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Chair: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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• (1200)

[*Translation*]

The Chair (Hon. Anthony Rota (Nipissing—Timiskaming, Lib.)): I call this meeting to order.

[*English*]

Welcome to the 23rd meeting of the House of Commons Special Committee on the COVID-19 Pandemic.

[*Translation*]

A reminder to all members that in order to avoid issues with sound, members participating in person should not also be connected to the video conference.

[*English*]

For those of you who are joining via video conference, I will remind you that when speaking you should be on the same channel as the language you are speaking, and please use your headsets.

[*Translation*]

As usual, please direct your remarks through the chair.

[*English*]

As I understand, there are no ministerial announcements today.

[*Translation*]

We will now proceed to presenting petitions.

[*English*]

I remind members that any petition presented during a meeting of this special committee must have already been certified by the clerk of petitions.

For members participating in person, I ask that they please come and drop their signed certificates off at the table once the petition is presented.

[*Translation*]

I would ask members to be very brief and concise, and to summarize the exact content of the petition.

We will continue.

[*English*]

The first person presenting a petition today is Ms. May.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I present two petitions this morning.

The residents of Saanich—Gulf Islands are calling on the government to simplify the process for protection of marine protected areas. It's a multi-layered communication process. The marine protected area first proposed in the 1970s for the southern Strait of Georgia, now called the Salish Sea, has been awaiting designation for so long that it was originally endorsed by Jacques Cousteau. That gives us a sense for why petitioners are calling for a simplified and more rapid process.

The second petition is from petitioners who are very concerned about our obligations under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and our commitments under the Truth and Reconciliation Commission calls to action. They specifically reference the RCMP violation of UNDRIP in its actions on Wet'suwet'en territory and ask the government to commit to actually living the principles embodied in UNDRIP.

The Chair: We will now go to Mr. Hardie.

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I am presenting a petition on behalf of the one in a million Canadians who suffer severe and adverse effects from vaccinations. Guillain-Barre syndrome is very debilitating, and this petition seeks the setting up of a no-fault accident or compensation system to help offset the loss of work, the loss of wages and the loss of quality of life that many of these people suffer. I'm pleased to present this petition pursuant to Standing Order 36.

• (1205)

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Mr. Trudel, you have the floor.

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Chair, culture is the soul of a people. Over the past 20 years or so, culture, especially music, has never been as accessible as it is now. Paradoxically, creators' incomes have never been so low. The advent of digital technology has completely overturned the system for distributing the wealth generated by creators for the benefit of various Web stakeholders, many of whom are billionaires. This petition addresses these problems and proposes realistic solutions.

The first is to set a minimum royalty model for streaming platforms for artists. The second is to update the existing private copying system. The third is for Internet and cell phone providers who sell their services as direct access to culture to share their profits with artists. The fourth is that the GAFAMs have to pay taxes on their services.

Six thousand people have already signed the first version of this petition, launched last month by musician Jordan Officer and supported by singer Barbara Secours.

As an artist, I am proud to present this petition today because the issues it raises are fundamental to the survival of Quebec culture.

[*English*]

The Chair: We'll now continue with Mr. Genuis.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I have four petitions to present today. I will be as brief as you suggested, although I will observe that if some members are going on longer during petitions than they normally do, it might be because the government has taken away so many of the tools that opposition members normally have for raising important issues in the House.

The first petition deals with the issue of euthanasia and long-term care. The petitioners are concerned that instead of focusing on improving medically assisted life, something that we know is a major issue in light of recent revelations, the government has put so much time and legislative energy into efforts to continually further expand euthanasia in Canada and remove vital safeguards.

The second petition speaks to the ongoing conversations happening in Canada around systemic discrimination and systemic racism. I think we do need to reflect on systemic discrimination. This petition deals specifically with Bill 21 in Quebec and raises concerns. The reality of the way that bill applies is that people from certain backgrounds who wish to practise their faith are not able to fully participate in Canadian society if they are employed in the public service. This petition asks the government to provide a response on that issue, something it hasn't done in response to past petitions on this.

The third petition deals with the issue of firearms. The petitioners want to see the government take a strong response in dealing with illegal guns and gun smuggling. The petition notes that the vast majority of firearms-related crimes in Canada involves illegal guns. At the same time, the petitioners are concerned that the government has the wrong focus—that is, harassing law-abiding firearms owners—without putting in place substantial measures to deal with illegal guns. The petitioners want to see the reversal of the order in council from May 1 and strong measures to deal with illegal firearms.

The fourth and final petition deals with Bill S-204, a bill that would make it a criminal offence for a Canadian to go abroad and receive an organ from a person who has not consented to giving that organ. It would also create a mechanism by which someone could be deemed inadmissible to Canada if they were involved in organ harvesting and trafficking. The petitioners are supportive of Bill S-204 and of similar bills in previous parliaments and would like to see us pass that bill as soon as possible.

The Chair: Presenting petitions, Mr. Lamoureux.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It is with pleasure that I table another petition by the residents of Winnipeg North. These residents have signed a petition asking the Government of Canada, and in fact all members of Parliament, to put a high priority on assisting our poorest seniors.

The increases to the GIS by \$200, and \$300 to the OAS, have been well received. They just want to highlight how important it is to support our seniors, in particular the poorest of our seniors.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: For members present in the Chamber, a reminder that they are asked to bring their petitions to the table.

[*English*]

We'll now proceed to statements by members.

We'll go to Ms. Atwin for the first one.

Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Fredericton, GP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

June 21 is National Indigenous Peoples Day, a day of acknowledgement and a day of celebration of the beautiful diversity of indigenous peoples across Turtle Island.

I wish to recognize the leadership of Chief Shelley Sabattis of the Welamukotuk First Nation in Oromocto, New Brunswick. Each year she and her council, volunteers and staff go above and beyond to show appreciation for their members and to demonstrate pride and culture while promoting well-being. We gather in an event where all are welcome to take part, from traditional hand drum-making with elders to moose meat and tacos.

This year we will celebrate a bit differently, but we will still stay connected, virtually and in spirit, to the vast network of indigenous peoples and allies. We need each other now more than ever. May we come together in song and stories and in solidarity. We will remember those who are not among us.

I hope all of Canada will join us in observing National Indigenous Peoples Day.

Mawiyapasuwok: let us come together. *Nit liech.*

• (1210)

The Chair: We'll now go to Mr. Beech.

Mr. Terry Beech (Burnaby North—Seymour, Lib.): Mr. Chair, COVID-19 is an unprecedented challenge for all communities across Canada, but as we do our part to flatten the curve, I often think about those who suit up every morning to serve on the front lines of our health care system. My mother is a home care worker and my sister is a nurse. Even before the crisis, they would often share the hardships they faced on a day-to-day basis. It's a tough job at the best of times. In a pandemic, these jobs are life-threatening.

I think we can all agree that these workers deserve more than our good wishes. They deserve a raise. That is why we have worked with the provinces to implement pandemic pay. In British Columbia more than 250,000 front-line workers are eligible for this program. That works out to a pay increase of about \$4 an hour. It's a small show of our appreciation for their difficult and priceless contribution to our country.

Share this message and say thanks to our front-line workers, participate in the 7 p.m. cheer, and order a pizza for your local nurses. It's the least we can do.

The Chair: We'll now go on to Mr. Shipley.

Mr. Doug Shipley (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We've been living in difficult times. Slowly, we are getting back to some resemblance of normalcy, although unfortunately not soon enough for some of our great summer festivals. It will not be normal in Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte this summer without the iconic Boots and Hearts weekend music festival, Kempenfest, Oro World's Fair, the Elmvale Fall Fair, or the Midhurst Autumnfest. Canada Day celebrations have been cancelled, but we can still celebrate the great nation we call home.

Because of the lack of Canada Day celebrations, I've created Happy Canada Day lawn signs that are available through my constituency office, free to all residents of Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte. I'm also hosting a drive-through party on Canada Day at the Royal Canadian Legion on St. Vincent Street in Barrie. All are welcome to attend. There will be cupcakes for all. Please drop by the legion between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m., and we can celebrate Canada Day safely together.

Thank you and have a great summer.

The Chair: Now we'll go on to Ms. Young.

Ms. Kate Young (London West, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Among the countless ordinary Canadians who have stepped up to do extraordinary work during COVID-19, I wish to draw attention to our teachers. Teachers have always had a special place in my heart. My father was a teacher, and my daughter-in-law, Kelly Webb, is one now. I'm certain that my colleagues can all easily remember a teacher in their past who played an important role in helping them achieve their potential. I remember my grade 12 English teacher, Vince Weaver, at Westminster Secondary School in London. He made me realize that I could do so much more than I believed.

Across the country, as schools closed, teachers did not stop their work. Some took their classes online. Others found innovative

ways to continue engaging with their students. This is not the school year anyone imagined, and what the next one will look like is unclear, but our teachers in London West and across Canada have shown that no matter what, they will be there to help our next generation shine.

The Chair: Before proceeding to the next presenter, I just want to remind the honourable members in the chamber that I realize that the six-foot limit makes it harder to whisper to each other, but we're hearing a bit of rumble, so I just want you to try to whisper at your best.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bergeron, you have the floor.

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Montarville, BQ): Mr. Chair, on July 1st, we will be celebrating one of the most important events for the riding of Montarville: the 175th anniversary of the city of Saint-Bruno-de-Montarville. The theme "Proud of our traditions" will be the focus of this celebration for the people of Montarville. This is a good illustration of the rich history of this municipality nestled in the western foothills of Mont-Saint-Bruno.

The seigneurie of Montarville was granted in 1710 to the illustrious former governor of Trois-Rivières, Pierre Boucher. The parish of Saint-Bruno, which took root there and in which a village grew, became a municipal corporation in 1845. To this day, it is one of the most prosperous localities, with a strong sense of belonging, a very dynamic community life and jealously preserved natural environments.

A whole program had been drawn up for the celebration, but the current health crisis has taken over some of the planned activities, which has in no way diminished the pride and festive spirit of the people of Montarville. On July 1st, we will have a good reason to be proud, in spite of everything.

Happy 175th anniversary to Saint-Bruno-de-Montarville.

● (1215)

[*English*]

The Chair: We'll now continue with Mr. Maloney.

Mr. James Maloney (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Chair, thank you for allowing me to take a moment to highlight an initiative that I started early on during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Heroes of Etobicoke—Lakeshore is an opportunity for citizens in my riding to recognize the contributions of those in their community who make life a bit easier. I'm pleased with the number of nominations I received that honour everyone from front-line workers to businesses that are innovating in these difficult times to volunteers who are finding new ways to reach out.

I think of Daniel Lauzon who set up Food for Now, a mobile service that helps take care of the homeless. I think of Toni Varone, who helped his business clients by forgiving their rents, or young Lucas, who wanted to thank his teachers. I've been moved and inspired by the countless stories of generosity, strength, resiliency, kindness, incredible character and creativity. I want to thank all the heroes, as well as the people who nominated them. Keep them coming.

Stay safe, everyone, and I wish you happy Canada Day early.

The Chair: We'll now move on to Ms. Wong.

Hon. Alice Wong (Richmond Centre, CPC): Mr. Chair, it gives me great pleasure to thank a local Richmond-based charity, the Social Diversity for Children Foundation, SDC, for its hard work both in raising funds for the purchase of personal protective equipment and in distributing this PPE to long-term care facilities and individual seniors' homes in the lower mainland of B.C.

The COVID-19 relief fund is supported by a dozen other non-profits, businesses and community groups. Over the past two months, SDC has been to 32 seniors homes and senior-related organizations. In total, it has delivered masks to 7,000 care workers, staff and seniors. It is amazing to have witnessed how the younger generation have gotten involved in caring for the elderly at this very challenging time.

The Chair: We'll now go to Ms. Damoff.

Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.): Mr. Chair, June is ALS Awareness Month, and 79 years after Lou Gehrig died from ALS little has changed. There's still no cure, and those with ALS typically die within five years of diagnosis.

On June 21, Canadians will gather virtually to raise funds for ALS Canada in the Walk to End ALS. In Halton, normally we meet each year at Bronte Creek Provincial Park on the May long weekend to raise funds for ALS Canada. This year I will virtually join Tim's Titans, a team formed to honour Tim Robertson, my friend who died in 2016 after living with ALS for 13 years. I have a T-shirt, with a picture of Lou Gehrig, that says, "Great Player...Lousy Disease" and "Tim's Titans...Great Team! ALS...Still a Lousy Disease."

Join me on June 21 for the virtual Walk to End ALS to raise funds to support patients and their families and for ALS research.

The Chair: We'll now continue with Ms. Khera.

Ms. Kamal Khera (Brampton West, Lib.): Mr. Chair, on Saturday our community stood and marched in solidarity against anti-black racism. The peaceful protests that we're seeing across the country and around the world were not triggered by an isolated incident. They are fuelled by decades of ineffective action against something that is so insidious and deeply entrenched in our history, systems and institutions. For us, that is the racial inequality faced by Canada's indigenous and black communities.

Anti-black racism is real. It exists right here in Canada, in our communities, including in Brampton. It exists when racialized students at McCrimmon Middle School are called "McCriminals". It exists when a shocking report exposes the Peel District School Board's failure to work fairly with the black community. It exists

when D'Andre Campbell, who was fighting mental illness, loses his life at the hands of the police.

It is clear that we need reform. We need to dismantle the systems that allow this privilege and oppression to take form, and address the unconscious bias plaguing our institutions.

We'll need to be bold, and the time to do that is now.

The Chair: We'll now go to Mr. Lloyd.

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): Mr. Chair, a few months ago I rose in the House on the eve of our closure due to COVID-19. I told Canadians we must not give in to fear, that we would carry on and get through this crisis stronger than ever.

Today, in this city and across Canada, Canadians are enjoying a beer on their favourite patios. Businesses are reopening, jobs are returning and our lives are starting to feel a bit normal again. Canadians pulled together, and because of that we did not see the devastating death toll that many had predicted.

Life may be returning to normal, but unfortunately, here in this chamber of democracy, the people's voices continue to be shut down. There is no good reason for Parliament to be suspended today. In the words of my grandfather, it's time for the Liberals to get with the program and bring back the House.

• (1220)

The Chair: We will now proceed with Ms. Jones.

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Labrador, Lib.): Mr. Chair, from in-person learning to virtual classrooms, COVID-19 has drastically changed the lives of students across the country, especially those in post-secondary education who are worried about covering costs like tuition or rent this coming fall.

Our government recognized that students should not have to worry or put their futures on pause during this difficult time. That's why last month the federal government introduced the Canada emergency student benefit.

If you're a high school student headed to a post-secondary school, or a current post-secondary student or a recent graduate, you can receive the Canada emergency student benefit every four weeks and have the financial support that you need to save for school. We also doubled Canada student grants and loans, enhanced the student loan program, increased supports for indigenous post-secondary education and introduced the Canada student service grant for those who wish to pursue it.

Our government is here to help all students get the support they need to pursue their future goals successfully. I wish them all the very best, and I wish all of you, my colleagues and those across Canada, a very happy National Indigenous Peoples Day, which is coming up on June 21.

The Chair: I want to remind the honourable members to keep to their 60 seconds so that we don't go over the time. I'm sure it would be a lot easier for everyone if we stuck to that limit.

We will now go to Mr. Aitchison.

Mr. Scott Aitchison (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC): Mr. Chair, I rise today to once again implore the government to do something about the horrible lack of access to and crazy cost of rural Internet service. Right now, too many areas of my riding have no access to rural Internet service at all, and those who can get service are paying through the nose. I've even heard constituents say that during this pandemic, they are having to choose between feeding their kids and educating them.

Over the last few weeks, Conservatives have been consulting with rural Canadians, and the results are in. My constituents are tired of fancy political promises. They are frustrated beyond belief by the new challenges created by this pandemic. They are absolutely fed up with having their pleas ignored.

All we want is affordable and reliable Internet service. Is that too much to ask of the government?

The Chair: We'll now go to Mr. MacGregor.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Chair, these last few months have been incredibly challenging for the residents of Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, who have been forced to deal with the economic and social consequences of COVID-19. The pandemic has laid bare the inadequacies of our social safety net, the weakness in our supply chains and the dependence of our society on essential workers, who often work long hours for low wages, putting themselves and their families at risk. We've also been forced to confront the systemic inequality, poverty and racism that continue to hold so many people back from achieving their full potential.

I will not dishonour the sacrifice that so many have made during this time by allowing us to go back to the status quo that got us here in the first place. I will not apologize for demanding that the most vulnerable in our society get the supports and opportunities they need to live with dignity, and I will not relent from pushing my political colleagues to summon the courage necessary to implement policies that lead to environmental, economic and social justice.

[Translation]

The Chair: I now give the floor to Mr. Blaney.

Hon. Steven Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Chair, here is a beautiful story, the story of a woman from Bellechasse, a courageous young mother from Saint-Malachie, Marie-Christine Goupil.

With three children, including the eldest daughter with a disability, and realizing that her daughter with a disability had special clothing needs, she decided to go into business to meet the needs of

other parents who, like her, were facing their child's clothing challenges.

Last week, she presented her Handy clothing collection on the show *Dans l'œil du dragon*. It was a very emotional moment for the audience and the dragons. They were so touched that they decided to give her the amount she wanted without diluting her shares.

The video of her presentation has already been viewed over 1 million times on social networks. Marie-Christine Goupil has discovered a passion for entrepreneurship and has moved and inspired many people with her passionate and courageous attitude.

Congratulations, Ms. Goupil, your example makes us proud.

• (1225)

The Chair: Mr. Blanchet, you have the floor.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I lend my voice to the Chief of the Assembly of First Nations of Quebec-Labrador, Ghislain Picard, whose message is as follows:

There have been no fewer than 14 reports and conclusions of commissions of inquiry since 1967 highlighting major problems in relations between law enforcement agencies and indigenous people. Each time, the conclusions have been overwhelming and highlight a disturbing reality.

The justice system has failed indigenous people. Are you going to respond, as you too often do, by moving on to the next one, or are you going to do what we expect you to do, which is to recognize that the justice system discriminates against indigenous people and that we have no less right to security than the rest of the population? In three months, police interventions have claimed more victims among our members than the pandemic. But it is not enough to simply take a knee and denounce racism. It's about standing up and taking action.

Those are the words of Ghislain Picard.

[English]

The Chair: We'll now continue with Ms. Harder.

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): Over the last few months, Canada's democracy has been disregarded and an autocracy has been resurrected in its place. By refusing to hold regular parliamentary sittings, Mr. Trudeau is sending a strong message to the Canadian public that he alone is the one who matters. In 2014, he professed that "Canadians want their Members of Parliament to be effective voices for their communities in Ottawa, and not merely mouthpieces for an all-too-powerful Prime Minister."

As it stands, however, he has shut down Parliament. Effectively, he has stripped us, the opposition, of our privileges and our powers. Sadly, Mr. Trudeau has become the all-too-powerful Prime Minister that he once warned against. A government that does not allow for effective opposition is not functioning in the best interest of Canadians; it is operating in the best interest of itself and, even more so, the interest of the Prime Minister.

Canadians deserve to flourish in a democracy, not merely survive under the autocracy that this Prime Minister has created.

The Chair: We'll now go on to Ms. Zahid.

Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chair, I would like to recognize the work of Agincourt Community Services Association and its tireless executive director, Lee Soda, who have been serving our community during the COVID-19 pandemic. Under more pressure than ever, their staff and volunteers continue to serve a community whose need was great even before the crisis. Their food bank helps over 4,000 people weekly. They have opened outdoor washrooms and hand-washing stations for vulnerable communities and are delivering groceries and other essentials to vulnerable seniors.

ACSA is a bridge between those who can help and those who need help, and they are just one example of how our community has come together to meet this challenge. There are restaurants and businesses donating meals to front-line workers, residents answering the call to stock the food bank shelves and neighbours looking in on the vulnerable and isolated. I am so proud of our community's spirit. Scarborough is strong.

The Chair: We'll now proceed to the questioning of ministers.

[Translation]

Please note that we will suspend the proceedings twice in order to allow employees who provide support for the sitting to replace each other safely.

[English]

The first question goes to the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Scheer.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Chair, for months Conservatives have been pointing out flaws in Liberal government programs that are preventing Canadians from getting the help they need. The Prime Minister has refused to make these very technical changes to get more help to Canadians who need it. For example, on the wage subsidy, more than two-thirds of the money allocated for that program has lapsed because businesses don't qualify.

I have a simple question. Will the Prime Minister change the program to allow companies who have made acquisitions to access the wage subsidy to keep more people working?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.): Mr. Chair, from the very beginning we knew that as we rolled out measures, we would need to improve them and tweak them, and that's exactly what we've been doing over the past three months. We needed to make measures happen quickly for Canadians, and we did that. But we continued to improve them, to make additions and amendments so that more people could get the help they needed, including with the proposed legislation last week that expanded the reach of the wage subsidy to more businesses. Unfortunately, the Conservatives didn't even want us to debate that particular piece of legislation.

• (1230)

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Actually, Mr. Chair, it was the Liberals who said no to the motion to allow this Parliament to sit to debate that motion, and even in that legislation they refused to allow businesses who have made acquisitions to access the program.

Now, when we look at the rent relief program, it is so difficult to apply for it that many landlords are refusing to bother, leaving even more small businesses to fall through the cracks. In fact, of the \$3

billion allocated to the rent relief program, only \$39 million has been paid out. That's less than 2%.

Now, the Prime Minister is still using talking points from April. It's now June and he has refused to fix these programs and has successfully talked out the calendar on the days that the House of Commons could meet to discuss these programs. When will he make these changes to get more help to Canadians who need it?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Chair, throughout this pandemic, we have constantly been updating and expanding our various programs. We recognize, in conversations with the premiers, how important it is to make sure that we're working together, the provinces and the federal government, on issues like rent subsidies where commercial rent is indeed a provincial jurisdiction. Many provinces have moved forward with the eviction bans that are necessary to go along with this, and we'll continue to work with provinces to make sure that we're getting Canadians the help they need.

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Mr. Chair, Canadians cannot wait. He has run down the clock on parliamentary sittings and he still refuses to make these changes to get more help to Canadians.

Today, we learned that Telus has installed Huawei technology in downtown Ottawa. There are over 80 sites across the national capital region with Huawei technology installed. Some of these sites are very near sensitive government institutions, like government departments, the National Research Council, RCMP headquarters and the Bank of Canada. How long has the Prime Minister known that Huawei technology has been installed in the Ottawa area?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Chair, first off, on the issue of Parliament, it has been meeting four times a week over the past many weeks, and members of the opposition have been able to continue to ask questions on COVID-19 and a broad range of subjects. Moreover, every two weeks the finance department puts forward at the finance committee the full transparent measures that we've taken, so that parliamentarians can study them. We are continuing to work in this crisis.

At the same time—

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Answer the question.

The Chair: I'm sorry?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: —in regard to Huawei technology there are strict rules for companies to follow and we assume they will all follow those.

The Chair: We'll pause for a second and stop the clock.

I want to remind the honourable members who are joining us virtually that heckling really does disrupt the whole session. Your face does come up and we do see who it is, so I just want to make sure that you're aware of that.

Now we'll go back to Mr. Scheer. We have a minute and 10 seconds left.

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Mr. Chair, the Prime Minister is bragging about accountability and transparency. Will he table an economic update before the House rises?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Chair, throughout this unprecedented pandemic, we have been open and transparent about all of the measures we've put forward. We've updated the finance committee—

The Chair: We'll go back to Mr. Scheer.

Hon. Andrew Scheer: That's a long way of saying no, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chair, the Prime Minister has pursued a policy of appeasement in pursuit of a personal vanity product at the UN. In the process, he's cozied up to dictators and human rights violators. He's abandoned Israel and committed funding to UNRWA, an organization whose schools have been used as storage facilities for Hamas rockets against Israeli civilians, and whose facilities have served as breeding grounds for racism and anti-Semitism. He has apologized for the Iranian regime when it shot down a plane full of Canadian citizens, and he refuses to list the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps as a terrorist entity.

What's the point of having a seat at the table if you have to sell out Canadian principles to get there?

The Chair: The Right Honourable Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Chair, we see that the Conservatives have kept with the Harper approach to international diplomacy. The failed presence of Canada on the world stage was an embarrassment for many Canadians for many years. That's why, when we took office five years ago, we demonstrated the kind of leadership on values that Canadians expected. We will continue to work around the world to defend multilateralism.

The Chair: We have a point of order.

Ms. May.

Ms. Elizabeth May: This being a committee, we can have a point of order during what would have been question period. I am not sitting that far away from the Prime Minister, and I'm sorry, but Andrew Scheer used to be the Speaker of the House and should show better decorum.

• (1235)

The Chair: We have a point of order from Mr. Genuis.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Chair, on the same point of order, it is disgusting for the leader of the Green Party to use decorum as an excuse to interrupt the Leader of the Opposition in the middle of critical lines of questioning. The leader of the Green Party knows the rules of the House and shouldn't be abusing them to advance a partisan agenda.

The Chair: We're getting into debate. I do want to point out that the time had run out. We're now moving on to the next line of questions.

On a point of order, Mr. Scheer.

Hon. Andrew Scheer: I appreciate the honourable leader of the Green Party, Elizabeth May, for that reminder. When I was Speaker I always appreciated her help and advice about how to improve decorum in here. I just want to say to the member, and to all members, that the reason that I cannot control myself is that the Prime Minister used the word “embarrassment” in answering a foreign affairs question, and it just made me think of the India trip.

The Chair: I believe we're getting into debate and arguments.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Blanchet, you have the floor.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet: Mr. Chair, while the Greens and the Conservatives are saying that they'll be waiting outside after the meeting, I will ask a question. The Prime Minister has extended the Canada emergency response benefit, and that's good news, but it's not enough.

Last week in the House, the government said it was urgent to fight fraud. For us, it was also urgent to adjust the CERB to the needs of the tourism, arts and agriculture sectors. Farmers are going to be seriously under-resourced.

So what happened to the urgency of reforming the CERB? Why is the government refusing to talk to the opposition parties?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Chair, I am very pleased to hear the hon. member finally align himself with the positions of the Liberal Party. Unfortunately, the Bloc is a week late. It should have let us debate these concerns in the House last week.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet: It seems to me that the word “alignment” here is a fantasy. We have unequivocally proposed to extend the debate to reach an agreement, which brings me to my second question.

Last week, the issue of assistance to people with disabilities was also a pressing concern, and it's even more so a week later. The Bloc proposed to extend the discussions and split the government's bill in two to help people with disabilities.

Why is the government refusing this assistance to people with disabilities, when it could have been debated with the opposition in a civilized and proper way in a Parliament in which it has a minority?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: That was exactly what we wanted, but unanimous consent of the Chamber was required to debate this matter, and the Conservative Party of Canada voted against it.

Unfortunately, we are going to have to find a different way to help people with disabilities.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet: If the idea is so good and wonderful, why not start over and open the dialogue now? What's stopping the Prime Minister from being a rallying point and inviting us to take to each other and resolve the problem, rather than saying that he is going to pack up his toys and go home? The people with disabilities are the ones who will pay the price.

Where was the Prime Minister on October 21, 2019? He received a minority mandate from Quebeckers and Canadians. Why is he behaving like something between a prime minister with a majority and a monarch by divine right?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: I've heard the Conservative Party and the Bloc Québécois throw their accusations around.

They don't point out that the House of Commons did indeed give its consent to extend the mandate of the Special Committee on the COVID-19 Pandemic until the end of June. Three parties agreed, which was the right thing to do in the context of this minority government.

We've been working with the other parties. However, as they did not get the results they wanted, they complained. Unfortunately, they too are part of a minority Parliament and must respect the voice of the majority of parliamentarians, just as we do.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet: I might have been tempted, but that's unlikely to happen because the Prime Minister isn't me, he's him. It's therefore up to him to bring people together, open a dialogue and recall Parliament. All we were asking for was the opportunity to talk for an hour or two.

However, suddenly he doesn't want to play anymore. It's not working anymore, and there's something a bit strange about that. In addition, the government wants to buy the right to interfere in provincial and Quebec jurisdictions for \$14 billion. However, Quebec and a number of provinces are refusing to allow it to interfere in their jurisdictions and are asking that this money be paid to them unconditionally.

Is the Prime Minister trying to take advantage of the crisis or is he trying to create a constitutional crisis?

• (1240)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Chair, the safety of Canadians is the responsibility of all levels of government. That's why we have proposed a \$14 billion agreement to ensure that all Canadians across the country experience a safe re-opening of the economy.

This is a proposal that we are working on with the provinces because we know that there are needs across the country, including early childhood centres, screening and support for municipalities. The federal government wants to be there to help the provinces.

The Chair: We'll now go to Mr. Singh.

[English]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Indigenous leaders have expressed a lack of confidence in the RCMP commissioner's ability to tackle full-scale systemic racism,

but the Prime Minister has expressed his confidence in the commissioner. What's that based on?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Chair, over the past two years, Commissioner Lucki has made significant strides forward on an issue where there is still much more to do. We know that systemic racism exists in all of our institutions across this country—

The Chair: We'll now go back to Mr. Singh.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: This is the same RCMP commissioner who just recently said that they couldn't explain what systemic racism was. Now the Prime Minister says that he has confidence, when indigenous leaders express their lack of confidence.

Why does the Prime Minister believe that the RCMP commissioner can tackle systemic racism in the RCMP?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Chair, systemic racism is something that touches every corner of our country, every corner of our institutions. It requires people to understand and move forward in coordinated ways with partners. The commissioner is committed to doing that, alongside members of our government. We will do that together and work with indigenous communities and black—

The Chair: Mr. Singh.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Mr. Chair, recent events have made it abundantly clear that to tackle the systemic racism at the level of the RCMP, we need a full-scale overhaul of the RCMP.

Is the Prime Minister committed to a full-scale overhaul of the RCMP to root out systemic racism?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: As I've said many times, Mr. Chair, I am committed to addressing systemic racism in this country and taking significant, bold actions to reduce the amount of discrimination that indigenous peoples, that racialized Canadians face on a daily basis. We have much work to do, but we will do it together.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Mr. Chair, Black Lives Matter has been calling for governments to defund the police. What it's saying is that we need to be better at where we spend our money, investing in communities and not policing.

Will the Prime Minister commit to a review of the RCMP budget to allocate resources to community services and not to policing?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Chair, over the past years we have been investing more directly and more money in community organizations, in the black community, and working with indigenous partners on the path to reconciliation. We have been investing in the kinds of community-based programs and solutions that are part of the solution. We know there is much more to do, and we will continue to look at all of our expenditures to make sure we're doing the right things.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Mr. Chair, over the past few years, while the Prime Minister has been in office, the RCMP budget has increased by 31%. More money is going towards policing. In recent events we've seen people who needed a health care response to a health care crisis been killed by the RCMP.

Does the Prime Minister believe that we need to be investing in a health care response instead of a police response for people who are faced with a crisis?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Chair, the member opposite well knows that it's not an either-or. We need to make sure that our systems across the board, from our police systems to our judicial systems, to our health care systems, to our community systems, are actually addressing the systemic discrimination issues that are embedded within them. That is exactly what we are going to continue to do in the coming years.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Mr. Chair, with regard to the CERB extension, can the Prime Minister guarantee that everyone who is receiving CERB payments now will continue to do so without any gaps throughout the summer?

• (1245)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Chair, I am happy to highlight that many Canadians who were on the CERB are now returning to work. Many more who are on the CERB now will be returning to work in the coming weeks. We know that as the economy gets back to work, people will want to—

The Chair: We will go back to Mr. Singh.

[Translation]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Can the Prime Minister assure people who need it that they will continue to receive the CERB over the summer, yes or no?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: We are very pleased to point out that we are going to extend the Canada emergency response benefit for at least another eight weeks, because a lot of people are going to need it. Even if they want to work, there aren't enough jobs for everyone.

So we'll be there for them, as we have been from the beginning.

[English]

The Chair: We're going to pause and suspend proceedings just for a few moments to allow our support staff to substitute for one another in a healthy and safe way.

We'll now proceed with Ms. McLeod.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Chair, it was really a surprise in the middle of a pandemic to see the Prime Minister at his first campaign stop last week in Ottawa. Certainly the game plan has become very transparent. He has a daily report show and he wants to sideline Parliament, dominate the news cycle and keep everyone in the dark about the state of the economy.

According to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, there is no reason that he cannot provide the fiscal update during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the PBO has published a number of reports himself.

Why won't the Prime Minister provide a fiscal update so we can all understand the state of our economy, or is that just not part of his campaign playbook?

Hon. Mona Fortier (Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Canada's economy is in a period of extraordinary uncertainty due to COVID-19. We've been clear about that.

We will continue to be open and transparent about the actions that we are taking to support families, businesses, workers, our health care system and our economy. This includes biweekly reports to Parliament on the full cost and status of our economic measures. Once it is possible to provide a clear economic projection, we will provide an update.

We are in this together, and we are prepared to do whatever is necessary to support Canadians.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: Chair, Canada's economy was in trouble prior to the COVID, with some of the worst numbers since 2009. Government revenues in March dropped by 7.2%, and it's shameful and, quite frankly, it's outrageous that they refuse to provide Parliament and Canadians with an economic update.

Households during this challenging time know how much money is coming in and they know how much money is going out. The picture is not pretty, but they know what the picture is.

Can the finance minister at least reveal the projected revenue decline in quarters one and two?

[Translation]

Hon. Mona Fortier: The Canadian economy is going through a period of extraordinary uncertainty due to COVID-19. We've known this for three months. We've continued to be open and transparent about the measures we've put in place for Canadians, workers and businesses. In fact, we have reported biweekly to Parliament on the total cost and status of our plan's measures.

As soon as it's possible to provide clear economic projections, we will provide a comprehensive update to Canadians—

• (1250)

[English]

The Chair: We go back to Ms. McLeod.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: Other governments have managed to provide updates for their citizens and carry out their responsibilities, but of course this government has sidelined Parliament with simply a question-but-no-answer period.

Let's try something else. The forestry industry was in crisis even before the pandemic, with mills closing down and thousands of jobs lost. Eight weeks ago, Minister Freeland said, "I have had many discussions with leaders in our forestry sector and the provinces about what we can do to support the industry today."

Meanwhile, we've had support going to the arts and we've had support going to fisheries, just to name a few, but arguably for the industry that was having some of the most numerous challenges, it has been radio silence.

That was eight weeks ago today. Can the government at least commit to releasing an updated softwood lumber transition plan before we rise?

Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Chair, we remain committed, of course, to the forestry industry and seeing it through this pandemic and this very uncertain time. The expanding market opportunities program, for instance, has helped Canada's forestry sector diversify, create jobs and open new markets. We've had new construction projects that are active today, using Canadian wood in key markets like Korea, Japan, China and the United States.

Tomorrow this House will vote on our government's investment of \$20.97 million for this program. It's part of our budget 2019 commitment to invest \$251 million over three years, and I hope the opposition will support us in that.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: It was stated in a major newspaper this morning that this government is like a sexy sports car—"vroom, vroom, vroom"—but with a history of breakdowns and major repairs. I think that might describe what has been happening. For forestry, it has been eight weeks and there has been nothing.

There is another area that Deputy Prime Minister Freeland did talk about. We were talking about the U.S. softwood lumber duties that are being held in the United States. It's billions of dollars being held with the U.S. treasury. In April, she acknowledged that these duties are a real issue for the softwood lumber industry. What's been done since that time?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Chair, Canada's forestry industry supports good middle-class jobs in communities across our country. The sector is also an essential link in the medical equipment supply chain, and we thank them for all the work they're doing.

We're aware of the immense pressures faced by this sector, especially at this time, and Deputy Prime Minister Freeland and others are taking that seriously and working through this issue. As our government has said repeatedly, we firmly believe that the U.S. duties on Canadian softwood lumber are unfair and unwarranted, and we will pursue all means in order to—

The Chair: Before continuing, I want to remind honourable members who are at home to make sure that the boom on their headsets is down. It just makes a better pickup. We heard everything, but it was a little distant.

That's for everyone's benefit.

[Translation]

We're now going to continue with Mr. Deltell.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Chair, before I ask my question, I'd like to pay tribute to the Minister of Justice, particularly to his versatility. Today, he talked about forests. Yesterday, the Minister of Justice talked about Davie and indigenous affairs. Really, this minister is very versatile.

My question is directly for the Minister of Finance. I like Mr. Lametti very much, but I'd like Mr. Morneau to answer my question.

Yesterday, in a Senate parliamentary committee, the Minister of Finance half-opened the door to an economic update. Based on what he said, it seems that, as we speak, a committee of the Department of Finance is working on an economic update.

Could Mr. Morneau tell Canadians when he is going to table this economic update?

Hon. Mona Fortier: Mr. Chair, as we know, the Canadian economy is going through a period of extraordinary uncertainty. As soon as it's possible to provide clear economic projections, we will provide a full update to Canadians.

Right now, we can say that we have supported workers, businesses and Canadians with the emergency measures we have put in place. We will continue to do so, because we need to be sure that Canadians can get through this crisis.

• (1255)

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Chair, I thought it was too good to be true.

The Minister of Finance is opening the door, and the Minister of Small Business is closing it. We don't know when the economic update will take place, yet all across Canada, provinces are doing economic updates.

Could Mr. Morneau explain to Canadians why he is unable to give one?

Hon. Mona Fortier: Mr. Chair, since the beginning of the crisis, we have implemented the economic action plan to respond to COVID-19, and we've provided immediate assistance to Canadians, businesses and workers.

Over 2.5 million jobs were protected by the Canada emergency wage subsidy. In addition, 8.4 million Canadians—

The Chair: We are returning to Mr. Deltell.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Chair, next Friday, the Quebec minister of finance, Eric Girard, will give an economic update.

If Eric Girard can give one for Quebec, why can't Bill Morneau give one for Canada?

Hon. Mona Fortier: Mr. Chair, once again, we have been open and transparent from the outset. We have devoted our energy to support Canadians, workers and businesses.

We will continue to do so.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Chair, I cannot judge the quality of the work done by the provinces, but what I do know is that Quebec, Saskatchewan and Newfoundland have also made efforts to support their residents economically. Those provinces are able to table economic updates. Yesterday, Saskatchewan even tabled a budget.

Why is Bill Morneau unable to table an economic update for all Canadians?

Hon. Mona Fortier: Let me repeat for my hon. colleague that we are going through extraordinarily uncertain times. We have continued to be open and transparent. We have reported biweekly to Parliament on the total cost and status of the measures in our economic response plan.

Once again, as soon as clear economic projections can be provided, we will provide an update—

The Chair: Mr. Deltell has the floor.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: The minister talks about the total cost of the government's economic expenditures.

So I ask the question: so far, over the past three months, how much has the pandemic cost Canadians?

Hon. Mona Fortier: As I said earlier, it is important to note that we have put forward measures, including the wage subsidy, which have helped more than 2.5 million—

The Chair: Mr. Deltell has the floor.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Chair, I have been trying for four minutes to get anything remotely resembling an answer, and I'm getting absolutely nothing. I am not asking questions for myself; I am asking questions for Canadians.

Why are the government and the Minister of Finance, Bill Morneau, not able to table an economic update when some provinces are able to?

Hon. Mona Fortier: Once again, I would like to remind my hon. colleague that we have provided interest-free loans to businesses. More than 669,000 loans have been approved.

We have continued to support businesses and Canadians during this time—

The Chair: Mr. Deltell, you have time for a very brief question.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: The only thing that distinguishes the provinces that table economic updates and the current government is political will.

Why does Bill Morneau not have the political will to tell Canadians the truth?

Hon. Mona Fortier: Once again, we have been open and transparent. As soon as it is possible to provide clear economic projections, we will provide Canadians with a full update.

[English]

The Chair: We will now continue with Mr. Saroya.

Mr. Bob Saroya (Markham—Unionville, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

COVID-19 has sparked and spurred anti-Asian racism. These are not just racist comments online; Asian Canadians have been attacked.

What is the government doing to combat anti-Asian racism?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Minister of Diversity and Inclusion and Youth): Mr. Chair, since our government took office in 2015, we have been making investments and working with communities. The difference between our government and the previous government is that we will actually consult with Canadians, including black Canadians, including Asian Canadians, to respond to the challenges, including with an anti-racism secretariat and an anti-racism strategy.

It will take all of us. I appreciate the member's question, so that we can also work together.

Mr. Bob Saroya: Mr. Chair, one business owner I know in Markham has operated for 20 years. Now she's looking at over \$9,000 in rent due on June 24. COVID-19 has crippled her sales and she's going to go out of business. Her landlord has no interest in the Canada emergency commercial rent assistance program.

How can the government say this program is working?

• (1300)

Hon. Mona Fortier: Mr. Chair, this program was made possible by working with the provinces, and we will continue to encourage landlords and tenants to work together to make sure they have relief for this very difficult time in which they're living. We're continuing to monitor the CECRA program and we will make it possible for businesses to have access to the program.

Mr. Bob Saroya: Mr. Chair, the government business rent relief program has been a total disaster. Even the government's own numbers show it is a failure. As of June 8, less than 2% of the \$3 billion budgeted has been spent.

What is it going to take for the government to admit that the program is a disaster and needs changes?

Hon. Mona Fortier: Mr. Chair, we know our government has been working closely with the provinces and territories to deliver the Canada emergency commercial rent assistance. Although the tenant-landlord relationship is ultimately the responsibility of the provinces and territories, our government has stepped up to provide support through the tools we have and through CMHC so that small businesses can get the rent relief they need.

Mr. Bob Saroya: Mr. Chair, according to the government, there are around 1.1 million small businesses in Canada. At committee, we were told only around 5,500 of them are receiving COVID-19 rent relief. That number is shameful.

When will the Liberal government wake up and make the changes?

Hon. Mona Fortier: Mr. Chair, we welcome the steps some provinces and territories have taken to further protect commercial tenants. We will continue to monitor this program closely and ensure that Canada's small businesses are supported during this challenging time. We will continue to monitor to see—

The Chair: We'll go back to Mr. Saroya.

Mr. Bob Saroya: Mr. Chair, there was no answer.

When can the government make these changes?

Hon. Mary Ng (Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade): Mr. Chair, I want to assure the honourable colleague that we are doing everything and will continue to do everything to help small businesses in our country.

Mr. Bob Saroya: Mr. Chair, on May 27 the CBSA seized 65 small handguns at Pearson airport, the largest firearms seizure on record. It is clear that smuggled handguns are the weapon of choice for criminals. Why is the Prime Minister focusing on an ineffective municipal ban?

Hon. Bill Blair (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness): Mr. Chair, I would point out that gun violence in any of our communities is unacceptable, and it's important that governments and communities take steps to prevent guns from getting into the hands of criminals. That's why we do important work at our border to keep guns from being smuggled into our country, but it also necessitates additional work. I don't think you can talk about gun violence without talking about stronger gun control. That's why our government has taken a very strong position and will strengthen gun control to keep Canadians safe.

The Chair: Mr. Saroya, you may have a 10-second question, if that's possible, please.

Mr. Bob Saroya: Mr. Chair, COVID-19 has not stopped gun violence in the GTA. My constituents are concerned about shootings minutes away from their homes. We know the Liberals' gun ban won't change anything, but a focus on smuggled guns and criminals will. When will they make that change?

Hon. Bill Blair: Mr. Chair, stronger gun control laws are an effective tool, and that's been told to us by police leadership and communities across the country.

We're also making investments in borders and law enforcement. Most importantly, we're making investments in communities and in kids to keep communities safe. I look forward to the member's strong support of those measures when we bring them forward.

The Chair: We'll now go to Mr. Hoback.

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Mr. Chair, the U.S. and the U.K. began their second round of free trade negotiations yesterday. Does the government intend to have a trade agreement in place before the U.K. tariffs come into effect on January 1?

Hon. Mary Ng: Mr. Chair, the U.K. is a strong partner of Canada, as is the European Union, and we're looking forward to continuing that strong relationship—

• (1305)

The Chair: We'll now go back to Mr. Hoback.

Mr. Randy Hoback: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

With respect to the negotiations with the U.K., when will the minister publish her goals and objectives for this agreement?

Hon. Mary Ng: Mr. Chair, we're going to continue to work to ensure that any future agreement is going to be based on the best interests of Canadians, and we will—

The Chair: We will go back to Mr. Hoback.

Mr. Randy Hoback: Can the minister confirm whether they've entered into negotiations with the U.K. at this point?

Hon. Mary Ng: Our government is analyzing the most-favoured-nation tariff regimes schedule the U.K. has put out. I want to assure Canadians—

The Chair: We'll go back to Mr. Hoback.

Mr. Randy Hoback: Mr. Chair, during the CUSMA negotiations, a deal was struck between the Liberal Party and the NDP that the government would notify this House 90 days before it starts any negotiations on any trade agreement. When will the minister notify this House?

Hon. Mary Ng: Mr. Chair, I want to assure the honourable member that we will absolutely be sharing information. Right now, we are analyzing the most-favoured-nation tariff regimes schedule put out by the U.K.

Mr. Randy Hoback: Mr. Chair, any meaningful attempts to reform the WTO needs buy-in from the United States. I think all countries agree on that. Has the minister discussed a WTO reform with the USTR, the United States trade representative?

Hon. Mary Ng: Mr. Chair, the Ottawa Group is a consensus-based group, and any decisions will be taken together. Of course, any meaningful reform must include the U.S.—

The Chair: We'll go back to Mr. Hoback.

Mr. Randy Hoback: Has the U.S. been invited to the Ottawa Group meetings?

Hon. Mary Ng: The Ottawa Group is a consensus-based group limited to WTO members who are committed to bringing forward ideas and proposals—

The Chair: We'll go back to Mr. Hoback.

Mr. Randy Hoback: Just as with any other trade agreement, the minister has committed to this House that she will publish the list of goals and responsibilities for the negotiations. When will she publish the list for the Ottawa Group?

Hon. Mary Ng: Mr. Chair, I'm thrilled that we had an excellent meeting of the Ottawa Group yesterday where, as a group, we agreed to take concrete action.

Mr. Randy Hoback: Will the minister be releasing a list of Canada's objectives we would like to see the new WTO's director-general pursue prior to the upcoming DG election?

Hon. Mary Ng: We published an action statement from the Ottawa Group yesterday. I would encourage the member opposite to have a look. I'm certainly happy to send it to him.

Mr. Randy Hoback: Going back to economic prosperity, we know that the U.S. has been having talks with other countries around the world. Has Canada yet been invited to this group?

Hon. Mary Ng: I'm pleased to continue to pursue the objectives of trade diversification. I would remind the member that we have access to a billion and a half customers through our very robust—

Mr. Randy Hoback: A billion and a half customers is fine if you have a functioning WTO, but if you don't have a functioning WTO, then a billion and a half customers may not be fully accessible to our suppliers, manufacturers and agriculture producers.

Can the minister confirm that she's in discussions with the U.S. in joining this economic prosperity group?

Hon. Mary Ng: Mr. Chair, I want to assure the honourable member that nothing is more important than standing up and helping create markets for our Canadian businesses and to help our small businesses get more export-ready so that they can grow into the international marketplace.

This is work that we've committed to do, and we will keep working on it, particularly—

The Chair: We'll go back to Mr. Hoback.

Mr. Randy Hoback: Yesterday Saskatchewan presented a budget. Not only did they present the budget, but they'll also actually debate the budget and pass the budget in Parliament. There's full accountability. Why won't this government do the same?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Chair, the House is sitting in this hybrid format so that people can participate in the House on the screens. I'm sure my colleague is happy to see that his own colleagues are able to ask questions and participate.

The Chair: We'll now go to Mr. Williamson.

Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will say that this is no substitute for Parliament, but I appreciate the opportunity.

New Brunswick families and businesses are rapidly making adjustments to manage and live with the coronavirus pandemic. Businesses here are opening and services are being offered. Families are preparing for summer and even planning ahead for a new school year in September.

We have a lot of work ahead of us. One notable absence is Service Canada. When does the government plan on opening its service counters to assist Canadians again?

• (1310)

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development): Mr. Chair, our government is committed to ensuring that Canadians continue to have access to the benefits that they rely on through Service Canada. We have redeployed over 3,000 additional staff to ensure that Canadians continue to have access to their benefits. We've established a 1,500-agent call centre to make sure that people can get access to the phone lines to get the help they need.

Mr. John Williamson: Service Canada is about more than providing COVID-19 information and benefits.

Provincial governments are working hard to adjust to Canada's new normal by opening up businesses and front-line government services. When will we see Service Canada play its role and open its service counters in our communities?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen: Mr. Chair, we're currently working with our world-class public health experts to determine how best to re-open the Service Canada network for the public. Make no mistake: Our Service Canada employees have gone above and beyond to ensure that Canadians continue to have access to the services that they rely on and the benefits that they need.

Mr. John Williamson: Please don't hide behind health experts when the Prime Minister is appearing in the middle of large protests, yet is afraid to bring back the Parliament of Canada to do its business. In fact, the New Brunswick legislature is open for regular business. Bills are being studied, opposition input is being heard and MLAs are voting on legislation, not rubber-stamping government bills. By comparison, our Parliament is stuck in pretending it cannot function like other law-making assemblies.

Canadians are in the dark about our country's finances. When will the government table an economic update so taxpayers understand what was spent, what is owed by our kids and grandchildren, and what the government's fiscal footing looks like?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez: Mr. Chair, nobody's hiding. Nobody's doing anything like that. The only reason my colleague is able to ask a question and I'm able to answer his question is that he's right there on the screen. We have this hybrid format that cares for MPs across the country, not only the ones sitting in the House.

Mr. John Williamson: This is no substitute for Parliament.

I will ask my question again. When will the government table an economic update so that taxpayers understand what was spent, what is owed by our kids and grandchildren, and what the government's fiscal footing looks like in today's environment?

Hon. Mona Fortier: Mr. Chair, I thank my honourable colleague for his question.

Canada's economy is still in a period of extraordinary uncertainty due to COVID-19. We have been open and transparent about the measures we have been providing to support families, businesses and workers. Even our health care—

The Chair: We'll go back to Mr. Williamson.

Mr. John Williamson: Except you have not. The Auditor General is underfunded. We have no idea about the total of government spending.

Again I will ask when the government will table an economic update so that we can have an understanding of what the government's fiscal footing looks like.

Hon. Mona Fortier: Mr. Chair, we have included biweekly reports to Parliament on the full cost and status of our economic response plan measures since the beginning.

I have said, and I will continue to say, that when it is possible to provide a clear economic projection, we will provide an update.

Mr. John Williamson: What is the full cost to date of the government's COVID-19 relief measures, as the minister just claimed the government has provided to Parliament?

Hon. Mona Fortier: Mr. Chair, we have provided support for workers, and 2.5 million Canadians have been helped through the Canadian wage subsidy. We have provided businesses with some loans, and 669,000 businesses have applied for these loans. Even for the CERB, we have over eight million Canadians who have applied.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: We will now continue with Mr. Bergeron.

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: Mr. Chair, as the leader of the Bloc Québécois mentioned a few moments ago, the government promised \$14 billion to Quebec and the provinces, but in targeted transfers. That is very little compared to the considerable expenses incurred to deal with the current crisis. But Quebec and the provinces don't just want this money to be transferred unconditionally, they also want a real discussion on a permanent increase in health care transfers.

Premier Legault was rightly concerned about the feds' interference into provincial jurisdictions. The federal government, which does not manage any hospitals or long-term care centres, must stop playing armchair quarterback and transfer the money to the only governments with jurisdiction over health, that is, Quebec and the provinces. Will it do so without delay and without nitpicking?

• (1315)

The Honourable Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health): Mr. Chair, we know that the Government of Quebec is working hard to ensure the safety of Quebecers and we are here to support them. As part of this co-operation, we have developed health and safety recommendations for workplaces, we have purchased medical equipment

for workers and we have supported the province in developing its reopening program. We are continuing this important partnership to ensure the safety of Quebecers and all Canadians.

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: The co-operation is so effective that the money is staying in the federal government's coffers. In fact, when the federal government wants to impose conditions, it always takes longer. We see it with housing, for which Quebec has not received a dime of the \$1.4 billion it is owed. We have also seen it with infrastructure funds, particularly for public transit, water systems and water treatment.

The health crisis is now. The needs are now. The much needed reopening of our economy is now. Will the government finally transfer the money without messing around or quibbling?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez: I am pleased to confirm to my colleague that there is no messing around, no quibbling, nothing of the kind. There is co-operation between two levels of government. It is natural to have discussions with all the provinces and with Quebec. I myself am taking part in some discussions and several of my colleagues are taking part in others. There is a clear willingness on the part of the federal government to co-operate with Quebec and all the provinces.

That is what we are doing and that is perhaps what the Bloc Québécois does not like. It likes bickering, but for the time being, there is none.

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: We don't want to bicker, we want the money to be paid out. It is not complicated, for heaven's sake! We do not want a blank cheque.

Right now, the money remains in the federal government's coffers. There is \$1.4 billion that should be paid to Quebec for social housing and is sitting in the federal government's coffers. We are waiting for money for water treatment and water systems, but it is sitting in the federal government's coffers. It's almost July. We are wasting precious months for construction.

What is the government waiting for to pay out the money so that we can get our economy rolling?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez: The federal government is a very active partner. We are discussing and working with Quebec on infrastructure projects. We are continuing our discussions and negotiations on the housing agreement.

Nothing is at a standstill. We are discussing and co-operating for the well-being of all Quebecers.

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: Madam Chair, things are definitely at a standstill, because the money is owed and has not been paid out. Months are going by while construction is not taking place.

We need to reopen the economy. We need more flexibility in the gas tax program and Quebec's contribution (the TECQ) to allow municipalities to undertake work on city halls, community centres and fire stations.

We need the federal government to contribute to funding public transit operations, which have become a real financial drain because of the drop in ridership.

What is the federal government waiting for to provide real help instead of just talking?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez: When it comes to just talking, the Bloc Québécois has a lot of experience, I admit.

We, in the government, are working and co-operating. We are not waiting with our arms folded, we are discussing a series of issues with Quebec. We do more than discuss, we work and we co-operate. We are working on projects, not only in infrastructure, but in a number of other areas. Just think of the co-operation of our armed forces in the CHSLDs, for example. We are here for Quebeckers.

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Your time has run out, Mr. Bergeron.

[English]

We'll go now to Ms. Khalid, from Mississauga—Erin Mills.

• (1320)

Ms. Iqra Khalid (Mississauga—Erin Mills, Lib.): Madam Chair, I'll be splitting my time with the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell.

During a consultation with the business community in Mississauga, the concerns of businesses, big and small, included the need for stable, affordable and safe child care. With the lack of such child care spaces, an economic recovery plan post-COVID cannot be effective until and unless we make sure that people are able to get back to work.

I've heard from parents across Mississauga that they're being forced to stay home because of inadequate child care and that they have to choose between putting food on the table and keeping family safe. More and more employers are realizing that good employees are unable to contribute to their business growth because of this challenge. Now more than ever, we need to find long-term sustainable solutions for Canadians who face challenges with regard to child care.

I ask our Minister of Families, Children and Social Development this: What is our strategy to tackle this ever-growing need for a national child care plan?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen: Madam Chair, I thank the honourable member for her question and for her important advocacy and work on this important issue.

We understand that child care is important to our economic recovery and our social infrastructure. We know the pressure that COVID-19 has placed on families, especially parents. That is why we're committed to continuing to work with provinces and territories to renew our agreements on early learning and child care, and to provide, at the earliest opportunity, \$400 million in support.

In addition to that, the Prime Minister has already indicated that child care will be part of the \$14-billion pledge to provinces and territories to assist them with respect to COVID-19 recovery efforts.

Over the next decade, we will continue to invest \$7.5 billion, and together we have achieved the goal of over 40,000 affordable child care spaces. We are also committed to continuing to create over 250,000 before-school and after-school child care spaces for kids under the age of 10. We will continue to work with our partners in the provinces and territories to ensure that Canadians can continue to have access to safe, quality and affordable child care.

[Translation]

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The honourable member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell has the floor.

Mr. Francis Drouin (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Madam Chair, small businesses play a fundamental role in the Canadian economy. In an article in *La Presse*, the Minister of Economic Development warned us that the economic crisis caused by severe lockdown measures could have more serious consequences in small municipalities than in large cities.

Based on discussions with the chambers of commerce in my riding, it is clear that federal government assistance will be essential for the reopening of the economy, specifically for the rural economy. In fact, I would like to acknowledge the work of the Prescott-Russell community development corporation (PRCDC), under the leadership of John Candie.

After announcing almost \$57 million to help SMEs adopt e-commerce, how does the minister plan to help SMEs and the business community in our rural areas?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages): Madam Chair, I also thank my colleague from Glengarry—Prescott—Russell for his important question.

Yes, our regions are important and the entrepreneurs in those regions are creative and daring. They take risks, but they are currently facing huge challenges. So we are here for them. We understand their anxiety and we want to help them. That is why we have decided to invest heavily in rural economic development. It is also why we have doubled the budget of CFDCs and Community Futures organizations across the country.

In southern Ontario we have reinvested over \$260 million in the regional economic development agency FedDev. In the great riding of Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, which I am particularly fond of and where there is a very good member of Parliament, there is an additional \$1 million for entrepreneurs in the region.

We have been, we are and we will be at your side.

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The honourable member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell has 36 seconds left.

[English]

No? Then we'll go to the honourable member for Elmwood—Transcona.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I'll be splitting my time with the member for Victoria.

Madam Chair, Krystal is a community worker in Winnipeg. She has been working from home since late March, taking care of her child, who is out of school, and caring for her father, who is living with her and vulnerable to COVID-19. Her employer called her up recently and asked her to physically return to work or to take a leave.

As a parent and a care provider to a vulnerable person, she's not comfortable with physically returning to work. Service Canada won't give Krystal a straight answer as to whether going on leave and collecting CERB would count as refusing "a reasonable job offer." With Bill C-17 looming in the background, Krystal is worried about jail time and fines if she does right by her child and her father by applying for CERB.

Can Krystal reasonably refuse to go back to work and collect CERB, or will she be considered a fraudster? That's my question for the minister that is specific to Krystal's case.

As well, what is the minister doing to provide clear direction to Canadians and to Service Canada agents so that people can get a clear answer before making their decision about returning to work?

• (1325)

Hon. Ahmed Hussen: Madam Chair, I want to thank the honourable member for his important question.

We recognize that Canadian workers will face various different situations, including those who are ineligible for the Canada emergency support benefit. We'll continue to work with workers to make sure they're able to be supported throughout this pandemic.

The fact of the matter is that every province has workplace health and safety regulations that must be supported. We understand that workers have the right not to work in unsafe situations. We also understand that many Canadians do want to go back to work; and in fact many have. We will make sure that we support Canadians throughout this recovery process.

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The honourable member has 47 seconds left, and that includes the answer.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Madam Chair, that answer is really not good enough, because the problem here is that Krystal needs to know whether she can continue receiving CERB or not. That's a federal government decision, and she needs to know whether the federal government is going to accuse her of fraud and put her in jail or assess fines against her if she refuses to go back to work because she wants to take care of her child and her father.

What is the minister's answer to that?

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The honourable minister has 20 seconds to respond.

Hon. Ahmed Hussen: Madam Chair, I can assure the honourable member that if a Canadian has to take care of a loved one due to circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, they are indeed eligible to receive the CERB and remain receiving that benefit.

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): As we deal with the global pandemic, we cannot lose sight of the ongoing climate emergency. Canada has missed every single climate target it set, and we need to break the cycle of empty promises.

Canadians want their government to be accountable, and environmental groups such as Ecojustice, CAN-Rac, Environmental Defence and West Coast Environmental Law, as well as the government's own climate institute, are all calling for legally binding climate targets.

When will the government put its climate targets into law with legally binding milestones so we never miss another target again?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Mississauga—Malton, Lib.): Madam Chair, I thank my honourable colleague for her question. I totally agree with her when it comes to the environment. It is a priority not only for us as a government, but it should be a priority for all Canadians. That is why we have put measures in place to put a price on pollution through carbon pricing. That is why we have a comprehensive plan that also includes significant investments in clean technology, which will help reduce our carbon footprint.

I am confident that these measures will enable us to not only meet but exceed our 2030 target and also allow us to achieve our net-zero 2050 target.

Ms. Laurel Collins: That didn't answer my question. I asked "when". Empty promises won't get us any closer to meeting our climate targets.

Can the minister tell us when his government will introduce climate accountability laws?

Hon. Navdeep Bains: Madam Chair, I think the fundamental issue here is having a plan when it comes to the environment. I'm confident that the measures that we have taken—putting a price on pollution, investing in clean technology, and other key measures to reduce our carbon footprint, including the investment in infrastructure—underpin a plan—

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Carol Hughes): We will go back to the honourable member for Victoria.

Ms. Laurel Collins: This government is not meeting its targets, but it is meeting with oil and gas lobbyists. The pandemic has made us reflect on our priorities. Are we going to choose a just recovery with good, sustainable jobs for Canadian workers, or are we going to keep subsidizing oil and gas companies to the tune of billions, subsidies that we know are ending up in the pockets of CEOs and shareholders?

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Carol Hughes): We will have a brief answer from the minister.

Hon. Navdeep Bains: Again, Madam Chair, this is the fundamental difference between us and the NDP. We fundamentally believe that the entire economy needs to work together, including the energy sector, to enable us to achieve those 2030 and 2050 targets. We are going to work together to support our workers, including in the energy sector, to reduce our carbon footprint.

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Now we will go to the honourable member for Saskatoon—Grasswood, Mr. Waugh.

• (1330)

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

When I was last here in May, I was on my way back to Saskatoon from Toronto, and there was actually someone on my flight who tested positive for COVID-19. I was never informed of it by the airline. I found out two weeks later. The report was in the news media.

Why hasn't the government put rules in place requiring airlines to reach out to individuals like me who may have been exposed to COVID on their flights?

Hon. Patty Hajdu: Madam Chair, it's hard to speculate on what happened from such a vague description of his experience, but I will say that we have every confidence in local public health, which is doing the hard and heavy lifting of contact tracing and working very closely with all kinds of different sectors, including airline sectors, to make sure that close contacts of people who have tested positive for COVID-19 are found, are traced and are isolated. I assume that the member took appropriate precautions on the flight and I hope that he continues to do so.

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Madam Chair, it was reported that the individual on my plane who had COVID was actually connecting in Toronto from an international flight. The Prime Minister announced last week that they would begin mandating temperature checks for those bound for Canada in July. Will international travellers be tested when they land in Canada, or will they be relying on the tests that take place in other countries?

Hon. Bill Blair: Madam Chair, this is a very important question, because the protection and safety of all Canadians—in particular, Canadian travellers—is a high priority for our government.

We've been working very closely with the airlines. At the current time, we are putting temperature screening in place. That will initially be done primarily by the airlines that are in the best position to do it at this point in time. We are also now going to be including CATSA, the people who do the security screening, so that when people enter the airport, they will also be screened. We believe that is going to be the most effective measure to keep all travellers safe.

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Madam Chair, last week five of the largest professional sports leagues in North America put out a statement of support for my private member's bill, the safe and regulated sports betting act. Given the struggles that clubs and leagues are facing due to COVID-19, including having no fans at all in the stands for the foreseeable future, the legalization of sports betting would be a welcome opportunity not only to engage fans but to generate much-needed revenue.

Will the government commit now to supporting the sports and gaming industries by supporting my private member's bill, Bill C-218?

Hon. Bill Blair: Madam Chair, I've had the opportunity on many occasions to speak to members of Parliament and also to mayors and councillors and people living in border communities where there are casinos. They've raised this issue a number of times.

We've listened very carefully to the concerns that have been expressed by them. I would like to advise the member that I look forward to the opportunity for a careful examination of his bill. We are at all times concerned about maintaining the integrity of the gaming industry within our community. That's the best way to protect Canadians. At the same time, we will examine his bill with all of the necessary attention to make sure it's given full consideration.

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Madam Chair, it's the first time in history that we've had the five professional leagues in this country joining together for this bill.

Newspapers rely, as we all know, on advertising for a significant portion of their revenue. This includes the usual flyers as well as in-paper ads. I've heard major concerns from a number of newspapers in this country about competition they're receiving today from Canada Post, which is offering massive free postage services. In fact, I have one of their ads here, which says that the first 6,000 pieces of postage are 100% free.

If the government is genuine about wanting to ensure that newspapers and journals can succeed in this country, why are you allowing Canada Post to use its monopoly power to actually threaten local newspapers in this country?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Heritage): Thank you, Madame Chair, and I thank the member opposite for his question.

As you well know, a healthy news and media sector in Canada is a priority for our government, which is why we have put in place a number of measures before COVID-19 and during COVID-19, and we will continue to be there for them after this crisis has gone by.

• (1335)

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Before we go on, we will be taking a break to do a bit of a changeover. I also want to remind members to address their questions and comments to the chair.

We will go now to the honourable member for Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, Mr. Ruff.

Mr. Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Thank you, Chair.

Mr. Blair stated yesterday here in the House that the AR-15 has been used in mass killings in Canada on many occasions.

Mr. Blair, please provide just one specific instance in which an AR-15 was used in a mass killing in Canada.

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I remind the member to address questions and comments to the chair.

The honourable minister may respond.

Hon. Bill Blair: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I think this is an excellent opportunity to point out to the member opposite how important it is to actually listen to what was said. If you go back and review that tape, and I would invite you to do so, you'll see that I said "the AR-15 and other weapons like them"—referring of course to military-style assault weapons—"have been used in mass killings", and I actually cited a number of examples.

Madam Chair, I think it would be very useful if the member's questions were based on facts.

Mr. Alex Ruff: I can remind Mr. Blair that I actually have watched the video a couple of times, and he specifically states that the AR-15 was used in mass killings in Canada, yet he has yet to provide one.

My additional question is to Mr. Blair. Out of the recently banned firearms on May 1, how many have been or are still currently in use by the Canadian Armed Forces?

Hon. Bill Blair: That's an excellent question, Madam Chair, because it's very important to provide Canadians with clarity.

We have prohibited these firearms for non-law enforcement and non-military use. The military uses weapons that were actually designed for soldiers to use in combat to shoot other soldiers. That's the appropriate use of such weapons, Madam Chair. They're not things to be played with in civilian society.

Mr. Alex Ruff: As a soldier for 25 years, I'll remind Mr. Blair that none of the currently prohibited firearms would be used in the Canadian Armed Forces.

I asked him a question on whether any of them is being or ever has been used in the Canadian Armed Forces. Are any of the recently banned firearms still in use, or have they ever been in use, in any military in the world?

Hon. Bill Blair: Madam Chair, I think it's important to also recognize that the basic origin, the provenance of the weapons that we have prohibited, was in their original design. They were designed for military use for various military forces around the world.

As I've said previously, they were designed for soldiers to use in combat to kill other soldiers. They're very efficient in their design for killing people. They have no purpose in Canadian society.

Mr. Alex Ruff: As someone who has used many military-style firearms and who is actually involved in helping define what we purchase in the military, I would use none of the ones that are currently prohibited.

I have a question, Chair, for Minister MacAulay. Can he please confirm whether Veterans Affairs has a plan to address the claims backlog, yes or no?

• (1340)

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Veterans Affairs): Madam Chair, I appreciate my honourable colleague's question, and yes, we've indicated that it's a major priority. That's why I'm so pleased that the supplementary estimates contained just under \$90 million to address hiring more staff, improving the process and making sure that we attack the backlog in an appropriate manner.

Mr. Alex Ruff: Madame Chair, does that plan exist in written form?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: Well, Madam Chair, I can assure you that it's in the supplementary estimates, and of course, this money is—

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Carol Hughes): We'll go back to Mr. Ruff.

Mr. Alex Ruff: The question is about the plan, not how much money has been allocated. I am asking for the written plan on how to address the backlog.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: Madam Chair, I can tell my honourable colleague that the money is in the supplementary estimates, and with the money we're able to attack this problem in an appropriate manner, and that's what is important for our veterans.

Mr. Alex Ruff: The deputy minister committed on March 10 that a written plan would be provided to the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs within a month and made public.

Did the deputy minister or the department provide the minister that plan within a month?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: Madame Chair, I'm sure my honourable colleague wants an appropriate plan and he would be fully aware this just under \$90 million would make a big difference in the plan to attack the backlog. We—

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Carol Hughes): We'll go back to Mr. Ruff.

Mr. Alex Ruff: Thank you, Chair.

Therefore, my question is, if the deputy minister in the department provided him with an appropriate plan or a written plan, why is he questioning how appropriate that plan is? I have complete confidence in the deputy minister's ability to produce a written plan.

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The honourable minister may give a brief answer, please.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: I can assure my honourable colleague that with the appropriate funding, we will address the backlog in Veterans Affairs.

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Carol Hughes): We will go now to the honourable member for Parry Sound—Muskoka, Mr. Aitchison.

Mr. Scott Aitchison: Thank you, Madam Chair. My question is about summer camps again.

Three weeks ago, I asked this government if the finance minister would meet with the beleaguered summer camp sector. Summer camps, which are a social and economic mainstay in Parry Sound—Muskoka and all of northern Ontario, have been crippled by the global pandemic. It's costing millions of jobs, and some camps are actually in danger of folding. Aside from a brief follow-up conversation over the phone with the junior minister, there has still been no action from this government.

When will the Minister of Finance meet with summer camps to find a solution?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen: Madam Chair, I recognize the honourable member's important question and his focus on summer camps. We recognize the importance of looking at that and paying attention to the needs of that community. We will continue to engage with them, as we have, to ensure and find ways in which we can get their feedback and find ways in which we can support them. That work is ongoing, and I assure the honourable member that our focus is on the kids and on ensuring that they have access to summer camps for this year.

Mr. Scott Aitchison: I don't know why you need to find ways to get feedback. The summer camps association has given lots of feedback and my office has given lots of feedback, so I don't see what's confusing about this. However, I've become accustomed to not really getting answers to questions, so I will go to the next one.

The Ontario government's regional reopening plan permits cruise boats to resume on Georgian Bay, yet the federal government is refusing to allow these vessels to operate until July 1. Therefore, small businesses such as the *Island Queen* cruiser in Parry Sound, which has only a very few precious weeks to operate in the first place, is losing yet another two weeks because of federal inaction. This not only hurts the cruise boat industry but also hurts tourism and small businesses all through our area.

Will the Minister of Transport take a regional approach himself by lifting the federal ban on Georgian Bay, just like the Province of Ontario has done?

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The honourable minister may reply.

Is there a response?

Hon. Bill Blair: Madam Chair, there is. I apologize for the confusion. Let me respond, if I may, on behalf of the Minister of Transport.

There have been a number of very important discussions with the provinces, in particular with the Province of Ontario, around provisions regarding pleasure craft. There are certain restrictions that will come to an end on June 30. We're working very closely with our provincial counterparts to address this issue, but we want to ensure that it will be done safely.

• (1345)

Mr. Scott Aitchison: Madam Chair, I actually gave the minister a heads-up that I would be asking that question. He sent me an email today saying he was not going to be able to be in the House, and it's great of him to do that. He said that whoever was going to fill in for him would have an answer, but again, that was not really an answer.

The next issue I would like to bring this government's attention to is the deplorable state of rural Internet service in Parry Sound—Muskoka. Quite simply, there are too many gaps in service, and what is available is generally way too expensive. We have families trying to work and teach their kids from home on unreliable and outrageously expensive Internet service, and we have too many small businesses that either cannot access or afford reliable Internet services. Today Greg Rickford, the Ontario energy minister, and Laurie Scott, Ontario Minister of Infrastructure, announced \$2.3 million for seven northern Ontario broadband projects.

Minister, will when your government get serious and become a reliable partner for the Government of Ontario and the private sector to deliver this crucial modern-day infrastructure to rural Canadians?

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I remind the member that he needs to address the questions and comments to the chair.

The honourable minister may reply.

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Rural Economic Development): Madam Chair, in the best of times, life without access to high-speed Internet is hard. During a pandemic, the challenges are that much more pronounced.

Our government's unprecedented investments are already connecting a million more Canadian households to this essential service, but until we achieve universal access our work is not done. We will work with our partners, including provinces across the country, to connect every Canadian household to high-quality Internet access that is affordable and reliable.

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The honourable member has 30 seconds.

Mr. Scott Aitchison: I think I can squeeze something in here, then.

I'm wondering, then, Madam Chair, since the Province of Ontario has used the Northern Ontario Heritage Corporation Fund to make this announcement, what about using FedNor to make the same kind of announcement, and partner with the province?

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The honourable minister has a brief answer.

Hon. Mélanie Joly: Obviously we believe in the importance of northern Ontario; that's why we nearly doubled the budget of Fed-Nor. We will continue to invest in businesses and people all around Parry Sound, Muskoka and northern Ontario.

If my colleague has specific projects in mind, please come and see me and let's have a conversation.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The honourable member for Montmagny-L'Islet-Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, Mr. Généreux, has the floor.

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I will continue along the same lines as my colleague. During this pandemic, we are realizing the extent to which reliable high-speed Internet service is needed for Canada's economy. There are still places where telework is not possible today because of the lack of adequate coverage. However, since 2015, the government has committed to addressing the situation through three new programs.

Benoît Pilotto, who is the mayor of Saint-Onésime-d'Ixworth, in my riding, wrote to me a few days ago. That is why I am asking you what concrete results the government plans to achieve for our rural areas by the end of the year.

Hon. Maryam Monsef: At the best of times, life without high-speed Internet access is difficult. During a pandemic, the difficulties are even greater. Our government's unprecedented investments are already connecting an additional one million Canadian households to this essential service. However, until we achieve universal access, our job is not done. We are working—

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Mr. Généreux, you have the floor.

Mr. Bernard Généreux: Madam Chair, I am simply asking the minister to tell me when the mayor of Saint-Onésime-d'Ixworth will be able to tell his residents when the Internet will be available in his municipality. It is not complicated.

What does the government plan to do so that rural municipalities across Canada can have access to the Internet as soon as possible? What is its plan?

Hon. Maryam Monsef: We are working with partners across the country to ensure that every Canadian household is connected to a high-quality, accessible and affordable high-speed Internet service.

• (1350)

[*English*]

Madam Chair, I assure my colleagues that we share the same goal, and we will work with all our partners across the country to ensure every Canadian household has access—

[*Translation*]

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Mr. Généreux, you have the floor.

Mr. Bernard Généreux: Madam Chair, I am still not getting a specific answer.

According to the government's plan, when will rural Canadian businesses and households be connected?

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would ask the honourable minister to provide a brief answer.

[*English*]

Hon. Maryam Monsef: Madam Chair, those plans are under way, and we will have more to share in the coming days.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Généreux: It seems that the Minister of Rural Economic Development plans to announce a new plan this week. Can she tell us how this program will differ from the Connect to Innovate program, which is already in place?

Can the minister tell us whether her program will solve the problem of the 25 square kilometre hexagonal zones, which unfortunately make many projects ineligible for the CRTC's broadband fund?

[*English*]

Hon. Maryam Monsef: Madam Chair, I'm pleased to share with my colleague that the model he's referring to, the hexagon model, is no more. Our maps are much more precise now to ensure that we do not leave Canadians behind.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Généreux: Madam Chair, this year, the Canada summer jobs program is a real fiasco. I think all my colleagues will agree with me.

On May 13, 100 jobs were announced in my riding; on May 20, 16 jobs were announced; on May 27, 13 jobs were announced; on June 3, 12 jobs were announced; and on June 10, only one job was announced.

As we speak, an amount of \$100,000 is still to be confirmed in my riding. Can we have an announcement, once and for all?

Let's stop the piecemeal announcements and finally confirm the remaining jobs today so that our organizations can have young people before the summer starts on the weekend.

[*English*]

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Carol Hughes): We will go to the honourable minister.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Ahmed Hussen: Madam Chair, I thank the honourable member for his question.

[*English*]

We recognize the important role that the Canada summer jobs program is playing in supporting employers and young workers in communities right across the country. Our government is working very hard to help employers adapt to the realities of the COVID-19 pandemic, and at the same time is supporting young Canadians as they begin to look for summer employment. We've introduced flexibilities into the program to ensure that more young workers have opportunities to get employed.

The honourable member also has to understand that we're in the COVID-19 pandemic, and as such it will take some time for businesses to equip themselves to hire students.

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Carol Hughes): We will go to the honourable member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith, Mr. Manly.

Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP): Thank you, Madam Chair.

In the first five months of this year, 554 B.C. residents died from opioid overdoses. They were teachers, construction workers, business owners, family members, neighbours and friends. Addiction is a health and social issue, but criminalization creates stigma, so people hide their drug use and die alone.

Access to a safe supply of drugs and safe injection sites saves lives and puts addicts in daily contact with people who can help them. Will this government end the war on drugs by decriminalizing them, providing a safe supply and reallocating resources from policing addicts to providing treatment for them?

Hon. Patty Hajdu: Madam Chair, I think it's really important we make sure that when we speak about people who use substances, we remove stigmatizing language like the word "addict".

We can stand together, as this government has, with people who use substances and their families to ensure a range of options for people who are struggling with addiction, who are using substances in a way that is harming their health and their communities.

As you know, we have restored harm reduction to the Canadian drugs and substances strategy. We've made it easier for people to access safe supplies of substances. We've increased access to treatment and the variety of treatment through federal transfers to provinces and territories.

Madam Chair, we're working with communities to make sure there are more community-based approaches to treating—

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Carol Hughes): We will go back to Mr. Manly.

Mr. Paul Manly: Madam Chair, the Geneva Convention considers both tear gas and pepper spray to be chemical weapons and prohibits their use in war, yet our police forces use these weapons on Canadian civilians. These weapons are indiscriminate and can affect peaceful protestors and innocent bystanders. Will the government prohibit the use of these weapons and require police to use de-escalation techniques to keep legal protests peaceful?

• (1355)

Hon. Bill Blair: Madam Chair, the right to peaceful protest in this country is a constitutionally protected right. We want to ensure it's always respected.

At the same time, Madam Chair, we recognize that the use of even less than lethal force can have significant impacts on people's safety. This is a highly regulated substance in Canada. It's prohibited for non-police use, and for the police it is and should be highly regulated.

The RCMP have advised me they have not used tear gas in nine years. We'll continue to monitor it to ensure that peaceful protest is always respected.

Mr. Paul Manly: Madam Chair, in 2012 the RCMP spent \$14 million on 18 armoured personnel carriers. One's parked at the Nanaimo detachment. I can't imagine why we have weapons of war like this for policing civilians. Will the government rein in the RCMP budget and end wasteful spending on militarizing our civilian police forces?

Hon. Bill Blair: Madam Chair, it's a very important tradition that our Canadian police are not militarized.

At the same time, we've seen a number of tragedies when police have responded to situations in which people were armed with weapons designed for soldiers to kill soldiers, and they've been used to kill police officers. The militarization of our society, so strongly promoted by some, is the direct consequence of the militarization of the police. As we remove these weapons from our society and prohibit them, we'll make it safer for everyone and we can then move away from such a model of policing.

Mr. Paul Manly: Madam Chair, the government spent \$4.5 billion to buy an old, leaky pipeline. Since 1961, there have been 82 reported spills from the Trans Mountain pipeline. Over 1.5 million litres of crude oil has spilled into the surrounding environment. This weekend, the Trans Mountain pipeline leaked again, dumping 190,000 litres of oil. How much is this spill going to cost Canadian taxpayers to clean up? How much contingency funding has been budgeted to repair the environmental destruction from spills?

Hon. Navdeep Bains: Madam Chair, I want to thank the honourable colleague for his question.

He full well knows that the acquisition that we made with regard to the TMX initiative is a reflection of the fact that we want this initiative to move forward in a sustainable manner and in a manner that protects the environment. I'll continue to work with my colleagues to endeavour to make sure that we have the appropriate processes in place to protect the environment and at the same time create good-quality, middle-class jobs for Canadians.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The honourable member for Rosemont—La Petite—Patrie, Mr. Boulerice, has the floor.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Black Lives Matter movement is right to discuss systemic racism in our societies. In Montreal, the city and the police department have recognized this, and measures will be put in place.

The Liberal government, once again, is all talk and no walk. Although it spends \$10 million a day, we see no attempt to reform or change the RCMP.

If the Prime Minister really wants to act, why is he delaying the action plan in response to the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls?

[English]

Hon. Bill Blair: Let me assure this House and the member opposite that we're not dragging our feet. This is an important issue. Indigenous people, black Canadians and other racialized people are far too often experiencing systemic racism and disparate outcomes through the criminal justice system. It's incumbent upon all of us who work within the criminal justice system to take the steps and actions necessary to produce more equitable outcomes. All police services, including the RCMP, must be committed to ensuring that the people they're sworn to serve and protect are always treated with dignity and respect.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Madam Chair, why are the Liberals taking indigenous children to court to challenge the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal ruling in their favour?

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Indigenous Services): Madam Chair, as the honourable member knows full well, a number of cases are pending, and we are currently negotiating with the parties. We are making progress, and I would be delighted to tell the member and the House about it in response to a later question.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: We've been asking questions about it for months, and as I see it, we should keep doing so.

The Prime Minister's new pipeline, which taxpayers were forced to buy with their hard-earned money, has leaked. Some 190,000 litres of oil spilled, and we can't even make the company pay for it because the Liberals bought the pipeline.

Trans-Mountain, Keystone XL and the resumption of gas exploration and development off the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador—are these the projects the Liberals had in mind for their green recovery?

● (1400)

Hon. Navdeep Bains: I'd like to thank the honourable member for his question.

Our priority was to protect the health and safety of Canadians throughout the pandemic, especially when it comes to the environment. That's why environmental and climate change laws aimed at protecting the environment, human health and conservation will remain in force.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Across Quebec, the cultural community is going through a harrowing time. Unions, associations, artists and creators have all taken part in public demonstrations recently to condemn the lack of a specific plan for the living arts, performing arts and festival sector.

What is the government waiting for?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: I'd like to thank the member for his question. However, I strongly disagree with him.

We haven't waited to develop a plan for the arts and culture sector. We listened to the community and we tailored our supports, as they were announced. We have an emergency plan for the arts and culture sector. We were asked to adapt the CERB to take royalties into account, and we did. We were asked to extend the CERB, and we did. We are fully aware that the recovery will take longer in the arts and culture sector.

We have been there, we are there and we will be there for the arts and culture sector.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Well, that wasn't at all what the artists and creators who were out demonstrating in the streets a few days ago thought. They were protesting on the weekend.

The CERB extension announced by the government only brings us to September, but the cultural community is expecting the worst in the fall.

What is the government's long-term plan to support creators and their entire teams?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: I'm not so sure those who were protesting last week had issues with our government, but we'd certainly be happy to speak with them.

As for a long-term plan, we are currently consulting arts and culture stakeholders to contemplate together how the government can help the sector in response to the ongoing crisis.

We are working on finding solutions, but until we have long-term solutions, we have seen to it that our artists and organizations have access to funding until September.

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The honourable member for Beauport—Limoilou, Mrs. Vignola, has the floor.

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Madam Chair, I will be sharing my time with the member for Montcalm.

According to the latest news, Seaspan Shipyards will be spending an additional \$1.5 billion to build two ships. Why? Because the ships were ordered in 2011 and still haven't been delivered.

Davie built the *Asterix* without going over budget because it delivered the ship on time. Davie is currently the top shipyard, representing 50% of Canada's shipbuilding capacity.

Why isn't Davie being awarded its fair share of contracts?

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Public Services and Procurement): I'd like to thank the member for her question.

Davie is certainly a strong and trusted partner that works very hard to help our government get results for Canadians.

Building a new class of ships is highly complex, and it's not unusual for cost estimates to change throughout the procurement project. It's important to make sure additional funding is available for the joint support ships project to ensure the navy's vessels are delivered.

Mrs. Julie Vignola: We are talking about \$1.5 billion, here. In the beginning, eight years ago, the project was supposed to cost \$2.6 billion. There can't be much missing when the cost overrun is double the initial estimate.

Why haven't the ships been delivered yet? Why is Davie still not seen as a trusted partner?

• (1405)

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Minister, please keep your answer brief.

Hon. Anita Anand: Once again, I would point out that building a new class of ships is highly complex, and it's not unusual for the cost estimate to change for a procurement project as large as this one.

I know that Davie works very hard, and we also believe it is an outstanding partner.

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It is now over to the honourable member for Montcalm, Mr. Thériault.

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Madam Chair, in Quebec, 12,000 people have begun their training to work in residential and long-term care centres. They will be ready for duty in mid-September. In the meantime, we need the support of the army, which is helping us save lives. The dedication of the members of the armed forces is paramount, and I want to extend my heartfelt thanks. The government extended their mission until June 26, which is only 10 days away.

What does the army have to do right now that is more important than helping our caregivers save lives?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez: Madam Chair, I'm glad my fellow member recognizes the fundamental role the men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces have played and continue to play in residential and long-term care centres and many other areas in support of our seniors.

We are in talks with the Quebec government. The discussions around providing continued assistance to Quebec are quite positive and productive. That assistance can take many forms, including the Red Cross. We will be there for our seniors, Madam Chair.

Mr. Luc Thériault: We are short 12,000 people, so if the Red Cross wants to help us, all the better. We'll take all the help we can get.

Barely 800 members of the military are still in Quebec. I repeat my question: What does the army have to do 10 days from now that is more important if it's not to help caregivers save lives?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez: Madam Chair, all the members of the military are still in Quebec. They have done absolutely incredible work and are continuing to do so.

The people at the Canadian Red Cross are well-trained paid workers who can perform the same work in partnership with the members of the armed forces, who can stay in Quebec as well.

Right now, we are working with the Quebec government and discussing how we can keep the measure in place until September 15.

Mr. Luc Thériault: Madam Chair, our nurses and orderlies are exhausted. They're at the end of their ropes. Now is the time to thank them, not the time to turn our backs on them. It's not the time for dilly-dallying or discussions. It's the time to tell them that we will be there to help them until the end.

I will repeat my question. What does the army have to do that is more important than helping caregivers save the lives of those who built Quebec?

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The Leader of the Government in the House of Commons is asked to keep his answer brief.

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez: Madam Chair, the Government of Canada is there and will continue to be there to help the people who built Quebec. The Government of Canada will work with the Quebec government to make that happen.

[English]

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Carol Hughes): We will go to the honourable member for Red Deer—Mountain View, Mr. Dreeshen.

Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer—Mountain View, CPC): Thank you so much.

Madam Chair, on May 14 I asked the Minister of Agriculture when the Liberal government would put aside its usual campaign rhetoric and recognize the very detrimental impact the carbon tax is having on farmers across this country. Minister Bibeau proudly noted that according to their data, the average cost of the carbon tax per farm across Canada is \$210 to \$819.

We know that these numbers are completely unfounded and are not based on any factual evidence. The fact is that the Liberal government's own Parliamentary Budget Officer has estimated that at \$25 per tonne, the cost for an 855-acre crop farm in Alberta is well over \$6,000. The office came up with that using the government's statistics from the 2016 agricultural census.

Madam Chair, the evidence is right in front of the minister. When will this Liberal government come clean with Canadians and recognize the disastrous impact the carbon tax is having on Canada's critical agriculture and agri-food sector?

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

Our government has been very open and transparent about our pollution pricing plan. We will do a review of our pollution pricing system in 2020, focused on competitiveness issues in trade-exposed industries such as agriculture. It is also important to remember that this is about tackling climate change and that 100% of the revenues stay in the province.

We will continue to support our farmers and food processors as they provide an essential service across Canada.

• (1410)

Mr. Earl Dreeshen: Madam Chair, Minister Bibeau keeps talking about wanting to protect Canadians' environment. Well, the truth is that Canada's farmers, ranchers and processors have for years demonstrated their ability to deliver meaningful reductions in emissions and to safeguard the environment through the adoption of new technologies, education and innovative management practices, but the government ignores these efforts.

Will the minister at the very least admit to Canadians that Canadian farmers are unable to pass on the cost of the carbon tax to consumers and instead have to absorb those extra costs out of their own pockets?

[Translation]

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau: Madam Chair, allow me to explain again our government's position on pollution pricing. The price and method were developed so we could build an increasingly clean economy.

We put a number of measures in place to help the agriculture sector. Emissions from animal and plant production aren't taxed. Farm fuels and fuels delivered to off-farm points-of-sale are also—

[English]

Mr. Earl Dreeshen: Thank you, Madam Chair. I do have another question.

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am watching the time, Mr. Dreeshen. You have a couple more seconds.

Mr. Earl Dreeshen: Thank you.

Madam Chair, Minister Bibeau has repeatedly asked stakeholders to send her data about the impacts of the carbon tax on farmers, so this is exactly what they have been doing.

The Atlantic Grains Council, the Grain Farmers of Ontario, Producteurs de grains du Québec and the Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association issued a joint statement at the beginning of this year in which they estimated that the cumulative indirect inflation of carbon tax on farm costs will be \$14.50 an acre this year, with that cost escalating by more than double by 2022 to almost \$30 an acre.

These are huge numbers. Why does the Liberal government continue to ignore the facts presented to it and continue to misrepresent the truth to Canadians?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau: Madame Chair, I can assure you that we have paid close attention to all the information that has been provided to us and that our calculation was also based on this information provided by provinces and different stakeholders.

Mr. Earl Dreeshen: Thank you—

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau: Our government has been very open and transparent about our pollution pricing plan. The department used data from stakeholders and provinces—

Mr. Earl Dreeshen: Thank you very much, Madam Chair—

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau:—as well as the 2019 agricultural tax data to estimate the average cost of pollution pricing associated with grain drying at up to 0.4% of overall operating costs.

It is important to remember that we have put in place many special provisions—

Mr. Earl Dreeshen: Madam Chair—

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau: —like exempting farm fuel and providing other financial supports for farmers.

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Mr. Dreeshen, I am watching the time, and the minister is allowed to answer for the same amount of time that you used to ask the question. Therefore, I would hope that we would allow her to finish.

She has finished, and unfortunately the time is up.

The committee now stands adjourned until tomorrow at noon.

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