansen
Kelly
Kitchen
Kram
Kusie
Lawrence
Lewis (Essex)
Lloyd
MacKenzie
Martel
McCauley (Edmonton West)
McLean
Melillo
Morantz
Motz
O'Toole
Paul-Hus
Rayes
Reid
Rood
Sahota (Calgary Skyview)
Scheer
Seeback
Shin

*Business of Supply**(Division No. 31)*

YEAS

Members

Alghabra
Anand
Angus
Arya
Atwin
Badawey
Bains
Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu
Bendayan
Bergeron
Bessette
Bittle
Blair
Blanchette-Joncas
Blois
Boulerice
Brière
Cannings
Casey
Chagger
Champoux
Chen
Cormier
Damoff
DeBellefeuille
Desilets
Dhillon
Drouin
Duclos
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dzerowicz
Ehsassi
Ellis
Fergus
Finnigan
Fonseca
Fortin
Fraser
Fry
Gaudreau
Gerretsen
Gould
Guilbeault
Hardie
Holland
Hughes
Hutchings
Ien
Johns
Jones
Jowhari
Kelloway
Khera
Kusmierczyk
Lalonde
Lametti
Larouche
Lauzon
Lebouthillier
Lemire
Long
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacGregor
Maloney
Martinez Ferrada
Mathysen
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)

Amos
Anandasangaree
Arseneault
Ashton
Bachrach
Bagnell
Baker
Battiste
Beech
Bennett
Bérubé
Blaikie
Blanchet
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Boudrias
Bratina
Brunelle-Duceppe
Carr
Chabot
Champagne
Charbonneau
Collins
Dabrusin
Davies
Desbiens
Dhaliwal
Dong
Dubourg
Duguid
Duvall
Easter
El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith
Fillmore
Fisher
Fortier
Fragiskatos
Freeland
Garrison
Gazan
Gill
Green
Hajdu
Harris
Housefather
Hussen
Iacono
Jaczek
Joly
Jordan
Julian
Khalid
Koutrakis
Kwan
Lambropoulos
Lamoureux
Lattanzio
LeBlanc
Lefebvre
Lightbound
Longfield
MacAtulay (Cardigan)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Manly
Masse
May (Cambridge)
McCrimmon

McDonald
McKay
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McPherson
Mendicino
Miller
Morrissey
Ng
O'Connell
O'Regan
Perron
Plamondon
Qualtrough
Regan
Rodriguez
Romanado
Saini
Saks
Sangha
Savard-Tremblay
Schiefke
Serré
Shanahan
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Simard
Singh
Spengemann
Tabbara
Thériault
Trudeau
Turnbull
van Koeverden
Vaughan
Virani
Wilkinson
Yip
Zahid

McGuinty
McKenna
McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendès
Michaud
Monsef
Murray
Normandin
Oliphant
Pauzé
Petitpas Taylor
Powlowski
Ratansi
Robillard
Rogers
Sahota (Brampton North)
Sajjan
Samson
Saraï
Scarpalleggia
Schulte
Sgro
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simms
Sorbara
Ste-Marie
Tassi
Therrien
Trudel
Van Bynen
Vandal
Vignola
Weiler
Wilson-Raybould
Young
Zann — 210

NAYS

Members

Aboultarif
Albas
Allison
Baldinelli
Barrett
Bergen
Bezan
Block
Brassard
Carrie
Chong
Cumming
Dancho
Deltell
Diotte
Dowdall
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Fast
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Généreux
Gladu
Gourde
Hallan
Hoback
Jeneroux
Kent
Kniec
Kurek
Lake
Lehoux
Liepert

Aitchison
Alleslev
Arnold
Barlow
Benzen
Berthold
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Bragdon
Calkins
Chiu
Cooper
Dalton
Davidson
d'Entremont
Doherty
Dreeshen
Epp
Falk (Provencher)
Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock)
Gallant
Genuis
Godin
Gray
Harder
Jansen
Kelly
Kitchen
Kram
Kusie
Lawrence
Lewis (Essex)
Lloyd

Business of Supply

Lobb	MacKenzie
Maguire	Martel
Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McColeman	McLean
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	Melillo
Moore	Morantz
Morrison	Motz
Nater	O'Toole
Patzer	Paul-Hus
Poilievre	Rayes
Redekopp	Reid
Richards	Rood
Ruff	Sahota (Calgary Skyview)
Saroya	Scheer
Schmale	Seeback
Shields	Shin
Shipley	Sloan
Soroka	Steinley
Strahl	Stubbs
Sweet	Tochor
Uppal	Van Popta
Vecchio	Vidal
Viersen	Vis
Wagantall	Warkentin
Wagh	Webber
Williamson	Wong
Yurdiga	Zimmer— 118

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos moved for leave to introduce Bill C-16, An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2021.

(Motions deemed adopted and bill read the first time)

[*English*]

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos moved that the bill be read the second time and referred to a committee of the whole.

Hon. Mark Holland: Mr. Speaker, I believe if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent to apply the results of the last vote to this next vote, with Liberal members voting in favour.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Blake Richards: Mr. Speaker, we agree to apply the vote and the Conservative members will be voting against the motion.

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois agrees to apply the vote and will be voting in favour of the motion.

[*English*]

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Mr. Speaker, the NDP agrees and we will be voting in favour.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, the Green Party also agrees to apply the vote and will be voting yes.

● (2310)

[*English*]

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi: Mr. Speaker, I agree to apply the vote and will be voting yes.

Mr. Marwan Tabbara: Mr. Speaker, I agree to apply and will be voting yes.

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould: Mr. Speaker, I agree to apply and will be voting yes.

[*Translation*]

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

(*Division No. 32*)

YEAS

Members

Alghabra	Amos
Anand	Anandasangaree
Angus	Arseneault
Arya	Ashton
Atwin	Bachrach
Badawey	Bagnell
Bains	Baker
Barsalou-Duval	Battiste
Beaulieu	Beech
Bendayan	Bennett
Bergeron	Bérubé
Bessette	Bibeau
Bittle	Blaikie
Blair	Blanchet
Blanchette-Joncas	Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Blois	Boudrias
Boulerice	Bratina
Brière	Brunelle-Duceppe
Cannings	Carr
Casey	Chabot
Chagger	Champagne
Champoux	Charbonneau
Chen	Collins
Cormier	Dabrusin
Damoff	Davies
DeBellefeuille	Desbiens
Desilets	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Dong
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duval
Dzerowicz	Easter
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Ellis	Erskine-Smith
Fergus	Fillmore
Finnigan	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fortin	Fragiskatos
Fraser	Freeland
Fry	Garrison
Gaudreau	Gazan
Gerretsen	Gill
Gould	Green
Guilbeault	Hajdu
Hardie	Harris
Holland	Housefather
Hughes	Hussen
Hutchings	Iacono
Ien	Jaczek
Johns	Joly
Jones	Jordan
Jowhari	Julian
Kelloway	Khalid
Khera	Koutrakis
Kusmierczyk	Kwan
Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Larouche	Lattanzio
Lauzon	LeBlanc
Lebouthillier	Lefebvre
Lemire	Lightbound

Business of Supply

Long	Longfield	Jeneroux	Kelly
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)	Kent	Kitchen
MacGregor	MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Kmiec	Kram
Maloney	Manly	Kurek	Kusie
Martinez Ferrada	Masse	Lake	Lawrence
Mathysen	May (Cambridge)	Lehoux	Lewis (Essex)
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	McCrimmon	Liepert	Lloyd
McDonald	McGuinty	Lobb	MacKenzie
McKay	McKenna	Maguire	Martel
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod (Northwest Territories)	Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McPherson	Mendès	McColeman	McLean
Mendicino	Michaud	McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	Melillo
Miller	Monsef	Moore	Morantz
Morrissey	Murray	Morrison	Motz
Ng	Normandin	Nater	O'Toole
O'Connell	Oliphant	Patzer	Paul-Hus
O'Regan	Pauzé	Poilievre	Rayes
Perron	Petitpas Taylor	Redekopp	Reid
Plamondon	Powlowski	Richards	Rood
Qualtrough	Ratansi	Ruff	Sahota (Calgary Skyview)
Regan	Robillard	Saroya	Scheer
Rodriguez	Rogers	Schmale	Seeback
Romanado	Sahota (Brampton North)	Shields	Shin
Saini	Sajjan	Shiple	Sloan
Saks	Samson	Soroka	Steinley
Sangha	Sarai	Strahl	Stubbs
Savard-Tremblay	Scarpaleggia	Sweet	Tochor
Schiefke	Schulte	Uppal	Van Popta
Serré	Sgro	Vecchio	Vidal
Shanahan	Sheehan	Viersen	Vis
Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)	Wagantall	Warkentin
Simard	Simms	Waugh	Webber
Singh	Sorbara	Williamson	Wong
Spengemann	Ste-Marie	Yurdiga	Zimmer— 118
Tabbara	Tassi		
Thériault	Therrien		
Trudeau	Trudel		
Turnbull	Van Bynen		
van Koevorden	Vandal		
Vaughan	Vignola		
Virani	Weiler		
Wilkinson	Wilson-Raybould		
Yip	Young		
Zahid	Zann— 210		

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Accordingly the bill stands referred to a committee of the whole.

(Bill read the second time and the House went into committee thereon, Mrs. Carol Hughes in the chair)

(On clause 2)

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Madam Chair, can the President of the Treasury Board assure the House that the bill is in its usual form and that it would pass an official languages impact analysis in both official languages?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Madam Chair, I would like to use this solemn occasion to inform my hon. colleague that the presentation of this bill is identical to that used during the previous supply period.

The Deputy Chair: Shall clause 2 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause 2 agreed to)

[English]

The Deputy Chair: Shall clause 3 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

NAYS

Members

Abouttaif	Aitchison
Albas	Alleslev
Allison	Arnold
Baldinelli	Barlow
Barrett	Benzen
Bergen	Berthold
Bezan	Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Block	Bragdon
Brassard	Calkins
Carrie	Chiu
Chong	Cooper
Cumming	Dalton
Dancho	Davidson
Deltell	d'Entremont
Diotte	Doherty
Dowdall	Dreeshen
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Epp
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Fast	Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock)
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Gallant
Généreux	Genuis
Glada	Godin
Gourde	Gray
Hallan	Harder
Hoback	Jansen

Business of Supply

(Clause 3 agreed to)

The Deputy Chair: Shall clause 4 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause 4 agreed to)

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Chair: Shall clause 5 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause 5 agreed to)

The Deputy Chair: Shall schedule 1 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Schedule 1 agreed to)

The Deputy Chair: Shall schedule 2 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Schedule 2 agreed to)

[*English*]

The Deputy Chair: Shall clause 1, the short title, carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause 1 agreed to)

The Deputy Chair: Shall the preamble carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Preamble agreed to)

The Deputy Chair: Shall the title carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Title agreed to)

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Chair: Shall the bill carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Bill agreed to)

The Deputy Chair: Shall I rise and report the bill?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Bill reported)

• (2315)

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos moved that the bill be concurred in.

Hon. Mark Holland: Mr. Speaker, I believe you would find consent to apply the results from the previous vote to this vote, with Liberal members voting in favour of the bill.

[*English*]

Mr. Blake Richards: Mr. Speaker, Conservatives agree to apply the vote and we will be voting against.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois agrees to apply the vote and votes in favour of the bill.

[*English*]

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Mr. Speaker, the NDP agrees to apply, and we will be voting in favour.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, Greens agree to apply the vote and will be voting yes.

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi: Mr. Speaker, I agree to apply and will be voting yes.

Mr. Marwan Tabbara: Mr. Speaker, I agree to apply and will be voting in favour.

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould: Mr. Speaker, I agree to apply and will be voting in favour.

[*Translation*]

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

(*Division No. 33*)

YEAS

Members

Alghabra	Amos
Anand	Anandasangaree
Angus	Arseneault
Arya	Ashton
Atwin	Bachrach
Badawey	Bagnell
Bains	Baker
Barsalou-Duval	Battiste
Beaulieu	Beech
Bendayan	Bennett
Bergeron	Bérubé
Bessette	Bibeau
Bittle	Blaikie
Blair	Blanchet
Blanchette-Joncas	Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Blois	Boudrias
Boulerice	Bratina
Brière	Brunelle-Duceppe
Cannings	Carr
Casey	Chabot
Chagger	Champagne
Champoux	Charbonneau
Chen	Collins
Cormier	Dabrusin
Damoff	Davies
DeBellefeuille	Desbiens
Desilets	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Dong
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid

Business of Supply

Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duvall	Yip	Young
Dzerowicz	Easter	Zahid	Zann— 210
Ehsassi	El-Khoury		
Ellis	Erskine-Smith		NAYS
Fergus	Fillmore		Members
Finnigan	Fisher	Aboutaif	Aitchison
Fonseca	Fortier	Albas	Alleslev
Fortin	Fragiskatos	Allison	Arnold
Fraser	Freeland	Baldinelli	Barlow
Fry	Garrison	Barrett	Benzen
Gaudreau	Gazan	Bergen	Berthold
Gerretsen	Gill	Bezan	Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Gould	Green	Block	Bragdon
Guilbeault	Hajdu	Brassard	Calkins
Hardie	Harris	Carrie	Chiu
Holland	Housefather	Chong	Cooper
Hughes	Hussen	Cumming	Dalton
Hutchings	Iacono	Dancho	Davidson
Ien	Jaczek	Deltell	d'Entremont
Johns	Joly	Diotte	Doherty
Jones	Jordan	Dowdall	Dreeshen
Jowhari	Julian	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Epp
Kelloway	Khalid	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Khera	Koutrakis	Fast	Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock)
Kusmierczyk	Kwan	Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Gallant
Lalonde	Lambropoulos	Généreux	Genuis
Lametti	Lamoureux	Gladu	Godin
Larouche	Lattanzio	Gourde	Gray
Lauzon	LeBlanc	Hallan	Harder
Lebouthillier	Lefebvre	Hoback	Jansen
Lemire	Lightbound	Jeneroux	Kelly
Long	Longfield	Kent	Kitchen
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)	Kniec	Kram
MacGregor	MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Kurek	Kusie
Maloney	Manly	Lake	Lawrence
Martinez Ferrada	Masse	Lehoux	Lewis (Essex)
Mathysen	May (Cambridge)	Liepert	Lloyd
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	McCrimmon	Lobb	MacKenzie
McDonald	McGuinty	Maguire	Martel
McKay	McKenna	Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod (Northwest Territories)	McColeman	McLean
McPherson	Mendès	McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	Melillo
Mendicino	Michaud	Moore	Morantz
Miller	Monsef	Morrison	Motz
Morrissey	Murray	Nater	O'Toole
Ng	Normandin	Patzer	Paul-Hus
O'Connell	Oliphant	Poilievre	Rayes
O'Regan	Pauzé	Redekopp	Reid
Perron	Petitpas Taylor	Richards	Rood
Plamondon	Powlowski	Ruff	Sahota (Calgary Skyview)
Qualtrough	Ratansi	Saroya	Scheer
Regan	Robillard	Schmale	Seeback
Rodriguez	Rogers	Shields	Shin
Romanado	Sahota (Brampton North)	Shiple	Sloan
Saini	Sajjan	Soroka	Steinley
Saks	Samson	Strahl	Stubbs
Sangha	Sarai	Sweet	Tochor
Savard-Tremblay	Scarpaleggia	Uppal	Van Popta
Schieffe	Schulte	Vecchio	Vidal
Serré	Sgro	Viersen	Vis
Shanahan	Sheehan	Wagantall	Warkentin
Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)	Waugh	Webber
Simard	Simms	Williamson	Wong
Singh	Sorbara	Yurdiga	Zimmer— 118
Spengemann	Ste-Marie		
Tabbara	Tassi		
Thériault	Therrien		
Trudeau	Trudel		
Turnbull	Van Bynen		
van Koeverden	Vandal		
Vaughan	Vignola		
Virani	Weiler		
Wilkinson	Wilson-Raybould		
		Nil	
			PAIRED
			The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried. When shall the bill be read the third time? By leave, now?
			Some hon. members: Agreed.

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos moved that Bill C-16 be read the third time and passed.

[*English*]

Hon. Mark Holland: Mr. Speaker, I have confidence that if you seek it, you shall find consent to apply the results of the previous vote to this vote, with Liberal members voting in favour.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Blake Richards: Mr. Speaker, we agree to apply the vote, and Conservative members will vote no.

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois agrees to apply the vote and will be voting yes.

[*English*]

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Mr. Speaker, the NDP agrees to apply the vote and will be voting in favour.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, the Green Party agrees to apply the vote and will be voting in favour.

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi: Mr. Speaker, I agree to apply the vote and will be voting in favour.

Mr. Marwan Tabbara: Mr. Speaker, I agree to apply the vote and will be voting in favour.

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould: Mr. Speaker, I agree to apply and will be voting in favour.

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

(*Division No. 34*)

YEAS

Members

Alghabra	Amos
Anand	Anandasangaree
Angus	Arseneault
Arya	Ashton
Atwin	Bachrach
Badawey	Bagnell
Bains	Baker
Barsalou-Duval	Battiste
Beaulieu	Beech
Bendayan	Bennett
Bergeron	Bérubé
Bessette	Bibeau
Bittle	Blaikie
Blair	Blanchet
Blanchette-Joncas	Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Blois	Boudrias
Boulerice	Bratina
Brière	Brunelle-Duceppe
Cannings	Carr
Casey	Chabot
Chagger	Champagne
Champoux	Charbonneau
Chen	Collins
Cormier	Dabrusin
Damoff	Davies
DeBellefeuille	Desbiens
Desilets	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Dong
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duvall
Dzerowicz	Easter
Ehsassi	El-Khoury

Ellis	Erskine-Smith
Fergus	Fillmore
Finnigan	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fortin	Fragiskatos
Fraser	Freeland
Fry	Garrison
Gaudreau	Gazan
Gerretsen	Gill
Gould	Green
Guilbeault	Hajdu
Hardie	Harris
Holland	Housefather
Hughes	Hussen
Hutchings	Iacono
Ien	Jaczek
Johns	Joly
Jones	Jordan
Jowhari	Julian
Kelloway	Khalid
Khera	Koutrakis
Kusmierczyk	Kwan
Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Larouche	Lattanzio
Lauzon	LeBlanc
Lebouthillier	Lefebvre
Lemire	Lightbound
Long	Longfield
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacGregor	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney	Manly
Martinez Ferrada	Masse
Mathysen	May (Cambridge)
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	McCrimmon
McDonald	McGuinty
McKay	McKenna
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod (Northwest Territories)
McPherson	Mendès
Mendicino	Michaud
Miller	Monsef
Morrissey	Murray
Ng	Normandin
O'Connell	Oliphant
O'Regan	Pauzé
Perron	Petipas Taylor
Plamondon	Powlowski
Qualtrough	Ratansi
Regan	Robillard
Rodriguez	Rogers
Romanado	Sahota (Brampton North)
Saini	Sajjan
Saks	Samson
Sangha	Sarai
Savard-Tremblay	Scarpaleggia
Schiefke	Schulte
Serré	Sgro
Shanahan	Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simard	Simms
Singh	Sorbara
Spengemann	Ste-Marie
Tabbara	Tassi
Thériault	Therrien
Trudeau	Trudel
Turnbull	Van Bynen
van Koevorden	Vandal
Vaughan	Vignola
Virani	Weiler
Wilkinson	Wilson-Raybould
Yip	Young
Zahid	Zann — 210

Business of Supply

Business of Supply

NAYS

Members

Abouttaif	Aitchison
Albas	Alleslev
Allison	Arnold
Baldinelli	Barlow
Barrett	Benzen
Bergen	Berthold
Bezan	Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Block	Bragdon
Brassard	Calkins
Carrie	Chiu
Chong	Cooper
Cumming	Dalton
Dancho	Davidson
Deltell	d'Entremont
Diotte	Doherty
Dowdall	Dreeshen
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Epp
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Fast	Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock)
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Gallant
Généreux	Genuis
Glada	Godin
Gourde	Gray
Hallan	Harder
Hoback	Jansen
Jeneroux	Kelly
Kent	Kitchen
Kmiec	Kram
Kurek	Kusie
Lake	Lawrence
Lehoux	Lewis (Essex)
Liepert	Lloyd
Lobb	MacKenzie
Maguire	Martel
Mazier	McCaulley (Edmonton West)
McColeman	McLean
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	Melillo
Moore	Morantz
Morrison	Motz
Nater	O'Toole
Patzer	Paul-Hus
Poilievre	Rayes
Redekopp	Reid
Richards	Rood
Ruff	Sahota (Calgary Skyview)
Saroya	Scheer
Schmale	Seeback
Shields	Shin
ShIPLEY	Sloan
Soroka	Steinley
Strahl	Stubbs
Sweet	Tochor
Uppal	Van Popta
Vecchio	Vidal
Viersen	Vis
Wagantall	Warkentin
Waugh	Webber
Williamson	Wong
Yurdiga	Zimmer — 118

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.
(Bill read the third time and passed)

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (B), 2020-21

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.) moved:

That the Supplementary Estimates (B) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2021, be concurred in.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Mark Holland: Mr. Speaker, I believe you will find consent to apply the result of the previous vote to this vote, with Liberal members voting in favour.

Mr. Blake Richards: Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives agree to apply the vote and will be voting against the motion.

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois agrees to apply the vote and will vote in favour of the motion.

[*English*]

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Mr. Speaker, the NDP agrees to apply the vote and we will be voting in favour.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, the Greens agree to apply the vote and vote yes.

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi: Mr. Speaker, I agree to apply and will be voting yes.

● (2320)

Mr. Marwan Tabbara: Mr. Speaker, I agree to apply and will be voting yes.

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould: Mr. Speaker, I agree to apply and will be voting in favour.

[*Translation*]

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

(*Division No. 35*)

YEAS

Members

Alghabra	Amos
Anand	Anandasangaree
Angus	Arseneault
Arya	Ashton
Atwin	Bachrach
Badawey	Bagnell
Bains	Baker
Barsalou-Duval	Battiste
Beaulieu	Beech
Bendayan	Bennett
Bergeron	Bérubé
Bessette	Bibeau
Bittle	Blaikie
Blair	Blanchet
Blanchette-Joncas	Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Blois	Boudrias
Boulerice	Bratina
Brière	Brunelle-Duceppe
Cannings	Carr
Casey	Chabot
Chagger	Champagne
Champoux	Charbonneau

Business of Supply

Chen	Collins	Tabbara	Tassi
Cormier	Dabrusin	Thériault	Therrien
Damoff	Davies	Trudeau	Trudel
DeBellefeuille	Desbiens	Turnbull	Van Bynen
Desilets	Dhaliwal	van Koeverden	Vandal
Dhillon	Dong	Vaughan	Vignola
Drouin	Dubourg	Virani	Weiler
Duclos	Duguid	Wilkinson	Wilson-Raybould
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duvall	Yip	Young
Dzerowicz	Easter	Zahid	Zann — 210
Ehsassi	El-Khoury		
Ellis	Erskine-Smith		
Fergus	Fillmore		
Finnigan	Fisher		
Fonseca	Fortier	Aboutaif	Aitchison
Fortin	Fragiskatos	Albas	Alleslev
Fraser	Freeland	Allison	Arnold
Fry	Garrison	Baldinelli	Barlow
Gaudreau	Gazan	Barrett	Benzen
Gerretsen	Gill	Bergen	Berthold
Gould	Green	Bezan	Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Guilbeault	Hajdu	Block	Bragdon
Hardie	Harris	Brassard	Calkins
Holland	Housefather	Carrie	Chiu
Hughes	Hussen	Chong	Cooper
Hutchings	Iacono	Cumming	Dalton
Ien	Jaczek	Dancho	Davidson
Johns	Joly	Deltell	d'Entremont
Jones	Jordan	Diotte	Doherty
Jowhari	Julian	Dowdall	Dreeschen
Kelloway	Khalid	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Epp
Khera	Koutrakis	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Kusmierczyk	Kwan	Fast	Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock)
Lalonde	Lambropoulos	Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Gallant
Lametti	Lamoureux	Généreux	Genuis
Larouche	Lattanzio	Gladu	Godin
Lauzon	LeBlanc	Gourde	Gray
Lebouthillier	Lefebvre	Hallan	Harder
Lemire	Lightbound	Hoback	Jansen
Long	Longfield	Jeneroux	Kelly
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)	Kent	Kitchen
MacGregor	MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Kniec	Kram
Maloney	Manly	Kurek	Kusie
Martinez Ferrada	Masse	Lake	Lawrence
Mathysen	May (Cambridge)	Lehoux	Lewis (Essex)
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	McCrimmon	Liepert	Lloyd
McDonald	McGuinty	Lobb	MacKenzie
McKay	McKenna	Maguire	Martel
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod (Northwest Territories)	Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McPherson	Mendès	McColeman	McLean
Mendicino	Michaud	McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	Melillo
Miller	Monsef	Moore	Morantz
Morrissey	Murray	Morrison	Motz
Ng	Normandin	Nater	O'Toole
O'Connell	Oliphant	Patzer	Paul-Hus
O'Regan	Pauzé	Poilievre	Rayes
Perron	Petitpas Taylor	Redekopp	Reid
Plamondon	Powlowski	Richards	Rood
Qualtrough	Ratansi	Ruff	Sahota (Calgary Skyview)
Regan	Robillard	Saroya	Scheer
Rodriguez	Rogers	Schmale	Seeback
Romanado	Sahota (Brampton North)	Shields	Shin
Saini	Sajjan	Shipley	Sloan
Saks	Samson	Soroka	Steinley
Sangha	Sarai	Strahl	Stubbs
Savard-Tremblay	Scarpaleggia	Sweet	Tochor
Schieffe	Schulte	Uppal	Van Popta
Serré	Sgro	Vecchio	Vidal
Shanahan	Sheehan	Viersen	Vis
Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)	Wagantall	Warkentin
Simard	Simms	Waugh	Webber
Singh	Sorbara	Williamson	Wong
Spengemann	Ste-Marie	Yurdiga	Zimmer — 118

NAYS

Members

Business of Supply

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos moved for leave to introduce Bill C-17, An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2021.

(Motion deemed adopted and bill read the first time)

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos moved that the bill be read the second time and referred to a committee of the whole.

[*English*]

Hon. Mark Holland: Mr. Speaker, I believe if you seek it you will find consent to apply the result of the previous vote to this vote, with Liberal members voting in favour.

Mr. Blake Richards: Mr. Speaker, we agree to apply, with Conservative members voting against.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois agrees to apply the vote and will be voting in favour of the motion.

[*English*]

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Mr. Speaker, the NDP agrees to apply and will be voting in favour.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, the Green Party agrees to apply and will be voting in favour of the motion.

[*English*]

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi: Mr. Speaker, I agree to apply and will be voting yes.

Mr. Marwan Tabbara: Mr. Speaker, I agree to apply and will be voting yes.

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould: Mr. Speaker, I agree to apply and will be voting in favour.

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

(Division No. 36)

YEAS

Members

Alghabra	Amos
Anand	Anandasangaree
Angus	Arseneault
Arya	Ashton
Atwin	Bachrach
Badawey	Bagnell
Bains	Baker
Barsalou-Duval	Battiste
Beaulieu	Beech
Bendayan	Bennett
Bergeron	Bérubé
Bessette	Bibeau
Bittle	Blaikie
Blair	Blanchet
Blanchette-Joncas	Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Blois	Boudrias
Boulerice	Bratina
Brière	Brunelle-Duceppe

Cannings	Carr
Casey	Chabot
Chagger	Champagne
Champoux	Charbonneau
Chen	Collins
Cormier	Dabrusin
Damoff	Davies
DeBellefeuille	Desbiens
Desilets	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Dong
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duvall
Dzerowicz	Easter
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Ellis	Erskine-Smith
Fergus	Fillmore
Finnigan	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fortin	Fragiskatos
Fraser	Freeland
Fry	Garrison
Gaudreau	Gazan
Gerretsen	Gill
Gould	Green
Guilbeault	Hajdu
Hardie	Harris
Holland	Housefather
Hughes	Hussen
Hutchings	Iacono
Jen	Jaczek
Johns	Joly
Jones	Jordan
Jowhari	Julian
Kelloway	Khalid
Khera	Koutrakis
Kusmierczyk	Kwan
Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Larouche	Lattanzio
Lauzon	LeBlanc
Lebouthillier	Lefebvre
Lemire	Lightbound
Long	Longfield
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacGregor	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney	Manly
Martinez Ferrada	Masse
Mathysen	May (Cambridge)
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	McCrimmon
McDonald	McGuinty
McKay	McKenna
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod (Northwest Territories)
McPherson	Mendès
Mendicino	Michaud
Miller	Monsef
Morrissey	Murray
Ng	Normandin
O'Connell	Oliphant
O'Regan	Pauzé
Perron	Petitpas Taylor
Plamondon	Powlowski
Qualtrough	Ratansi
Regan	Robillard
Rodriguez	Rogers
Romanado	Sahota (Brampton North)
Saini	Sajjan
Saks	Samson
Sangha	Sarai
Savard-Tremblay	Scarpaleggia
Schiefke	Schulte
Serré	Sgro
Shanahan	Sheehan

Sidhu (Brampton East)
Simard
Singh
Spengemann
Tabbara
Thériault
Trudeau
Turnbull
van Koeverden
Vaughan
Virani
Wilkinson
Yip
Zahid

Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simms
Sorbara
Ste-Marie
Tassi
Therrien
Trudel
Van Bynen
Vandal
Vignola
Weiler
Wilson-Raybould
Young
Yonn— 210

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif
Albas
Allison
Baldinelli
Barrett
Bergen
Bezan
Block
Brassard
Carrie
Chong
Cumming
Dancho
Deltell
Diotte
Dowdall
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Fast
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Généreux
Gladu
Gourde
Hallan
Hoback
Jeneroux
Kent
Kmiec
Kurek
Lake
Lehoux
Liepert
Lobb
Maguire
Mazier
McColeman
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Moore
Morrison
Nater
Patzner
Poilievre
Redekopp
Richards
Ruff
Saroya
Schmale
Shields
Shiplay
Soroka
Strahl
Sweet
Uppal
Vecchio
Viersen

Aitchison
Alleslev
Arnold
Barlow
Benzen
Berthold
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Bragdon
Calkins
Chiu
Cooper
Dalton
Davidson
d'Entremont
Doherty
Dreeschen
Epp
Falk (Provencher)
Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock)
Gallant
Genuis
Godin
Gray
Harder
Jansen
Kelly
Kitchen
Kram
Kusie
Lawrence
Lewis (Essex)
Lloyd
MacKenzie
Martel
McCauley (Edmonton West)
McLean
Melillo
Morantz
Motz
O'Toole
Paul-Hus
Rayes
Reid
Rood
Sahota (Calgary Skyview)
Secheer
Seeback
Shin
Sloan
Steinley
Stubbs
Tochor
Van Popta
Vidal
Vis

Business of Supply

Wagantall
Waugh
Williamson
Yurdiga
Warkentin
Webber
Wong
Zimmer— 118

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Accordingly, the bill stands referred to a committee of the whole. I do now leave the chair for the House to go into committee of the whole.

(Bill read the second time and the House went into committee of the whole thereon, Mrs. Carol Hughes in the chair)

(On clause 2)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is with a lot of anticipation that I ask the President of the Treasury Board this question.

Can he assure the House that the bill is definitely in its usual form and that this second bill this evening could pass an official languages impact analysis in both official languages?

[*English*]

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Madam Chair, in the spirit of our linguistic duality, I would like to assure my colleague that this bill is in exactly the same presentation as the bill of the previous supply period.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Chair: Shall clause 2 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause 2 agreed to)

The Deputy Chair: Shall clause 3 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause 3 agreed to)

The Deputy Chair: Shall clause 4 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause 4 agreed to)

[*English*]

The Deputy Chair: Shall clause 5 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause 5 agreed to)

The Deputy Chair: Shall clause 6 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Business of Supply

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause 6 agreed to)

The Deputy Chair: Shall schedule 1 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Schedule 1 agreed to)

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Chair: Shall schedule 2 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Schedule 2 agreed to)

The Deputy Chair: Shall clause 1 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause 1 agreed to)

The Deputy Chair: Shall the preamble carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Preamble agreed to)

• (2325)

[*English*]

The Deputy Chair: Shall the title carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Title agreed to)

The Deputy Chair: Shall the bill carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Bill agreed to)

(Bill reported)

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos moved that the bill be concurred in.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Mark Holland: Mr. Speaker, I believe you will find unanimous consent to apply the result of the previous vote to this vote, with the Liberal members voting in favour.

Mr. Blake Richards: Mr. Speaker, we agree to apply the vote, and the Conservative members will be voting against the motion.

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois agrees to apply the vote and will be voting in favour.

[*English*]

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Mr. Speaker, the NDP agrees to apply the vote and will be voting in favour.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, the Green Party agrees to apply the vote and will be voting in favour.

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi: Mr. Speaker, I agree to apply and I will be voting in favour.

Mr. Marwan Tabbara: Mr. Speaker, I agree to apply and will be voting yes.

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould: Mr. Speaker, I agree to apply and will be voting in favour.

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

(*Division No. 37*)

YEAS

Members

Alghabra	Amos
Anand	Anandasangaree
Angus	Arseneault
Arya	Ashton
Atwin	Bachrach
Badawey	Bagnell
Bains	Baker
Barsalou-Duval	Battiste
Beaulieu	Beech
Bendayan	Bennett
Bergeron	Bérubé
Bessette	Bibeau
Bittle	Blaikie
Blair	Blanchet
Blanchette-Joncas	Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Blois	Boudrias
Boulerice	Bratina
Brière	Brunelle-Duceppe
Cannings	Carr
Casey	Chabot
Chagger	Champagne
Champoux	Charbonneau
Chen	Collins
Cormier	Dabrusin
Damoff	Davies
DeBellefeuille	Desbiens
Desilets	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Dong
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duval
Dzerowicz	Easter
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Ellis	Erskine-Smith
Fergus	Fillmore
Finnigan	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fortin	Fragiskatos
Fraser	Freeland
Fry	Garrison
Gaudreau	Gazan
Gerretsen	Gill
Gould	Green
Guilbeault	Hajdu
Hardie	Harris
Holland	Housefather
Hughes	Hussen
Hutchings	Iacono
Ien	Jaczek
Johns	Joly
Jones	Jordan
Jowhari	Julian
Kelloway	Khalid
Khera	Koutrakis

Business of Supply

Kusmierczyk	Kwan	Fast	Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock)
Lalonde	Lambropoulos	Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Gallant
Lametti	Lamoureux	Généreux	Genuis
Larouche	Lattanzio	Gladu	Godin
Lauzon	LeBlanc	Gourde	Gray
Lebouthillier	Lefebvre	Hallan	Harder
Lemire	Lightbound	Hoback	Jansen
Long	Longfield	Jeneroux	Kelly
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)	Kent	Kitchen
MacGregor	MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Kmiec	Kram
Maloney	Manly	Kurek	Kusie
Martinez Ferrada	Masse	Lake	Lawrence
Mathysen	May (Cambridge)	Lehoux	Lewis (Essex)
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	McCrimmon	Liepert	Lloyd
McDonald	McGuinty	Lobb	MacKenzie
McKay	McKenna	Maguire	Martel
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod (Northwest Territories)	Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McPherson	Mendès	McColeman	McLean
Mendicino	Michaud	McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	Melillo
Miller	Monsef	Moore	Morantz
Morrissey	Murray	Morrison	Motz
Ng	Normandin	Nater	O'Toole
O'Connell	Oliphant	Patzer	Paul-Hus
O'Regan	Pauzé	Poillievre	Rayes
Perron	Petitpas Taylor	Redekopp	Reid
Plamondon	Powlowski	Richards	Rood
Qualtrough	Ratansi	Ruff	Sahota (Calgary Skyview)
Regan	Robillard	Saroya	Scheer
Rodriguez	Rogers	Schmale	Seeback
Romanado	Sahota (Brampton North)	Shields	Shin
Saini	Sajjan	Shiple	Sloan
Saks	Samson	Soroka	Steinley
Sangha	Sarai	Strahl	Stubbs
Savard-Tremblay	Scarpaleggia	Sweet	Tochor
Schiefke	Schulte	Uppal	Van Popta
Serré	Sgro	Vecchio	Vidal
Shanahan	Sheehan	Viersen	Vis
Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)	Wagantall	Warkentin
Simard	Simms	Waugh	Webber
Singh	Sorbara	Williamson	Wong
Spengemann	Ste-Marie	Yurdiga	Zimmer — 118
Tabbara	Tassi		
Thériault	Therrien		
Trudeau	Trudel		
Turnbull	Van Bynen		
van Koevorden	Vandal		
Vaughan	Vignola		
Virani	Weiler		
Wilkinson	Wilson-Raybould		
Yip	Young		
Zahid	Zann — 210		

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif	Aitchison
Albas	Alleslev
Allison	Arnold
Baldinelli	Barlow
Barrett	Benzen
Bergen	Berthold
Bezan	Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Block	Bragdon
Brassard	Calkins
Carrie	Chiu
Chong	Cooper
Cumming	Dalton
Dancho	Davidson
Deltell	d'Entremont
Diotte	Doherty
Dowdall	Dreeshen
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Epp
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

When shall the bill be read a third time? By leave, now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Translation]

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

[English]

Hon. Mark Holland: Mr. Speaker, I believe if you seek it, you will find consent to apply the result of the previous vote to this vote, with Liberal members voting for.**Mr. Blake Richards:** Mr. Speaker, Conservatives once again agree to apply the vote and we will be voting against the motion.

[Translation]

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois agrees to apply the vote and will be voting in favour.

[English]

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Mr. Speaker, the NDP agree to apply and will be voting in favour.

Business of Supply

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, the Green Party agrees to apply and will be voting in favour.

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi: Mr. Speaker, I agree to apply and will be voting yes.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marwan Tabbara: Mr. Speaker, I agree to apply the vote and will be voting in favour.

[*English*]

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould: Mr. Speaker, I agree to apply and will be voting in favour.

[*Translation*]

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

(Division No. 38)

YEAS

Members

Alghabra	Amos
Anand	Anandasangaree
Angus	Arseneault
Arya	Ashton
Atwin	Bachrach
Badawey	Bagnell
Bains	Baker
Barsalou-Duval	Battiste
Beaulieu	Beech
Bendayan	Bennett
Bergeron	Bérubé
Bessette	Bibeau
Bittle	Blaikie
Blair	Blanchet
Blanchette-Joncas	Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Blois	Boudrias
Boulerice	Bratina
Brière	Brunelle-Duceppe
Cannings	Carr
Casey	Chabot
Chagger	Champagne
Champoux	Charbonneau
Chen	Collins
Cormier	Dabrusin
Damoff	Davies
DeBellefeuille	Desbiens
Desilets	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Dong
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duvall
Dzerowicz	Easter
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Ellis	Erskine-Smith
Fergus	Fillmore
Finnigan	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fortin	Fragiskatos
Fraser	Freeland
Fry	Garrison
Gaudreau	Gazan
Gerretsen	Gill
Gould	Green
Guilbeault	Hajdu
Hardie	Harris
Holland	Housefather
Hughes	Hussen
Hutchings	Iacono

Ien	Jaczek
Johns	Joly
Jones	Jordan
Jowhari	Julian
Kelloway	Khalid
Khera	Koutrakis
Kusmierczyk	Kwan
Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Larouche	Lattanzio
Lauzon	LeBlanc
Lebouthillier	Lefebvre
Lemire	Lightbound
Long	Longfield
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacGregor	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney	Manly
Martinez Ferrada	Masse
Mathysen	May (Cambridge)
May (Saarich—Gulf Islands)	McCrimmon
McDonald	McGuinty
McKay	McKenna
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod (Northwest Territories)
McPherson	Mendès
Mendicino	Michaud
Miller	Monsef
Morrissey	Murray
Ng	Normandin
O'Connell	Oliphant
O'Regan	Pauzé
Perron	Petitpas Taylor
Plamondon	Powlowski
Qualtrough	Ratansi
Regan	Robillard
Rodriguez	Rogers
Romanado	Sahota (Brampton North)
Saini	Sajjan
Saks	Samson
Sangha	Sarai
Savard-Tremblay	Scarpaleggia
Schiefke	Schulte
Serré	Sgro
Shanahan	Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simard	Simms
Singh	Sorbara
Spengemann	Ste-Marie
Tabbara	Tassi
Thériault	Therrien
Trudeau	Trudel
Tumbull	Van Bynen
van Koeverden	Vandal
Vaughan	Vignola
Virani	Weiler
Wilkinson	Wilson-Raybould
Yip	Young
Zahid	Zann — 210

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif	Aitchison
Albas	Alleslev
Allison	Arnold
Baldinelli	Barlow
Barrett	Benzen
Bergen	Berthold
Bezan	Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Block	Bragdon
Brassard	Calkins
Carrie	Chiu
Chong	Cooper
Cumming	Dalton

Dancho	Davidson
Deltell	d'Entremont
Diotte	Doherty
Dowdall	Dreeshen
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Epp
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Fast	Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock)
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Gallant
Généreux	Genuis
Gladu	Godin
Gourde	Gray
Hallan	Harder
Hoback	Jansen
Jeneroux	Kelly
Kent	Kitchen
Kmiec	Kram
Kurek	Kusie
Lake	Lawrence
Lehoux	Lewis (Essex)
Liepert	Lloyd
Lobb	MacKenzie
Maguire	Martel
Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McColeman	McLean
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	Melillo
Moore	Morantz
Morrison	Motz
Nater	O'Toole
Patzer	Paul-Hus
Poillievre	Rayes
Redekopp	Reid
Richards	Rood
Ruff	Sahota (Calgary Skyview)
Saroya	Scheer
Schmale	Seeback
Shields	Shin
Shipley	Sloan
Soroka	Steinley
Strahl	Stubbs
Sweet	Tochor
Uppal	Van Popta
Vecchio	Vidal
Viersen	Vis
Wagantall	Warkentin
Waugh	Webber
Williamson	Wong
Yurdiga	Zimmer— 118

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.
(Bill read the third time and passed)

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

• (2330)

[*English*]

SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I know the hour is late, but I am sure the government spent considerable energy preparing a response to a question I put to the government on November 19, for which I received an unsatisfactory an-

Adjournment Proceedings

swer, so here we are for a late show, and putting the “late” in late show tonight.

I asked the Minister of Small Business to stand up for small business and instruct her government to respect the will of Parliament and postpone the wage subsidy audits on small businesses. The answer that came that day did not come from the Minister of Small Business, to whom I put the question, it came from the Minister of National Revenue, who I am not sure listened to the question because her response did not really address it and was wholly unsatisfactory.

I hope the government, and particularly the Minister of Small Business, shares my concern about small businesses and understands they really are the lifeblood of our economy. They employ people in our communities. They have had to make heartbreaking choices as they cope with the pandemic. I know every MP in this chamber has had to deal with businesses in their ridings and the things they are going through.

In September, some small businesses received a letter from the CRA that contained a checklist of documents that was about six pages long. This came at a time when small businesses did not even know if the support programs that were expiring in September were going to be continued, or what the details of any continuation of these programs might be, yet they were being told to drop everything and put together these complicated lists of items within 10 days.

Small businesses are in survival mode. An enormous proportion of our small businesses do not know if they are going to make it through Christmas or what next year is going to look like, so our motion was really a common-sense motion in support of our small businesses. It was supported by the Bloc, the NDP, the Green Party and even two out of the three ex-Liberals who are now sitting as independents supported this motion, so only the governing party did not support the motion. At this point, having had the experience of that vote, it is no longer about just the substance of that motion, but respecting the will of Parliament.

Parliament has spoken. The members who were elected by Canadians have spoken and instructed the government to postpone the audits until at least after the tax season. The government has still given no indication that it will respect the will of Parliament; in fact, it has given a contrary view on this. Therefore, we continue to call upon the government to at least accept the will of Parliament and publicly show some level of support for small businesses, if not the merit of the motion itself. The government has a very difficult relationship with small businesses now. We all know about the draconian tax changes it proposed in 2017. We know about the comments that the leading members of the government made.

I see my time is up. I will let the government respond from there.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am very happy to respond to the question from the member for Calgary Rocky Ridge regarding the Canada emergency wage subsidy and its effect on small businesses.

Adjournment Proceedings

The Canada Revenue Agency recognizes that businesses and organizations of all sizes have been severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and is making it a priority to deliver CEWS and the new Canada emergency rent subsidy payments as quickly as possible.

Since the start of the pandemic, the Government of Canada has worked closely with businesses to understand their needs and provide them with support that will help them quickly rehire workers laid off due to COVID-19. Since the beginning of the pandemic, the CRA has time and again mobilized in a concerted and nimble way to develop and implement, in record time, the numerous programs and systems needed to quickly deliver funds to businesses and individuals during this very difficult time.

In the case of the Canada emergency wage subsidy, 1.6 million claims were processed, representing almost \$50-billion worth of support delivered to employers. This is an outstanding accomplishment.

The CRA is committed to maintaining a balance between making emergency funds accessible to businesses that urgently need this support, while preserving the fairness and integrity of our tax system and administering the laws adopted by Parliament.

Conducting verifications is one of the ways the CRA can protect the integrity of its programs that provide needed support for businesses and communities using tax dollars. The initial CEWS verifications included a limited sample and covered a wide range of businesses. In fact, CEWS's post-payment verifications impact less than 0.1% of CEWS recipients. Small businesses were not being unfairly included. There have been fewer than 90 verifications involving small businesses. This is in spite of the fact that small businesses, which have been hit the hardest by the pandemic, have accounted for over 70% of applications in each period of the CEWS.

It is plain for any reasonable person to see that small businesses have, in fact, not been unfairly included as part of these necessary and useful verifications. The CRA must do its due diligence and ensure those receiving emergency response benefits are entitled to them. Canadians can have confidence that the CRA will protect the integrity of programs that provide needed support for businesses using their tax dollars.

The preliminary results from post-payment verifications will inform the CRA not only on the level of compliance with respect to this benefit program, but also on conducting compliance activities during the COVID-19 pandemic and, by extension, other global crises. Given the size of the CEWS, the CRA needs to administer it fairly for all employers. Preliminary CEWS verifications selected a limited sample, and they are in many business ranges.

I would mention in closing that we respect and acknowledge the House's formal opinion on this important matter, as articulated in a resolution of the House adopted on November 4. I can assure Canadians that the CRA is committed to maintaining a balance between making emergency funds accessible to businesses that urgently need this support, while preserving the fairness and the integrity of our tax system in administering the legislation as adopted by Parliament.

• (2335)

Mr. Pat Kelly: Madam Speaker, the government cannot have it both ways. It cannot say it respects the will of Parliament while it ignores the will of Parliament. Parliament voted on November 4, and the government should simply do what Parliament asked of it and declare that it will hold off until June. That is what Parliament asked the government to do.

The parliamentary secretary, as recently as earlier this evening, heard at the Standing Committee on Finance just how onerous these audits are. It heard how complicated the application processes are, and heard some of the difficulties and challenges around small business. It is time for the government to show small businesses a little more respect than it has since it was elected in 2015.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Madam Speaker, the government's investment in Canadian businesses via the CEWS means that hundreds of thousands of Canadian businesses and millions of employees will be able to keep their staff on the payroll and their doors open.

As I previously stated, the CRA is committed to maintaining a balance between making emergency funds accessible to businesses that urgently need the support while preserving the fairness and integrity of our tax system and administering the laws as adopted by Parliament.

To date, almost \$50 billion has been paid to 1.6 million claimants who have applied for the CEWS. The CRA recognizes the economic challenges that have resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact that the audit process can have on businesses. For this reason, the CRA has proceeded carefully in order to protect both businesses and the broader economy, which remains vulnerable due to the pandemic.

The CRA wants to reassure business owners across Canada that it will be as flexible as possible with deadlines for information requests given the hardships of the ongoing pandemic, in line with our people first approach—

• (2340)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Unfortunately, the time is up.

The hon. member for Courtenay—Alberni.

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, thank you very much for being here so late tonight. I know it is close to midnight, and I want to thank you for the work that you are doing tonight by staying so late and overseeing the House of Commons.

The reason I am here is in relation to a question I had regarding the homelessness tragedy that is taking place across Canada. In particular, my question was related to what is happening in Port Alberni, in my riding and on the streets of Port Alberni where we are losing lives. People are losing hope.

We have an overrepresentation of indigenous people living on the streets, and that is what I want to speak to tonight. Over two-thirds of the people living on the streets of Port Alberni are indigenous. The Liberal government's promise to allocate and build 3,000 beds to deal with the homelessness crisis across Canada is not nearly enough. People are living without shelter. They are living in makeshift tents. They are living in public parks.

They are trying to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic. There is an opioid crisis that is taking place, a public health emergency here in British Columbia. The mental health implications are dire for this population. Their spirits are often simply broken. Many of them are suffering from systemic racism from public institutions, and are often struggling to overcome multi-generational trauma caused by colonial policies, like the Indian residential schools that have had a huge impact.

People are desperate. Sadly, too many are turning to suicide, to violence against others, or to substance misuse. It is shameful that these conditions persist in urban communities across our country, whether it is in small rural communities or in large cities. This is not the Canada that we want it to be. We must address these very serious and important issues. It should not be the future of our children.

The 3,000 beds I cited earlier, which the Liberal government has committed to, deal with the hard to house, those who are at the lowest barriers, and who need assistance and support services. We need these investments critically in our community. We need this massive investment, along with reforms for federal drug policies, which create stigma and a fear of ending up in the criminal justice system rather than in the health and social support system, where care and help could be provided.

We are looking at proposals to help deal with these issues, but in the meantime lives are being lost to the COVID-19 pandemic, to the opioid public health emergency, to death by suicide, to violence against women and girls, and to an endless cycle of urban indigenous poverty that has to be broken.

We are calling on the government to take action. We ask ourselves, "Where do we start?" There is no question in my mind that we need to start by implementing the calls to action from the missing and murdered indigenous women and girls inquiry, implementing the calls to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, creating and resourcing an indigenous-led housing program, creating and resourcing an indigenous-led board to investigate violence against indigenous people by the criminal justice system, and ensuring shared decision-making related to policies affecting the rights of indigenous people in their communities.

As I stated, in my riding, I have been working, supporting and advocating for funding under the rapid housing initiative. I have been writing letters and speaking to ministers whenever I have the opportunity, including the parliamentary secretary tonight. I really appreciate him taking the time to talk to me about an application that is going in, that I will not get into the details of. However, the importance of—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Unfortunately, the hon. member's time is up. The hon. parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development.

Adjournment Proceedings

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I too, would like to thank House staff for staying late and supporting us, not just through the evening tonight, but also in the difficult period of COVID. I hope all are safe.

The member opposite lists a number of initiatives we have committed to that I think are incredibly important as we move to address and end chronic homelessness in this country, and it cannot happen without an indigenous-led urban, rural and northern housing strategy. Leaving it to the three NIOs and investing into the existing streams of housing has not done the job. We need to make sure that communities right across the country, whether in large cities, in the western or eastern part of the country or in the northern territories, require us to respond in different ways.

I want to assure the member opposite that the rapid housing initiative is a billion-dollar program that was rolled out on very short notice to deal with the chronic and very dangerous situation facing people without shelter. It is the first instalment of the campaign to end chronic homelessness in this country and is certainly not the last investment. I want to thank him for forwarding and bringing to our attention the project in his riding. It is a good project. I will bring it to the minister's and CMHC's attention on the member's behalf to make sure that he gets a quick response, because his community needs help.

To further talk about the situation facing us as a country, as we take a look at some of the deep cracks or gaps in our social safety net, COVID has shown us why it is essential to address these with urgency and with large investments, and also to make sure those investments land on the ground and are directly invested into communities that are leading the campaign to end chronic homelessness. Cities, towns and communities know best how to spend those dollars. That is why we are very proud to work with the Canadian Federation of Municipalities to deliver these dollars.

I agree that 3,000 units of housing will not solve the problem. That is why we have also committed to the indigenous-led urban, rural and northern housing program. It is why we have also committed to reinvesting dollars into the co-investment fund. It is also why, in the recent fall statement, we put additional dollars into the rental housing fund to build more purpose-built housing. It is also why, in the same fall economic statement, a commitment was made by this government to build 38 shelters for indigenous women on and off reserves, as well as 50 supportive housing units in the coming year as part of the buildup to the response to the missing and murdered indigenous women.

Adjournment Proceedings

At the end of the day, it is going to take all orders of government working together: indigenous governments, municipal governments, provincial governments and federal governments. There is obviously a housing component to it. There are also mental health and addiction issues that have to be addressed through supportive housing. We need provincial health authorities to make sure the federal funds that flow to the health authorities are spent in these residential settings.

We have a plan. We have a good strong plan. We have a good study coming out of the human resources committee in Parliament right now. We have ministers who are committed. We have a government that is committed and, for the first time in perhaps 30 years, we have all governments pointed in the same direction to achieve the same good things for people right across the country.

I will agree with the member opposite on one final point. If we do not create the indigenous-led urban, rural and northern housing strategy, we will never end chronic homelessness. On the west coast in particular, in B.C. where the homeless counts and point-in-time counts show the massive overrepresentation of indigenous people, this program is so critically needed. It was needed years ago. The good news is that it is on the way, and that we have parties on the other side of House that are willing to support it in a minority Parliament because together we can get this done.

I will say one last thing to my colleagues from British Columbia. This was a very tough weekend in British Columbia for a whole lot of reasons, but we also lost Katherine McParland from Kamloops. She was on our advisory committee as we reprofiled homelessness programs with Reaching Home. She also co-chaired the B.C. government's panel on ending chronic homelessness in B.C. She died very tragically this weekend. We have lost a strong voice of lived experience. She is a young woman who came out of the foster care system, a young woman who struggled and unfortunately is not going to be around to see the fruits of her labour pay off for thousands of other kids. My thoughts are with her family and friends today.

• (2345)

Mr. Gord Johns: Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for taking the time to be here tonight to listen to this important issue. Clearly, this is a human rights issue. We are losing young people unnecessarily.

I want to thank him for acknowledging the loss that he talked about tonight, and also for acknowledging the importance of all levels of government working collectively. We have great non-profits doing incredible work at the grassroots level and saving lives, but they need help. We have a great mayor in Port Alberni, Sharie

Minions, who is working around the clock trying to find solutions; a new MLA, Minister Josie Osborne, who said it is her first and number one task; and we have a provincial government that is building half of the non-market housing in Canada; however, we need a federal partner.

I would look to the parliamentary secretary to help deliver on this project. It will save lives. Let us stop the unnecessary loss of lives.

• (2350)

Mr. Adam Vaughan: Madam Speaker, I had a great conversation with the new minister of housing from British Columbia after he was sworn in about the shared responsibility all orders of the government have, and I think this is the only way we are going to solve homelessness.

While we take steps to exit people from the situations they face whether in shelters, on the streets or in precarious housing and we take steps to address the issues right in front of us that need addressing, including the opioid crisis, which the member opposite has also spoken about, we must also recognize the prevention of homelessness as just as crucial.

That is why income support programs, dealing with child welfare systems and returning indigenous children in particular to indigenous communities and family are just as much a part of ending chronic homelessness as some of the issues he mentioned as well. We cannot do it with one order of government, and we are not going to do it with bricks and mortars alone. We need to realize this is a health crisis, and treat it as a health crisis and we need to respond to it when the same urgency as the COVID response.

I am very proud to be part of a government with a Prime Minister who has declared an end to chronic homelessness. I look forward to working with the member opposite to deliver on that commitment.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Edmonton West is not present to raise the matter for which adjournment notice has been given. Accordingly, the notice is deemed withdrawn.

[*Translation*]

The motion that the House do now adjourn is deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 11:51 p.m.)

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