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Wednesday, December 9, 2020

Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



CONTENTS

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

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, December 9, 2020

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayer

• (1400)

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: As we usually do on Wednesday, we will now have the singing of the national anthem led by the hon. member for Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

SEASON'S GREETINGS

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, in the spirit of the season:

'Twas just weeks before Christmas and in this very room,
Members are speaking, debating by Zoom.
The Speaker keeps order, reducing dispute,
With up to date rulings “Minister, I think you're on MUTE!”
We zoom into kitchens, seeing babies and props,
Our newest granddad in Prince George is the tops!
Our stockings are hung by the chimney with care,
In the hope that vaccines soon will be there.
Fiscal anchors and guard rails weigh down Santa's sled,
But this too shall pass, sunny days are ahead.

2020's been a bad year, no one can deny,
We want to say Merry Christmas, at least we can try!

We know we are best when we speak from our heart,
Next year must be better - if we all do our part.
So stay in your bubble; keep your distance at school,
And God bless us all through Hanukkah and Yule.

Joyeux Noël. Merry Christmas.

* * *

• (1405)

ORDER OF CANADA

Ms. Helena Jaczek (Markham—Stouffville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was delighted to learn that one of my constituents in Markham—Stouffville, Brian McFarlane, has been appointed to the Order of Canada, one of our country's highest civilian honours, for

his contributions to the sport of hockey as a sportscaster, writer and historian.

Brian McFarlane has had a distinguished career. Born in New Liskeard, Ontario, he attended university on a hockey scholarship, where he scored record numbers of goals. After graduation, he worked in television and radio, including CFTO and CFRB in Toronto.

One of the most recognizable voices in the game for 26 years, he served as a host and commentator on *Hockey Night in Canada*. He has written over 90 books on hockey and, in 1995, he was inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame.

I want to extend my congratulations to Mr. McFarlane and to thank him for all he has done for Canadians and for Canada's game.

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WARDENS OF BRUCE AND GREY COUNTIES

Mr. Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a few exceptional residents of Bruce and Grey counties.

Over the past year I had the honour of serving with the outgoing wardens of both Bruce and Grey counties, Mitch Twolan and Paul McQueen. I think they both did not foresee the circumstances that COVID-19 would bring and the challenges, but they both rose to the occasion and did tremendous work.

I want to thank them and their families for their sacrifices and their service over this past year on behalf of my fellow MPs from Huron-Bruce and from Simcoe-Grey, but, more important, on behalf of all residents of Bruce and Grey counties.

I would like to welcome the new wardens, Janice Jackson for Bruce County, and Selwyn Hicks for Grey County. I am confident they are both going to carry on the great work of their predecessors. I look forward to working with them and I am sure they will rise to the occasion.

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BLACK BUSINESS INITIATIVE

Mr. Andy Fillmore (Halifax, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I would like to congratulate the Black Business Initiative in my riding of Halifax on 25 remarkable years of service to Nova Scotia.

Statements by Members

Since 1996, BBI has been a champion for my province's Black business community. Through mentorship and counselling, networking, marketing and outreach activities as well as loan and equity lending, BBI supports Black-owned businesses to get started, grow and overcome systemic challenges they face along the way.

BBI also has a strong record of engaging Black and other marginalized youth eight to 35 years old to become active, creative and successful members of the business community through initiatives like its wildly successful business is jammin' program.

I invite all members in the House to join me in offering my profound gratitude to the Black Business Initiative for a quarter-century of service to Nova Scotia.

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[*Translation*]

LE BOOK HUMANITAIRE COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to tell the House about an initiative of a community organization in my riding, le Book Humanitaire, which has set up a drop-in shelter where the homeless can warm up this winter.

Led by Rachel Lapierre, the organization's volunteers have been battling the ravages of the pandemic all year, for example by organizing a call service for our seniors and providing meals and delivering groceries. Le Book Humanitaire was recently honoured at our chamber of commerce's Zénith gala. My team and I are proud of the dedication and achievements of the organization's volunteers and we will continue to encourage all our organizations in their mission.

In closing, I want to take this opportunity to thank the people of Saint-Hippolyte, Saint-Jérôme, Prévost and Sainte-Sophie, for their unfailing generosity. I wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a 2021 filled with health, love, peace and togetherness.

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HOLIDAY GREETINGS

Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg (Bourassa, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since March 2020, we have been confronted with an unprecedented pandemic that is affecting millions of people around the world. In spite of everything, we have proven to be strong and resilient in the face of this crisis. There is no other way to say it: 2020 has not been an easy year.

For my constituents in Bourassa and for all Canadians, the holidays will be very different this year, as we are forced to find new ways to celebrate together but apart. There is hope on the horizon, though. We will soon be able to see our families again and get back to our lives.

[*English*]

My team, my family and I are pleased to wish everyone happy holidays.

• (1410)

HOLIDAY GREETINGS

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it goes without saying that 2020 has been a year like no other. So many have sacrificed so much, and with Christmas coming, there is no shortage of people and groups in our communities of Barrie and Innisfil who are stepping up to assist those in need.

I want to acknowledge the Barrie and South Simcoe Police services, the Simcoe County paramedics and the Barrie and Innisfil fire and emergency services. Not only have they been on the front lines of pandemic response, they are also responding by collecting toys for Christmas Cheer, Toy Mountain and other causes around the region. After the collections are complete, many of these men and women will be on duty protecting us.

Let us also be thankful for the front-line health care workers, PSWs, those who work in seniors' homes and LTC centres who will be working over the holidays as well.

Finally, I have an ask. The demand for service from food banks in Barrie and Innisfil has increased because of the pandemic. If people can, please support them with a donation of money or grocery cards.

From my family to all, merry Christmas, happy Hanukkah, and I wish all a happy, prosperous and healthy 2021.

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PICTOU COUNTY HERO

Mr. Sean Fraser (Central Nova, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to share with the House an extraordinary act of bravery involving a local air cadet, Warrant Officer 1st class Haileigh White, from my hometown of Pictou County, Nova Scotia.

While on her way to cadets, Warrant Officer White witnessed a serious motor vehicle accident and immediately stopped to help those involved. Upon assessing the scene, she discovered one of the vehicles was on the way to the local hospital with a female passenger who was in labour.

The driver of the vehicle was unconscious but breathing. The driver of the other vehicle in the collision was not breathing at all. Without hesitating, Warrant Officer White leapt into action and began performing CPR on one of the drivers until paramedics arrived on the scene. They later advised Warrant Officer 1st class White it was her quick thinking and action that saved a life.

In true Nova Scotian fashion, after getting home she changed her muddy clothes and made it to cadets on time.

I want to extend my sincere gratitude to Warrant Officer 1st class White. Her quick thinking, fortitude under pressure and first aid training provided through the cadets made all the difference. I know I can speak for every member of the House of Commons when I say we need more people like her in the world. Well done, Haileigh. She is an absolute hero.

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[Translation]

STATUS OF WOMEN

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Sherbrooke, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow marks the end of the 16 days of activism against gender-based violence, but violence against women is still an issue the other 349 days a year, even though it should never happen.

These days of activism are an opportunity to fight for an end to this violence. I was in university during the tragedy at École Polytechnique, so that date is burned into my mind. A lot has been accomplished in the years since, but there are still many struggles ahead and so many gains to make.

I have taken the time to speak with the organizations that support women who are victims of violence, such as the Centre des Femmes La Parolière, which is celebrating its 30th anniversary. I want to give a shout-out to Christine Poulin and Michèle Comtois for the excellent work they do.

The government has given more than \$40,000 to the Escalade de l'Estrie and the Sherbrooke CALACS as part of the support provided to such organizations. Let us continue working on this issue to build a safer world for our girls.

Happy holidays, everyone.

* * *

[English]

FIREARMS

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister likes to say an AR-15 is not needed to hunt deer. This shows us how much he does not know, as AR-15s were restricted and only allowed to be used at a range.

Why would the Prime Minister start letting facts about firearms get in his way now? He has gone on to say that they were designed to kill the greatest number of people in the shortest amount of time and that they have no place in Canadian society. This is also not true. If anything, that would be fully automatic firearms with high-capacity magazines, and they have been banned for decades.

Despite the Prime Minister's misinformed justifications, apparently the Liberal government in the Yukon believes AR-10s, which the PM also banned, are a good choice for wildlife management. It purchased these rifles for its conservation officers to make sure it had the tools needed to keep officers safe. Meanwhile, the Liberals in Ottawa are preparing to spend billions of dollars to confiscate these same firearms from Canadians who have always used them safely, responsibly and in accordance with the law.

When will the Liberal government stop targeting law-abiding firearms owners and focus on violent criminals instead?

Statements by Members

HOLIDAY SEASON

Ms. Kamal Khera (Brampton West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to wish my constituents in Brampton West and all Canadians a very happy holiday season. This year presented unique challenges, perhaps the greatest challenge of our generation. In one way or another, we have all been impacted. We have all made sacrifices and some of us have lost a loved one this year, which is perhaps the greatest loss of all.

As we reflect on where we are and how we got here, resiliency and optimism stand out as core values of Canadians in the face of adversity. Together as a nation we have made it this far. There is light at the end of the tunnel. We are very close and can soon take pride in the sacrifices we made to protect each other.

This holiday season we need to take care of ourselves, reach out to our loved ones and get through this last hurdle together. While the holidays may not be the same this year, 2021 brings with it a renewed hope for better days ahead.

* * *

● (1415)

COVID-19 PANDEMIC RESPONSE

Hon. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, Alberta announced additional steps to tackle the growing COVID-19 crisis. Most of us are not medical experts. We rely on people we trust to guide our decisions as we do our very best to keep those we love safe and healthy. Those who are medical experts are nearly unanimous. This virus is extremely serious. The increasing number of deaths and of Albertans in hospital, and particularly ICUs, reinforces this, and represents a formidable challenge to our collective health.

To my friends and family in Alberta, over the next 28 days, we will not be able to come together in person, yet we must be united like never before. To the extent that people can afford to, they should support local businesses and charities, order takeout from favourite local restaurants or teach someone to use technology to help them stay connected.

Be kind, be safe and most importantly, be available virtually for people who need help. Our challenge is significant, but it is nothing compared to our commitment to one another.

*Statements by Members***OSHAWA ROTARY CLUBS**

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, many Canadians are going into Christmas not knowing whether they will be able to put gifts under the tree. Many families across the country face this challenge every year, but with the pandemic, even more will feel that pain. That is why I am proud of the work Oshawa's Rotary clubs did this week in organizing the first Oshawa Rotary Christmas tree sale. Members of the community were able to purchase a tree with all proceeds going to support many community projects. In addition, some customers even opted to donate their tree to one of Oshawa's local community services so that those who cannot afford a tree this year will have one this Christmas.

Oshawa has proven that it is the tough times that make us reach out to those in need and Rotarians embrace that tradition. That is why I am a proud Rotarian. I want to thank all Rotarians, especially Emmy Itheme and Susan MacKinnon, for partnering in this initiative. Because of their tireless work, families across Oshawa will be able to experience the magic of Christmas.

Merry Christmas to all and happy 2021.

* * *

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, even before the pandemic, gendered violence was already a national issue. Red Women Rising, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and the TRC all identified the need to protect the safety of women and girls, through safe housing and spaces, as paramount to ending violence. However, little has been done.

The unconscionable violence faced by women in the Downtown Eastside is rising. Imagine one's daughter being sexually assaulted in broad daylight and no one intervening. Imagine one's mother giving birth to baby in a porta-potty and no one noticing. It should shock everyone to their core that such incidents have happened. We cannot let such brutal violence be normalized like this. There is no question that violence experienced by women in the Downtown Eastside is further exacerbated by COVID-related restrictions, which have reduced the number of safe spaces for women.

Advocates are calling for an immediate task force with all levels of government to ensure the safety of women. The Liberal government needs to show leadership and lead this work. The lives of women depend on it as our collective humanity hangs in the balance.

* * *

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, from December 7 to 10, the Mouvement autonome et solidaire des sans-emplois is holding a week of regional action to appeal for a complete overhaul of employment insurance.

In addition, the Conseil national des chômeurs et chômeuses is conducting the AE-21 campaign, which calls for a permanent reform of EI.

Across Quebec, unemployed workers' movements and unions are asking the government to commit to reforming the current system. The problems with the eligibility criteria for the current program and its incompatibility with QPIP are just two issues that warrant a complete overhaul, not just temporary measures.

We support this cause, and the Bloc Québécois demands comprehensive, significant reform of the EI system quickly.

* * *

● (1420)

[English]

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker,

'Twas the night before Christmas and all through the house
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse.
Then came Scrooge's call through the PM's headset
"You owe me repayment on the national debt."

"But, Scrooge, Christmas is for Santa and cute elves
Candy canes and budgets that balance themselves."
"No", snapped Scrooge, "Santa is in debtors' jail 'til you pay.
I'll leave him there and ruin Christmas Day."

"I need cash in a flash", cried out JT
Perhaps speaking fees from friends at WE.
The central bank will make our dollars double
Reducing by half my money troubles.

Doubling the number of each coin will make us more
Turning loonies to toonies and toonies to fours.
Each party will chip in some coins for free
If it's loonies we need, they're in the NDP.

We'll host Liberal fundraisers, social distanced no doubt
That's easy enough; Liberals are always spaced out.
Meanwhile at the North Pole was a plan under way
To set Santa free and save Christmas Day.

Out of a helicopter an air force vet ran
A dashing and handsome, slightly balding man.
"Goodness", asked St. Nick, "who's this man on a mission?
My gosh, it's the leader of the opposition."

The leader cut the bars and set Santa away
Who wasted no time and ran straight for his sleigh.
But as he jumped on, a reindeer did buck
Santa stubbed his big toe and yelled, "Oh, shucks."

Then off and away his chariot soared
Our children's dreams renewed and restored.
Proving again, Christmas dreams can come true
As Santa and all change their colours to blue.

* * *

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a slightly less partisan Christmas poem.

*Oral Questions***ORAL QUESTIONS**

'Tis the last sitting week before Christmas
For this virtual House
Instead of coming to Ottawa
MPs are home with their spouse.

Using a new cloud platform
Never leaving the room
House meetings or committees
It all happens on Zoom.

Making speeches of brilliance
Winning each dispute
Only to realize
That we are on mute.

Working for constituents
Fighting for grants
Wearing shirt, tie and jacket
With no need for pants.

For MPs, tackling a virus
Has become the most important of tasks
We have beseeched all Canadians
To wash their hands and wear masks.

With a team Canada approach
There is no "I" or "me"
For parliamentarians
2020 has been all about WE.

We have worked together on programs
That have made all the news
Millions of Canadians
Have used CERB, CECRA and CEWS.

In this crazy environment
Division is something we cannot afford
Politicians must come together
Like Freeland and Ford.

[Translation]

St. Nick will check his list,
And I know he will check it twice
To see which party in the House
Was not naughty but nice.

Was it green, blue, red,
Orange or light blue?
I think that this honour
Goes to our pages so true.

We will remember 2020
For this virus we abhor
And for the opposition
Always demanding more.

Let's all tell the elves
The one thing on which we are keen
Is for them to be quick
And bring us a good vaccine.

[English]

If we can ask Santa for something
It is clear what that would be
A return in 2021
To real normalcy.

*[English]***COVID-19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE**

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the wage subsidy was supposed to help workers stay employed. It was supposed to help small businesses keep their doors open. Instead, we have learned that it went to padding the bottom lines of 68 of Canada's largest corporations.

How much money did the government spend subsidizing corporations that did not lose a penny during COVID-19?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will get to the question in a moment, but allow me to begin by thanking the doctors, the researchers and the scientists at Health Canada and elsewhere who worked tirelessly over the past many weeks and months to approve the first COVID-19 vaccine, safe and effective for use by Canadians today. This is a big deal and a good news day for Canadians.

We will see 30,000 vaccines begin to arrive next week, with many more on the horizon, but we are not through this yet. We have a tough winter to get through, and I know we are going to get through it together.

● (1425)

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the vaccine is great news. I agree with the Prime Minister, and I appreciate him voting for our motion to have a plan so that Canadians can see it. I want to add to his thanks the Canadian Armed Forces, which helped our long-term care homes.

We learned recently that Extencicare received \$82 million from the wage subsidy at the time the Canadian Armed Forces took over its facility in Toronto, meaning Canadians were actually paying shareholders while the Canadian Armed Forces were cleaning up the corporate mess.

Why did the Prime Minister pay millions for a job that the Canadian Armed Forces ended up doing?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, from the very beginning of this pandemic we made a promise to Canadians that we would have their backs, and that is exactly what we did. We delivered on the CERB, which helped Canadians with replacement for their paycheques. We delivered on a wage subsidy that supported businesses small and larger to get through these difficult times, and Canadians pulled together. We have continued to be there with PPE and now with vaccines, with rapid testing and with other things. We have worked directly with the provinces. We will continue to support Canadians as necessary so we can get through this pandemic.

Oral Questions

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, banks regularly put conditions on companies when it comes to dividends and share repurchasing in exchange for loans. Spain and the Netherlands built restrictions into their wage subsidy program. Once again, the government could not be bothered to do basic due diligence.

Will the Prime Minister commit to reforming the Canada emergency wage subsidy so that it only benefits those in the break room, as opposed to the corporate executives in the boardroom?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again the Conservatives are talking about limiting and being careful and holding back on spending, and criticizing us for having put money out too quickly to too many Canadians. We knew that during these unprecedented times we needed to get money into the pockets of Canadians and into the bank accounts of small businesses as quickly as possible.

As we have said, we are verifying things on the back end. We are making sure that people did not take advantage of it, but people who made good faith mistakes will not be penalized. Our focus during this year has been to be there for Canadians and that is what we have done.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is penalizing average Canadians and helping major corporations. The government changed the criteria for the CERB so that people who took home more than \$5,000 before taxes are now being assessed on their net income instead of their gross income. The website mentioned nothing about net. Even after the changes, it still does not.

Why is there one set of rules for Canadians working hard and struggling in the unemployment line and another set of rules for connected corporate Liberal insiders?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, from the very beginning, we were clear on getting support out to Canadians. The rules did not change, but we have indicated to Canadians that we will work with them if people made good faith mistakes. We know that during this unprecedented time we needed to be there for Canadians, and that is the choice we made.

The Conservatives have said we should not have delivered as much money to Canadians as we did, but I know there are a lot of Canadians who look back on this year and understand that because we were all there for each other, it was much less bad. We are not going to call it a good 2020, but it was a less bad 2020 than it otherwise would have been.

* * *

[Translation]

PRIVACY

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we live in a country where the right to privacy is fundamental.

Today's youth are vulnerable, and some are victims of traffickers who post content online without consent. Bill C-11 could be amended to protect personal information.

Is the Liberal government prepared to protect these vulnerable members of our society?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are working tirelessly to protect vulnerable Canadians. That includes online activities.

We are going to implement regulations that will ensure that online platforms can behave responsibly and remove all illegal content, whether it be hate speech, child exploitation or other violent or terrorist acts.

We will give Canadians and the authorities the resources and tools needed to protect the most vulnerable.

* * *

● (1430)

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in an unprecedented, historic move, six former premiers of Quebec issued a clear and concise letter demanding that the Charter of the French Language apply to federally regulated businesses.

In agreement are the unanimous National Assembly, the Conservative Party, if I understand correctly, certainly the Bloc Québécois, and possibly the now self-professed member for “Montreal”.

I would like to know if the Prime Minister of Canada intends to put the Bloc Québécois's Bill C-254 to a vote.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our two official languages are fundamental to our country.

We will always be there to defend the status of the French language across the country, including in Quebec.

We will always be there to defend our official languages, particularly for members of minority communities, and we will keep investing to protect it.

We introduced a bill to protect it and promote it online, and we will strengthen the Official Languages Act.

* * *

HEALTH

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Quebecers and all their former premiers know how they want to protect the French language.

On another note, tomorrow, the Prime Minister will be meeting with the Premier of Quebec and all the provincial premiers.

Is he going to once again show up with a confrontational and interfering attitude or is he going to show up with a proposal about how he can meet the demands of the premiers of Quebec and the provinces without interfering?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know that the Bloc Québécois always wants to be confrontational and pick fights. We have been working extremely well with the provincial premiers for many months by transferring them resources and billions of dollars for the health care system and giving them personal protective equipment, rapid tests and now vaccines.

We are and will continue to be there to work with the premiers and the provinces to protect the health of all Canadians.

* * *

COVID-19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government gave \$1 billion to large corporations, which in turn gave \$5 billion to their shareholders. However, the Liberals do not want to penalize them. Instead, they want to penalize the workers and artists who applied for the CERB in good faith.

Why are the Liberals protecting the ultra-rich and penalizing workers and artists?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been there from the start to help Canadians who lost their income due to COVID-19 by providing the CERB and the wage subsidy for small businesses. We were there to support people going through extremely tough times during this pandemic, and we will continue to be there.

We will continue to support businesses, workers, our seniors and our youth. We know that this pandemic is not over. Although we are feeling very hopeful, because vaccines will start arriving next week, we must stay the course to get through this winter together.

[English]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's government is going after the self-employed and artists. It is literally doing that right now.

This government spent \$1 billion on companies that turned around and gave \$5 billion in dividends to their shareholders. Two of those were long-term care homes, which have had some of the worst conditions for residents and seniors. Why did the Liberal government not make sure that all public money went to protecting the vulnerable seniors and residents of those long-term care homes?

[Translation]

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member mentioned artists, and I want to point out that our government recognizes how much this pandemic has hurt our creators and artists. The pandemic has forced artists to cancel events, and they do not have the audiences to share their art with. That is why, in addition to creating the CERB, we were there for our artists with hundreds of millions of dollars more to support them during this pandemic and to ensure that we can all celebrate the end of this pandemic together.

• (1435)

[English]

JUSTICE

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have no doubt that the reports of young girls being abused, and those acts being recorded and viewed millions of times online, disturbs all of us. When I read about it last weekend, I was shocked. Frankly, I was disgusted that it was happening right here in Canada. I think all of us were.

The Prime Minister was informed of this last March. I am wondering if he can tell us why he did not, at that point, begin the process of stopping these images from being portrayed and viewed all around the world. I wonder why he did not start doing something back in March.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been working for many years to fight child exploitation and abuse. That is why we continue to actively work to create new regulations requiring online platforms to eliminate illegal content, including hate speech, child sexual exploitation, and violent or extremist content.

Our approach will ensure that illegal content is removed quickly, that the platforms are monitored and that victims have access to a fast, transparent and independent process. We are working with our international partners as well, and we intend to introduce these regulations at the earliest opportunity.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are hearing that these porn sites themselves will start verifying the content, but I do not think any of us have any faith in these porn sites. Their goal is to make money. It is clearly not to protect women and girls. None of us want this abuse to continue. We all have sisters and daughters.

The government has said that it is going to introduce legislation next year, but I am asking the Prime Minister if there is something he can do today to protect our nation's daughters. Can he do something for them, not next year, not in a few months, but today, to stop this online abuse from happening right here in Canada?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the past years we have stepped up in our fight as a government against abuse, gender-based violence and exploitation of minors. We have continued to put forward measures that protect all Canadians, particularly women and girls, and we will continue to do that.

Working with the Ministry of Women and Gender Equality, we have put forward many programs, but as the member opposite says, there is much more to do. We look forward to getting the support of all parties in this House as we move forward on strengthening measures to protect all Canadians.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

HEALTH

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the pandemic showed that the provinces had significant needs in the area of health care. They need more and more resources. The Prime Minister is meeting with the provincial premiers tomorrow to discuss health transfers.

Is the Prime Minister prepared to do what our leader has done and commit to granting stable, predictable, unconditional funding to our provincial partners?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since the beginning of the pandemic, we have been there with the provinces and territories to protect Canadians, to invest in the health care system. From day one, we transferred an additional half a billion dollars, and we also made record health transfers this year. Later, under the safe restart agreement, we added another half a billion dollars.

In total, we have transferred around \$25 billion to the provinces, in addition to providing tests, PPE and now vaccines.

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in his latest economic update, the Prime Minister threw the provinces a bone and announced \$1 billion for long-term care homes. That \$1 billion has a whole bunch of unacceptable strings attached. It is outright federal interference. The provinces are capable of administering their money themselves.

Has the Prime Minister lost faith in the provinces? Will he commit to stable, predictable, unconditional funding?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our seniors' lives and dignity are not a jurisdictional matter. It is the federal government's responsibility to protect our seniors all across this country.

We are working with the provinces to provide Canadians with a better health care system, a system that will protect our seniors better than we were able to do during this pandemic, unfortunately.

I think all Canadians expect seniors to be protected no matter where they live in this country. We will be there to work with the provinces to make sure of that.

[English]

Mr. Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, five years ago and counting, the Prime Minister promised to end the blood ban against gay and bisexual men. All parties are united in ending this outdated stigma now, not in months or years. More than ever, safe blood donations are needed urgently. The Canadian Medical Association and the All Blood is Equal campaign have the science-based safe solution, which simply changes the questionnaire to ask about sexual behaviour instead of sexual orientation.

Will the Prime Minister finally keep his promise and put an immediate end to this discrimination?

• (1440)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when we got elected in 2015, we made the commitment to end the MSM blood ban, and we are working towards that.

We dropped the ban from five years to one year, and then further dropped it to three months. We needed to do that based on science. Unfortunately, under the Harper government, the blood services were starved of the research money necessary to do that work.

Therefore, we funded them to do the scientific research necessary to be able to eliminate that blood ban altogether. That is our goal, and that is what we are going to do.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my friend and colleague had a very reasonable question on the discriminatory blood ban against members of the LGBTQ community. The Prime Minister has made this promise several times over the last few years, but like with many things, there is never action. There is science, and there are several other countries following this procedure and ending discriminatory bans now.

Will the Prime Minister answer the serious question with a timeline to live up to the promise he made five years ago?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in 2016, the deferral period was reduced from five years to one year. In 2019, it was further reduced to three months.

We have funded 15 projects to find the evidence necessary to eliminate it altogether. We will continue to work with Canadian Blood Services and Héma-Québec until we cross this finish line, which is in sight.

I am very pleased to see members opposite standing up for the rights of the LGBTQ2 community. I just wish they would talk to their members who continue to stand in favour of barbaric conversion therapy. It would be nice to see the Conservative Party stand with the LGBTQ2 community for once.

* * *

[Translation]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Pierre Marc Johnson, Daniel Johnson, Lucien Bouchard, Jean Charest, Pauline Marois, Philippe Couillard—the only female premier and all the other living premiers in the history of Quebec have joined the Quebec National Assembly in asserting that the Charter of the French Language must be applied to federally regulated businesses in Quebec. The Bloc Québécois has introduced a bill to do just that.

Will the Prime Minister listen to all the premiers of Quebec and commit to supporting our bill?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are waiting for the Government of Quebec to introduce its legislation in due course.

We will work with the Quebec government to protect the French language. That is a priority for the Liberal Party of Canada, and it always has been. As we made clear in the throne speech, we will continue to be there, as we always have been, to protect franco-phone minorities across the country, which the Bloc cannot do, as well as to protect the French language within Quebec. We will do everything we can to protect our beautiful French language.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Blah, blah, blah, Mr. Speaker. That is all just empty rhetoric again.

The Bloc Québécois has been asking the federal government to apply Bill 101 to federally regulated businesses for 13 years. The government must have had time to make up its mind. Today, all the living Quebec premiers, the labour federations in Quebec and the Quebec National Assembly are unanimous. Everyone is asking the Prime Minister to take action.

Will he apply Bill 101 to federally regulated businesses, yes or no?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, speaking of blah blah, blah, talk is all the Bloc can do.

We are here to take action and protect the French language, and we always will be. We committed to appoint only Supreme Court judges who can speak French, something that even the Conservatives have not committed to doing.

We will continue to defend the French language and to work hand in hand with the Government of Quebec when it introduces its bill. We are waiting to see it, and we will work together to resolve the problem of the decline of French in Quebec.

* * *

● (1445)

PUBLIC SAFETY

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the House passed a motion calling on the government to make a decision on Huawei by Friday, December 18. The motion may not be legally binding, but it is morally binding.

Will the Prime Minister honour the will of Parliament and make a decision on Huawei by next Friday?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, 5G technology can meet the explosion in consumer and industrial demand for faster, higher-capacity networks. We want to ensure that Canadians benefit from the latest 5G innovations.

At the same time, the safety and security of Canadians will always be our number one priority, and we will never compromise on issues of national security. We will continue to ensure that Canadian networks remain safe and secure, and we are working with security experts to find the right path forward.

[*English*]

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is not about how great 5G is. It is about respecting

Oral Questions

democratic norms. The Prime Minister talks a good game about respecting democratic norms abroad. He has said, “Canada recognizes the critical need to strengthen democratic norms and institutions around the world”.

The PM talks the talk, but he does not walk the walk here at home. He fails to uphold democratic norms here at home. He has ignored the call by the House to list the IRGC as a terrorist group.

Is he also going to ignore the call by the House to make a decision on Huawei by next Friday?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, particularly in this time of pandemic when everyone is turning toward digital and online activities as essential for staying connected, we will continue to ensure that we are listening to the best advice of our scientists, experts and national security advisers in terms of making the right decisions to keep Canadians safe while giving them access to the full range of digital opportunities. That is what Canadians expect of us. That is what they expect of all of us in the House, and we look forward to working together to ensure that happens.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first we were going to have a decision on Huawei before the election, and then we were not. Then we were going to have a new framework on China, and then we were not. All the while, Canada’s national security is being threatened, and Canadians are being harassed and intimidated, by China’s foreign influence operations here on Canadian soil.

When will the government get its act together on China, respect the will of the House and come forward with a robust plan to counter China’s foreign influence operations here on Canadian soil?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the past two years, two Canadians, Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor, have been detained arbitrarily by China. Canada has done absolutely everything necessary to try and get them home safely. We will continue to hold up our principles, our values and the rule of law as we defend Canadian rights and push back against China’s coercive diplomacy.

Hon. Erin O’Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Chinese regime is abusing our citizens, abusing our security, abusing human rights and abusing the rules-based trade order. This week, the European Union passed its Magnitsky act. This week, the United States added 14 more Chinese officials to its sanctions list for the creation of a police state in Hong Kong, where 300,000 Canadians live. That brings 29 officials to the list of people sanctioned by the U.S. The number for this Prime Minister is zero.

Oral Questions

When will the Prime Minister finally show a serious and principled approach with respect to communist China, at home and abroad?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the course of the last two years, we have worked tirelessly with allies and partners around the world on holding China to account for the arbitrary detention of two Canadian citizens. We have pushed hard, and we have seen allies in every corner of the planet speak up in the defence of not just Canadians, but of the fundamental rule of law that protects us all around the world. We are going to continue to work closely with our allies, particularly in the Five Eyes, to push back against China's coercive diplomacy in a way that benefits Canadians, upholds our values and protects the opportunities we have around the world.

* * *

• (1450)

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians who followed the rules and applied for CERB in good faith are now getting repayment demands from the government. My constituent, Carol, is self-employed and made less than \$10,000 last year, but the government says her net income was barely too low, so now she owes it \$14,000. Meanwhile, the Liberals are letting at least 68 large companies, which got millions in government aid, pay out that money as dividends to shareholders.

Why do the Liberals always help the rich but keep Canadians like Carol in poverty?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, from the very beginning we knew that in this pandemic we needed to support Canadians, and that is exactly what we did. We rolled out, in record time, supports to Canadians across the country with the CERB, with the wage subsidy and with supports for seniors, youth and families. We are going to continue to be there to support Canadians.

During that time, people may have made good-faith errors. They will not be penalized for that. We needed to make sure that we would have Canadians' backs, and every step of the way we have been there for them.

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HEALTH

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, currently there is a proposal at the WTO to waive intellectual property provisions that could frustrate the COVID-19 vaccine roll-out around the world. Canada has so far stood against that proposal. Instead of helping big pharmaceutical companies protect their bottom line, the government should be putting the needs of people first. We need to do everything we can to ensure the safe, timely and affordable delivery of as much vaccine as possible.

The WTO TRIPS council meeting is tomorrow. Will the Prime Minister commit to finally supporting the waiver to ensure that people, and not profits, are the focal point of decisions around vaccine production and distribution?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, from the very beginning, we knew that we could not end this pandemic anywhere without ending it everywhere. This is why, even as we were securing a larger range of potential vaccines than any other country, even as we were securing more doses per capita for Canadians than any other country, and even as we are now seeing vaccines roll out to Canadians as early as next week, we have not forgotten our obligations to the international community. We have stepped up with the COVAX Facility, with the ACT-Accelerator and with measures that will ensure that, as vaccines become available, they become available to the most vulnerable around the world as well. We need to vaccinate billions in the coming years. We will help.

Mr. Tony Van Bynen (Newmarket—Aurora, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the opposition has said that Canada is at the back of the line for vaccines. A member of the party opposite is even sponsoring a petition questioning the safety and the effectiveness of vaccines, and the Leader of the Opposition refuses to denounce his comments. Earlier this morning, they were proved wrong.

Can the Prime Minister please update the House on the government's plan to get Canadians a vaccine for COVID-19?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we reached a critical milestone in our fight against COVID-19 today. Health Canada approved the first vaccine for COVID-19. Regulators worked around the clock to complete a thorough independent review.

This vaccine is safe and effective. We will have 249,000 doses by the end of the month. An initial shipment of 30,000 doses will depart for Canada this week, arriving at the 14 shipment points across the country as early as Monday.

We are working with, and thank, the Canadian Armed Forces, who are ready to ensure Canadians get vaccinated as soon as possible.

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AIR TRANSPORTATION

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on June 30, Air Canada cancelled 30 regional routes with no follow-up plan from the government. On October 14, West Jet cancelled another five regional routes with no follow-up plan from the government. Yesterday, Air Canada cancelled another five regional routes with no follow-up plan from the government. These routes are important, not only for the communities and the aviation workers, but for Canadians who rely on their services.

When will the Prime Minister deliver on his promise to restore Canada's regional routes?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, air sector workers are hit hard by this crisis. We continue to support them with our programs. We are very concerned about Air Canada's decision to suspend additional regional routes in the Atlantic provinces. As we are developing an assistance package for the Canadian airline industry, I can assure Canadians that before we spend one penny of taxpayer money on airlines, we will ensure that regional communities retain air connections to the rest of Canada, and that Canadians get their refunds.

We know that this is not a time for travelling right now, but when we get to start travelling again, we know that our air carriers need to be there for all regions of the country.

• (1455)

Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday we learned that flights to airports in Saint John, Sydney, Fredericton, Charlottetown, Deer Lake and Halifax have been reduced or cut entirely. For months, the transportation minister has said a plan is coming. Today, the Prime Minister says that he is concerned. That is not good enough. We are nine months into this pandemic and air travel is going in the wrong direction.

My constituents in southwest New Brunswick, which now has zero service out of Saint John, as well as thousands of other people in Atlantic Canada want to know. What are the Liberals doing to keep airline travel running down east?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, given this pandemic, there are not a lot of Canadians travelling in the Atlantic bubble or elsewhere across the country. Airlines have made decisions that are concerning not just for now, but for the future as well. We are ensuring, and working with them to ensure, that regional routes are restored as soon as necessary and as soon as possible.

Indeed, we will not be supporting the airlines with sector-specific support until they assure us of the return of regional routes and the return of refunds to Canadians.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, residents of the South Okanagan were shocked to find out that Air Canada is cancelling all flights to the Penticton airport. Those who rely on this airport do not have access to a government jet like the health minister, and they certainly do not have the luxury of waiting for months as the government dithers and delays.

Will the Prime Minister do something now, or is he telling the residents of the area that they should go fly a kite? They certainly will not be flying.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have worked with sectors that have been hit hard by this pandemic from the very beginning, including over a billion dollars to airline workers across the industries to support important air travel. It will be necessary once this pandemic is over.

Over the past many months, we have expressed our concern about suspension of regional routes. We will continue to work with airlines to ensure support and protection of regional routes, particularly once we get through this pandemic and want to start travelling again, but as I said, no sector-specific support will go to the airlines

until they return refunds to Canadians and until they show us a plan for restoring regional routes.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, former prime minister Mackenzie King once said that Canada is a nation with “too much geography”. The Prime Minister seems to agree. He is failing regional markets from the Okanagan in B.C. to Atlantic Canada. The government has failed to roll out a rapid testing strategy at airports that would allow some of these regional routes to remain open. The federal government is responsible for the certainty of air travel that binds this country.

How many Canadians are going to be stranded on the tarmac waiting for the government to act?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, we hear the Leader of the Opposition going on about rapid testing, when the fact is that he has been talking about it all fall, when over two months ago we sent rapid tests to the provinces in the millions.

In regard to the travel, we have, over the past many weeks, run a pilot project with our friends in the Government of Alberta to ensure that we can see the impact of rapid testing on quarantine times, and drawing from the data we get from that, we will make further decisions about how to best keep Canadians safe as they seek to travel once again.

* * *

[*Translation*]

HEALTH

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Quebec has 1,728 new cases of COVID-19. Health care workers are already overburdened and soon they are going to be asked to do even more because they are the ones who will be handling the vaccination efforts. Health care workers are the ones dealing with the crisis and they are the ones who are going to get us through it with the vaccines. We need to support them, not abandon them.

Will the Prime Minister join Quebec and the provinces in announcing that he will significantly and permanently increase health transfers?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are in the midst of an unprecedented crisis, and we have been there for Canadians and health care every step of the way throughout this crisis.

Oral Questions

We have been there with historic transfers of tens of billions of dollars. We have been there with personal protective equipment, rapid tests and, now, vaccines.

I look forward to sitting down with the premiers tomorrow to talk about everything we are doing together to protect Canadians now and to look at how we can also work together in the years to come.

• (1500)

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, a mere \$500 million was transferred for health care.

Quebec and the provinces are meeting with the Prime Minister tomorrow, and they are united in their demand for higher health transfers. The provinces were forced to cancel Christmas, shut down thousands of businesses, tell millions of people they would lose their jobs, cancel operations and stop cancer screening. These are unprecedented measures because we are facing an unprecedented crisis.

Will the Prime Minister acknowledge that and, at long last, increase health transfers significantly and permanently?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have to correct my hon. colleague. This year, we have transferred tens of billions of dollars more for health care systems in partnership with the provinces. Next year, we will be transferring over \$42 billion for health care. Throughout this crisis, we have done more than has ever been done to help the provinces and to help Canadians stay safe and healthy.

We will always be there to keep Canadians safe and healthy. That is what Canadians expect from the federal government, and that is what we will keep doing.

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OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, six former Quebec premiers from all political parties support the National Assembly motion reaffirming that protecting the French language is essential and that Bill 101 must apply to federally regulated businesses in Quebec. Mayors of towns and cities, unions and multiple organizations support that demand. All opposition parties in this House agree with that demand. Only one person does not support it, and he is right in front of me, in front of all of us.

Why does the Prime Minister not support this demand from all former Quebec premiers and all the organizations I just mentioned?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said, we are waiting for the provincial government to introduce legislation on this matter, and we will have a look at it. We will always work with that government to protect the French language, as our party has always done.

I will not be lectured by the Conservatives when they refuse to appoint only bilingual judges to the Supreme Court. Why do they refuse to do that? Now they want to stand up and talk about it. Will they commit to only appointing judges who speak French to the Supreme Court, as we have done?

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is incredible to hear this Prime Minister who is unable to rein in his own MPs and the people in his party.

In addition to the Quebec president of the Liberal Party, the hon. member for Saint-Laurent and other members who likely scoff at Bill 101 behind closed doors, we now find out that Serge Joyal, a former minister and Liberal senator, sent an open letter to the media to say that he too is against the idea of federally regulated businesses being subject to Bill 101.

If that is not the Prime Minister's position, then he should stand up and clearly say here in the House that he agrees that federally regulated businesses in Quebec should be subject to Bill 101.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I predicted, nothing was said about the fact that we think that all Supreme Court justices should be able to speak French.

The Conservatives are not here to protect the French language. They are here to play petty politics. We are here to stand up for the French fact across Canada, including Quebec. We will continue to work to defend the minorities and this beautiful French language across the country.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, six former Quebec premiers have signed a letter in support of Bill 101.

People of different political stripes are in full agreement. It is rare for Mr. Charest and Mr. Bouchard to agree. That is our party's position as well.

What is this Liberal government waiting for to apply Bill 101 to federally regulated businesses?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are waiting to see the bill proposed by the current Quebec government.

Once again, I just gave the official opposition three opportunities to state their position on Supreme Court judges. The Conservatives refuse to commit to appointing only judges who speak French to the Supreme Court of Canada. If people really want to know what they truly think of the French fact and bilingualism, just let them consider that.

The Liberal Party will always defend the French language.

* * *

• (1505)

[English]

HEALTH

Ms. Lenore Zann (Cumberland—Colchester, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I first bring warm regards from Nova Scotia, and I want to congratulate the Prime Minister on Canada's first vaccine approval announced today.

While this is very good news, rapid testing is also very important to stop the spread of COVID-19, and I know my constituents here in Cumberland—Colchester would very much appreciate hearing about the availability of testing upon possible exposure.

Could the Prime Minister please give us an update with regard to ensuring Canadians have access to rapid testing?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Cumberland—Colchester for her exemplary leadership during this extremely difficult year.

Testing is one of the most important tools we have to respond to COVID-19. We have already authorized six rapid test response kits to date and deployed over 8.1 million of them to provinces and territories. To ensure these tests are put to best use, PHAC also released guidance for provinces and territories on best practices. We have been there for the provinces and territories every step of the way and we will continue to support them in delivering on their responsibilities for health care.

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REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, municipalities across northern Ontario have been waiting over 100 days to find out whether they will receive funding through the community investment initiative to support economic development. The department claims to respond to funding applications within 80 days. I raised this issue with the minister two weeks ago, but as of this morning we are still waiting for an answer.

Can the Prime Minister tell us when these municipalities can expect to have a clear answer on the status of their funding applications?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the past many months we have worked to flow unprecedented funds to provinces, municipalities, communities and organizations that have needed extra support because of this terrible 2020. The COVID crisis has caused us all to need to pull together and work together. We have been there for municipalities, indigenous communities, rural and remote areas and Canadians from coast to coast to coast. We will continue to work with them to ensure their applications get processed as quickly as possible and for any further help they might need.

We will be there for Canadians. That is a promise we have made. That is the promise we have kept.

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that was a classic non-answer from the Prime Minister. I asked a question about the community investment initiative through FedNor. The Prime Minister did not respond using the words “FedNor”, “the community investment initiative”, “economic development” or “northern Ontario”, so I will give him the opportunity to answer the question again.

When can northern Ontario municipalities expect to have a clear answer on the status of their funding applications?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think if the member opposite checks the blues he will see that I actually said the applications are being looked at as rapidly as pos-

sible, and that we will work with them for any extra funds that they need.

Oral Questions

In the meantime, speaking of regional development agencies, I was extremely pleased to highlight that in the fall economic statement we recognized the need for a specific regional development agency for British Columbia. Now, in addition to the tremendous amount of support we give through western diversification, we will be able to give more support directly to B.C. to ensure that regional development agencies have the tools to best support people on the ground right across the country. This is a good day for regional development across the country and will continue to be.

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RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our economic recovery has to be about how we create jobs and, in the process, get our resources to market. The proposed Alberta-to-Alaska rail link can play a vital role in increasing market access for Canadian resources and creating jobs in Yukon and across the northwest. Indigenous leaders are championing this project, but we cannot get a straight answer out of the government.

Is the government going to support the Alberta-to-Alaska rail link, yes or no?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when we receive a detailed project, we will look at that project. That is how these things work. We are no longer in a time where someone can simply shrug and decide to throw a railway across the country and then get it done. Instead, we are going to work with interested groups and proponents of the project and make sure it is done the right way. The Conservatives might try to take shortcuts all the time. We are focused on getting things done right so that they do not end up in the courts, years down the road. We believe in developing the economy of this country the right way, in partnership with indigenous people and in partnership with environmental concerns. That is exactly what we will do.

Points of Order

● (1510)

[*Translation*]**PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT**

Mr. Yves Robillard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government has been doing exceptional procurement work throughout the pandemic so that Canadians have access to essential personal protective equipment.

At the beginning of the pandemic, it was very difficult to obtain N95 masks, face shields, gowns and other personal protective equipment that met approved standards. There were problems in the supply chain and an unprecedented level of demand, since the whole world was trying to acquire this sort of equipment.

Could the Prime Minister give us an update on the personal protective equipment we brought into Canada and sent to the provinces and territories?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Marc-Aurèle-Fortin for his question and hard work.

At the beginning of the pandemic, we faced many challenges in procuring essential personal protective equipment. We responded to those challenges by negotiating contracts for the purchase of over 197 million N95 respirators, 60 million face shields and 419 million surgical masks. Deliveries continue to arrive every day.

We promised to protect the health of Canadians and that is exactly what we are doing.

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[*English*]**INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS**

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, no community has been harder hit in Canada by COVID-19 than Shamattawa First Nation. It has 291 confirmed, and many more potential, cases and an 80% test positivity rate. I reached out to the ministers again yesterday. I appreciate a reconnaissance mission is heading in today, but this nightmare scenario is getting worse by the hour, and this is happening in Canada, one of the wealthiest countries in the world.

Will the Prime Minister do whatever it takes to save the lives of the people of Shamattawa First Nation?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, from the beginning of the pandemic, we have said we would always be there to help those in need, and that is exactly what we are doing.

The Minister of Indigenous Services confirmed support from the Canadian Rangers to Chief Redhead of Shamattawa this weekend. We have heard the call for more support, and an evacuation of vulnerable community members has already begun, with efforts under way to increase the isolation capacity within the community. We will be there for them.

Speaking of being there for them, because this is the last question, allow me to thank all the pages, all the House of Commons staff, everyone who has been there for us through this very difficult

year, and the Speaker and his colleagues. My thanks to all for an extraordinarily difficult but successful year in this House of Commons.

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POINTS OF ORDER**HOUSING**

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, if you seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent for the following motion.

I move:

That, given that COVID-19 has disproportionately impacted people who are homeless or unhoused, the House call upon the government, while respecting the jurisdiction of Quebec, the other provinces, and Indigenous Nations to:

- A. recognize that people who are homeless and unhoused, many of whom are Indigenous Peoples, seniors, persons with disabilities, and low income people, do not have the resources to fully practice the necessary public health measures as recommended by federal, provincial and territorial officials on how to stay safe during this pandemic;
- B. make substantive investments in both long-term and short-term programs including low barrier shelters, transitional housing and permanent supportive housing for those who are chronically unhoused;
- C. put in place an Urban Indigenous housing strategy led by Indigenous peoples, and;
- D. increase funding for NGOs who help individuals needing to self-isolate due to COVID-19, including by providing mental health supports, addictions services, meal programs and other measures.

● (1515)

The Deputy Speaker: This being a hybrid sitting of the House, I am seeking to hear from those who are in disagreement with the hon. member proposing this motion.

I therefore ask all those who are opposed to the hon. member for Winnipeg Centre proposing this motion to please say nay. I hear none.

The House has 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)

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable on a point of order.

Mr. Luc Berthold: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Chair for not mistaking me for the member for Winnipeg North.

During question period, the Prime Minister said that he has defended the French language, but he seems incapable of complying with the Official Languages Act within the government itself, especially with respect to contracts, like the one awarded to WE Charity.

I would like to enlighten the Prime Minister, so I am seeking the unanimous consent of the House of Commons to table a document stating that the institution must determine whether the initiative will have an impact on the vitality of the English and French linguistic minority communities in Canada and on the full recognition and use of both English and French in Canadian society.

The Deputy Speaker: Once again, I will only ask those who are opposed to the request to express their disagreement.

Accordingly, all those opposed to the hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable moving the motion will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

VETERANS OMBUDSMAN

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the veterans ombudsman's annual report for 2019-20.

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AGREEMENT ON TRADE CONTINUITY BETWEEN CANADA AND THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

Hon. Mary Ng (Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the text of the agreement on trade continuity between Canada and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

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[*Translation*]

FEDERAL REGULATORY MANAGEMENT INITIATIVES

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the “Annual Report to Parliament for the 2019 to 2020 Fiscal Year: Federal Regulatory Management Initiatives”.

This report outlines the significant net benefit of regulations made by the Governor in Council in 2019-20 and reports publicly on the one-for-one rule, as required by the Red Tape Reduction Act.

The report also includes the administrative burden baseline for 2019, listing the administrative requirements in federal regulations.

* * *

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

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

Routine Proceedings

er of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8)(a), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to eight petitions. These returns will be tabled in an electronic format.

* * *

CANADA-UNITED KINGDOM TRADE CONTINUITY AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ACT

Hon. Mary Ng (Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-18, An Act to implement the Agreement on Trade Continuity between Canada and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

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

* * *

● (1520)

CANADA SHIPPING ACT

Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-261, An Act to amend the Canada Shipping Act, 2001 (thermal coal).

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is an honour and privilege to table this private member's bill today, and I am pleased that my colleague, the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, is the seconder on the bill.

Our constituents are fed up with the increased use of the Salish Sea as a free parking lot for bulk freighters anchored around the southern Gulf Islands. Many of these bulk freighters are exporting dirty U.S. thermal coal from ports in British Columbia because the west coast U.S. states have banned the export of thermal coal from their ports. Under international trade rules, we cannot simply ban the export of U.S. thermal coal from Canadian ports. Therefore, this legislation seeks to ban the export of all thermal coal by ship from Canada.

Burning thermal coal is the dirtiest most carbon-intensive way to produce electricity. Canada is shutting down its thermal coal electrical generation, and it is hypocritical to be exporting thermal coal to Asia to burn for electricity there. This does not fit our commitment to climate change.

The language of the bill is simple:

It is prohibited for a vessel to load into its hold, at a port or marine installation in Canada, any thermal coal that is to be transported outside Canada.

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

*Routine Proceedings***PETITIONS**

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour and privilege to table e-petition 2828, which has 1,861 signatures.

The petitioners are concerned about the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority proposal to build another container terminal at Roberts Bank, creating a massive new man-made island the size of 150 football fields.

The petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to maintain the environmental integrity of the Roberts Bank ecosystem for migratory birds, the endangered southern resident killer whales and other wildlife. They ask the government to deny approval of the Roberts Bank container terminal 2 project.

CONVERSION THERAPY

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this petition is supported by the majority of the 91 churches in my riding.

The undersigned citizens are extremely concerned about Bill C-6, about the attack on their freedom of religion, conscience, expression, belief and their ability to speak it in the public square. While all Canadians agree that no one should have to forcibly undergo a treatment they do not want, Bill C-6 prevents people who, of their own free will, want counselling, advice or prayer about their sexual confusion.

The petitioners call upon the Government of Canada for a narrower definition of what the Liberals view as conversion therapy in order to exclude pastoral care, voluntarily sought counselling or prayer, to amend or withdraw this legislation and to preserve their charter rights.

TRANS MOUNTAIN PIPELINE

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, first, I want to thank the Speaker, our table officers and our wonderful members of the House community that support us as members of Parliament. I hope everyone is able to enjoy their holidays in these difficult times

I am honoured to present a petition today on behalf of constituents who are very concerned about public money being spent on the Trans Mountain pipeline. They note that completion of the Trans Mountain pipeline is inconsistent with Canada's greenhouse gas reduction targets, a point made yesterday by the Parliamentary Budget Office in its most recent study that said we could not complete the pipeline in a way that would allow it to be profitable, while at the same time meeting Canada's commitments to reduce greenhouse gases.

The petitioners call on the House assembled to press the government to stop any public funds being used to build the Trans Mountain expansion.

• (1525)

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to join my voice to others who are

wishing colleagues best wishes for the holidays and if they celebrate, a merry Christmas. I know often during this time of year, we turn our attention to those who are less fortunate or who are in a vulnerable position, and it is in that spirit that I table a petition.

The petitioners highlight the horrific human rights abuses targeting Uighurs and other Turkic Muslims in China. They highlight a campaign of forced abortion, forced sterilization, forced insertion of IUDs, undermining the bodily autonomy and the rights of Uighur women. It is also part of an effort by the Government of China to reduce the Uighur population, efforts that have been called by the Subcommittee on International Human Rights and by petitioners a genocide.

The petitioners call on the House to recognize that genocide and also to use the Magnitsky act to target those involved in these violations. Oftentimes during holidays, we see escalations of human rights abuses in certain parts of the world when perhaps authoritarian governments think that our attention is turned. We need to continue to be vigilant and aware of these issues even during—

The Deputy Speaker: We are getting a lot of requests for petitions today. I would ask hon. members to keep their comments succinct and specifically only relating to the petition.

The hon. member for Cloverdale—Langley City.

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

Mrs. Tamara Jansen (Cloverdale—Langley City, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present two petitions to the House today.

Many Canadians were shocked to see that in the middle of a pandemic, while the government takes months to fix bungled support programs and provide our hardest-hit industries with the support they need, their government was more focused on pursuing an ideological agenda than actually helping Canadians.

The first petition I am presenting addresses Bill C-7.

The petitioners recognize that the Canadian government should invest in palliative care and support for people with physical and mental disabilities and should seek to preserve life rather than end it. They also recognize that the current MAID safeguards in place are necessary to protect people with disabilities and those who cannot consent from having their lives prematurely terminated.

The petitioners are asking the House to preserve the necessary safeguards for euthanasia that are in place to ensure that vulnerable Canadians are protected.

CONVERSION THERAPY

Mrs. Tamara Jansen (Cloverdale—Langley City, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition I am presenting addresses Bill C-6 or what was Bill C-8 before the Prime Minister prorogued Parliament to cover up the WE scandal.

The petitioners recognize that in Bill C-6 conversion therapy is vaguely defined and overreaches established safeguarding principles by criminalizing therapies offered by medical professionals and normal conversations between children and parents, counselors, caregivers and educators.

The petition, which received 1,293 signatures, calls on the House to address that issue by fixing the definition and asks that the government complete and make public a gender-based analysis of the impact of the legislation that it could have on women, children, professionals and families in health education and caregiver roles.

[*Translation*]

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Greg Fergus (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a great privilege to be able to present three petitions today. Before I do, I would like to join my colleagues in wishing everyone a very Merry Christmas, happy holidays, happy Hanukkah and happy Kwanza.

In the same vein, the first petition I am presenting, which was signed by several hundred Canadians, calls on Parliament to ensure that we change Canada's history books to include a detailed account of the history of slavery in Canada and the Black slave trade in our country. That way we will better understand the contribution of Black people and the injustices the Black community has faced for several centuries.

• (1530)

[*English*]

NIGERIA

Mr. Greg Fergus (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the second petition that I would like to present on behalf of the Nigerian Canadian community, which calls upon Parliament to condemn the violence against unarmed protesters at the Lekki toll gate in October in Nigeria. This is an issue that has been of great concern to the Nigerian diaspora in Canada.

[*Translation*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Greg Fergus (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the last petition I would like to present is also signed by many Canadians. They are calling on not just the government but also the House of Commons to do everything possible to combat climate change. More specifically, they are calling on us to put a price on pollution and to impose border tax adjustments for goods that cross our border.

[*English*]

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the privilege of presenting three petitions today.

The first petition is about the Uighur genocide.

The petitioners call on the government to formally recognize the genocide occurring among the Uighur Muslim population and to sanction those responsible for the crimes. They are specifically asking the House of Commons to formally recognize that the Uighurs

Routine Proceedings

in China have been subject to genocide and to use the Magnitsky act to sanction those who are responsible for these heinous crimes.

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

Mr. Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is about Bill C-7, medical assistance in dying.

The petitioners call on the House of Commons to discontinue the removal of safeguards for people requesting euthanasia and put in place additional measures to protect vulnerable persons. Some of the reflections are restoring the 10-day reflection period, restoring the original requirement that a person must give consent and restoring the original requirement for the signature of two witnesses, among other things.

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the third petition is about organ harvesting.

The petitioners call on the House of Commons to amend the Criminal Code and the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act to prohibit Canadians from travelling abroad to acquire human organs removed without consent or as a result of a financial transaction and to render inadmissible to Canada any and all permanent residents or foreign nationals who have participated in this abhorrent trade in human organs.

The Deputy Speaker: We only have about six minutes left for petitions, so I ask members to be concise.

The hon. member for Kenora.

TOURISM

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to present four petitions to the House today.

The first originated in my riding over the summer. The petitioners call on the government to provide support to tourism operators who have been especially hard hit during this pandemic and did not qualify for many government support programs.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition calls on the House of Commons to formally recognize that Uighurs in China have been subject to genocide and to use the Magnitsky act and sanction those responsible.

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the third petition calls on the House of Commons to ensure there are safeguards in place to protect the most vulnerable in our society when it pertains to Bill C-7, medical assistance in dying.

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the last petition expresses concerns to the House of Commons about international trafficking in human organs. It calls on the government to prohibit Canadians from travelling abroad for that purpose and to render inadmissible to Canada all permanent residents or foreign nationals who have participated in such practice.

Routine Proceedings

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the petitioners call on the House of Commons to formally recognize that Uighurs in China have been and are subjected to genocide. They call on the government to use the Magnitsky act to sanction those individuals who are responsible.

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions signed by many Canadians.

The first petition recognizes that Uighurs in China have been and are subject to genocide and that mechanisms in law should be used to ensure those responsible for their heinous crimes are brought to justice.

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is related to trafficking in human organs. The petitioners want to ensure that this horrific practice is criminalized in Canada.

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the third petition is to ensure that safeguards are put into the deeply flawed Bill C-7.

• (1535)

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions to table today.

The first petition calls on the government to formally recognize that the Uighurs in China have been and are subject to genocide.

The petitioners call for the government to use the Justice for Victims of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act and sanction those who are responsible for these crimes being committed against the Uighur people.

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the next petition is on organ harvesting.

The petitioners call on the House of Commons to amend the Criminal Code and the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act to prohibit Canadians from travelling abroad to acquire human organs removed without consent or as a result of a financial transaction and to render inadmissible to Canada any permanent residents or foreign nationals who have participated in this abhorrent trade in human organs.

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the final petition is on Bill C-7.

The petitioners are requesting that the Government of Canada return the safeguards it has removed specifically related to the 10-day reflection period and the number of witnesses, so someone is properly consoled and consulted.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have one petition to present.

The petitioners wish to bring the attention of the House to an ongoing campaign of gross human rights violations being perpetrated by the Chinese communist regime against Uighur Muslims. They call on the House to declare this to be a genocide and to impose Magnitsky sanctions on those responsible.

FIREARMS

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have another petition from my constituents calling on the government to stop targeting licenced law-abiding firearms owners.

The petitioners call for our limited resources to be focused on anti-gang enforcement, reducing involvement of at-risk youth in gang violence and on providing the Canada Border Services Agency with the tools it needs to stop the flow of illegal guns into our country.

SEX SELECTION

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition today addresses sex-selective abortion.

The petitioners highlight that while it remains legal in Canada, polling shows 80% of Canadians believe it should be illegal. We need to show Canadians the House supports gender equality at all stages of life.

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the third petition is with respect to Bill C-7.

Specifically the petitioners would like to restore the 10-day reflection period for people whose deaths have been determined to be reasonably foreseeable and to require medical professionals to do everything possible to enable the person to access life-affirming services to review their suffering, other than physician-assisted death.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the next petition I have today has to do with the ongoing human rights abuses in China toward Uighur Muslims.

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the final petition today has to do with organ harvesting. There are concerns about international trafficking in human organs and these petitioners call on the Government of Canada to do something about it.

Routine Proceedings

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point order. There are a couple more of us who have petitions to present. In these last days of this sitting of Parliament, I was wondering if I could get unanimous consent to present a few more petitions.

The Deputy Speaker: Does the hon. member have unanimous consent to extend the period for presenting petitions?

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: There is no unanimous consent to extend the period today. I would remind hon. members that, of course, there will be other opportunities to present petitions in the days ahead.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 170, 184 and 202.

[Text]

Question No. 170—**Ms. Lianne Rood:**

With regard to compensation for farmers who produce products subject to supply management resulting from signing the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement and other trade agreements: (a) broken down by type of producer (dairy, chicken, etc.), what is the total amount of compensation sent to farmers in (i) 2019, (ii) 2020; (b) in the year immediately following August 19, 2019, when a news release was put out by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada announcing that \$345 million in compensation will be paid to dairy producers in the first year in the form of direct payments, how much was actually paid out; and (c) for all planned payments over the next five years, broken down by type of producer, what are the (i) dates, (ii) amounts, (iii) formula used, (iv) name of trade agreement compensation was related to?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in regard to part (a) of the question, the dairy farm investment program, which was established as a result of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement, provided \$61,852,928.14 in fiscal year 2018-19 and \$61,686,884.48 in fiscal year 2019-20 in dairy compensation.

In regard to part (b), the dairy direct payment program provided \$338,634,952.78 in fiscal year 2019-20 as compensation for dairy farmers.

Finally, in regard to part (c), details related to planned payments for eligible producers of supply-managed commodities are still being determined.

Question No. 184—**Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas:**

With regard to the erosion of multiple government services in the Quebec administrative region of the Lower St. Lawrence over the past 25 years: (a) how many and which departments and agencies, in full detail, have reduced or increased their staffing in the abovementioned region; (b) what is the exact number of public service jobs involved; (c) what specific impact studies were completed as part of the decision-making process that led to these staffing reductions; (d) what performance assessments and analyses were conducted as part of this process in each of these departments and agencies; (e) exactly how much in overall payroll did the transferred or abolished jobs amount to; (f) what were the full costs incurred by the government to relocate public servants and their families; and (g) what socio-economic analyses did the government conduct before the various decisions to abolish or relocate these jobs, including the list of the various findings of the public consultations on these issues?

Mr. Greg Fergus (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board and to the Minister of Digital Government, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government is strongly committed to recruiting and retaining a dynamic and diverse workforce that can deliver on its priorities.

The size and makeup of the public service fluctuates in response to government priorities and program requirements. Deputy heads have an ongoing responsibility to manage staffing and workforce adjustment decisions within their organizations.

Workforce adjustment is a situation that occurs when a deputy head decides that the services of one or more indeterminate employees will no longer be required beyond a specified date because of the discontinuance of a function or a lack of work, a relocation in which the employee does not wish to relocate, or an alternative delivery initiative.

All indeterminate employees in the core public administration, both represented and unrepresented, are covered under workforce adjustment agreements.

Question No. 202—**Mr. Jack Harris:**

With regard to government litigation: how much has it cost the government to litigate the case of Abousfian Abdelrazik and his claims that Canada violated his rights under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, including the value of all legal services, disbursements, and costs awards for Federal Court file numbers T-727-08, T-1580-09, and DES-3-18, from June 1, 2008, to the present?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with respect to the costs incurred by the government to litigate the case of Abousfian Abdelrazik and his claims that Canada violated his rights under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, to the extent that the information that has been requested is or may be protected by any legal privileges, including solicitor-client privilege, the federal Crown asserts those privileges. In this case, it has only waived solicitor-client privilege, and only to the extent of revealing the total legal costs, as defined below.

Routine Proceedings

The total legal costs, actual and notional costs, associated with Mr. Abousfian Abdelrazik Charter claims, both at the Federal Court, Federal Court file number T-727-08, T-1580-09, T- 889-10 and DES-3-18; and Federal Court of Appeal, Federal Court of Appeal file number A-370-09, since June 1, 2008, amount to approximately \$9.3 million. This amount covers the costs associated with the numerous procedures, including interlocutory motions and appeal thereof that have been filed in these court cases over a period of more than 12 years. The services targeted here are litigation services provided, in this case, by the Department of Justice, as well as litigation support services. Department of Justice lawyers, notaries and paralegals are salaried public servants and therefore no legal fees are incurred for their services. A “notional amount” can, however, be provided to account for the legal services they provide. The notional amount is calculated by multiplying the total hours recorded in the responsive files for the relevant period by the applicable approved internal legal services hourly rates. Actual costs covered in the total amount mentioned in this response include file-related legal disbursements as well as costs awards. The total amount mentioned in this response is based on information currently contained in Department of Justice systems, as of October 23, 2020.

* * *

[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen’s Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the government’s responses to Questions Nos. 171 to 183, 185 to 201 and 203 to 205 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled immediately.

[Text]

Question No. 171—Ms. Leona Alleslev:

With regard to contracts signed since January 1, 2016, which are not subject to proactive disclosure due to receiving a national security exception (NSE), broken down by year and by department or agency: (a) how many contracts have received an NSE; (b) for which commodities has an NSE been applied; (c) what is the total dollar value of all contracts that have received an NSE; (d) how many of the contracts have a total value (i) under \$200,000, (ii) between \$200,000 and \$1,000,000, (iii) over \$1,000,000; and (e) for each NSE signed since January 1, 2020, where an official signed a letter invoking the NSE, what is the (i) date, (ii) name of official, (iii) title of official, (iv) commodity?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 172—Mr. Chris Warkentin:

With regard to undertakings to allow government employees to work from home as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic since March 1, 2020: (a) what is the total amount of money the government has spent on providing technology resources, including monitors and computer mouses, to employees who are working from home, itemized by date and broken down by department, agency, or Crown corporation; (b) what is the total amount of money the government has spent on providing office furniture, including chairs and desks, to employees who are working from home, itemized by date and broken down by department, agency or Crown corporation; (c) what is the total amount of money the government has spent on administrative expenses, such as internet or telecommunications bills, for employees who are working from home, itemized by date and broken down by department, agency or Crown corporation; (d) what is the total number of office chairs provided to federal employees from government warehouses for the purpose of working from home, itemized by date and broken down by department, agency or Crown corporation; and (e) what is the total amount of money the government has spent on the transport, including delivery, of items mentioned in (a) through (d) to employees who are working from home?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 173—Mr. Kyle Seeback:

With regard to the chart entitled “Canada’s COVID-19 Economic Response Plan - Overview” on the government’s website, under the “Related resources” tab of the COVID-19 Economic Response Plan webpage: (a) what is the actual amount of actual expenditures made to date, broken down by each initiative listed on the chart; and (b) what is the number of individuals or organizations who have received funding, broken down by each initiative listed on the chart?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 174—Mr. Chris Warkentin:

With regard to car and driver services provided to employees of departments, agencies, or Crown corporations, as of October 22, 2020, and excluding ministers and other elected officials: (a) how many employees are entitled to a car and driver; and (b) what are the titles of all employees who are entitled to a car and driver?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 175—Mr. Brian Masse:

With regard to all government advertising on Facebook, broken down by fiscal year and federal department, agency, Crown corporation, minister’s office or other entity from 2009-10 to present: (a) how much was allocated in each departmental budget annually for overall advertising; (b) how much of those allocated funds were spent on Facebook advertising; and (c) how much was spent in total across government on Facebook advertising for each fiscal year from 2009-10?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 176—Mr. Brian Masse:

With regard to Canada’s official residences including The Farm, Harrington Lake, Rideau Hall, Stormoway, 7 Rideau Gate and 24 Sussex Drive: what are all telecommunications costs incurred annually since 2010, including, for each fiscal year, (i) the total annual cost per residence, (ii) the type of services provided (e.g. fiber optic, wireless, other or multiple), (iii) who is the telecom service provider (TSP) and are these under contract, (iv) if the TSP holds a contract, for how long, (v) inventory of type of services, products, channels or stations, packages provided, (vi) amount of downloaded content, (vii) speed of downloaded content?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 177—Mr. Brian Masse:

With regard to the CRTC Broadband Fund, the Universal Broadband Fund and Connect to Innovate: (a) for each program and for each fiscal year it has been in operation, how much money was (i) allocated for the year, (ii) disbursed by the province and territory; (b) for each program and for each fiscal year it has been in operation, how many days elapsed between the application date and approval for each successful application; (c) for each program and for each fiscal year it has been in operation, how many days have elapsed since the submission of completed applications still under consideration; and (d) for each program, (i) how many applications have been submitted since applications opened, (ii) how many have been approved?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 178—Mrs. Karen Vecchio:**

With regard to government departments and agencies refusing to deem processing requests made under Access to Information and Privacy Act (ATIP) an essential service during the pandemic: (a) which department and agencies have deemed processing ATIP requests and producing responses an essential service and continue to process requests; (b) which departments and agencies refused to deem processing ATIP requests and producing responses an essential service; (c) for each department and agency in (b), did the minister responsible approve this refusal or decision and, if so, on what date did the minister approve the refusal or decision; and (d) of the departments in (b), which ones have resumed processing requests and producing responses and on what date did this the resumption occur?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 179—Mrs. Carol Hughes:

With regard to Indigenous communities and the COVID-19 pandemic: (a) how much money has been spent through the Indigenous Community Support Fund, broken down by (i) province or territory, (ii) recipient community, (iii) date of application, (iv) date of disbursement; (b) for each day between February 1 and May 31, 2020, what telephone calls did the Minister of Indigenous Services, the deputy minister and any associate or assistant deputy ministers make to or hold with Indigenous communities, representative organizations (including National Indigenous Organizations (NIOs), tribal councils, and major political organizations, such as the Nishnawbe Aski Nation) regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, broken down by (i) departmental official, (ii) day, (iii) topic, (iv) organization or community; (c) how many ventilators were available in Indigenous communities in March 2020, and how many are available now; (d) how many ventilators is the Department of Indigenous Services ready to transfer to Indigenous communities on an urgent basis, if needed; (e) how many isolation tents did the Department of Indigenous Services have available in March 2020, and how many does it have available now; (f) what is the daily patient capacity of air ambulance services funded by the Department of Indigenous Services; (g) how much personal protective equipment expressed in shipments and in units has been sent in total to Indigenous communities, broken down further by province and date sent; and (h) how much funding has been disbursed to Indigenous organizations and communities providing services to Indigenous peoples in urban centres or off reserve, broken down by (i) province or territory, (ii) recipient community or organization, (iii) date of application, (iv) date of disbursement?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 180—Mr. Daniel Blaikie:

With regard to the Supplementary Estimates (A), 2020–21, with \$48,710,504 in funding for communications and marketing (COVID-19) under Vote 1a, and \$7,699,338 in funding to support regional presence, stabilize and enhance Privy Council Office capacity and the transfer of exempt staff in Ministers' Regional Offices under Vote 1a, requested for the Privy Council Office, broken down for each source of funding: how was the whole amount of this funding used, broken down by line item and expense?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 181—Mr. Daniel Blaikie:

With regard to the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), the Liechtenstein leaks and the Bahamas Leaks: (a) how many Canadian taxpayers were identified in the documents obtained, broken down by information leak and type of taxpayer, that is (i) an individual, (ii) a corporation, (iii) a partnership or trust; (b) how many audits did the CRA launch following the identification of taxpayers in (a), broken down by information leak; (c) of the audits in (b), how many were referred to the CRA's Criminal Investigations Program, broken down by information leak; (d) how many of the investigations in (c) were referred to the Public Prosecution Service of Canada, broken down by information leak; (e) how many of the investigations in (d) resulted in a conviction, broken down by information leak; and (f) what was the sentence imposed for each conviction in (e), broken down by information leak?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 182—Mr. Daniel Blaikie:

With regard to the Offshore Tax Informant Program, since fiscal year 2015-16: (a) how many calls have been received; (b) how many files have been opened based on information received from informants; (c) what is the total amount of the awards paid to informants; (d) what is the total amount recovered by the Canada Revenue Agency; (e) how many current investigations are the result of information received

through the program; and (f) how much money is involved in the current investigations?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 183—Mr. Daniel Blaikie:

With regard to negotiations between Canada and the United Kingdom toward a trade agreement: (a) how does the government define the terms (i) transitional trade agreement, (ii) comprehensive trade agreement; (b) when did negotiations between Canada and the United Kingdom begin for each type of agreement; (c) how many times and on what dates have officials from Canada and the United Kingdom met to discuss terms for each type of agreement; and (d) for each of these meetings, which Canadian officials were present?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 185—Mr. John Barlow:

With regard to expenditures made by the government since December 1, 2019, under government-wide object code 3259 (Miscellaneous expenditures not elsewhere classified), or a similar code if the department uses another system: what are the details of each expenditure, including the (i) vendor name, (ii) amount, (iii) date, (iv) description of goods or services provided, including volume, (v) file number?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 186—Mr. John Barlow:

With regard to expenditures on social media influencers, including any contracts which would use social media influencers as part of a public relations campaign, since December 1, 2019: (a) what are the details of all such expenditures, including (i) vendor, (ii) amount, (iii) campaign description, (iv) date of contract, (v) name or handle of influencer; and (b) for each campaign that paid an influencer, was there a requirement to make public as part of a disclaimer the fact that the influencer was being paid by the government and, if not, why not?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 187—Mr. Todd Doherty:

With regard to the government's response to the Federal Communications Commission of the United States setting up the 988 telephone number as a National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and for mental health emergencies: what is the current timeline regarding when the 988 telephone number will be set up in Canada for a similar purpose?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 188—Mr. Peter Julian:

With regard to the Safe Return to Class Fund: (a) how much money has been spent through the fund, broken down by (i) province or territory, (ii) date of application, (iii) date of disbursement; (b) what are the details of all applications received for the fund, including the (i) amount requested, (ii) project description, (iii) province or territory of applicant; and (c) how many applications were rejected, broken down by (i) province or territory, (ii) amount requested, (iii) project description, (iv) reason for refusal?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 189—Mr. Peter Julian:

With regard to the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS), the Large Employer Emergency Financing Facility (LEEFF) and audits by the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) into tax evasion and aggressive tax avoidance, since March 11, 2020, and broken down by the LEEFF and CEWS: (a) how many audits has the CRA conducted to ensure companies are not committing tax evasion and aggressive tax avoidance, broken down by number of companies; (b) of the companies audited by the CRA in (a), how many have benefited from support measures and how many have been refused support because of tax fraud or aggressive tax avoidance; (c) how many pre-payment reviews have been conducted; (d) of the applications reviewed in (c), how many were refused in relation to the total pre-payment verifications conducted; (e) how many post-payment reviews have been conducted; and (f) of the reviews conducted in (e), how many companies had to refund the money received in relation to the total post-payment reviews conducted, and what is the total amount of money refunded?

(Return tabled)

Routine Proceedings

Question No. 190—Mr. Peter Julian:

With regard to the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS), the Large Employer Emergency Financing Facility (LEEFF) and Canadian businesses listed in the “Panama Papers” and the “Paradise Papers,” broken down by the CEWS and the LEEFF: (a) how many businesses benefited from the CEWS and the LEEFF; (b) for each of the businesses listed in (a), what was the total amount received; and (c) for each of the businesses listed in (a), was any screening carried out before or after the payment was made?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 191—Mr. Alistair MacGregor:

With regard to the national risk assessment model (NRAM) used by the International and Large Business Directorate of the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), from fiscal year 2011-12 to date: (a) how many taxpayers, considered to be at high risk of non-compliance, are subject to in-depth examination, broken down by (i) fiscal year, (ii) category of taxpayer; (b) what is the list of indicators that help auditors detect potential aggressive tax planning files; (c) what steps are being taken to assess the effectiveness of the NRAM in detecting aggressive tax planning; and (d) what deficiencies have been identified by the CRA in its most recent ongoing evaluation of the NRAM?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 192—Mr. Alistair MacGregor:

With regard to aggressive tax planning schemes identified by the Canada Revenue Agency, from fiscal year 2011-12 to the present: (a) what are the aggressive tax planning schemes identified by the agency; and (b) what is the estimated total foregone tax revenue, broken down by aggressive tax planning scheme?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 193—Mr. Andrew Scheer:

With regard to the government’s announcement on October 1, 2020, regarding the Canada Infrastructure Bank’s three-year plan: (a) what specific modelling, if any, did the government use to substantiate its claim that the plan will create 60,000 jobs; (b) who conducted the modelling in (a); (c) what were the projections from the modelling; (d) what are the details of all documents sent to or received by the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, her office or her deputy minister concerning the October 1 announcement, including the (i) sender, (ii) recipient, (iii) date, (iv) title, (v) format (email, memorandum, etc.), (vi) summary of contents, (vii) file number; and (e) what are the details of all documents sent to or received by the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, her office or her deputy minister concerning or that refer to the Canada Infrastructure Bank, since January 1, 2020, including the (i) sender, (ii) recipient, (iii) date, (iv) title, (v) format (email, memorandum, etc.), (vi) summary of contents, (vii) file number?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 194—Mr. Alistair MacGregor:

With regard to the Canada Revenue Agency, between fiscal years 2009-10 and 2018-19, broken down by fiscal year: (a) how much was spent on training; and (b) how much was spent on criminal investigations?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 195—Mr. Andrew Scheer:

With regard to government-funded infrastructure projects: (a) what is the complete list of projects the government funded that have been completed since January 1, 2020; (b) what are the details of all projects in (a), including the (i) expected date of completion, (ii) location, (iii) federal riding, (iv) project title or summary, (v) total federal contribution, (vi) date when the project began; (c) what is the complete list of all projects scheduled to be completed in the 2021 calendar year; and (d) what are the details of all projects in (c), including (i) expected date of completion, (ii) location, (iii) federal riding, (iv) project title or summary, (v) total federal contribution, (vi) date when the project began?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 196—Ms. Laurel Collins:

With regard to the Department of Crown-Indigenous and Northern Affairs’ nutrition programs, including but not limited to Nutrition North, for the fiscal years of 2010-11 to 2020-21, broken down by fiscal year: (a) how much money was committed to these programs and, if the final cost is not available, what is the best estimate of the cost; (b) how much of the committed money was left unspent and, if the

final cost is not available, what is the best estimate of the cost; (c) what products were bought, broken down by (i) subsidy level, (ii) food type each fiscal year; (d) for each program, who was consulted, if anyone, to set subsidy levels or otherwise contribute to the programs development; and (e) for each program, what nutrition data and targets were being used to determine program funding?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 197—Ms. Laurel Collins:

With regard to all federal funding committed to the creation and maintenance of housing stock in Nunavut, for each fiscal year from 2011-12 to 2020-21: (a) what was the total amount committed; (b) what was the total amount spent or best approximation; (c) how much new housing stock was created in Nunavut; and (d) what advocates, consultant lobbyists or business representatives, individuals or other organizations consulted with the relevant ministers regarding housing investments in Nunavut?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 198—Ms. Laurel Collins:

With regard to the direct delivery of mental health services and benefits for communities within Nunavut, including community-based mental health services for Inuit communities, non-insured drugs and short-term mental health crisis counselling for recognized Inuit people through the Non-Insured Health Benefits Program, addiction prevention, treatment and aftercare programs, mental health, emotional and cultural support services and transportation services to eligible former Indian residential school students, basic social services for Inuit communities, including income supports, home care services, and family violence prevention programs and services and the National Inuit Suicide Prevention Strategy, for the fiscal years from 2010-11 to 2020-21: (a) how much money was committed to these programs for each fiscal year, broken down by program; (b) what was the total spent and, if the final cost is not available, what is the best estimate of the cost for each fiscal year, broken down by program; (c) for each fiscal year of the programs, who was consulted, if anyone was consulted, to set subsidy levels or otherwise contribute to the programs development; and (d) for each year of the programs, what data and targets were being used to determine program funding?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 199—Ms. Laurel Collins:

With regard to RCMP operations in Nunavut, broken down by fiscal year from 2010-11 to 2020-21: (a) how much was spent on RCMP operations in the territory; (b) how much was spent on Inuit cultural training for RCMP officers who operated in the territory; (c) how many hours of cultural training were conducted; (d) how many officers were operating in Nunavut; (e) how much was spent on overtime for RCMP officers who were deployed to Nunavut; (f) how many complaints did the Civilian Review and Complaints Commission for the RCMP (CRCC) receive in Nunavut; (g) how many complaints were dismissed without being investigated; and (h) for requests for review in which the CRCC is not satisfied with the RCMP’s report, how many interim reports have been provided to complainants for response and input on recommended actions?

(Return tabled)

S. O. 52

Question No. 200—Mr. Charlie Angus:

With regard to the government's capital expenditures on drinking water and wastewater infrastructure on reserve, and Indigenous Services Canada and its predecessors' expenditures on maintenance and operations for drinking water and wastewater infrastructure on reserve: (a) what amount has been allocated, broken down by program and by year (and, where applicable, by region), over the last five years; (b) what amount has been spent, broken down by program and by year (and, where applicable, by region), over the last five years; (c) over the past five years, how many boil water advisories have been active month to month; (d) over the past five years, which reserves have had water and wastewater infrastructure upgraded or built and what were they; (e) what are the companies that have received contracts to do the water and wastewater work on reserves; (f) where there any issues or problems in terms of fulfilling the contract and, if so, what were they; (g) out of the reserves that have had water and wastewater infrastructure built or repaired in the past five years, how many of them have had water issues, either with infrastructure or other issues, that resulted in renewed boil water advisories; (h) if so, which reserves, when did it occur and how long have they lasted; and (i) how long, according to the budgetary expectations, will it take to complete the government's promise to eliminate boil water advisories on First Nations reserves, based on the current level of funding?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 201—Mr. Jack Harris:

With regard to the demographics of the staff of the Correctional Service of Canada: what percentage of correctional officers self-identify as (i) Indigenous, (ii) Black, (iii) another visible minority, broken down by region (Atlantic, Quebec, Ontario, Prairies, and Pacific)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 203—Mr. Jack Harris:

With regard to the demographics of the RCMP: (a) what percentage of RCMP members self-identify as (i) Indigenous, (ii) Black, (iii) from another visible minority; (b) what percentage of RCMP staff self-identify as (i) Indigenous, (ii) Black, (iii) from another visible minority; (c) what percentage of RCMP members identify as (i) female, (ii) male, (iii) other; and (d) what percentage of RCMP staff identify as (i) female, (ii) male, (iii) other?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 204—Mr. Charlie Angus:

With regard to surveillance technologies and their procurement, study, and use by federal government institutions: (a) what direct contacts (i.e. phone calls, emails, or in-person meetings) have taken place between ministers and public servants at the deputy minister, assistant deputy minister, chief of staff or senior policy advisor level or equivalent, and Palantir, Clearview AI and any of their respective subsidiaries, and for each such instance, what was the date, the method of contact, the subject matter discussed and the job title of any public servants present for it; (b) has the government concluded any contracts, contribution agreements or other formal or informal agreements with Palantir, Clearview AI and any of their respective subsidiaries, and, if so (i) with which institution, (ii) for what purpose, product or intended outcome, (iii) beginning when, (iv) what is the value of the contract, contribution agreement or other agreement; (c) do any government institutions (including departments and branches of agencies and Crown corporations) use data analytic services or software in modeling or predicting human behaviour, such as predictive policing, and, if so, (i) with which institution, (ii) for what purpose, product or intended outcome, (iii) beginning when, (iv) what is the value of the contract, contribution agreement or other agreement; (d) what government institutions (including departments and branches of agencies and Crown corporations) are currently or are planning to start using facial recognition technology and (i) how long have they been using it, (ii) what are they using it for, (iii) how often do they use it, (iv) what suppliers (companies) are they using, (v) what is the value of any related contracts or agreements; and (e) have there been any privacy breaches related to this technology or uses that have been deemed improper?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 205—Mr. Jack Harris:

With regard to the use of force by RCMP members in the course of their duty: (a) how many interactions between members of the RCMP and members of the public occurred in each of the years from 2000 to 2020, inclusively, that resulted in the (i) death, (ii) bodily injury, of a person, whether such death occurred immediately or subsequent to the incident or while in police custody; and (b) for each inci-

dent, what was the date, (i) whether the incident resulted in the injury, however minor, or death of the detained person, (ii) the province where the incident took place, (iii) the RCMP division involved, (iv) the community within the province where the incident occurred, or if the community is not possible, the RCMP detachment responsible for the geographic region where the incident occurred, (v) whether the incident took place in public, in a private home or other building, an RCMP vehicle, in an RCMP detachment building, or in an RCMP cell, (vi) whether the RCMP was acting in a contract policing role, (vii) the race, gender, sex, age of the person injured or deceased, (viii) whether medical attention was sought, (ix) if an investigation was launched, (x) if an investigation was launched, the name of the investigating agency, (xi) the outcome of any of the investigations, including the date thereof, and whether any charges were recommended or laid?

(Return tabled)

[English]

The Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that the aforementioned questions be made orders for return and that they be tabled immediately?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

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

* * *

REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY DEBATE

COVID-19 AND LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES

The Deputy Speaker: The House has received a request for an emergency debate.

We will now go to the hon member for Vancouver Kingsway.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to propose an emergency debate on the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic and long-term care facilities.

I am deeply saddened to report that long-term care homes across Canada are once again being ravaged by COVID-19, despite the promises made by the government in response to the carnage of the first wave. Indeed, Canada utterly failed to protect vulnerable long-term care residents and workers during the initial outbreak of COVID-19. More than 840 outbreaks were reported in long-term care facilities and retirement homes across Canada, accounting for more than 80% of all COVID-19 deaths in this country, as of May 2020. This represents the worst record among all comparable nations.

The situation was so dire that the Canadian Armed Forces had to be called in. Residents were found underfed, abandoned and afraid. In some cases they were left to die alone in bed, covered in their own waste. These stories shocked our conscience and challenged our self-image as a compassionate and humane society. However, they were entirely foreseeable.

Government Orders

Experts and advocates had been raising the same concerns for many years, but successive governments failed to act. In fact, decades of research have demonstrated that insufficient staff-to-resident ratios and a reliance on part-time casual staff have led to hurried, dehumanizing care, high staff turnover and workforce instability in the long-term care sector all across Canada.

In its fall throne speech, the federal government pledged to, “Work with the provinces and territories to set new, national standards for long-term care so that seniors get the best [care] possible”. However, no meaningful action has been taken by the current federal government to date. As a result, Canadians living in long-term care are once again bearing the brunt of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ryerson University's National Institute on Aging estimates that there have now been 1,976 long-term care facilities and retirement homes affected by COVID-19 outbreaks. This has resulted in the deaths of 9,355 residents and 16 staff, accounting for 74% of all COVID-19 deaths in Canada to date. Outbreaks continue to surge in long-term care facilities across Canada.

As of Friday, a total of 90 residents at Extendicare Parkside in Regina had tested positive for COVID-19, alongside 34 staff members. Toronto's Westside Long Term Care Home confirmed an outbreak at the facility on November 12, and since that time a total of 117 infections have been confirmed among residents, and 57 cases have been reported among staff. This is an urgent situation, demanding immediate action.

This pandemic has exposed a fragmented and under-resourced long-term care system across Canada that is heavily reliant on for-profit delivery. According to a recent analysis by the Toronto Star, residents of Ontario's for-profit long-term care homes are still experiencing significantly worse outcomes in the second wave of COVID-19, both in terms of infections and deaths, than those living in municipal or non-profit facilities. Residents in for-profit homes have been more than three times as likely to catch COVID-19 as those in a non-profit facility. For-profits have seen more than twice as many staff infections per bed, and resident deaths have been significantly more common.

Indeed, today we learned that two of the largest long-term care providers in the Toronto region, Extendicare and Sienna Senior Living, received more than \$157 million in federal and provincial COVID-19 relief, while at the same time paying out \$74 million in dividends to shareholders this year. Meanwhile, more than 480 residents and staff have died at those companies' facilities from COVID-19.

• (1540)

Federal leadership is urgently needed to implement a coordinated approach to protect vulnerable Canadians living in long-term care homes, both throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and in the years to come. Families are incredibly worried about their loved ones. They need concrete action now.

With the House adjourning soon, with the second wave of the pandemic raging and showing no signs of abating, and with provinces and territories increasing the measures they are demanding from their citizens because they see the COVID-19 pandemic

increasing, it is essential that MPs have the opportunity to debate this crucial issue as soon as possible.

It is almost mid-December. We are going to be breaking until the end of January. We are in the middle of the second wave of the COVID-19 outbreak, and it is worse than the first. We know that deaths have occurred and are likely to occur in very high percentages in our long-term care homes. While the government promised action in the throne speech, we have seen no action. There is not a single national standard yet that has been—

• (1545)

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Vancouver Kingsway for bringing this to the attention of the House and for his intervention in this regard.

However, I am not satisfied that it meets the requirements of the Standing Orders at this time. We will not proceed any further.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed from December 8 consideration of the motion that Bill C-7, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (medical assistance in dying), be read the third time and passed.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies had four minutes remaining in his time when the House last took up debate on the question. We will now go to him by video conference.

The hon. member for Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies.

Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in case I do not have time at the end, I would like to wish you, your family and those at the table a very merry Christmas.

I would like to finish up my speech on Bill C-7 and my concerns. What highlights it more than my speaking for another four minutes are quotes from key individuals.

The Liberal member of Parliament for Thunder Bay—Rainy River, a doctor, said:

...as someone with a medical background and somebody who has dealt with this issue over the years a lot, I think morally it's incumbent upon me to stand up when it comes to issues of health and life and death...

Government Orders

My biggest concern, as someone who has spent my whole life trying to avoid accidentally killing people, is that we don't end up using MAID for people who don't really want to die....

I think, with a bit of time, people may come around to the fact that there are reasons they want to live.

I will go to another quote from another current Liberal member of Parliament, the member for Delta, British Columbia, who said, "I absolutely acknowledge and am quite preoccupied by the power imbalance between practitioners and patients, particularly patients who have been in systems that have discriminated against them and ignored their voices their entire lives. I have grave concerns with the particular circumstances of the individual that you spoke of".

The individual is Roger Foley in this case. The quote comes from a Senate committee. She continued, "Quite frankly, I can tell you, he is not alone. I regularly hear from families who are appalled by the fact that they take their child, potentially their older child, in and are offered unprovoked [medical assistance in dying]. I think that has to stop. That's a matter of practice, I would suggest, and we need to get at that through our regulations, through working with our medical associations."

Here we see highlighted, even by our very own colleagues across the way in the Liberal Party, grave concerns about the current bill and the way it is written.

I will go to another quote from another doctor, Dr. Catherine Ferrier, who said:

To leave to doctors the decision about providing [medical assistance in dying] to anyone who meets the criteria is to entrust them with life-and-death decisions for millions of people in a vulnerable position. Doctors have the same limitations as everyone else does, which may include unconscious bias towards [medical assistance in dying] as an option and against living in certain situations. No one should [ever] have that power.

It should be made clear in the law that [medical assistance in dying] is not a medical treatment on the same level with real treatments. It's not a standard of care. It should be a last resort when all other reasonable options have failed.

I have one last quote by Dr. Trudo Lemmens and Leah Krakowitz-Broker from an op-ed, which states:

...unlike any other country in the world, the new bill fails to explicitly require that all reasonable...options be made available and tried first, before allowing physicians to end a patient's life.

In other words, the bill makes dying easier than living.

Rather than instilling hope and helping to build resilience by focusing on options for living, health care providers will now be asked to discuss an early death.

The conversation I have heard far too many times from concerned citizens is that we have put our seniors, our disabled community and other communities in an abhorrent situation where they have to choose between treatment or death, based on the outside pressures of costs, burdens to their family and so forth. These are choices that should never have to be made by those who should be treated the best in our society.

It has been said many times in the House, over 300 times I know from our side and others, that this bill needs to change before it is—

● (1550)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I will let you further your arguments during the 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, when I look at Bill C-7, what I see is a reflection of the will of tens of thousands of Canadians in all regions of our country. I see reflections that come from the Supreme Court of Canada from six years ago and the many hours of discussions and debates, which are into the hundreds if not thousands, inside the chamber and at committees, in the House of Commons and the Senate. At some point, we need to recognize that, yes, there are going to be arguments on both sides of the issue, but at some point it does need to pass.

Does he not recognize the value of the deadline imposed by the Superior Court of Québec? Does the Conservative Party have any respect for that decision by the Superior Court of Québec?

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Madam Speaker, what the member across the way needs to understand is that we are legislators. We are sent here by our constituents to represent them and to represent their concerns. They have clearly spoken, across Canada, about their concerns with respect to the bill as it is written. We have suggested amendments to fix it the best way we possibly can and the current Liberal government has thrown them out and rejected them all. I would suggest to the member across the way that he listen to the constituents across Canada, hear their concerns and fix the bill.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague, from my neck of the woods, handled that last question far more respectfully than I would have. I would have passed it back to the parliamentary secretary, saying that while the Liberals had months to be able to do this and push it forward, they prorogued for six weeks. If this was such an urgent matter for them, they would have done it.

We are sent here as legislators. We are sent here to be the voices of our electors. We are also sent here to be the voices of those who do not have a voice. I am someone who has an adult child with a disability, and I will get into that more in my speech tomorrow. Our job as parents is always to protect them. I can see both sides, because I have a father-in-law who is living beside me in palliative care right now. I have had many family members who have struggled with cancer.

Should we not be doing everything in our power to step back and take a reflective look at this piece of legislation to ensure that those fundamental core protections for our most vulnerable are in place before we move forward?

Government Orders

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member, who is a good friend and colleague. Absolutely, as a parent of four children myself, it is our responsibility. We feel that responsibility especially with this bill.

I have senior parents who are still alive today. My dad is 86 and mom is 76. I am deeply concerned that they would ever be put in the position to have to make that decision. There are seniors who maybe do not have children who can care for them like I can. They may be put in a position where they are pressured to make a decision to end their lives as opposed to taking treatment or further care, not wanting to be perceived as a burden. It is a shame that we would even put them in that position. No Canadian should ever have to make the decision between treatment and physician-assisted suicide or medical assistance in dying. That should never happen.

• (1555)

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciate a lot of what my colleague had to say on this matter. One of the things he mentioned was the importance of having all health care options available, including palliative care and a stronger support system for those who are struggling and potentially nearing the end of their lives.

I wonder if the member has any comments on the current situation, particularly in northern and remote regions, concerning health care options and how important it is to ensure that all those options are available for people.

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Madam Speaker, that is a great question. What I would have preferred to see in a bill like Bill C-7 would be something to deal with palliative care and other treatments, even before considering a bill like this.

Again, as was brought up by my colleague previously, the government prorogued Parliament, yet things like palliative care for people who are ill, especially in northern communities, is a big gap. We do not see where the government is actually caring for those northern communities. As the former critic for northern affairs, we saw a big absence of care in the north. We should be looking at all forms of care and dealing with those first before we ever consider a bill like Bill C-7.

[*Translation*]

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would also like to wish you, as well as the table officers, pages and everyone who works in this building, happy holidays.

[*Member spoke in Portuguese as follows:*]

Feliz Natal!

[*English*]

It is with great pleasure that I speak to Bill C-7, an act to amend the Criminal Code in relation to medical assistance in dying. First, I want to express my sincere gratitude to the members of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights for their excellent work on this difficult matter and to all the witnesses who appeared before the committee and for their compelling testimony.

Unfortunately, the Conservatives have made it clear that they are not interested in improving the bill. They want to stop it from mov-

ing forward, all this while people continue to suffer across the country. In creating this important piece of legislation, we consulted with over 300,000 Canadians, including key stakeholders. At every opportunity we acknowledged that this was a complex and personal issue, and that we would respect the different views of parliamentarians and Canadians.

During these consultations I engaged with many disability advocates and experts who participated in most of the 10 round tables I hosted across the country in January and February, along with my colleagues, the Minister of Health and the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion.

Two of the engagements I was involved with focused exclusively on the disabilities community, one in Vancouver at a round table with disabilities groups and another forum in Ottawa organized by the Canadian Association for Community Living, now Inclusion Canada, and the Council of Canadians with Disabilities in January, entitled End of Life, Equality and Disability: A National Forum on Medical Assistance in Dying.

During these consultations our government heard the voices of individuals with disabilities and degenerative illnesses who shared their perspectives and concerns, including those who believe that limiting medical assistance in dying to those who are dying is a violation of their rights and self-determination. These were individuals like Mr. Truchon and Madam Gladu, who initiated legal proceedings alleging that being precluded from accessing MAID violated their charter rights and deprived them of their preferred way of responding to intolerable suffering. Also Julia Lamb in Vancouver said quite clearly that she spoke for herself and that the leadership of the disability community did not speak for her.

We respect those voices from the disability community, which are as diverse as any community. These interventions had a direct impact on the structure of the legislation, including the non-end-of-life regime with additional safeguards as well as the substantive safeguards themselves, which affirm autonomy but balance safeguards for people who may have been in a vulnerable position. We heard those voices and we incorporated it into the very legislation that we proposed.

We also heard a clear consensus during the consultations that the additional 10-day reflection period—

• (1600)

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Pickering—Uxbridge, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I apologize to the minister, but it is very clear that members attending virtually are purposely opening their mikes to add comments, which is not allowed. The Speaker has ruled on that many times. The same member has done it throughout question period today, and I would ask you to speak to that member to ensure that there is decorum in the House and that we are all allowed to listen to the speeches that are happening.

Government Orders

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Yes, I do appreciate that sometimes it is an accident, and sometimes it is on purpose. I would remind members who are listening in through video conference to please keep their microphones on mute.

The hon. minister.

Hon. David Lametti: Madam Speaker, we also heard a clear consensus during the consultations that the additional 10-day reflection period in the end-of-life regime was not serving its intended function, but instead was prolonging patients' suffering. In fact, many practitioners and families of those who had gone through the process of MAID shared heart-wrenching stories of patients who had stopped taking their pain medication for fear of losing their capacity to consent to the procedure. This is certainly not the outcome that Parliament intended in 2016.

I will go into more details about some of the safeguards the bill provides, but before I do, I want to say that, given their expressed concerns around safeguards, I do not understand the frankly irresponsible actions the Conservatives are taking in delaying this legislation, knowing full well the risks that could result in Quebec from a legal void. If we reach the court deadline and nothing has changed, there will be no adequate safeguards in Quebec for those whose deaths are not reasonably foreseeable. In addition, Quebecers will not be able to benefit from the modifications that we are making to reduce suffering. I am unsure how the Conservatives can accept that as a possible outcome if their main concern is safeguards.

In the Carter case, the Supreme Court found that the criminal prohibition of medical assistance in dying violated section 7 of the charter and could not be upheld under section 1, because a permissive structure with appropriate safeguards would achieve the legislative purpose of protecting vulnerable persons. The court expressly stated that it was the role of Parliament and provincial legislators to perform the difficult task of creating the regulatory regime that properly balanced competing societal interests.

[Translation]

The government believes that it is possible to respect the autonomy of Canadians in deciding when they have suffered enough while helping people with disabilities live full lives. I know that challenges exist when it comes to providing the care that everyone needs and the access to that care, but the solution is not to prevent people who are experiencing intolerable suffering from making an autonomous choice about one of the most fundamental aspects of their lives.

I am confident that the choice to provide enhanced safeguards for those whose death is not reasonably foreseeable is the prudent way to expand eligibility for medical assistance in dying. The safeguards for this group of newly eligible individuals are designed to ensure that sufficient time and expertise are devoted to the assessment of their request for medical assistance in dying. In these circumstances, it is essential to ensure that individuals are informed of other means of alleviating intolerable suffering because, ultimately, it is a question of putting an end to a life that could have lasted for many more years.

I know this is an important issue for Canadians, and I am committed to working with all parliamentarians to begin the parliamentary review of the medical assistance in dying regime as soon as possible after Bill C-7 has made its way through the parliamentary process. I have no doubt that the issue of advance requests will be an important part of that review.

[English]

I believe that Bill C-7 is one important and prudent step forward in ensuring greater respect for the autonomy of a broader category of Canadians who are suffering intolerably. It carefully balances competing interests and values in a context where reasonable, informed experts and stakeholders disagree in significant ways. It makes only the necessary changes to ensure a MAID regime that is responsive to our experience to date, and respects the charter rights and freedoms of Canadians to autonomy and safety.

In Carter, the court stated, "that the risks associated with physician-assisted death can be limited through a carefully designed and monitored system of safeguards." That is exactly what Bill C-7 continues to do.

While a subject as important as MAID requires and deserves Parliament's appropriate consideration, I want to underscore the importance of timely and efficient consideration, and the political consequences of the Conservatives' current obstructionism. The Conservatives' delays will have a very real and direct impact on the individuals who seek to alleviate suffering through access to MAID. Individuals in circumstances similar to Audrey Parker's will face the awful choice of ending their lives early, rather than risk losing the capacity to consent.

Others will continue to face the procedural burden of mechanisms that families and practitioners have overwhelmingly told us are burdensome and no longer necessary. Still others who are experiencing intolerable suffering, and who have received all the necessary medical diagnoses, will remain ineligible as a direct result of the Conservatives' delay tactics.

On this last point, let me be clear about the dangers created by the Conservatives' attempts to run out the clock on the Quebec Superior Court's extension. There is absolutely no assurance that a Quebec court will grant further extensions to the current suspension of invalidity. If that suspension period expires without the passage of Bill C-7, Truchon will come into effect in Quebec without the benefit of the protections, standards and inclusions of our proposed bill, and without the benefits of our proposed bill to reduce suffering for people in the current regime.

Government Orders

• (1605)

[Translation]

I do not know why my official opposition colleagues feel no need to meet the deadline set by the Superior Court of Quebec and are delaying the passage of this legislation. Their actions are prolonging the unnecessary suffering of Canadians. I encourage them to allow the bill to make its way through the process so we can meet the courts' December 18 deadline.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am very happy to hear from the Minister of Justice at third reading of this bill.

Like us, he knows that his right to speak must be upheld and that it is his duty as minister to exercise that right. That is exactly what our members are doing and what all members of the House of Commons can and must do.

This morning, I heard on CBC that a Liberal MP wants to vote against the bill. It makes no difference to me whether he votes for or against it. However, what I find disappointing is that this MP, whose primary job is to speak in the House, has not done so. Did his Liberal colleagues tell him to keep quiet because he is not on their side? If so, that is very disappointing.

My question for the minister is about the fact that he is accusing Conservatives of delaying the study of the bill when we are simply adhering to the Standing Orders and exercising our right to speak.

This bill was introduced in the House in February. We understand that a pandemic occurred, but that has nothing to do with this. However, I would like the minister to explain why his government shut Parliament down by proroguing it, which meant that we had to start all the parliamentary work all over again when we came back. If the government had not prorogued Parliament, it would have saved 24 days of parliamentary work. We could have picked up where we left off in February and we would have gained 24 extra days.

The minister is to blame for the fact that we do not have enough time. What is worse, even if we were to accept the fact that the government decided to suspend the work and close Parliament, why did the minister waste seven days after the opening of the House and the throne speech? Why did he not introduce the bill as soon—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I have to give the minister an opportunity to respond and allow others to ask questions.

The hon. minister.

Hon. David Lametti: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question.

I obviously disagree with my colleague's strategy, which consists in filibustering in the House of Commons to delay this bill.

If the Leader of the Opposition is unable to control his colleagues on the religious right who are still opposed to this bill, I would invite my hon. colleague from Louis-Saint-Laurent and the other Quebec MPs in his caucus to exercise their leadership to express the will of Quebecers and Canadians.

• (1610)

[English]

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, on a point of order. I think you will find that the bigotry the member is expressing toward people of faith is unparliamentary and he should be asked to withdraw it.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I am sorry, but we are getting into debate.

We have two minutes left for questions.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Joliette.

[Translation]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, I have a question for the minister.

He knew that the Conservative Party would delay this debate. The House Leader of the Official Opposition said that members have the right to speak and have a duty to do so. We obviously know that they are filibustering to prevent this bill from passing before December 18.

The minister knew all of this, though. The bill was first introduced back in February. Why did he not take all of this into consideration to ensure that we could meet the Superior Court's deadline and that the bill would be ready to go before December 18? Why did he not act sooner? Why did the government prorogue the House?

Hon. David Lametti: Madam Speaker, I want to inform the House that I am a man of faith, and my faith is always a part of everything I do.

In response to the question from my hon. colleague, the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and I did our best to ensure that the bill would be studied as quickly as possible.

[English]

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the Minister of Justice for his work on Bill C-7. I also thank him for his speech today, particularly for the emphasis he put on the ending of unnecessary suffering. This is something I very much hear from my constituents, and particularly their concern about loved ones having to go early before they lose competence at the end of the life.

My question for the minister is this. Given the concerns in the disability community about possibly facing a terrible choice, sometime in the future, between a life without the supports they need and perhaps choosing medical assistance in dying, which I do not believe the bill would actually allow, will the minister support the NDP proposal to have a national program that would lift all people living with disabilities out of poverty so that they do not face these stark choices and instead get the support they need to live lives that are equal with other Canadians'?

Hon. David Lametti: Madam Speaker, my thanks to the hon. member for his question and his work on this bill as well as others.

Government Orders

I share the interpretation of this law, which I think is the correct interpretation of this law. It is about autonomy and it is about making enlightened choices. Within the context of criminal law, we have tried to build those choices into the bill. I also share his very deep concern for making those choices real choices, by supporting people with disabilities. At every turn as a parliamentarian, I have done that. I will continue to do that and I will work with the hon. members to try to improve the very real challenges that people with disabilities face in their day-to-day lives.

Ms. Nelly Shin (Port Moody—Coquitlam, CPC): Madam Speaker, before I begin my speech, I would like to attempt to bring this room to a place of peace. I know this is a very sensitive topic and we all have our ideas and our passions. Some of us have different ideologies on this, but I think it is beautiful that these heated debates are happening because that is what is required to work through an issue like this. Life is not simple. It is complicated. When there are challenges, they require us to be real and work through our emotions and ideas until we come to a place where there is agreement and a compromise that everyone can agree on.

Throughout the debate, I have heard my party being accused of filibustering or trying to delay passage of this bill. I find that heartbreaking, because this issue has to do with life and death. As was stated many times, death is final and irreversible. It can impact people beyond the scope of those who are seeking it.

Rather than attack the motivation of other members on this topic, I would like to ask all members to continue in our debates, understanding that this is a very complicated issue. We can have discussions that are real, but avoid comments like the minister made about the religious right, which I found offensive.

Hope is a journey. It is not something that can be bought like going through a drive-thru to buy McDonald's. Hope is something that accumulates over time and for different reasons, for different people. It requires a huge scope of places that the person who is struggling for hope goes through. It requires a full course to arrive at the doorstep of someone who is suffering, and sometimes it arrives unannounced.

One thing I find troubling about this bill, any time I have debated on it, has been the perspective of hope. Hope is the most sacred gift we have as human beings. Life is not perfect. We go through life struggling, but the beauty of the human spirit is our determination to triumph over adversity. We see things like this among so many people who come close to committing suicide. Look at someone like Christopher Reeve: a famous actor who played a superhero. Everyone looked to him as Superman, yet because of a riding accident he lost many faculties and contemplated suicide. With support in his very limited way of living, he was able to live out the rest of his life. His ability to overcome his challenges made him a greater hero.

I am not saying this to belittle suffering. When I was 17, my father was taken to emergency in the hospital because his heart had stopped. His heart had been beating irregularly and at one point it actually stopped. When I arrived at his hospital room I saw his slippers, but he was not in his bed. His roommate said to tread quietly as my father was in an urgent emergency crisis. I stepped away. I

was frightened, as a 17-year-old. Because his heart had stopped beating, they were taking him for emergency surgery.

The most traumatizing aspect of this experience was witnessing him jolting and screaming in pain because of the electric shocks being applied to him. It was a very painful experience to watch. When I was talking with my father about this bill recently, he said that in those moments he counted about 10 shocks before he passed out.

• (1615)

He said it was the most tormenting experience he had had in his life, that it felt like someone had taken a hammer and was beating him down, and that he could not stop it or control it. He said that the only reason he fought through this to stay alive was the thought that he had three daughters to take care of. That gave him hope. Fortunately, he lived on. He has a pacemaker, and he is all right.

The reason I bring this up is to acknowledge that sometimes suffering is painful. I picture my father going through that every day to the point that he really wanted to die, and I am applying this to those who are legitimately seeking MAID. That law passed. This was debated in 2016 as Bill C-14, and it passed. The purpose, as I perceive it, was to offer a dignified death to those who would seek it.

I have great concerns with some of the details on safeguards removed from this bill. I fear that this removes access to hope even more. We have heard many experiences and stories, some coming from the justice committee. The time that is required when a person is suffering from something like a spinal cord injury can be more than 90 days, for them to regain that trajectory of having hope and wanting to live. Granted, it would be very painful and I would never want to be in that situation, but there are those who overcome.

This bill would allow a person who has just suffered a life-changing spinal cord injury, for example, to end their life just 90 days after the catastrophic event that caused the injury. When a person is at their most vulnerable, experiencing unimaginable stress, a doctor could be forced to suggest ending their life. That is the option there.

From my understanding from doctors and witness testimony on the record at the justice committee, suicidal ideation after a catastrophic medical episode is very common. There is the possibility, with good care and support, that these transient suicidal thoughts could often take longer than 90 days to overcome. In recent weeks we have heard many of these stories of people who went through serious personal tragedy, but who have ended up living amazing lives and doing incredible things on the other side of it.

I would like to share the story of David Shannon. David suffered a spinal cord injury in a rugby scrum when he was 18 years old. He shared that after his accident, he lay in bed, close to death more times than he wishes to contemplate. He went on to have a career in a non-governmental organization with leadership, and he practises law. He said:

Government Orders

... I have accomplished a lot in my life. I've crossed our great country by the power of my wheelchair — coast to coast. I've jumped out of an airplane at over 25,000 feet.

It explains all the things he was able to do because he chose to live.

My fear is that removing these safeguards will create that truncation of hope that requires that full course for a person to regain their trajectory. If that is truncated, the big question is, "What if?"

This morning, in a CBC article, about a member of the Liberal government:

He said he worries the resulting legislation may not address people who are "transient" in their wish to terminate their lives, such as someone who has a permanent disability or who now needs chronic care. Those feelings of anguish can fade over time as they adjust to a changed reality, he said.

I think, with a bit of time, people may come around to the fact that there are reasons they want to live.

I want to thank my colleagues for their heated debate. I appreciate where they are coming from, but I would like to ask each one to take a moment of deep thought and ask if it is not worth protecting and safeguarding hope so that people have that opportunity through a longer time period to rediscover hope and have a chance to live past that darkness and move into a place of light.

• (1620)

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have spoken, as well, to many doctors. I have also read the testimony, as she has, of many patients, and I must admit I am quite troubled by the suffering I hear about from individuals who state that, once they made the decision to proceed with medical assistance in dying, the additional 10 days of waiting was excruciating and that it caused unneeded suffering for them and for their families. Not all safeguards are being removed in the bill proposed by the government: far from it.

I would like to hear from her specifically on that one safeguard that is being removed. It is a short period of time, and I believe that once a person makes the decision to proceed with medical assistance in dying it would be very difficult, as she described, to go back on that and transition away from that idea, as she suggested.

On that very concrete point, I wonder if she has any comments for the House.

• (1625)

Ms. Nelly Shin: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member across the aisle for bringing the tone of the dialogue in the House to a place where we can agree to disagree.

I fully appreciate what the member is saying. There is a law that was passed to protect those who would like to seek assistance in dying. When it comes to rights, one of the most complicated things in a democracy is asking when one right trumps another. That is the difficult aspect of this. I believe that hope is a right of some sort, at the expense of complicating access to hope for those who I believe should have that full course to access it. I am concerned about those as well.

I appreciate her question, and I hope she understands where I am coming from.

Mrs. Tamara Jansen: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I am wondering something. I am noticing that those of us who have put our hands up are not getting noticed. I am hoping that you are also taking questions from Zoom.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I have to take questions from all sides of the House, and that is exactly what I am doing.

The hon. member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, nothing in Bill C-7 removes the fact that a person applying for medical assistance in dying has to have a condition that is incurable, that they have to be in a state of irreversible decline and that they must also be facing intolerable suffering. In some of the examples the member posed, it did not sound like those people would qualify legally for medical assistance in dying. I would like to hear her comments on that.

Furthermore, I understand her Conservative Party colleagues' concerns about persons with disabilities. Will she join with us in the New Democratic Party and call on the government to provide a federal benefit of up to \$2,200, so that people with disabilities are not having to make this terrible choice and can lead a life with dignity and have the supports necessary to lead a fulfilling life?

Ms. Nelly Shin: Madam Speaker, I am very grateful for the sentiments and the passion that the member has for those with disabilities.

I believe that, if we had not prorogued Parliament and spent more time discussing things such as support for the disabled community, which resonates with my mantra of hope, the tone of our debates would be more fulsome and reflective of making passage for hope to flourish in our discussions.

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for her impassioned speech.

At the justice committee, we heard evidence about the inadequacy of the 90-day reflection period, that such is not sufficient time to access meaningful palliative care and other supports. Can the member speak to the need to have a lived experience in order to make a truly informed choice?

Ms. Nelly Shin: Madam Speaker, I believe that the narrative needs to go towards acknowledging and choosing the path of better living. More access to care is also a very valuable piece of this dialogue. On many levels, because it impacts so many of us, not just the person who is suffering but our families as well, this area could have been discussed more.

Government Orders

• (1630)

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, Foreign Affairs; the hon. member for South Okanagan—West Kootenay, The Environment; the hon. member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands, Natural Resources.

[*English*]

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am very honoured to rise in this House for this extremely important discussion, and I want to thank my hon. colleague from Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke for the excellent work he has done on this. These are very difficult questions, and I am glad I was not the point person to have to do the heavy lifting. My colleague and I may not always agree on all the points, but I respect his incredible integrity.

I point out he comes from Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, which is the classic way that English people have misrepresented the first nation languages. It is worth pointing out, because one thing that really struck me as a concern in Bill C-7 was the fact that we are dealing with a Quebec court decision that came very shortly after we brought in legislation the first time.

One thing I found with the previous government, and definitely with the current government, is the fact that if there was a first nations case, they would appeal. In fact, I do not ever remember the government not appealing a court decision about a first nation. However, with this ruling we had to rewrite the law of the land. I understand we are on a deadline, but it would have been reasonable, given the complexity of the issue, for us to seek clarification from the courts to make sure the courts had interpreted this properly and then brought it back to us. It is something I find concerning.

I am again going to do a bit of a comparison, which is a standard form of parliamentary debate, between two options. One option is the issue of Bill C-7 and the other option is, say, a first nations issue. Let us say it is that of the St. Anne's residential school survivors. The government has just admitted it spent \$3.2 million in court fees fighting against the rights of people who have suffered some of the most horrific abuses ever recorded in Canada, such as child rape, forced abortions on children and torture done for the kicks of the staff at St. Anne's, who were electrocuting children.

This is all documented. In fact, it was documented in 10,000 to 12,000 pages of police evidence gathered by the excellent work of the OPP and brought to court. The federal government obtained all that evidence, and under the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, it was obligated to do two things as the defendant. It was obligated to prepare a list of the history of abuse that happened in the residential schools, and then obligated to present all the evidence.

In the case of St. Anne's, the government decided to lie and said there was no history of abuse at St. Anne's residential school. It all said there were no records showing any abuse. Meanwhile, it was sitting on 10,000 pages of police and witness testimony that

named some of the most powerful church people in the land. Father Arthur Lavoie, Bishop Leguerrier and Bishop Belleau were all named, along with all manner of other abusers.

This was really important because this started under a previous government, when Peter MacKay was the justice minister and Bernard Valcourt was here. I know members are going to wonder how this relates to the issue here. Under Bill C-7, some of the Conservatives are talking about a fear of creating two tracks of justice: a set of justice for one set of citizens and a lower set of justice for other people.

I am not convinced of the Conservatives' arguments on Bill C-7, although I have thought a lot about whether they have actually met the test of creating two tiers of justice. Anyone could look at Canada for two examples of injustice. We could look at, say, middle-class white people in St. Paul's, Toronto. What is their standard of justice and receiving justice in the courts compared with that of any indigenous person in the country? I think we would all agree that we certainly have two tiers of justice.

We had that with St. Anne's. When I approached former minister Valcourt about the documents, he said he had no obligation to turn over documents, when he did. This set the really ugly issue in motion. When the Liberal government came in, we thought it would fix this and it did not. In fact, it hunkered down.

• (1635)

The government paid \$3.2 million, under the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, to go after the survivors of St. Anne's, who had their cases thrown out because the government lawyers lied in hearings. At the bottom of the Order Paper question, it says the Government of Canada prefers negotiation to settle these. I would agree.

In fact, on November 26, in a Timmins Today article, Christina Tricomi, from the minister's department, said, "The Government of Canada remains committed to negotiating a resolution outside of the courts". Of course we would expect this to be the government's position, but that is not true. In fact, I have a letter here dated October 15, 2020, from the law firm of Dionne Schulze, asking the government to sit down and negotiate a solution. The government said no; it would meet them in court.

Elders Without Borders, representing Edmund Metatawabin, Evelyn Korkmaz and other St. Anne's survivors, asked the government to sit down and finally end this. The government lawyers said no; they would meet them in court. Also, on December 1, 2020, lawyers from Dionne Schulze wrote to Catherine Coughlan at the justice minister's office asking her to please go to the case management settlement so they could talk about finding a solution.

Government Orders

To go back to Bill C-7, we are talking about two standards of justice. One of the standards of justice in the country is that lawyers are legally obligated under their professional conduct rules to find a way out. It is a lawyer's ethical duty to "compromise or settle a dispute whenever it is possible to do so on a reasonable basis, and...discourage the client from commencing or continuing useless legal proceedings."

How useless are these legal proceedings?

In Ontario's Superior Court, where the government continues to lose against St. Anne's, the attorney general for Doug Ford's government came forward to support the survivors of St. Anne's, while the minister, who represents the riding of Toronto—St. Paul's, sent her lawyers to fight them. The Ontario attorney general agreed that these were cruel and unusual tactics. Under their professional obligations, lawyers are called to find a solution, and we had the survivors asking for solutions.

I remember talking to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and begging her to meet with the survivors and end this vicious, vindictive campaign against them, and she met with them. I was there as the survivors cried. The survivors said they just want to settle and meet with the government, and the minister promised this. The next day, they were back in court.

Angela Shisheesh, a powerful survivor, addressed this. I will quote her, and I am not making this up. On APTN, June 18, 2018, she said, "She lied to me, literally. She lied to me. It hurts. It's just another abuse". This is about the survivors of St. Anne's and the abuse they have seen under the current government. They talk about the re-abuse they have suffered in having to come forward to talk about the horrific crimes they suffered and in being told by lawyers that they are making it up and there is no evidence.

I go back to Bill C-7 and the Truchon decision. The government seems to have gone further than the Truchon decision, so let us do a comparison. Let us talk about St. Anne's.

Under the obligations that were ordered on January 14, 2014, the government had to bring forward the person of interest reports on the perpetrators of the child crimes. It was obligated to do that. It was ordered again in January 2015 to do that and it refused. The Government of Canada decided to protect the perpetrators.

What does that mean? For Father Arthur Lavoie, the government provided a two-page report, when in fact it was sitting on 2,472 pages of crimes against children. It had a case thrown out, case H-15019. The subject was a victim of horrific child rape, and the government decided to fight this survivor all the way from Ontario hearings to the B.C. Superior Court to shut down his right to just get justice. The only crime he committed was being an indigenous child.

When we talked to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, she said she would make it right and call Edmund Metatawabin, the leader. The only time she ever called him was to force him to testify on the stand for her lawyers. This man is a Governor General's award winner. When we talk in Bill C-7 about two tracks of justice, I ask if anyone can imagine a Governor General's award winner from downtown Toronto being hauled to court by the minister and forced to testify over the fact that he spoke up against horrific child

abuse, rape, electric torture and the abuse of children at St. Anne's that still hangs out like a dark cloud.

• (1640)

I know members are asking why we are talking about comparisons on a bill like this on a day like this. It is because once—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member will have to finish during the questions and comments. We are already over his time.

The hon. member for Kenora.

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from northern Ontario for sharing his insight and a very thought-provoking speech.

I would like to speak directly to Bill C-7. As the member noted, this is a very complex issue for many people and a very complicated debate. It is for me as well.

Part of what informs me in this debate is hearing from my mother, who is a palliative care nurse in Kenora. I have spoken with many of my constituents, who have different views on this issue, and I reconcile that with some of my own beliefs. This all speaks to the need for a wholesome and robust debate on this issue, and on this side of the House, we are quite concerned that when the government prorogued Parliament, it effectively limited the opportunity for debate.

Does the member have any comments on that?

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, I have great respect for the work my hon. colleague is doing as a new member of Parliament representing a great, very large region that is very similar to mine. I am honoured to know his mother is a palliative care nurse. She is doing God's work.

I am surprised the government did not get a review from the courts. I am surprised it prorogued with the issues before us. However, one of the concerns I have, given the strategy of some of my friend's colleagues, is there has been a lot of misrepresentations. I am very uncomfortable about a lot in the bill, but they talk about people who want to have a life where they can jump out of helicopters or planes, and climb mountains. We all want to do that, but the bill only applies to those who are intolerably suffering, facing and incurable illness and in an advanced state of decline. That is very limiting.

My concern is whether we have enough of a reflection period, but they make a claim that this is going to be widespread. Also, I find the term “assisted suicide” very offensive, and it is being used in the House. It is a misrepresentation.

My hon. colleague brings a lot of good points to the House and I thank him for that.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen’s Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the member’s comments in regard to the issue of calling this “assisted suicide” versus “assisted dying”, because words do matter. They are very important when we talk about this type of legislation. It has a residual effect on the population. It is not an easy decision, and we all know that.

Can the member expand on the importance of words? Also, I was not 100% clear on what the member has decided. What is he doing on this legislation?

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, words do matter. I am glad the member is giving me this opportunity. Words like “reconciliation” matter. Reconciliation has to mean something. There is no such thing as reconciliation in Canada as long as the member for Toronto—St. Paul’s is hosting her vindictive, vicious campaign against survivors of some of the most horrific abuse and the justice minister is spending millions of dollars fighting the survivors of St. Anne’s residential school.

There is no such thing as reconciliation in this nation, and there is no such thing as honesty or integrity from a government that made promises to survivors, looked them in the eye and then turned around and sent its lawyers after them. Until that is rectified, it is all just talk over there.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Timmins—James Bay for standing up for his constituents every time he is in the House.

As he is aware, our colleagues, the member for Elmwood—Transcona and the member for Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, have recently put forward a proposal to the government to try to get a federal benefit for persons with disabilities. That would free up provincial resources so we can start adequately funding things like palliative care and important medical supports.

I would like to hear some of the member’s thoughts on that proposal and why it is important to make sure that persons living with disabilities have a life worth living and have the supports to lead rich and fulfilling lives.

• (1645)

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, I really appreciate that. I was taught as a little altar boy, “What person tells of someone hungry, go thou be filled”.

It is hypocrisy to stand in the House and say that we care about people with disabilities when they are living on such marginal incomes and in such poverty, without support. We do not have the proper medical supports to give them hope. If we are going to talk about hope, it is going to be grounded in basic financial supports.

Government Orders

I honestly thank my colleagues from the New Democratic Party for making sure that this issue of the poverty people who have disabilities are facing is actually addressed.

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am thankful for the opportunity to rise again to speak on the bill.

I want to recognize that we have come a long way with the bill. At every turn, we have had the disability community step up and be the voice that we needed to hear on this particular bill.

The Senate, the other place, has started a pre-study and has heard from over 85 witnesses. While they brought varying perspectives from across the country, all of them were opposed to the bill and asked that the government go back to the drawing board and come up with a bill that would protect the interests of all Canadians, particularly the interests of disabled Canadians.

As we have seen in the news today, the member for Thunder Bay—Rainy River has said that he cannot, in good conscience, support the bill, and I know that there are other members. The minister responsible for disability inclusion, when she was in the other place giving testimony, said that she was concerned, and that she was hearing from the disability community about safeguards and how this will affect those folks who live with disabilities. We know that we are on the side of the angels with this one. We know that we are working to protect the vulnerable.

We heard extensive testimony from Mr. Foley, who gave compelling testimony from his hospital bed. He stated that he had been informed several times of the fact that he was eligible for MAID. This was not something he requested. He wanted to live, and that was something that he definitely was not requesting. Yet, it was being suggested to him that he was eligible for it. This is not something that is happening somewhere else, it is happening right here in Canada.

We want to ensure that folks who live with disabilities in this country are included in our society, feel included in this society and in no way feel that they are a burden to our society. Therefore, we need to ensure that those Canadians are offered the same rights and freedoms as all Canadians and not given a separate stream.

In the case of an able-bodied Canadian on their worst day thinking that it all should end, they are offered suicide prevention techniques. Canadian society has worked very hard to ensure that suicide prevention is something we value. It is well funded. There are hotlines across the country and 24-hour counselling services available. As a Canadian, I am proud that we have a suicide prevention regime in this country that is effective. It is one that all of us can be proud of.

However, with the bill before us, we see a change in direction. We see two classes of Canadian citizens. There are the able-bodied Canadians, who are offered suicide prevention on their worst day, and there are the disabled, who are then eligible for MAID. Now, I am not saying that in every case one would be offered that, but it changes the sentiment.

Government Orders

My friend Taylor has cerebral palsy. She lives her life independently, but she lives in a wheelchair. I have had the opportunity of helping her out with her wheelchair, which gets very dirty in the winter, especially around Ottawa with the salt and slush everywhere. Once a year, in the spring, I bug Taylor and say, “Taylor, it's time to wash that wheelchair of yours”. I'll load it in my van and haul it over to the car wash. It is a motorized wheelchair, and we pressure wash it and get it looking nice and clean again.

However, Taylor got a cold two winters ago, shortly after the MAID legislation was introduced. After a few days of not feeling well, the batteries on her wheelchair were dwindling and she was struggling with life in general. She went to the hospital, and she was asked if she needed oxygen, would she like to have it.

• (1650)

She asked herself what they meant by asking if she needs oxygen, would she like oxygen. She needs oxygen to live, so if she needs oxygen, by all means give her oxygen. That is the sentiment that many folks living with disabilities are concerned about. That is the experience of my friend Taylor, and that is the experience of Mr. Foley and many of the advocates who we heard from over the last few months.

The Liberals have been in a self-made rush to pass this legislation. The member for Timmins—James Bay, who spoke before me, asked why the bill is here when it was a junior court in Quebec that struck down this law. Why was there no appeal of this?

Most Canadians do not consider this, and our parliamentary system is not as delineated as the American system, but in Canada our executive branch lives inside of the legislative branch. Sometimes this leads to a feeling that the government and the legislature are one and the same. That is not the case. The legislature passes the legislation and the executive, the cabinet, is called to enact that legislation. They do sit in here, and they are also members of the legislative body, but they are to do the bidding of the legislature.

What is frustrating about this situation is that the ink was barely dry on the original euthanasia regime in this country when the court struck it down. The executive branch, rather than appealing that and abiding by the wishes of this place, of the entire legislature, chose not to appeal. While that was a legal decision for them to make, and they were able to make that decision, given the fact that they are to do the wishes of this place, it would seem to me that they should have appealed that decision just on the basis that this was the law that was passed in this place recently.

It was hard work. I remember it took a while to get the first bill through, and we worked to get the balance right. I remember specifically the health minister at the time and the justice minister at the time stood up repeatedly, while members from their own party were saying this did not go far enough, and they continually held the line and repeated, “We got the balance right”.

I remember at the time pointing out that I thought we were at the top of a fairly steep, slippery slope. Little did I know that we would be here four years later. We are picking up speed on the slope, no doubt.

The minister says that we have to abide by this self-imposed deadline to some degree. There is some frustration around that as well because of the fact that for 24 days in this Parliament we did not have the opportunity to have a debate because Parliament was prorogued. That was not the Conservatives' tactics. It was definitely not the Conservatives' tactic to prorogue Parliament. That was the Liberals.

The other thing that is really frustrating about prorogation is that the bill then dies and comes back. They had already heard from the disabilities community before prorogation that the bill was incomplete, that it did not have protections in it and that it did not do what it was saying it was going to do. The Liberals had the opportunity to fix the bill during the time of prorogation.

They had the opportunity to fix the bill and to make amendments to it. They could have saved face. They could have made these changes on their own over the time of prorogation, but they chose not to. They chose to reintroduce the same bill, and here we are. There were 85 witnesses in the Senate, and all of them are opposed to the bill. The bill should be sent back. We need a new one that recognizes the needs of disabled Canadians.

• (1655)

Mr. Marcus Powlowski (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, Lib.): Madam Speaker, having been mentioned by several previous speakers, I thought I had better actually say something here.

Let me say, first of all, that I have not been silenced by the Liberal Party, and nobody has told me not to speak about this issue. I have to thank the whip for making this a free vote. A lot of members know some of my position, but this is, I admit, difficult legislation.

There are, obviously, very strong competing interests. There are people who think we should go further and allow more people to access medical assistance in dying, and there are a lot of people who say this has gone too far, particularly people in the disabled community, but we have to draw the line somewhere. I fully recognize that is the case, and I think the Minister of Justice had a very difficult job, a job that he was forced into by the court decision, but he had a job as to where to draw the line.

Some of us may quibble with exactly where that line was drawn, but I want to ask the member opposite if he does not believe that perhaps some of the issues we are discussing here cannot be revisited when the court-ordered review of the legislation comes up in the coming year.

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Madam Speaker, the legislative review the member mentioned is an important thing, and that is why it is so frustrating that the government did not appeal the lower court decision out of Quebec. This review is coming up, and the Liberals wanted to make all these changes to the bill. Many of the changes that are proposed in Bill C-7 have nothing to do with the Quebec court decision. They have put those things in there. The legislated review could have accommodated some of those things, if that is what the government wanted to do.

To use the court as an excuse is extremely frustrating to me, given the fact that it was the government's job to appeal that decision.

Government Orders

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, I heard the member for Peace River—Westlock express the sentiment, which I know is shared in the House, that people with disabilities should be able to live full lives on an equal basis with all other Canadians. The problem has been that this remains a sentiment, and people do not actually do anything to make that a reality.

I wonder if the hon. member will support the NDP proposal to establish a national income support program that would lift all people with disabilities out of poverty.

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Madam Speaker, that sentiment is shared across the House, and I just want to recognize my friend Joel. Joel and I started school together in grade three and we went through all the way to grade 10 together. He often comments on my Facebook page now. He is very proud of where I have gone, and I am very proud of him.

He has been a Cutco salesman for a long time. I do not know if members have ever used Cutco knives, but he has been a Cutco salesman for a while. He works at Walmart. He is fully integrated into our Canadian society, and that is something that I am very proud of. In his larger extended family there is a whole army of people who work to make sure that Joel is an included part of our society, and I am very proud of Canadian society in that folks like my friend Joel enjoy full participation.

• (1700)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to have this opportunity to ask my friend a question following his excellent speech.

In terms of this question raised, rightly, by the NDP of full inclusion for people living with disabilities, it is not just about benefit programs, although those have an important role to play. It is also about access to employment, and I think we are going to get to hear at some point from the member for Carleton about his work on this issue.

Does the member have a comment about the important work of ensuring that we remove barriers to employment, volunteering and community involvement for people living with disabilities, rather than the approach of this bill, which is to create a special track toward death.

Finally, I wonder if my colleague could follow up on the comments from the member for Thunder Bay—Rainy River that this will be a free vote for members of the Liberal caucus. It is exciting to hear this, and I hope that other members of the Liberal caucus will actually be willing to take advantage of it.

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Madam Speaker, I am excited to hear that free votes are becoming contagious and are spreading across this place. I look forward to hearing if the NDP, the Green Party and the Bloc will also be having free votes on this.

Mr. Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will not be voting in favour of Bill C-7. It is poor legislation that will negatively impact many of the most vulnerable Canadians. If passed, there certainly will be more court challenges that will only dilute the few protections that are currently in place.

I know the disability community, as has been mentioned in previous speeches, has been very upset about the bill. It feels that it will make it even more vulnerable than it currently is.

I was reading a report this morning of one of the witnesses at the Senate committee. I would like to read a few of the comments from Neil Belanger, the executive director of the British Columbia Aboriginal Network on Disability Society, an indigenous cross-cultural disability organization that has provided a variety of disability programs and services across Canada for the past nearly 30 years. This is what he said:

Our organization stands with all disabled persons' organizations in Canada in the call for MAID to be limited to end of life.

The Indigenous peoples of Canada experience a higher rate of disabilities than that of the non-Indigenous population, higher rates of suicide, lower health status and life expectancy, higher unemployment and poverty rates, overcrowding in homes and they are overrepresented in the justice system....

Despite these conditions, the individuals our organization serve do not describe themselves as "suffering with a disability," ... Persons living with disabilities may become more isolated, demoralized, experience a loss of hope and the desire to escape, and in their vulnerable state they can be more susceptible to the option of MAID.

He goes on to say, "Logically the first response would be to change those systems, increase health and disability resources and services, ensure adequate financial support for Indigenous and non-Indigenous persons."

Finally, he says:

Bill C-7 isn't about providing adequate supports for persons living with disabilities. With the proposed removal of the end-of-life criteria, it perpetuates the continued negative portrayal of Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples living with disabilities as having lives not worth living because of that disability....[It] perpetuates the idea that these people are of less value and therefore worthy of a state-assisted death.

Those are very harsh words. As a Métis, I am concerned about the very negative impact the legislation will have upon the indigenous people who are likely the most vulnerable population in Canada in every respect, whether it is addictions, suicide, incarceration, the list goes on.

In British Columbia, we see it in Vancouver in the Downtown Eastside and all throughout. I have met with parents who have children with disabilities and they are also very concerned about the message that is being sent, which is stated in the legislation, that life is not worth living, that it is unbearable.

A couple of weeks ago I watched a video of a fellow who I had never heard of before. His name is Nicholas James Vujcic. He was born in 1982 with a rare disorder called phocomelia. He was born without legs or arms. He does have about a six-inch foot coming out of his torso. I listened to him speak to a large group of prisoners. He was inspiring hope. He founded an organization called "Life without Limbs" and also "Attitude is Altitude". He has spoken to hundreds of thousands, even millions, of people. His message is that no matter what our circumstances, we have something to give and to help other people. We need to be promoting this message about overcoming challenges. In Canada, we have some great examples.

Government Orders

• (1705)

I think of Rick Hansen, who is in a wheelchair. Years ago he did an around-the-world tour. The best example we have and who is known worldwide would be Terry Fox. I am a teacher by profession and every year we go with students on these walks in support of beating cancer.

I am also concerned that it is just a matter of time before MAID will be offered to people struggling with mental health challenges. Why would I not believe that? The 10-day wait period is being removed. Reasonably foreseeable death is being removed. Approval of two medical practitioners is being removed. Disability is being added as one of the conditions, and so forth.

I mentioned last week that one of my assistants in Ottawa told me about her grandmother, who was 100 years old, a vibrant, social woman and in good health for her age. As we faced COVID-19 this year, with the lockdowns and necessary safety precautions, she became isolated, depressed and no longer wanted to live. She requested MAID and it was granted to her. I suppose that being 100 years old is reasonably foreseeable, but for all of us we will die.

I know people are struggling this year with depression and loneliness. The Canadian Association for Mental Health has released information showing that four times more people this year are having suicidal thoughts than previous due to COVID.

On Monday, I met with Dr. Taylor Bean and Maple Ridge councillor Chelsa Meadus to discuss the impact of regulations on the mental well-being of many of her patients and the big increase of anti-anxiety medication. This is what we are facing right now as we are coping with COVID.

In the summertime, I talked with the director of one of our local funeral homes. He told me of the concerning increase he saw of people who had died of suicide and in demographics he had not seen before, 30- and 40-year-olds who had lost work or maybe lost their business. I have no doubt that as time moves on, mental anguish will be added to the list as we continue to broaden the legislation, which we see right now.

Mental anguish unfortunately is a very human condition. It can be caused by the loss of a loved one, bankruptcy or news of a terminal illness. Dr. Frank Ervin is a doctor at Ridge Meadows Hospital. He posted this on Facebook recently. He said, “Physicians now have the power to end your life even if you are not dying....I personally have had a patient undergo MAiD who would have had a very good chance of living 5 or more years. The quality of care and the decision to administer MAiD was very questionable in my view and when I contacted the coroner to request a review was told that these cases are not reviewable by the coroner's service. Where is the oversight?”

I think of my wife Marlene. She was diagnosed with cancer and went through a very difficult time. She had five operations. It has been five years and she is cancer-free—

• (1710)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): On that very positive note, I must interrupt the hon. member for questions and comments.

The hon. member for Kenora.

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his tremendous insight and thoughts on this topic. One of the things he mentioned was some of the challenges and vulnerabilities facing indigenous communities. As a member representing a northern Ontario riding with 42 first nations, three distinct treaty territories and the Métis homelands, it is something I and our region understand quite closely.

I wonder if the member can speak to some of the opinions he has heard from indigenous communities as they pertain to this legislation.

Mr. Marc Dalton: Madam Speaker, I am the member of Parliament for Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge. The largest ethnic population, surprisingly, in this area is indigenous people and Métis. What I am hearing, at least from my perspective, is very pervasive right across as far as dealing with mental health and these challenges. The representative of the disability organization for indigenous people stated well his perspective of indigenous people with disabilities.

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have enormous respect for my colleague opposite and for his views even if we disagree.

As a point of clarification, I would like to ask if the member disagrees with the very idea of medically assisted dying or with this bill. The bill we have put forward is to respond the Quebec Superior Court's decision. It is in order to improve the legislation based on the experience of patients.

We are not talking about the very principle of medical assistance in dying; we are talking about improving the existing law. I wonder if he could just clarify. Is he against medical assistance in dying all together?

Mr. Marc Dalton: Madam Speaker, my concern is that we are not putting the emphasis on palliative care. We have put MAID, which is legislated through the Supreme Court, into the Canada Health Act and so it is required to be accessible and funded right across Canada. We do not have that for the general population for palliative care. Only about one-third of Canadians have access to that.

I previously mentioned a lady with whom I had a conversation. She was in hospice dying of cancer. She has now passed. I asked her how much pain she was going through and she said that she was going through no pain whatsoever. Pain can be totally controlled under palliative care as well as mental anguish.

• (1715)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, my colleague has raised many important issues on how we defend the rights of people with disabilities. I wonder if he can pick up on the issue of giving people alternatives. I was quite struck by the comment from one of his colleagues from B.C., another member of our caucus, who said that people had a right to hope

We have to give people access to that right, that ability to hope, to see they have alternatives in front of them. Members who talk about the importance of choice should consider the range of options people have, such as wanting to really have that option of choosing to live and how we can make that option real and meaningful for people who want that available to them.

Mr. Marc Dalton: Madam Speaker, it is really important that people who are facing end of life be given those options. Counselling and supports are really important. One of the amendments we requested, which was defeated, was to increase from 90 days to 120 days for people going through mental challenges. We do not have that support. We need to increase the supports for people in the situations of end of life.

Mr. Kenny Chiu (Steveston—Richmond East, CPC): Madam Speaker, let us deal with the elephant in the chamber here. There are reasons to support euthanasia despite 21st-century medical advancements, but to protect the vulnerable in our society from mistreatment or abuse, we must provide the service ethically and monitor its delivery scrupulously. However, what we are debating here today is exactly the opposite of that.

Bill C-7 seeks to amend the medical assistance in dying legislation by eliminating various safeguards on how and when the service gets delivered, with apparent disregard of any scrupulous requirement. Some of the offensive changes to end-of-life decision-making would include removing the 10-day waiting period between a MAID request and its administration, allowing for no reflection or opportunity for consultation on alternatives during this critical period, and proceeding without immediate consent, thus removing the final opportunity for someone to change their mind.

The bill would also create a two-tracked approach. The first track is someone whose death is deemed reasonably foreseeable, a term which is subjective and lacks effective meaning as the Truchon case in Quebec revealed. The second track would allow individuals who do not meet the reasonably foreseeable death criteria to receive MAID. At least these individuals are granted the opportunity to reflect for 90 days.

I voted against the second reading of Bill C-7 because it would not adequately protect Canadians from harm, and the gap presented is way too wide to be bridged. Unfortunately, as I predicted, the government refused to accept any reasonable amendments submitted by concerned stakeholder groups. I will, therefore, be voting against Bill C-7 during third reading as well.

As has been said many times, the bill would create pathways to end of life that would significantly impact the disabled, without sufficiently supporting the alternatives. Also, it does not include enough consideration for the rights of medical professionals to refuse to provide death as a service. Doctors know their patients'

Government Orders

most intimate details. They have the professional experience to make suggestions on treatment and to know how to refer to other experts when necessary. However, because of MAID, medical professionals, such as Dr. Mai, who is a stroke neurologist, have expressed concerns that doctors are not being encouraged to suggest the best treatment. They are being obligated to suggest and provide a treatment that they may not believe is the right one for any patient. They are being told to kick their conscience to the curb.

In this regard, I will quote someone who, according to the CBC, has two law degrees and a master's degree in health policy, and has helped develop health law and policy for the WHO and several governments. He has practised medicine in Canada, Africa and the South Pacific. The member for Thunder Bay—Rainy River shares our mutual concerns of how the bill addresses the issues faced by those who are transient or undecided in their end-of-life decision-making.

In a CBC article, he stated, “My biggest concern, as someone who has spent my whole life trying to avoid accidentally killing people, is that we don't end up using MAID for people who don't really want to die”. As someone with a medical background, he says he feels that it is morally incumbent upon him “to stand up when it comes to issues of health and life and death”.

Perhaps this concern is something that should be addressed through a review. It has recently been said in this chamber that any legislation that is introduced in Parliament requires a thorough review, and that is especially true for bills that are literally matters of life or death. Bill C-7, which seeks to expand medical assistance in dying, is one of those bills.

Members of the justice committee have heard first-hand from disability advocates vehemently opposed to Bill C-7 and its rapid expansion of MAID. They argue that it amounts to a “deadly form of discrimination”, making it easier for persons with disabilities to die rather than live.

• (1720)

It is shameful that in the Liberal government's rush to pass the bill before December 18, it continues to neglect to address the legitimate concerns being raised by persons with disabilities and medical professionals.

Government Orders

The Conservatives are focused on ensuring this type of legislation includes safeguards for the most vulnerable in our society, and for the conscience rights of physicians and health professionals. I have previously outlined these reasonable amendments we have introduced to reinstate such balances the government has removed, so I will not re-list them here. However, I shall repeat that it is essential the government begin a separate and comprehensive parliamentary review of the original 2016 MAID legislation and the state of palliative care in Canada. It is critical that this review analyze how the government's MAID legislation negatively impacts persons with disabilities.

I might add, such a review could have taken place over the summer. Instead, the Liberal government shut down Parliament to hide from its ethical scandals, only to return and introduce this legislation from scratch again. What larger lapse of moral fibre and ethical decision-making could there be?

Furthermore, it pains me to find this bill comes at a time when vulnerable Canadians, such as those in palliative care, are more isolated than ever. Because of the pandemic, they could be left alone in their room for days. These measures that are aimed at saving lives have left them looking for options, as in the case of Ms. Nancy Russell, a 90-year-old long-term care resident in Toronto, who received MAID simply because she did not want to go into another lockdown, according to a media report.

Fleeing from the Communist regime in Shanghai, my father struggled to provide for himself and his family by mastering the art of directorship in the early film industry in Hong Kong. He later worked in Nigeria when I was a teenager and only returned home after suffering from a major stroke. I witnessed his struggle firsthand to live and attempt to regain independence with little familial resources or societal help. My father was a fighter. He also overcame cancer and other major medical problems before dying in his sleep in Saskatoon one early Sunday morning in the nineties. If the Bill C-7 MAID legislation had existed back then, he would have been under inhumane pressure to lessen the burden he was imposing on his family, even though his death was not reasonably foreseeable. I for one am grateful for his strength and determination to stay alive so that I could reciprocate the care he provided me when I was young. He was able to live long enough to hold my brother's firstborn, his very first granddaughter, only months prior to his natural death.

Medical assistance in dying is a very complex issue and evokes strong emotions. Recognizing we need more time to review the bill, my Conservative colleagues and I repeatedly proposed increasing the number of meetings dedicated to reviewing the bill and hearing from witnesses. Unfortunately, each time the Liberals refused.

Canada's Conservatives will continue to highlight the flaws in this bill, which threaten the lives, rights and dignity of people with disabilities long past this unfortunate legislation. We will continue working to protect vulnerable Canadians, especially persons with disabilities, when the next assault on their dignity arrives. Canadians deserve as much.

Like many of us here, my constituents have approached me in earnest to express their opposition to Bill C-7 and MAID. They ask for their MPs to stand in defence of the rights of people with dis-

abilities, highlighting that it is a discriminatory policy and that Canada should not stand for such discrimination and must not extend euthanasia to people who are not dying. They asked me to stand in defence of the conscience rights of doctors, hundreds of whom are protesting Bill C-7 as being against their oath to protect—

• (1725)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I have to interrupt the hon. member. 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, it is a false argument to talk about process being the reason why this legislation is not set to ultimately pass.

I do believe this bill reflects the many years of debate, discussions and consultations that came from the Supreme Court of Canada to the Superior Court of Quebec's most recent decision to literally tens of thousands of Canadians in all regions of our country.

Does the member believe that the Superior Court of Quebec does not have the confidence of the Conservative Party to support this legislation, or at least to allow the legislation to come to a vote so that it could be dealt with before we break?

Mr. Kenny Chiu: Madam Speaker, my Zoom session has exhibited some problems, and I did not fully hear the member for Winnipeg North. I recognized his voice, and I kind of get what he was asking. I will try my best to answer.

I am so privileged and honoured to live in a country that respects the rule of law. Our judicial system is structured in such a way that there is a hierarchy. That is why governments and individuals could appeal to a higher level of court. The Quebec court decision could have been appealed to the Court of Appeal, as well as to the Supreme Court of Canada—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We will have one other member ask a question before we have to interrupt. The hon. member for St. Albert—Edmonton.

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Madam Speaker, my colleague is absolutely right about the importance of conscience protections for physicians, which is why we brought forward amendments to this bill to provide for conscience protections.

The members across the way say, "Nothing to see here. No need for such protections." They point to a recognition of conscience protections being in the preamble of Bill C-14. Could the member speak to that?

Second, I would note that the Carter decision, paragraph 132 states:

Nothing in the declaration of invalidity which we propose to issue would compel physicians to provide assistance in dying.

Yet that is happening in Ontario, violating the charter rights of physicians.

• (1730)

Mr. Kenny Chiu: Madam Speaker, in my speech I alluded to my father's experience escaping from Communist China. It is a country that does not provide freedom of conscience for its members.

In Canada we do, and that is why we treasure our freedom so much. We must not force people to act under duress and against their conscience.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The member will still have a minute and a half left for questions and answers the next time this matter is before the House.

It being 5:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*Translation*]

CANADIAN MULTICULTURALISM ACT

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ) moved that Bill C-226, An Act to amend the Canadian Multiculturalism Act (non-application in Quebec) be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Madam Speaker, Quebec is a nation, a francophone nation, an egalitarian nation, a nation that is proud of its history, a nation where there is separation of religion and state. The Quebec nation is different from Canada. All Quebec members in the House, no matter their political affiliation, know this. We are different. We are different for many reasons. We are different because of our language, French, our institutions, our particular attachment to secularism and our values, shaped by a history written in part by the Catholic Church, from which the state steadily freed itself.

We are different from Canada. We are not better, we are different. We are different in how we live and how we live together. Having the government impose a model of integration just does not work, and that is why I am very pleased to be tabling this bill on behalf of the Bloc Québécois and very pleased to resume the necessary debate on multiculturalism and its repercussions for Quebec.

This bill follows up on the supposed recognition of the Quebec nation by this Parliament. I know that the Prime Minister does not believe in it and that he wants to make Canada the first postnational state in the world, which means that Quebec's national identity would disappear. That is completely ridiculous. The Quebec nation is the community to which we belong, the group with which we identify and the one we are discussing in order to decide how our society is to be organized. A nation is a special place where political decisions can be made and, therefore, recognizing a nation means recognizing a political entity with legitimate political rights and aspirations.

By recognizing the Quebec nation, the House of Commons recognized, perhaps unwillingly, the right of Quebecers to control the

Private Members' Business

social, economic and cultural development of Quebec themselves. By stating that the Quebec nation is composed of all residents of Quebec, regardless of their origin or mother tongue or the region where they live, the federal government recognized that the Quebec nation has a clear geographic base made up of the territory of Quebec. I think it is worth noting that Quebec has never needed Ottawa in order to be a nation and unanimously declare its nationhood. On October 30, 2003, the National Assembly of Quebec unanimously passed the following motion:

THAT the National Assembly reaffirm that the people of Quebec form a nation.

The motion does not say that Quebecers form a nation if Canada remains as it is or that Quebec is a nation if it opts for sovereignty. It says that the people of Quebec form a nation, period. There is a reason the National Assembly specified, repeated and reaffirmed the existence of the nation of Quebec. In fact, this resolution reiterated what all Quebec governments had been saying for decades. In June 1980, René Lévesque said:

Canada is composed of two equal nations; Quebec is the home and the heart of one of those nations and, as it possesses all the attributes of a distinct national community, it has an inalienable right to self-determination. This right to control its own national destiny is the most fundamental right that Quebec society has.

That is why the Quebec nation must have all the tools it needs to thrive and, most importantly, to define itself.

Accordingly, I included the following preamble in this bill:

Whereas Quebecers form a nation and therefore possess all the tools needed to define their identity and protect their common values, including as regards the protection of the French language, the separation of state and religion, and gender equality...

I sincerely hope that the House will unanimously support this preamble. That being said, Quebec is the only nation of its kind in the world. It is a nation inhabited by eight million francophones on a continent of over 600 million people. Francophones make up a total of 2.3% of the continent's population. It is hard to be more of a minority than that.

• (1735)

Demographically speaking, we should have disappeared over time. However, we are still here, alive and well.

Quebec is a true historic anomaly, a miracle of resilience, and it must have all the tools it needs to carry on, starting with its independence.

The federal government could have been an ally and contributed to the survival of the Quebec nation. Ottawa could have used its authority to contribute to the development of Quebec's distinct identity. It has always refused to do so.

Instead, Ottawa is hindering Quebec and undermining Quebec's efforts to create a unifying culture. One of Ottawa's worst attacks on the Quebec nation, on what we are collectively, is multiculturalism.

Multiculturalism undermines Quebec's distinctiveness and reduces it to one ethnic group among many. It undermines the existence of a common culture. Multiculturalism undermines Quebec's very existence as a nation.

Private Members' Business

For Canadians, it is a model that can work. In an anglophone country on an anglophone continent, it is natural for newcomers to want to integrate in English. However, Quebec is French. It is a French-speaking minority in an English-speaking country, on an English-speaking continent. Why would newcomers integrate into a minority? Multiculturalism is undermining Quebec.

If we go to the Government of Canada website, under the heading “Canadian identity and society”, it states that multiculturalism ensures “that all citizens keep their identities, take pride in their ancestry”. In other words, integration is pointless.

In Quebec, multiculturalism is not a policy of integration, but rather a policy of disintegration. It is a policy that creates a fragmented society inhabited by people from many different cultures, rather than fostering the development of a society that integrates newcomers to enrich a common culture. Multiculturalism is a juxtaposition of communities.

The reality is that multiculturalism rejects the idea of a common culture by encouraging multiple cultures to coexist. Although it is defined as a model for integrating newcomers, in reality it promotes coexistence driven by indifference, or perhaps tolerance, rather than respect for difference. This inevitably leads to ghettoization of cultures.

Concerned that multiculturalism divides society into a multitude of solitudes, Quebec has always rejected the Canadian approach, especially since it trivializes Quebec's position within Canada and refutes the very existence of the Quebec nation.

In 1971, Robert Bourassa, referring to multiculturalism, stated in a letter to Pierre Elliott Trudeau that “that notion hardly seems compatible with Quebec's reality”. That was true 50 years ago and remains true today.

Quebec focuses on integration. Cultural plurality, or cultural diversity, is something to be shared. Getting to know one another better, talking to one another and building our society together, that is the Quebecois approach. To do that, we have to be on the same wavelength.

That is why, in Quebec, we ask immigrants to recognize the French fact, to know the French language, to learn it and to recognize that it is the common language of the public space. That is why Quebec insists on the need to respect the cornerstones of Quebec society, such as the separation of church and state, gender equality, and the existence of an historic cultural heritage. That heritage is multicultural, not multiculturalist.

Before 2003, there was even talk of a civil pact. The Quebec model of integration goes beyond simple citizenship designed to promote the development and peaceful coexistence of cultural minorities in a vacuum by bringing these minorities to enter the symbolic and institutional space occupied by the nation.

In other words, contrary to Canada's approach, which talks about preserving the identity of minorities without integration, Quebec's approach supports integration based on the learning of the French language, the official language and language common to the citizenry, and on the adherence to a set of fundamental principles.

• (1740)

Quebec is a French-speaking, democratic and pluralistic society based on the rule of law, which means that everyone has the same value and dignity, as well as the right to equal protection under the law. Knowledge and respect for the values of Quebec society are necessary for newcomers to adapt to their new environment and fully participate in it. We believe that integration is achieved through full participation, which multiculturalism inhibits. The conflict between the Quebec model and the Canadian one is clear and irreconcilable.

This is confusing to newcomers. They see Quebec as a French-speaking nation that exists within a bilingual country that promotes bilingualism. It prides itself on an approach to welcoming and integrating newcomers that focuses on the importance of certain basic values and upholds French as the language of the people. This conflicts with the definition of a Canada that presents itself as bilingual and multicultural.

In its preliminary submission to the Bouchard-Taylor commission, the Conseil des relations interculturelles du Québec highlighted this confusion:

...the efforts made by [Quebeckers] to define and promote [their] own model of integration came up against the ideology of multiculturalism, which was sometimes interpreted by certain groups as the possibility of living one's own culture according to the rationale of separate development...the ideological way of thinking that emerged in the 1970s, which presented society as a mosaic of cultures, has since been encouraging certain groups to develop beliefs that clash with Quebec's vision.

People arriving in Quebec receive two contradictory messages. Instead of blaming them, the Bloc Québécois thinks it would be better to make the messages clearer. Quebec needs freedom to integrate newcomers. Every year, Quebec welcomes tens of thousands of immigrants, and that does not include refugees. We must have access to all the tools we need to integrate them and help them integrate into Quebec.

The Prime Minister's version of multiculturalism is completely out of touch with the Quebec reality. He does not believe in the Quebec nation and does not think that Quebec should decide how its residents should coexist. He certainly does not want nations around the world seeing who we are, hearing our voice, and relating to our desire to carve out our own place in the world, reach out to all the peoples of the world and contribute to global humanism.

I urge everyone who values global cultural diversity and everyone who values Quebec's interests, culture and identity to support my bill, which will allow Quebec to choose its own integration model.

Quebec is a nation, a small francophone nation on a vast anglophone continent. It must have all the tools it needs to integrate the people who join us, the people who will help us grow, enrich our society, and move confidently into the future.

• (1745)

[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 love Quebec and I love the French language. I, as a Canadian, feel very passionate about how important it is that Quebec remain the French capital of North America. There are so many wonderful aspects of the French language and being part of a multicultural society.

In the area I represent, there are children who speak French, English and Tagalog, or French, English and Punjabi. There are many different languages. These types of things make Canada the great country it is.

French continues to grow in other areas, and definitely in Winnipeg North. It seems to me the member, through legislation of this nature, is actually sending a negative message in terms of our diversity, and our ever-growing and changing heritage, which is something we should all be proud of.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Thériault: Madam Speaker, it is important to differentiate between our love of diversity and multiculturalism. Multiculturalism is a political ideology. In the words of Boucar Diouf, our society is diverse, yet tightly knit. It is plural. However, we want to integrate newcomers based on fundamental factors and principles, based on a common culture.

The message needs to be perfectly clear: Quebec is a French-speaking society, not a bilingual one. Quebec is a society that recognizes gender equality and that separates church and state. My colleague referred to Quebec as the capital; I would have liked him to say that Quebec is a nation.

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Montcalm for his speech.

First of all, does he not find it a little ironic that it was a Quebecker who created the Canadian Multiculturalism Act for Canada as a whole, and now it is another Quebecker who wants to abolish it, but only for Quebec?

Second, can the member give us a very clear definition of multiculturalism in the context of our justice system?

Mr. Luc Thériault: Madam Speaker, Pierre Elliott Trudeau described himself as a Canadian first and foremost. I am a Quebecker, I am not a Canadian. I never have been and never will be. That is the difference between me and Pierre Elliott Trudeau.

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

Quebec already has the exclusive power to select its economic immigrants. It gives a lot of points to those who speak French, in fact. I would like to read three clauses from the Canada-Quebec accord relating to immigration:

24. Canada undertakes to withdraw from the services to be provided by Québec for the reception and the linguistic and cultural integration of permanent residents in Québec.

Private Members' Business

25. Canada undertakes to withdraw from specialized economic integration services to be provided by Québec to permanent residents in Québec.

26. Canada shall provide reasonable compensation for the services referred to in sections 24 and 25 provided by Québec...

How will his bill change any of that?

Mr. Luc Thériault: Madam Speaker, the bill will ensure that Quebec is able to make its own decisions about integrating newcomers based on a common culture.

Multiculturalism is a political ideology that suffocates Quebec's distinctiveness. There is plenty of interest in recognizing plurality, the distinctiveness of everyone and all nations, but right now, the only distinctiveness that is not recognized in Canada and in Parliament is the distinctiveness of the Quebec nation.

Quebeckers do not want a political ideology. It works for the rest of Canada because, as researchers have explained, multiculturalism only works for majorities. When majorities want to integrate newcomers, they integrate them into their continental majority, but that does not apply to Quebec. This is why it is important that we have our own integration model and that if Parliament recognizes Quebec as a nation, it must also recognize our right to self-determination and our right to decide how we want to integrate our people.

• (1750)

Ms. Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise today to debate private member's Bill C-226, introduced by the member for Montcalm, which is asking the House to support an amendment to the Canadian Multiculturalism Act so that it would not be applicable in Quebec. The act in question is part of a set of 10 constitutional and legislative positions, regulations and practices that recognize the contribution of all Canadians to the social fabric and economic well-being of the country.

The multiculturalism policy and its enabling legislation, the Canadian Multiculturalism Act, are at the heart of the Government of Canada's efforts to improve quality of life, preserve social cohesion and guarantee all citizens equal participation in the country's social, political, economic and cultural life, regardless of race or ethnic origin.

Canadian multiculturalism is an effective instrument for fostering social cohesion, mutual respect and a shared sense of Canadian identity. Canada is a pioneer in this regard, being the first country in the world to establish a constitutional multiculturalism state, one in which peoples of all races, religions, cultures and languages have come to join our indigenous peoples.

Because of our Canadian Multiculturalism Act, Canada is viewed internationally as a model for promoting social cohesion. Our acceptance of cultural diversity is fundamental to our Canadian values of human rights and respect for differences and has played a role in our continued successful ranking on the United Nations human development index.

Private Members' Business

Canada's model of multiculturalism is one of integration, not assimilation. Assimilation can be described as the process whereby new immigrants become indistinguishable within the dominant host society. In contrast, integration involves adding to the existing culture, which in turn enhances society. The majority of immigrants who come to Canada do integrate into society. They go to school, live and work in local communities and contribute to society at large.

Bilingualism and multiculturalism both speak to Canada's unique national identity. They are not in opposition. They are both assets that have enabled the building of a country that is one of the most envied in the world. Enshrined in our Constitution and in our Charter of Rights and Freedoms, our official bilingualism and our multiculturalism have supported each other in the past and must continue to move forward together.

No single set of policies can encompass the distinct historical legacies and current needs of Canada's diverse communities. It would be regrettable, indeed tragic, if the policy framework of multiculturalism were seen as operating at cross purposes, as if anyone who supports Quebec's national goals must reject multiculturalism or as if supporting multiculturalism means denying Quebec nationalism.

The Multiculturalism Act is compatible with Quebec's special status. The act aims to build relations of inclusive citizenship that embrace all Canadians.

Multiculturalism in Canada is not just for newcomers. Multiculturalism is about, and for, all Canadians. Multiculturalism is about mainstream Canada because mainstream Canada is multicultural.

Our history in Canada shows that the Canadian Multiculturalism Act has helped create a society where diversity is accepted and where integration is successfully taking place. It has helped build a country that takes pride in its multicultural heritage.

• (1755)

The last few decades have shown that the Canadian Multiculturalism Act and Quebec's intercultural model have managed to work well alongside each other. One policy has not caused a problem for the other. Without a doubt there are differences in the policies, but each has helped forge a Canada that we can all be proud of.

The Canadian Multiculturalism Act was created to preserve and enhance our multicultural heritage and to help ensure the equal participation of all Canadians in society. The act provides a framework that is expansive and visionary. There is room within that framework for the voices and perspectives of all Canadians, including those of Quebecers.

[*English*]

In 1971, the federal government, through its multicultural policy, recognized the diversity found in Canada as a fundamental characteristic of Canadian society. This policy recognized that Canada was built not only on the contributions of indigenous peoples and the two official language communities, French and English, but also on the contributions of the many diverse communities that have come from all over the world, over the span of decades, to settle

here in what is now known as Canada. It was an aspirational statement that would lead the way to the Canada we know today.

In 1988, the Parliament of Canada embedded our multiculturalism policy in legislation through the Canadian Multiculturalism Act. The Canadian Multiculturalism Act, now over 30 years old, provides the framework for federal responsibilities and activities. It brings Canadians closer together and promotes mutual respect among Canadians of all backgrounds.

Since the Canadian Multiculturalism Act has been in place, it has become a core component of Canadian identity. It has helped build a cohesive society by assisting groups and individuals to participate in all spheres of Canadian society. The act has contributed to promoting mutual respect and peaceful relations among Canadians of different backgrounds and assisted in strengthening bonds of mutual trust and responsibility.

As much as multiculturalism has become a core component of our identity, so, too, has our country's linguistic duality become a defining element of Canadian identity. Our Official Languages Act complements the Canadian Multiculturalism Act. Both recognize that there is a uniqueness to the diverse population in Canada and that this unique heritage is worth preserving. These two acts are symbols of Canada and its heritage.

After 30 years, I can confidently say that the Canadian Multiculturalism Act has served our nation well. In Canada, diversity is one of our greatest strengths, yet we must never forget that it demands our continuous effort, attention and care, so that it can continue to grow. Today, according to Statistics Canada data, immigration accounts for about two-thirds of overall population growth. Our multicultural heritage should not be divisive, particularly in a democracy that respects individual freedoms as much as Canada. Generations of immigrants have come and successfully settled across this country, and we can see the success of their integration simply by looking around this chamber or walking down the streets of just about any city in Canada.

Multiculturalism is not simply a government policy; it is the lived experience of people across our country, a country in which Canadians of different origins live and work side by side and where these same Canadians, new and not so new, work to learn the languages, customs and history of our country that they, in turn, share with us as equal members of Canadian society. This two-way street has helped shape us as a country.

The work to lay the foundation for the multicultural country Canada is today was done by past generations.

• (1800)

Today, young Canadians are consistently more accepting of immigration and cultural diversity than older generations. On the whole, Canada's multiculturalism policy and the subsequent Canadian Multiculturalism Act have helped create the Canada of today: a Canada that is open and welcoming of cultural diversity, and a Canada that will remain a multicultural society.

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am very proud and truly honoured to rise in the House today to speak to the bill introduced by my Bloc Québécois colleagues.

I am proud to be a Quebecker. I am proud to be part of this nation, which, against all odds, has always demonstrated not only its fighting spirit, but also a willingness to overcome hardships with honour and dignity. I love the history of Quebec. I love the particularities of Quebec. I love the culture of Quebec. I am a Quebecker, like my 77 other colleagues elected to the House who, along with me, represent Quebec's 78 ridings.

Quebec is not a monolithic block. Quebec draws its strength from its diversity. Whether one is a sovereignist, like my friends in the Bloc Québécois, left-leaning, like the member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, a centralizing federalist, like my friends in the Liberal Party, or Conservative, like me and my nine other colleagues, we are all Quebeckers. We can be proud of this nation, which was in fact recognized by a Conservative government.

I studied history, and I am proud of the history of Quebec. We all know that the first nations have existed and still exist on Quebec territory since the dawn of time.

Yesterday I celebrated the 12th anniversary of my first election. I am proud to have spent 12 years and one day representing the Huron-Wendat people in either the National Assembly or the House of Commons. Their territory used to be called the Huron Village. I am very proud to represent this nation because we must always keep in mind that our territory has been occupied by the first nations since the dawn of time.

The first Europeans came here as colonists, as they used to be called. There was Jacques Cartier in 1534, and Samuel de Champlain in 1608. On July 3, Champlain founded Quebec City, ensuring that the permanent foundation of the European presence on North American soil would be part of history under the French regime. We have worn our French identity with honour, pride and dignity for more than 400 years.

A debate is currently taking place about preserving the language, which is the very essence of what we are as Quebeckers. We must never forget that language is part of our history, our heritage, and it is up to us to preserve it so we can show off Quebec in all its glory.

The British arrived in 1759, 1760 and 1763. We must salute the fact that, for more than 260 years, francophones and anglophones have been living on Quebec soil. We are also living alongside other groups who came to Quebec. In the 1840s, Quebec welcomed thousands of people from Ireland fleeing the great famine. Their descendants continue to make Quebec proud. Just because someone is born in a place that has no ties to France does not make them less of a Quebecker. Quite the contrary. Three Quebec premiers had Irish roots. I am thinking of the Johnson brothers.

We have great politicians who also made their mark and had Irish roots. I am thinking of Gilles Duceppe, among others. There is no shame in that, quite the contrary. We are proud of the intermingling that has taken place over the years.

Private Members' Business

Confederation in 1867 was made possible with the support and assistance of what were then known as French Canadians. George-Étienne Cartier and Sir John A. Macdonald built this country, which allowed Quebec to live and take charge of its destiny within Canada, governed by the laws of Canada. We have always managed to live here in French, and that is something to be protected. That is Quebec's greatest honour.

I mentioned immigration. I must admit that I am fortunate and proud to have a conflict of interest, because I myself am the child of immigrants.

• (1805)

My parents chose and were chosen to move here in 1958, and I was born in 1964. The greatest gift is that my parents, who are now 96 and 97 years old, raised me as a Quebecker. They did not spend their time telling me stories about how things were back in their day in their home country. Instead, they told me how we could live with our pride in our ancestors' legacy here, in Quebec, in Canada. I cannot thank them enough for that.

Even though my father could not stand up on skates for more than four seconds before falling because he had never skated before in his life, he could talk about Maurice Richard, Jean Béliveau and Guy Lafleur with an enthusiasm that would embarrass me today. That is how passionate he was about talking about our national sport. I am hardly exaggerating. I know that members of all parties here in the House have wonderful immigration success stories, and my parents' story is one of them.

Since we are talking about immigration, Quebec's uniqueness emerged in all its glory over the years through the measures that were taken in collaboration with the federal government with regard to immigration. Take, for example, the 1971 Lang-Cloutier agreement, which allowed Quebec to have immigration representatives in the embassies; the 1975 Andras-Bienvenue agreement, which clarified Quebec's role in the selection process; and the well-known 1978 Cullen-Couture agreement, which allowed Quebec to clearly define the selection criteria for its immigrants.

I am getting to the subject at hand today, namely multiculturalism, because, in 1991, there was the Gagnon-Tremblay-McDougall agreement on Quebec's specific role in the selection of immigrants. All of that was done within Canada and in accordance with Canadian laws, including the Canadian Multiculturalism Act, which came into effect in 1988. Obviously, policies had been put in place under the 15th Prime Minister of Canada, the Right Hon. Pierre Elliott Trudeau, but the act as we know it, the 1988 act, received royal assent under Brian Mulroney, the boy from Baie-Comeau.

Private Members' Business

I know he is not the only Quebecker to have led the country. We had Wilfrid Laurier; Louis St. Laurent, my riding's namesake; our 15th Prime Minister, Mr. Trudeau, and his son, our current Prime Minister; and Paul Martin, who was also a Quebec MP. However, I do not think anyone would fault me for saying that we can be very proud of Brian Mulroney, that Quebecker who led Canada, the boy from Baie-Comeau. Had he had any concerns whatsoever about the Canadian Multiculturalism Act in 1988, he would not have gone there.

The Conservatives recognize the rights of first nations. The Conservatives recognize that French and English are the founding, national and official languages of this country. That is what enables Quebec to be a distinct, French-speaking society within Canada. We believe all Canadians are equal. They have the same rights and powers and enjoy the same benefits. We embrace shared values like equality, democracy and the rule of law.

Section 2 of the Canadian Multiculturalism Act allows for special agreements between the federal government and the provinces. That is why I can understand why sovereignists are worried when we talk about that with the current government, which is highly centralist and thinks that Ottawa knows what is best for the provinces. We take exactly the opposite approach.

The Conservatives are the ones who recognized Quebec as a nation. The Conservatives are the ones who gave Quebec a seat at UNESCO. The Conservatives are the ones who gave Quebec more powers over immigration. The Conservatives are the ones who are open to the idea of giving Quebec more powers over culture and immigration. We are the ones who are open to the idea of a single tax return. Most importantly, we are the ones who want Bill 101 to apply to federally regulated businesses. The Conservatives are the ones who very seriously respect Bill 21 because, technically, it fell precisely under provincial jurisdiction.

If we want Canada to continue to prosper and assert itself as it has done so well for more than 400 years, then we need a Conservative government that will respect the laws, jurisdiction and distinctiveness of Quebec.

• (1810)

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleagues for their speeches.

I think tonight's subject and the discussion we are having are interesting, but I am wondering if now is really the right time.

This is early December, and we are in the middle of the second wave of the pandemic. There are 1,500 new cases of COVID-19 per day in Quebec. Hospitals are being forced to cut back because the system cannot take care of everyone. Major surgeries are being postponed.

Talking about philosophical or, some might say, even ideological subjects is all well and good, but we could have devoted this time of debate to current events. We learned yesterday that 10,000 restaurants have already closed their doors over the past few months in Quebec, and according to other restaurant owners, the worst is yet to come over the next few weeks.

As I said at the outset, this is an interesting debate because it is about living together in harmony and how we organize a multicultural society, like the one in which we live. Many societies and countries around the world are having these difficult debates and discussions, because there are several models, which sometimes clash or coexist. I will come back to this, because it is important.

None of these models is perfect, they could all be improved upon, and, sometimes, some are more suited to the historical and social reality of a particular country.

I will start with the case of Norway, which is a bit far from us. Quebec is a francophone society, a very small minority in North America, as my colleague from Montcalm mentioned earlier. However, Quebec can and has the opportunity to attract francophone immigrants, which we are already doing a fair bit. The Government of Quebec has full authority to choose from among those in the economic immigration class. Many points are given to those with knowledge of French in order to have them come and live among us. That is why so many people from the Maghreb have moved to Quebec in recent years. I commend them for it.

Norway does not have this luxury. It has a population of four million people who speak a language not spoken anywhere else in the world. They obviously welcome very few immigrants, as it is a question of survival for them and they have no other options.

I want to talk about three other types of integration models that are more familiar to us. The first one involves severe assimilation or integration, in which newcomers are asked to leave behind their identities, their customs, their cultures, their foods or their songs to blend in with the majority and the nation. This model is similar to the one France has adopted in recent years.

The French model is a very colonialist one. Algeria, for instance, was considered to be an integral part of French territory. In the African colonies, young African students were forced to take tests on the cheeses of Normandy. In this model, people lose everything they had and everything they have in order to assimilate into the dominant paradigm.

Here, we are obviously more familiar with the multiculturalism model. We invite people to come to work in our society and contribute to it and to raise a family here, in order to build a better future for them and their children. They can keep their customs, their traditions and some of their values, provided that they are compatible with our democratic values, of course.

They are given the space they need to continue being who they are. We even promote this because diversity is valued and we seek to put it forward. This perspective advances the rights of minorities while respecting the laws of the host country, of course. The use of a minority lens truly allows the focus to be on the promotion, development and protection of the rights of minorities. That is the model found in English Canada.

Does this model work for Quebec? I think not. In any event, that is not the Quebec consensus. Why? We mentioned it earlier: Quebecers are not a minority, but a nation. This is not the first time we have heard it in Parliament. The recognition of the Quebec nation was made official by Parliament in 2004 and by the federal government in 2006.

• (1815)

There is a consensus in Quebec on interculturalism, which is closely related to multiculturalism. While some would turn this into a battle and pit one against the other, we are saying that the two can coexist.

Philosopher Gérard Bouchard talks about this in his book entitled *L'interculturalisme*. He believes that multiculturalism and interculturalism are both part of pluralistic philosophies that emphasize respect for identities and diversity.

Obviously there is a major difference between the two. If not, there would not be two different concepts and we would not be talking about two different approaches.

Interculturalism is about a common culture, as was mentioned earlier. Personally, I like to talk about a common foundation that brings people together. In Quebec, that foundation has been carefully examined and established by several commissions and in a number of reports that talk about the desire to bring people together while respecting their diversity. We are talking about a foundation or a common culture based on democratic rules, equality among people and, obviously, the French language as the common public language in Quebec. I think there is also a consensus on that.

The matter of language and francization of immigrants is extremely important, because it is also the gateway to a common culture in Quebec. Why am I talking about this?

Because interculturalism was an attempt to strike a balance between individual and collective rights. Tension between individual and collective rights exists in all societies. There is no perfect model. In Quebec, the Charter of the French Language is a good example of that. It prioritizes collective rights such as the preservation and survival of the French language in this part of North America. On other issues, individual rights take precedence.

Finding that equilibrium, engaging in that debate is an ongoing process. We find ways to balance what Gérard Bouchard called “respect for universal rights”, which are individual rights, with respect for diversity, identity and every individual's roots. That equilibrium is always fragile, always a give and take. We are constantly fine-tuning it.

We in the NDP are convinced that these two approaches can coexist. I will give a simple example, which I know personally: it coexists within my political party. In fact, these two notions are part of our platform. In our election platform, we talk about “multiculturalism”, while in our statutes and regulations, we talk about “interculturalism”. We are not always bickering. On the contrary, we can have a constructive dialogue and put forward two approaches that can actually exist alongside each other.

One of the issues we have with the bill currently before us is that we are having trouble seeing what problem it seeks to address.

Private Members' Business

For Quebec, we saw respect for interculturalism in the selection of immigrants, in the application of Bill 101, and in the integration services for newcomers that are part of the Canada–Québec Accord relating to immigration and temporary admission of aliens. I would like to remind members of some of the important articles of this agreement.

Article 24 states the following:

24. Canada undertakes to withdraw from the services to be provided by Québec for the reception and the linguistic and cultural integration of permanent residents in Québec.

Article 25 reads as follows:

25. Canada undertakes to withdraw from specialized economic integration services to be provided by Québec to permanent residents in Québec.

Article 26 states the following:

26. Canada shall provide reasonable compensation for the services referred to in sections 24 and 25 provided by Québec

I am trying to see what problem exactly they are looking to fix. I get the impression that this is more of a philosophical or ideological debate. In fact, I see no real obstacle, barrier or roadblock.

In addition, the program run by Canadian Heritage, which is based on the existing legislation, ensures that Quebec organizations receive funding for integrating immigrants, for respecting diversity and for fighting discrimination. These organizations include Actions interculturelles de développement et d'éducation in Sherbrooke, the Canadian Council for Refugees, the Girls Action Foundation of Montreal and the Armenian Apostolic Church diocese. There are many others.

I think we need to have a thoughtful and nuanced debate on these issues.

• (1820)

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Madam Speaker, I worked meticulously on my speech, so I hope that it will address many of the questions my colleagues have raised in their speeches.

I want to recognize my hon. colleague from Montcalm and thank him for his important speech on the bill that he sponsored, Bill C-226, an act to amend the Canadian Multiculturalism Act regarding its non-application in Quebec. This bill is very important for Quebec because it would amend the Canadian Multiculturalism Act to provide that it does not apply in Quebec.

I remind members that there are different conceptual levels of multiculturalism. We need to distinguish between multiculturalism as a social fact of ethnocultural diversity and multiculturalism as a social construct or state ideology. The construct of multiculturalism is a symbolic representation of a nation's political vision. Diversity is viewed differently by Quebecers and by Canadians.

Adjournment Proceedings

The Canadian myth portrays Canada as a fundamentally multi-cultural country, as though there were no social hierarchy created by the cultural domination of the historical anglophone majority. By contrast, Quebec's national vision interprets diversity as a meeting with a host society. This meeting involves a form of cultural exchange. That means immigrants turned citizens integrate into the host society's culture, which evolves by subsuming aspects of the cultures of Quebec's diverse residents.

Unlike the Canadian representation of multiculturalism, the Quebec model involves cultural convergence, which strengthens the nation's common culture without halting its progress.

The term multiculturalism also refers to another conceptual level, that of public policy, the purpose of which is to promote a national vision related to a particular view of multiculturalism by implementing specific measures and programs designed to bring in diversity one way or another.

As mentioned earlier, Canada's policy dates back to 1970. Obviously, it quickly came under heavy criticism from Quebec because it would relegate Quebecers to being just one ethnic minority among many. What is more, while multiculturalism is presented as an option that is preferable to assimilation, it is an outdated approach with a trivializing effect. It marginalizes communities and traps them in their culture of origin. This leaves groups more isolated, causing them to turn in on themselves.

It is not just Quebecers and francophones who criticize multiculturalism for being divisive. The same critique was brought forward by English-speaking Canadian author Neil Bissoondath in his book entitled *Selling Illusions: The Cult of Multiculturalism in Canada*.

What specifically are we criticizing about multiculturalism? I will go straight to the point that interests me even more deeply, that is, everything that our theorist, sociologist and historian Gérard Bouchard has inscribed in our cultural heritage.

According to him, Quebec's interculturalism is a model of integration, as I said earlier, that is distinct from assimilation or multiculturalism. The main components that Mr. Bouchard outlined are as follows: promoting French as a civic language that is a condition for participation in public life; respecting the rights of all Quebecers, including those most vulnerable to discrimination because of cultural differences such as language, religion and customs; recognizing the majority-minority relationship underlying Quebec's ethnocultural reality; giving priority to collective integration, as befits a small nation whose cultural future is a source of constant concern; developing a common culture; and emphasizing intercultural connections and exchanges.

• (1825)

Let me quote Mr. Bouchard:

One of the model's primary concerns is avoiding assimilation. Rather, its goal is integration, adherence to our society's fundamental values as defined in our Charter. It also expects newcomers to learn French and participate in civic life. As for the common culture, it develops through free intercultural interaction and feeds off all contributions, from the majority and minorities alike. Nobody is expected to renounce their culture.

Quebec's interculturalism took shape in the late 1990s with the publication of a white paper entitled *Let's Build Québec Together: A Policy Statement on Immigration and Integration*. It states that Quebec is a society where French is the common language of public life, a democratic society where everyone's participation and contribution is expected and facilitated, a pluralistic society open to everyone's contribution within the limits imposed by respect for basic democratic values.

It is therefore essential that the social and economic integration of immigrants take place in French. Economically, interculturalism must provide immigrants with the resources to get into the job market, and that starts with learning French. The notion of exchange is key to the policy of interculturalism because, politically, interculturalism implies that the state respects intercultural principles, especially citizen participation, intercultural exchange and the fight against discrimination.

The civic route is preferred over the courts for settling cultural disputes. Inclusivity and the importance of the common culture are the strengths that distinguish interculturalism from Canadian multiculturalism.

State secularism is a model for integration and a way of accommodating ethnocultural diversity. This is a principle that establishes the separation of government and religion, the religious neutrality of the state, equality for all citizens, and guaranteed freedom of conscience and freedom of religion.

In closing, it is important to know that the two policies are independent. The one does not have to involve the other. Whether it is true or not, the important thing is that, in any case, this is a Quebec discussion that concerns the nation of Quebec, its identity and its future. It does not concern Canada in any way. Interculturalism, like secularism, is a matter for public discussion and debate. There is a clear consensus among all parliamentarians in Quebec that these debates are profoundly national and democratic. They have been held and will be held in our National Assembly, period.

• (1830)

[*English*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): 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.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[*English*]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, Conservatives are calling on the government to take concrete action in response to gross violations of fundamental human rights in China.

In my earlier question, I had asked about three specific areas of action. Sometimes Canadians hear about what is happening in other parts of the world, and they feel helpless. We cannot do everything to solve every problem around the world, but we can take concrete action. We can take steps ourselves to try to make things better.

The first thing we can do is use Magnitsky sanctions. We can end this culture of impunity that sometimes exists around violations of human rights. We can list people under the Magnitsky act, and therefore hold them accountable and prevent them from moving their money to Canada, from travelling to Canada and so forth.

Magnitsky sanctions are taking off globally as a vehicle for ending impunity for violations of human rights. It is encouraging to see Europeans taking steps in that direction, following steps made by the British and Americans, as well as by us in Canada, thanks to work done by my colleague, the member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman on getting a Magnitsky sanctions bill passed in the last Parliament.

The Magnitsky sanctions bill is only as good as its use, and the government has, disgracefully I think, failed to list any officials from China under the Magnitsky act. The fact is that our allies, in some cases, have already done so.

The second thing we need to do is strengthen our laws on supply chains to ensure that we are no longer importing products that are made through violations of human rights. Canada has very weak laws right now on supply chains. We have the significant risk that even products procured by the government involve slave labour or other violations of fundamental human rights.

The third thing we need to do is not be complicit in human rights violations through our own tax dollars. That is why I, and other Conservatives, have been calling on the government to withdraw from the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, the AIIB. This is a Chinese state-controlled bank that functions as part of China's wider belt and road initiative: its neo-colonial agenda to promote its model of governance around the world.

This point is made very clearly in the transition binder for the Minister of International Development. It baffles me that the Minister of International Development continues to support participation in the AIIB, despite the reality that it is part of China's strategic efforts to promote its governance around the world.

Why would we pay for that? Why would we ask Canadians to pay taxes so that those tax dollars could be sent over to this Chinese state-controlled development bank? We could be doing so much more good if we were instead using this money to promote real development in a way that is aligned with Canadians interests and Canadian values.

I note, parenthetically, that the AIIB is building pipelines in Azerbaijan and in Turkey. I highly doubt, given the human rights standards of this development bank and of the government in China more broadly, that proper consultation with indigenous people is happening in the construction of these pipelines in Asia.

It is particularly striking since the Minister of International Development has a sad record of attacking Canada's energy sector. In

Adjournment Proceedings

fact, in 2012, she tweeted, "It's time to landlock Alberta's tar sands."

This minister, who has expressed a desire to landlock Canada's own energy resources, is allowing our international development to fund the construction of pipelines, in other countries, that are designed as part of the strategic foreign policy objectives of the Chinese government.

Why is the government effectively putting forward measures that are undermining the success of our domestic energy sector, while using our development assistance dollars to fund the advancement of China's foreign policy interests and to fund the construction of pipelines in other countries that do not have nearly the same human rights standards as development projects here in Canada?

These are important questions. While the government is seeking to sound tougher on China, the fact is it has done nothing. The government has done nothing in the area of Magnitsky sanctions. It has done nothing in the area of strengthening our laws on supply chains. It has done nothing in terms of recognizing the issues around the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.

The very least we could do to combat China's human rights abuses—

• (1835)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sorry, the hon. member's time is up. The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Mr. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan for raising what I think we both believe to be a very important issue. We speak on it regularly, he and I and others, at the Canada-China committee.

As he knows well from that work, Canada is indeed alarmed by the human rights situation of the Uighurs and other Turkic ethnic minority groups in China. This was expressed most recently as last night by Ambassador Dominic Barton at the committee's meeting.

The nature and scale of the abuses by Chinese authorities of Uighurs under the pretext of countering extremism are deeply disturbing to us. Canada remains troubled by the mass arbitrary detentions, religious persecution, repressive surveillance, allegations of torture, mistreatment, forced labour and mass arbitrary separation of children from their parents, among other abuses.

Adjournment Proceedings

These actions by the Chinese government are contrary to its own constitution, are in violation of its international human rights obligations and are inconsistent with the United Nations global counter-terrorism strategy. Our government has made its concerns known publicly, including in multilateral fora, and privately through diplomatic representations with Chinese authorities whenever we get the opportunity.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs has raised this issue with his Chinese counterpart, Foreign Minister Wang Yi, at their bilateral meetings, including the June 2019 G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Japan. The most recent meeting was in Rome this past August. The minister also raised the issue directly with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, during a meeting with her in Geneva in August of this year.

Canada has made several statements at the UN, including at the United Nations General Assembly's Third Committee, where we joined 38 other countries in co-signing a joint statement on human rights in Xinjiang and Hong Kong on October 6, 2020. In June of this year, during the 44th session of the HRC, Canada and 27 other countries signed a joint statement on the human rights situation in Xinjiang.

In these statements and others, we repeatedly and jointly, working multilaterally because that is most effective, called for immediate, meaningful and unfettered access to Xinjiang for independent observers, including the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and her office, and relevant special procedure mandate holders. Most recently, the trade commissioner service has updated its guidance for businesses on the risk of doing business in China, including risks related to human rights abuses and forced labour. Ensuring companies adhere to responsible business practices is essential for managing social, reputational, legal and economic risks.

Canada is committed to engaging bilaterally with China and working alongside our partners to advocate for the human rights of Uighurs and other Turkic ethnic groups in China. We will not leave any stone unturned. We will continue to work in close collaboration with our allies. We will continue to push for this issue to be investigated through an international independent body and for impartial experts to access the region so they can see the situation first-hand and report back evidence.

I assure everyone that the promotion, protection and respect of human rights are core priorities of Canada's foreign policy. Canada will continue to raise its concerns about the human rights situation in China. We will continue to call on China to live up to its international obligations, as well as its own—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Unfortunately, the time is up.

The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, it is disappointing to hear that response, because I think the parliamentary secretary, and more broadly the government, have a limited sense of what Canada can do in response to these events. It is not enough to make statements and say the government phoned a certain person and raised these concerns.

The reality is that if we have impunity, if we do not have sanctioning and if we do not have laws that prevent the sourcing of materials from slave labour, this will continue to happen. If we continue to write cheques to a Chinese state-owned development bank, while it is holding Canadian hostages and is involved in these horrific human rights abuses, how is it going to take statements of concern seriously?

I asked about Magnitsky sanctions. Our allies have already come forward with Magnitsky sanctions. The member wants us to work in concert with our allies. Our allies already have tougher supply chain laws and are already using Magnitsky sanctions, and it was the Obama administration that strongly advised countries not to participate in the AIIB.

Why is the member not working with our allies to use real, meaningful tools, as I have suggested, to respond to these gross violations of human rights?

• (1840)

Mr. Robert Oliphant: Madam Speaker, in 2009, I had the tremendous opportunity to meet with Rebiya Kadeer. She is considered the mother of all Uighurs. At the time, she was the president of the World Uyghur Congress and held that office for nine years. When I met with her, Mr. Harper, the former prime minister, happened to be in China at the time. She begged him to raise this issue. All he said was that he would raise general concerns and some specific cases. Haroon Siddiqui wrote an excellent article about this.

We will take no lessons from the Conservatives about talking, engaging and working for human rights to ensure we get this done. The former government did nothing. We are there, our Prime Minister is there as is our Minister of Foreign Affairs every day working on human rights to ensure we are engaged. We will be successful at making our world a better place.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, the Canada Energy Regulator recently published a report entitled “Canada's Energy Future 2020”. In that report, the CER presents two scenarios: a reference scenario of business as usual and a so-called evolving energy system scenario which “continues the historical trend of increasing action on climate change.”

I want to make it clear here that the evolving scenario is not one that will take us to net-zero emissions by 2050. That critically important path was left unexplored in this report. The evolving scenario does show steadily declining use of fossil fuels combined with a concomitant increase in renewables such as wind and solar, but still leaves us producing five million barrels of oil every day at 2050.

The report contains a remarkable graph showing pipeline capacity in Canada along with total supply available for export. I say remarkable as it is the first time I have seen the CER admitting what many of us have long known or suspected, and that is that under the evolving scenario, the Keystone XL and Trans Mountain expansion pipelines will not be needed at all if we make even timid efforts to fight climate change.

Only the Enbridge Line 3 expansion would be needed under this scenario to handle increased production. I remind members that the evolving scenario does not get us even close to net zero by 2050, so Line 3 may not be needed either if we really want to meet our commitments.

Remember again, these pipelines I mention are expansion pipelines. The Line 3 expansion, the Trans Mountain expansion and Keystone XL are not designed to access new markets. They will all ship oil and bitumen to the U.S.A. They are not designed to get prices for our products. Their *raison d'être* is to handle expanded production from the oil sands. Under present conditions and any reasonable projection into the future, that expanded production will be minimal at best.

The lack of expanded production is not limited to Canada. It is not because of increased red tape here. All these pipelines are being built under Harper-era regulations. The world simply does not want more oil. The near future is a world in which, according to energy and investment experts, production will drop not due to geology or even demand, but due to a sharp decline in investment.

Recently Imperial wrote down a billion dollars of its Canadian oil sands assets. Total recently wrote down \$8 billion of similar assets.

Oil investments are plummeting in the U.S.A. and elsewhere in the world. Norway will not expand its production and neither will Denmark. In fact, Denmark announced it will drop its production to zero by 2050.

Keystone XL is being built by TransCanada Energy and recently received a big investment from the Province of Alberta to ensure it did not give up for lack of investment dollars. Joe Biden says that he will not allow it to be built, but that may be moot because energy investment analysts are saying we do not need Keystone XL anymore.

Energy investors are telling companies they do not want to invest in new projects that are doomed to failure in a world with shrinking demand for oil. They want to reap the dividends of production, not added development. They know we will need oil in coming years; we just will not need as much.

The story for Trans Mountain is the same except this time it was the federal government that bought the pipeline. It will simply not be needed. We would be wasting valuable political capital fighting the U.S.A. over Keystone XL and we are wasting taxpayer money by investing in both these projects.

• (1845)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, our government is

Adjournment Proceedings

guided by one principle as we work towards meeting our Paris targets. We want to exceed our 2030 objective and achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. We recognize that this will take real, meaningful action.

That is why our government recently introduced the Canadian net-zero emissions accountability act in Parliament. This bill would establish a legally binding process for the government in order to achieve our net-zero objective based on the best science available.

More than 120 countries, 1,000 companies, 2,000 chambers of commerce, 452 cities and some of the biggest investors in the world have joined Canada in this commitment.

[*English*]

However, we also recognize that reaching success will require investment and innovation throughout Canada's energy sector. We must do this to ensure we continue to create jobs for Canadians while moving forward on the path to a low-carbon future. Our government's supports for projects like Keystone XL, TMX and LNG Canada are part of that recognition. Canadian oil and gas is some of the most responsibly and sustainably produced in the world. This sector is Canada's largest investor by far in the clean-tech innovations that we need to reach our goals. Our government will continue to diversify our future energy mix while also generating economic benefits on our path to net zero.

Adjournment Proceedings

To that end, the Minister of Natural Resources will soon launch Canada's hydrogen strategy. The initiative, after broad consultations, will allow us to fully seize the opportunity hydrogen represents and build back better from the COVID-19 pandemic. Canada is already recognized as a global leader in the hydrogen fuel cell sector. We are also a hub for technical expertise and intellectual property. We produce leading products and services that are exported around the world. More than that, clean hydrogen has the potential to sharply reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. The strategy will strengthen our economic competitiveness through export potential, attract investment and create good sustainable jobs across the country. It could also drive down emissions in sectors like resource extraction and processing, freight transportation, power generation and manufacturing, as well as in the production of steel and cement where electrification may not be the best choice. It will take investment and support across the Canadian energy spectrum to meet our climate change commitments while also creating jobs and driving investment.

This is a critical moment. Tackling climate change is the challenge of our generation. To ensure a healthy future for the next generation we will need innovation, we will need collaboration, we will need all types of emerging technologies to get us to net zero by 2050. Our government remains committed to doing just that.

Mr. Richard Cannings: Madam Speaker, I could say one thing we do not need to get to net zero is any more pipelines. We have to prepare for this new world of declining oil production. The huge job losses we have seen in the Alberta oil patch are not going to be reversed no matter how many pipelines we build. The workers who have relied on exploration and construction jobs in the oil patch will need a new set of jobs to turn to in order to feed their families. We are disrespecting them and their needs by promising the moon if only we had more pipelines. New projects require world prices we will never see again. This is the time to create jobs for the future instead of pipelines. For instance, let us invest in massive retrofit programs, 10 times the amount announced in the fall economic statement, across the country that would create hundreds of thousands of well-paying jobs for electricians, plumbers, carpenters and welders in every community of Canada. That would give these workers the hope and respect they deserve and the jobs they need—

• (1850)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. parliamentary secretary.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Paul Lefebvre: Madam Speaker, I want to stress how important it is to our government to balance protecting the environment with creating jobs, including well-paying unionized jobs in natural resources and in construction.

We are looking for a balance as we continue to support and diversify Canada's energy sector and work towards achieving net-zero emissions. We know that this not only can be done, but must be done. Our government will always do what is necessary to achieve this goal, since that is what all Canadians, including future generations, deserve.

[*English*]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Madam Speaker, I found it very interesting that in the last round, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources was talking about the important role that oil and gas producers play in renewable energy. One thing I want to talk about is that, in my riding, some of the biggest investors we have in renewable energy are actually companies that were oil and gas producers long before they were renewable energy producers.

In particular, by the town of Gull Lake, there is a wind farm by Suncor Energy and Enbridge, which is named the SunBridge Wind Farm. The point I want to make is that our oil and gas companies realized, long before the government did, the need to invest in renewables and to diversify energy companies. When we are talking about going forward while reducing our emissions and trying to wean our way off fossils fuels, the important thing we have to keep in mind is exactly who the biggest contributors to renewable energy are. They are the energy-producing companies that we already have, which just happen to also be involved in oil and gas.

I am here to follow up on the question I had for the Minister of Natural Resources about the Keystone XL pipeline. I was hoping to hear more from him tonight about the importance of Keystone XL. The parliamentary secretary alluded to that here. I found it interesting that the member who was asking questions before me was also talking about Keystone XL.

The important thing we have to talk about when we speak of Keystone XL is the jobs it will create here in Canada and the amount of work it will provide for Canadians, especially as we are trying to find our way out of a global pandemic. People are looking for a way to get back to work, particularly in Saskatchewan and Alberta. People find their value in their jobs and in their ability to work. When we have a regulatory environment, such as we do right now, that is really stripping that ability for people to go back to work, it is eliminating their jobs and their livelihoods.

People feel the government does not have their backs and is not supporting them. It is really important we allow people to do what they do so well, which is to work to provide energy security for our country but also for the world. As the demand for energy continues to rise, Canadian energy needs to be the solution and needs to be what we focus on as we go forward.

One of the other aspects and benefits of a project like Keystone XL will be the revenue it brings into the communities and areas of the country it runs through. The royalties it produces are so important to the municipalities and communities around there, and particularly the companies that are oil and gas companies. They are the ones sponsoring a lot of what goes on in our communities, whether it be minor league baseball or hockey, recreation facilities or arts facilities. A lot of these oil companies are the ones really driving the sponsorships for these buildings and the economic growth in our communities, much beyond just purely building pipelines.

When we look at the entire economic snapshot, we need to focus on what exactly these companies are doing. They are providing jobs and opportunities, and the benefits go far beyond simply that of building a pipeline.

• (1855)

[Translation]

Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as I said in my previous remarks, our government has always supported Keystone XL because we know that this project will increase our access to markets in a safe, responsible and sustainable way. In fact, this project was discussed in the first phone call between the Prime Minister and U.S. President-elect Joe Biden.

Our government will continue to advocate for this project because we know that it has significant economic advantages, will create thousands of jobs in several states and will enhance North America's long-term energy security. It will also contribute to the strongest energy relationship in the world. We know that we can strike a balance between economic prosperity and the environment in the transition to a low-carbon future.

We understand the importance of striking this balance, so much so that we recently introduced in Parliament a Canadian net-zero emissions accountability bill. We know that our government's efforts to fight climate change, put a price on pollution and make investments that help our energy sector become more sustainable only strengthen the arguments in support of this bill.

[English]

Of the major suppliers of oil to the United States, Canada is one of the few with a price on carbon and a goal to achieve net zero by 2050. Our government has also strengthened its approach to meaningful consultation and acknowledging the importance of partnerships in natural resource projects in Canada.

Rightly, Canada has moved away from developing solutions for indigenous communities to collaborating and partnering with them, because we understand that working with indigenous peoples to find solutions will lead to better economic, social and environmental outcomes.

Our government's track record of doing the hard work necessary to ensure that major projects go forward the right way every step of the way is clear. Just look at the Trans Mountain expansion project. When the project was in jeopardy, we stepped up and did what was necessary to ensure construction. Construction is now well under way with approximately 4,900 jobs, and they are working on terminals, pump stations and installing pipe from Edmonton to Burnaby.

Adjournment Proceedings

That is nearly 5,000 jobs and more are to come. We are also continuing to engage with indigenous groups on the project, including exploring opportunities for economic participation and on the implementation of measures to address impacts on rights and other concerns.

Our government believes in a competitive and sustainable natural resource sector, and that good projects must go ahead with the full confidence of Canadians. Keystone XL is no different. To this point, the project has received all major approvals in both Canada and the United States. Projects like Keystone XL are necessary to ensure North American energy security during a highly uncertain time for global energy markets. Our government's efforts and support for this project has been and will continue to be unwavering.

As I mentioned at the beginning of my remarks, the Prime Minister raised the importance of this project with the president-elect at his first opportunity. That shows how much of a priority this is for our government. We look forward to construction moving forward, and we will continue to advocate for this project with President-elect Biden at every opportunity.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Madam Speaker, I would like to remind the member that President-elect Biden was part of the Obama administration that shut down the Keystone XL pipeline. I just want to make sure that it is more than just pretty words, and that there is actual, real, concrete action the government is taking.

On the Natural Law Energy website is the memorandum of understanding that it signed with TC Energy. It says that:

Natural Law Energy...and TC Energy began a partnership on September 29th, 2020. NLE will collaborate on energy projects across Turtle Island (North America). The first of these projects will be Keystone XL. The Investment in the first group of projects will be historic with growth potential. We honor our grandmothers and grandfathers by developing our shared business with integrity and showing responsibility to our Nations and traditional territories. NLE will lead with our value of safety. Traditional Natural Law, with constitutional governance and modern day corporate protocols will be implemented to ensure the health and well-being of Mother Earth for the next seven generations.

Again, this is about indigenous certainty and reconciliation going forward for—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Sorry, but I did allow a bit more time for the hon. member.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources.

[Translation]

Mr. Paul Lefebvre: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

• (1900)

[English]

There is certainly a meeting of the minds here. Basically, our government supports Keystone XL, and we will continue our unwavering support.

Adjournment Proceedings

[*Translation*]

This project has received all the major approvals in Canada and the United States. It will be hugely beneficial economically and create thousands of jobs on both sides of the border. It will ensure North America's long-term energy security and contribute to the strongest energy relationship in the world.

[*English*]

We know that we need to have a balance between economic prosperity and the environment as we transition into a low-carbon

economy. It is important that we continue down this path. We will continue to defend this project in Canada and in the United States.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): 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 7 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Wednesday, December 9, 2020

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS			
Season's Greetings		Mr. Trudeau.....	3202
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands).....	3197	Mr. O'Toole.....	3202
Order of Canada		Mr. Trudeau.....	3202
Ms. Jaczek.....	3197	Privacy	
Wardens of Bruce and Grey Counties		Mr. O'Toole.....	3202
Mr. Ruff.....	3197	Mr. Trudeau.....	3202
Black Business Initiative		Official Languages	
Mr. Fillmore.....	3197	Mr. Blanchet.....	3202
Le Book Humanitaire Community Organization		Mr. Trudeau.....	3202
Mr. Fortin.....	3198	Health	
Holiday Greetings		Mr. Blanchet.....	3202
Mr. Dubourg.....	3198	Mr. Trudeau.....	3203
Holiday Greetings		COVID-19 Emergency Response	
Mr. Brassard.....	3198	Mr. Singh.....	3203
Pictou County Hero		Mr. Trudeau.....	3203
Mr. Fraser.....	3198	Mr. Singh.....	3203
Status of Women		Mr. Trudeau.....	3203
Mrs. Brière.....	3199	Justice	
Firearms		Ms. Bergen.....	3203
Mr. Calkins.....	3199	Mr. Trudeau.....	3203
Holiday Season		Ms. Bergen.....	3203
Ms. Khera.....	3199	Mr. Trudeau.....	3203
COVID-19 Pandemic Response		Health	
Mr. Lake.....	3199	Mr. Martel.....	3204
Oshawa Rotary Clubs		Mr. Trudeau.....	3204
Mr. Carrie.....	3200	Mr. Martel.....	3204
Violence Against Women		Mr. Trudeau.....	3204
Ms. Kwan.....	3200	Mr. Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry).....	3204
Employment Insurance		Mr. Trudeau.....	3204
Ms. Chabot.....	3200	Mr. O'Toole.....	3204
Christmas Greetings		Mr. Trudeau.....	3204
Mr. Poilievre.....	3200	Official Languages	
Christmas Greetings		Mr. Beaulieu.....	3204
Mr. Housefather.....	3200	Mr. Trudeau.....	3205
		Mr. Beaulieu.....	3205
		Mr. Trudeau.....	3205
		Public Safety	
		Mr. Chong.....	3205
		Mr. Trudeau.....	3205
		Mr. Chong.....	3205
		Mr. Trudeau.....	3205
		Foreign Affairs	
		Mr. Chong.....	3205
		Mr. Trudeau.....	3205
		Mr. O'Toole.....	3205
		Mr. Trudeau.....	3206
		Employment	
		Mr. Cannings.....	3206

ORAL QUESTIONS

COVID-19 Emergency Response	
Mr. O'Toole.....	3201
Mr. Trudeau.....	3201
Mr. O'Toole.....	3201
Mr. Trudeau.....	3201
Mr. O'Toole.....	3202

Mr. Trudeau	3206
Health	
Mr. Blaikie	3206
Mr. Trudeau	3206
Mr. Van Bynen	3206
Mr. Trudeau	3206
Air Transportation	
Mrs. Kusie	3206
Mr. Trudeau	3207
Mr. Williamson	3207
Mr. Trudeau	3207
Mr. Albas	3207
Mr. Trudeau	3207
Mr. O'Toole	3207
Mr. Trudeau	3207
Health	
Mr. Thériault	3207
Mr. Trudeau	3207
Mr. Thériault	3208
Mr. Trudeau	3208
Official Languages	
Mr. Rayes	3208
Mr. Trudeau	3208
Mr. Rayes	3208
Mr. Trudeau	3208
Mr. O'Toole	3208
Mr. Trudeau	3208
Health	
Ms. Zann	3208
Mr. Trudeau	3209
Regional Economic Development	
Mr. Melillo	3209
Mr. Trudeau	3209
Mr. Melillo	3209
Mr. Trudeau	3209
Rail Transportation	
Mr. O'Toole	3209
Mr. Trudeau	3209
Public Services and Procurement	
Mr. Robillard	3210
Mr. Trudeau	3210
Indigenous Affairs	
Ms. Ashton	3210
Mr. Trudeau	3210
Points of Order	
Housing	
Ms. Gazan	3210
Motion	3210
(Motion agreed to)	3210

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Veterans Ombudsman	
Mr. MacAulay	3211
Agreement on Trade Continuity Between Canada and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	
Ms. Ng	3211
Federal Regulatory Management Initiatives	
Mr. Duclos	3211
Government Response to Petitions	
Mr. Lamoureux	3211
Canada-United Kingdom Trade Continuity Agreement Implementation Act	
Ms. Ng	3211
Bill C-18. Introduction and first reading	3211
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)	3211
Canada Shipping Act	
Mr. Manly	3211
Bill C-261. Introduction and first reading	3211
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)	3211
Petitions	
The Environment	
Mr. Manly	3212
Conversion Therapy	
Ms. Gladu	3212
Trans Mountain Pipeline	
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	3212
Human Rights	
Mr. Genuis	3212
Medical Assistance in Dying	
Mrs. Jansen	3212
Conversion Therapy	
Mrs. Jansen	3212
Human Rights	
Mr. Fergus	3213
Nigeria	
Mr. Fergus	3213
The Environment	
Mr. Fergus	3213
Human Rights	
Mr. Redekopp	3213
Medical Assistance in Dying	
Mr. Redekopp	3213
Human Organ Trafficking	
Mr. Redekopp	3213
Tourism	
Mr. Melillo	3213

Human Rights	
Mr. Melillo	3213
Medical Assistance in Dying	
Mr. Melillo	3213
Human Organ Trafficking	
Mr. Melillo	3213
Human Rights	
Mr. Shields	3214
Mr. Kurek	3214
Human Organ Trafficking	
Mr. Kurek	3214
Medical Assistance in Dying	
Mr. Kurek	3214
Human Rights	
Mr. Williamson	3214
Human Organ Trafficking	
Mr. Williamson	3214
Medical Assistance in Dying	
Mr. Williamson	3214
Human Rights	
Mr. Cooper	3214
Firearms	
Mr. Vis	3214
Sex Selection	
Mr. Vis	3214
Medical Assistance in Dying	
Mr. Vis	3214
Human Rights	
Mr. Vis	3214
Human Organ Trafficking	
Mr. Vis	3214
Questions on the Order Paper	
Mr. Lamoureux	3215
Questions Passed as Orders for Returns	
Mr. Lamoureux	3216
Request for Emergency Debate	
COVID-19 and Long-Term Care Facilities	
Mr. Davies	3219
Speaker's Ruling	
The Deputy Speaker	3220

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Criminal Code	
Bill C-7. Third reading	3220
Mr. Zimmer	3220

Mr. Lamoureux	3221
Mr. Doherty	3221
Mr. Melillo	3222
Mr. Lametti	3222
Ms. O'Connell	3222
Mr. Deltell	3224
Mr. Ste-Marie	3224
Mr. Garrison	3224
Ms. Shin	3225
Ms. Bendayan	3226
Mr. MacGregor	3226
Mr. Cooper	3226
Mr. Angus	3227
Mr. Melillo	3228
Mr. Lamoureux	3229
Mr. MacGregor	3229
Mr. Viersen	3229
Mr. Powlowski	3230
Mr. Garrison	3231
Mr. Genuis	3231
Mr. Dalton	3231
Mr. Melillo	3232
Ms. Bendayan	3232
Mr. Genuis	3233
Mr. Chiu	3233
Mr. Lamoureux	3234
Mr. Cooper	3234

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Canadian Multiculturalism Act	
Mr. Thériault	3235
Bill C-226. Second reading	3235
Mr. Lamoureux	3237
Mr. Vis	3237
Mr. Boulerice	3237
Ms. Dhillon	3237
Mr. Deltell	3239
Mr. Boulerice	3240
Ms. Gaudreau	3241

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

Foreign Affairs	
Mr. Genuis	3242
Mr. Oliphant	3243
The Environment	
Mr. Cannings	3244
Mr. Lefebvre	3245
Natural Resources	
Mr. Patzer	3246
Mr. Lefebvre	3247

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