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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, November 4, 2020

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayer

• (1405)

[*English*]

The Speaker: It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of the national anthem led by the hon. member for Windsor West.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

4-H CANADA

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I am pleased to rise virtually in the House to celebrate “Show Your 4-H Colours” day, alongside 4-H members, alumni and friends who are wearing green today in support of the good work 4-H Canada does in our communities. While I could not find a great green tie, I do have my Annapolis Valley tartan scarf and my white shirt to celebrate along with them.

Since 1902, 4-H has strengthened youth interest and education in agriculture in our communities. Now, over 100 years later, it continues that mission but has evolved to also include science, technology, performing arts, photography and public speaking. Members of 4-H are taught how to commit their head, their hearts, their hands and health to benefit our world. Members of 4-H and alumni provide strong leadership across the country.

I want to encourage all members of the House to join me in applauding the work 4-H does in our communities across the country, including in my riding of Kings—Hants, to develop key skill sets for the next generation of young leaders.

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YWCA WOMEN OF DISTINCTION AWARDS

Mr. Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate a constituent of mine in Saskatoon West, Dori Krahn, from the Saskatoon Fire Department. Dori is the recipient of this year's Nutrien YWCA Women of Distinction award.

A member of the Saskatoon Fire Department, she serves the community as the department's community relations officer. She further serves Saskatoon as an ambassador for the city's Remembering When program.

Firefighters, like all first responders, rush toward danger in order to save ordinary people who are in trouble. They do not know what they will encounter, but through their training, experience and teamwork, they know they will face that crisis head-on. Their skill and fearlessness has been critical during our current COVID-19 pandemic.

Going above and beyond is not new for Dori. She previously served the community, working in the constituency offices of Carol Skelton and the current member for Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek.

This is a well-deserved honour for Dori. I wish her the best of luck, lifelong happiness, congratulations and a big thanks for everything she continues to do.

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FEDDEV ONTARIO

Ms. Kate Young (London West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be the MP for London West and I am privileged to highlight the diversity and opportunities in our region.

Thanks to investments from FedDev Ontario, three companies will receive a total of \$5.6 million that will create 115 new jobs. Factory Bucket in London, Oxford Pallet in Norwich and Titan Trailers in Tillsonburg and Delhi will all be able to increase production thanks to this investment.

Factory Bucket has developed a suite of innovative software products to help manufacturers digitize, creating 20 skilled jobs in London. Oxford Pallet will hire 20 new employees in Norwich by expanding production and further reduce waste by recycling old pallets. Titan Trailers, which designs custom trailers for bulk cargo, has created 75 skilled jobs and more than doubled production.

It is through investments like these, from federal regional development agencies, that our government is helping businesses weather the pandemic storm and build back better.

Statements by Members

• (1410)

[Translation]

ADISQ GALA

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens (Beauport-Côte-de-Beaupré-Île d'Orléans-Charlevoix, BQ): Mr. Speaker, last Sunday, a ray of sunshine broke through the cloud of sadness that is currently hanging over Quebec.

Once again we have culture to thank for it. I am talking about the 42nd ADISQ gala, which was brilliantly hosted by Louis-José Houde. This event managed to do the impossible and make the best of a bad situation. Artists in the music industry gave a series of outstanding performances, which took enormous strength given the uncertainty they are facing both now and in the future. Artists do not reinvent themselves. They are all about renewal. They are forward thinking, have vision and uphold fundamental values.

On behalf of my Bloc Québécois colleagues and myself, I want to congratulate Les Cowboys Fringants, Charlebois, Cormier and Bilodeau, KNLO, Elisapie, Strélski and all of the award winners, both named and unnamed.

Congratulations and thank you to all of these talented musicians who make Quebec great and help it shine.

I want to tell the House on their behalf that music and culture are magic, essential and generous, but not free.

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[English]

LOCAL LEGION HALLS

Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Sudbury, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for 95 years the Royal Canadian Legion has faithfully served virtually every community in our country and the families of men and women who proudly wear the uniforms of service.

Our community legion halls are a source of camaraderie. They hold events, bingos, game nights, dances, fundraisers and weddings. They are the hubs of their communities, especially in rural centres.

The past several months have been very difficult for the 1,300 legion branches across the country. Recently I joined my colleague, the MP for Nickel Belt, at Lockerby Legion Branch 564 in Greater Sudbury, to announce a \$25,000 investment to rebuild a cenotaph bearing the names of 260 branch members who have served. We were proud to announce this commemorative partnership program grant on behalf of the Minister of Veterans Affairs.

I want to encourage all Canadians to support local legion halls in their communities in any way they can, so legions can continue to serve our service men and women for another 100 years.

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VETERANS' WEEK

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, November 5 marks the beginning of Veterans' Week.

During this time, we remember the brave men and women who have put on the uniform. We must remember the sacrifices they made to protect the freedom of those they would never meet or know.

Earlier this year, members of the Canadian Armed Forces answered the call and put their health on the line to ensure that seniors living in long-term care facilities affected by COVID-19 outbreaks were taken care of.

Reflecting on what has been such a difficult year, I am thinking of every military member unable to be with their loved ones as they bravely serve our country. I am thinking of the veterans we have lost and their loved ones left behind.

We are forever in their debt. Because of their service and sacrifice, Canada remains the true north strong and free.

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VOLUNTEERISM

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, do you like sandwiches? If you do, I would like to tell you about an amazing group of volunteers in my community. They have been making sandwiches and baked goods for our local food banks and meal programs.

Our local pod of sandwich sisters, headed by Darryl Nielsen, have made over 15,000 sandwiches since April. When I was volunteering at the Fontbonne Ministries, I saw the impact of having those extra sandwiches and baked goods in addition to the meals that were being served.

We have an amazing group of volunteers who have been working in our food banks all across our community: Bethany Baptist Church; Eastview Neighbourhood Community Centre; St. Anne's Anglican Church; St. John the Compassionate Mission; Danforth Church; and Neighbourhood Food Hub.

I want to thank all those tremendous volunteers who have been supporting our community through this pandemic.

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[Translation]

VETERANS' WEEK

Mr. Francis Drouin (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Veterans' Week begins tomorrow, so today I am rising remotely to salute the incredible work of our legions, especially those in my community in Alexandria, Hawkesbury, Rockland and Russell.

[English]

Across Canada, legions play an important role in not only supporting our veterans, but also ensuring that Canadians remember those who have gone before us and the men and women in uniform who fought and continue to fight so Canadians can enjoy their freedom.

[Translation]

Legions play an important role in celebrating Remembrance Day ceremonies in our communities, and I am so grateful to them for that. Our legions need us now more than ever.

[English]

I encourage the residents of Glengarry—Prescott—Russell and all Canadians to join their local legions and get involved. As we mark the 75th anniversary of the end of the Second World War, we owe it to those who paid the ultimate sacrifice to never forget.

* * *

● (1415)

VETERANS' WEEK

Hon. Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Veterans' Week begins tomorrow.

As we mark the 75th anniversary of the end of the Second World War, the Royal Canadian Legion has named Deborah Sullivan of Summerville, New Brunswick as this year's national Silver Cross mother.

Deborah's son, Navy Lieutenant Chris Saunders, was serving aboard HMCS *Chicoutimi* on October 6, 2004, when he tragically lost his life. The designation of the Silver Cross mother is a solemn reminder of the families whose loved ones have died in service to our country.

Royal Canadian Legions provide essential services to veterans and to their families. Whether we pick up a poppy or donate directly to a local branch, these time-honoured institutions need our support now more than ever to continue their good work.

On behalf of my constituents, I want to thank all who have served and continue to serve.

Lest we forget.

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HOSPICE OF WINDSOR ESSEX COUNTY

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Windsor—Tecumseh, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today in the House to honour the work of John Fairley and the “Face to Face” campaign he founded, which has raised \$1.2 million over the last 18 years in support of the Hospice of Windsor and Essex County.

Hospice provides palliative care and an oasis of peace, comfort and trust for the patients who are on their end of life journey and their families.

Hospice depends on donations to provide that critical care. However, the economic impact of COVID-19 and the closure of fundraisers threatened this vital mission. However, John Fairley was not deterred. When given the choice to move forward or shut things down, John said, “I decided, with hope in my heart, that our community would be there.” This year, despite the odds, our community came through once again with over \$95,000 in donations.

I congratulate all the volunteers and organizers, Hospice and John Fairley, whose mom is smiling down on his tremendous work.

Statements by Members

TK'EMLUPS TE SECWEPENC INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we regularly hear about significant challenges regarding infrastructure in first nations communities. Today, I want to share a success story.

Tk'emlups te Secwepenc in my riding are proud that they are the first first nations community in the country to fund a major capital infrastructure project using development cost charges.

The completion of the north reservoir of their water network will allow 900 acres of reserve land to be developed and provide improved fire protection. The vision of the band is that its flat land and proximity to highways and rail lines are key features in their “open for business” message. After 150 years and the barriers to business in the Indian Act, the leadership demonstrated by Tk'emlups proves that a road map of how to succeed with major development projects is possible.

I congratulate them and I wish them great success.

* * *

WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE

Ms. Lianne Rood (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, one of the untold Canadian stories is of women in agriculture. Generations of farm women worked side by side with men, preparing fields and gardens, sowing crops, caring for livestock, taking in the harvest and then getting their food to market. Farm women did all of that, while taking care of children, keeping house and putting food on the table, and even serving food on tailgates in the fields. My grandmother did that, my mother did that and I learned it at their sides.

Farm women are and were the original multi-taskers. Today, women in agriculture are involved in all aspects of agribusiness, managing large farm production operations, food processing facilities and many links in the food supply chain.

I salute Canadian women who produce food to feed Canadian families and who aspire to growing Canadian agriculture and agri-food well into the 21st century. They are heroes.

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WOMEN IN THE ARMED FORCES

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, for this Remembrance Day, I want to thank the women who have and are representing us so well in the Canadian Armed Forces. I have witnessed their resilience and strength, both as veterans and as active members at 19 Wing Comox.

Oral Questions

I remember a SAR tech who helped hoist me up in a helicopter for a mock rescue, demonstrating amazing skills. When I asked her how she could throw herself into the ocean to save someone in the middle of a storm, she told me, “You just practice until it's what you do, and you don't think about it”.

A veteran who served in World War II said that she fought hard to be respected as a woman in the forces. She expected me, in this place, which is still male-dominated, to never stand down but always stand up. That is what she fought for.

I want to acknowledge all the women who have served and are serving. I am so grateful for your challenges and your victories. As Yvette, a veteran in my riding, said, “It's what you do, isn't it, when you're called to serve? You sacrifice your freedom for someone else's.”

Canada remembers.

* * *

• (1420)

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, 85% of Quebecers feel that GMO labelling should be mandatory. Surprisingly, Canada is the first country in the world to have authorized the commercial production of a genetically modified animal. That animal is salmon.

We were guinea pigs, consuming it unawares. We demand the right to know. We demand transparency. As of January 2021, the first GMO salmon will hit the market here in Canada, endangering wild salmon populations.

The Canadian Aquaculture Industry Alliance does not support the commercial production of this salmon. Mi'kmaq and Maliseet communities have also identified threats to the survival of wild salmon posed by GMO salmon.

It is my honour to sponsor petition e-2877, which calls on the government to institute mandatory labelling of foods and consumer products that contain GMOs and to respect the rights of indigenous nations.

I urge everyone to sign petition e-2877.

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[English]

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mr. Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on November 11, Canadians across the country take a moment to commemorate our veterans, remembering the sacrifices made and the lives lost that made Canada the country that we are so proud to call home. It is especially poignant this year with the 75th anniversary of the end of the Second World War and the 70th anniversary of the start of the Korean War.

Today, I want to focus my comments on commemorating the families of our most recent veterans. Let us remember the sacrifices and impacts on parents, spouses and family members, like Bob and

Carol Mitchell, M.J. Parker, Don and Patricia Poland, the Anderson family, the Dawe family and this year's national Silver Cross mother, Debbie Sullivan. Let us also remember the families and parents of those who are still serving. Among them are Patricia Manke, Sherry Lumley and Tracy Wilson, all proud mothers of serving CAF members to whom we owe our respect too.

Finally, we cannot forget the veterans who are still with us and who will never forget the loss of their colleagues in conflict. Brian McCallum, Greg Robertson, Brenden Leslie and Shaun Fevens are all names we should remember too. It is the least we can do.

I offer my thanks to all those who have served and who continue to serve our nation so bravely. Their sacrifices will not be forgotten. *Pro patria*. Lest we forget.

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[Translation]

NATIONAL CAREGIVER WEEK

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Gatineau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, during this national caregiver week I want to draw the attention of the House to the extraordinary dedication of the people who care for a loved one, friend or neighbour every single day.

Being a caregiver means making great sacrifices for a loved one, or handling the small daily tasks that mean so much in a person's life. The pandemic has come with its share of challenges and obstacles for caregivers. Caregivers have dealt with uncertainty and worked very hard, but they continue nevertheless to take on all sorts of tasks without expecting anything in return.

Their efforts make them heroes. I want to acknowledge the essential work of L'Appui Outaouais, which supports several organizations in the region that together work for the 100,000 or so caregivers in the region. Let's express our gratitude to them because thanking our caregivers is essential too.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

JUSTICE

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Attorney General cannot get his story straight when it comes to judicial appointments. First, the process was independent. Second, they only interfered to get more diverse candidates. We then heard that the government did not always take the most highly recommended candidate. When answers continually change, it suggests bad actions are being covered up.

Will the Prime Minister finally admit that he has politicized Canadian judicial appointments?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I look forward to taking questions from the member opposite, but first I want to reassure Canadians that the Canadian government is watching very carefully as events unfold in the United States as they go through their electoral processes. As always, we will seek to make sure we are able to defend Canadian interests and Canadians as we move forward, as the Americans make an important decision about their next step forward. We will watch. We will continue to defend Canadians.

• (1425)

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, another sign of a cover-up is giving statements like that or answering questions that were never actually asked.

The Attorney General told the House he never had a candidate refused by the Prime Minister's Office. Nobody asked him that question. If one is told who to select, one's selection will never be refused.

Has the Prime Minister or anyone in his office ever directed the Attorney General to pick a certain candidate?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, after 10 years of Conservative mismanagement, we brought in important reforms to the process in 2016. We strengthened the role of the independent judicial advisory committees. We produced a more rigorous, open and accountable system that better reflects Canada's diversity.

All appointments are based on merit and based on the needs of the court and each candidate's area of expertise. We are proud of the high quality of jurists who have been appointed under our reformed system. They are from different backgrounds and, yes, even from different political affiliations.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, many members of the Prime Minister's entourage are influencing judicial appointments. Email between the Prime Minister's Office and the former Minister of Justice prove it beyond a doubt. There is clear evidence of interference.

Is the Prime Minister's Office influencing judicial appointments?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we brought in major reforms to the process in 2016 following 10 years of mismanagement by the Conservative government.

We strengthened the role of independent judicial advisory committees. We created a more rigorous, open and accountable system that better reflects Canada's diversity. Appointments are based on merit, on the needs of the courts and on each candidate's area of expertise. We are proud of the extremely competent members of the legal profession who have been appointed since our improved system was introduced. They come from diverse backgrounds and, yes, they have different political affiliations.

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HEALTH

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the case numbers in this second wave of COVID-19 are

Oral Questions

increasingly troubling. Public health officials now recommend wearing a mask made of three layers rather than two. Clearly, federal public health officials want to be stricter and more cautious than Quebec.

Should Quebecers listen to federal or provincial guidelines?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since the beginning of this pandemic, we have been working with the provinces and territories to ensure that Canadians are protected from coast to coast to coast. We have consistently recognized the importance of the workers on the ground and local health authorities to properly manage what they are seeing on the ground. At the federal level, we put forward measures and recommendations that could help across the country. We expect everyone to do what it takes to keep their distance, wear protective masks and download the COVID Alert app.

[*English*]

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is important that Canadians get consistent public health advice when it comes to COVID-19.

They did not get that yesterday from the health minister. When asked, she refused to answer if Canadians should listen to federal, provincial or municipal health authorities when there is conflicting advice about lockdowns or mask wearing. In fact, on those issues, she has changed her own mind several times.

Why can Canadians not get a straight answer from the federal health minister on public health advice about COVID-19?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been clear from the very beginning that we need to do everything we can to keep ourselves and others safe. That is what Canadians should be doing. I am very pleased to support Dr. Tam, the health minister and all of our various health experts across the country who are putting forward measures that Canadians can take on to keep themselves safe.

I am extremely pleased to hear the member opposite, the Leader of the Opposition, talk about the importance of wearing masks. It is important that everyone wears masks.

* * *

[*Translation*]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is very rare, but for once the Prime Minister and I agree on something: It would be better if Joe Biden were elected. However, I will never be Prime Minister of Canada and so I can say express my opinion.

He cannot. Nevertheless, he said it, weakening our relationship with the United States in the process. Frankly, the Prime Minister has already sabotaged our relationship with France.

Oral Questions

Can we be on the outs at the same time with two of our three main allies? Has the Prime Minister spoken with the President of the French Republic?

• (1430)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to reassure everyone in the house and all Canadians that we are closely watching the process unfolding in the United States. As has been the case for many years, we will be there to defend Canadians, our interests, our business people and our workers such as aluminum or steel workers. We will be there to defend Canadians no matter the result of the U.S. election. We will continue to work with our allies, including France, on major issues around the world.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the simultaneous interpretation does not appear to be working for the questions.

I am rather happy that we and the Premier of Quebec have made it clear to France that this Prime Minister does not speak for Quebec on matters of freedom of speech, secularism or friendship with France.

Canada cannot be at odds with France and the United States at the same time. The President of France called the Premier of Quebec, but not the Prime Minister of Canada. Clearly there is a certain coolness between France and Canada. There is just one solution. Will the Prime Minister of Canada call the President of France and apologize for his serious lack of judgment?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the years I have been very happy to work with my friend, the President of France, Emmanuel Macron, on issues that are important to Canadians and the world, such as climate change, women's rights, combatting terrorism and protecting our fundamental rights. We will always do so, and I look forward to speaking to President Macron soon.

* * *

SENIORS

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we are in the midst of the second wave of COVID-19. Once again, our seniors are the hardest hit. It was unacceptable during the first wave of COVID-19, but there is no excuse now, during the second wave. Our seniors deserve the best care possible. The Prime Minister promised to set federal health care standards.

Where are these standards to protect our seniors?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House we understand that it is important to work in partnership with the provinces to protect all Canadians. Our seniors are, indeed, particularly vulnerable to COVID-19. That is why we immediately sent in the Canadian Armed Forces at the request of Quebec. We continue to help the Canadian Red Cross, because we will always be there for our seniors. In addition, we are working with the provinces to share best practices and to ensure that seniors will be protected in their long-term care homes across the country in the years to come.

[English]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the worst outbreak of COVID-19 right now is happening in Manitoba. It is happening in long-term care homes. It is happening in long-term care homes owned by the government. These homes are for profit, when we have said again and again that profit should have no place in the care of our seniors.

We need national standards of care for our seniors. When will the Prime Minister take responsibility, end profit in federally owned long-term care homes, and save lives?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, Canadians expect all their orders of government to work together. We fully respect provincial jurisdiction over long-term care homes, but we are there to support. We are working with them toward long-term care norms and guidelines that can be national in scope to make sure no seniors anywhere in the country feel they are getting less protection than their neighbours in a different part of the country.

We need to be there to support. I spoke with Premier Pallister of Manitoba last night and continue to encourage him to reach out to the federal government for anything he needs to handle this difficult situation.

* * *

[Translation]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Freedom of expression is fundamental and non-negotiable for Canadians. The Prime Minister has been all over the map lately. Last Friday, he clearly said what he really thinks, but he later retracted his statement when he saw that neither the French nor Canadians agreed with him. It was a slap in the face that President Macron called Premier Legault and not the Prime Minister.

Why did the Prime Minister not get a call from President Macron?

• (1435)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will repeat what I said last week and that is that we will always defend freedom of expression. It is a right protected by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and it is always something that we want to protect in our democracy and in our society. As usual, we will continue to work with our counterparts around the world, including President Macron, on issues that are important to Canadians and to everyone in the world, including the protection of freedom of speech and our fundamental rights.

Oral Questions

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to refresh the Prime Minister's memory. On Friday, he said that freedom of expression is not without limits. However, yesterday, he said that he would vigorously defend freedom of speech. He cannot deny that he obviously said two different things. It seems he does not know whether he is coming or going.

Why does the Prime Minister not want to admit that what he said about freedom of expression on Friday is what he really thinks?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know that my hon. colleague would not want to mislead the House.

Perhaps he can set the record straight by recognizing that, last week, I said that we would always defend freedom of expression. That is an essential principle of our democracy. It is a fundamental freedom that we cherish as Canadians and that we will always defend here and throughout the world.

* * *

[English]

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Ms. Lianne Rood (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Professor Charlebois from Dalhousie University has described the practices of grocery giants as “supply chain bullying”.

He pointed to the fees charged to suppliers by grocery giants such as Loblaws and Walmart to pay for \$6 billion in renovations to their stores. That is like making a multi-million dollar renovation on the cottage at Harrington Lake and expecting taxpayers to foot the bill.

When will the government tell Loblaws and Walmart to stop the bullying tactics that are putting farmers and food processors at risk, and making grocery bills even higher for Canadians?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is disappointing to see grocers impose costly fees, which fall on thousands of Canadian food processors working hard to feed Canadians and support communities.

Independent grocers, food processors, food producers and workers have played a critical role during this pandemic. We share Canadians' concern about fair market practices, and are committed to ensuring the right conditions for all businesses to thrive.

The federal Competition Bureau, as an independent law enforcement agency, is responsible for enforcing the Competition Act, and we expect that it will.

Ms. Lianne Rood (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister should know, and take seriously, that food security in a pandemic is a very real risk.

Since March of this year, Canadians have seen shortages of products on grocery store shelves. Producers and processors stepped up and kept food coming from the farm to Canadians' tables, but the grocery giants are gouging them with new fees. After months of rising above the challenges with next to no support from the government, they need action now.

When will the government recognize this service to Canadian families and stand up to grocery giants' supply chain bullying?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a shame to see members trying to mislead the House in the fact that this government has actually stepped up with hundreds of millions of dollars during this unprecedented time to support producers, farmers and people right across the country who are struggling in this pandemic. Yes, we are concerned with the costly fees added on by grocery chains and that is why we have turned to the federal Competition Bureau. We assure Canadians we will continue to raise this matter also with our provincial counterparts as we encourage everyone to take action in this matter.

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[Translation]

COVID-19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, despite record spending this year, we have not seen a budget. We have not seen an economic update. We have not seen bi-weekly reports on COVID-19 spending. We have not seen the Minister of Finance's mandate letter. To top it off, today, the Parliamentary Budget Officer criticized the government for being secretive about \$80 billion in spending.

Is the Prime Minister keeping secrets about that spending, or has he simply lost track?

● (1440)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our top priority is supporting Canadians and businesses as we weather the COVID-19 pandemic.

From the beginning, we have been open and transparent about our COVID-19 economic plan. We thank all parties for working together to get that money out the door and for supporting Canadians during this unprecedented time. From the beginning, we have been providing frequent updates, and, as part of our ongoing commitment, we will present an update on Canada's COVID-19 economic response plan this fall. We will always be there for Canadians who need help.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, here is what we do not know. We do not know about the budget because there has not been one in a record 18 months, or about an economic update, which does not yet have a date. There is still no letter of mandate to the Minister of Finance, no bi-weekly updates. The Parliamentary Budget Officer said there are no reports on \$80 billion of spending. Now Napoleon said, “Never ascribe to malice that which is adequately explained by incompetence.” Is it possible that the Prime Minister is not hiding anything, he has just completely lost track of all the spending?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, from the beginning of this pandemic we made a very different decision from what the Conservatives would have made as the member for Carleton keeps highlighting. We made a commitment to Canadians that we would be there for them. We sent out the Canada emergency response benefit almost immediately to millions of Canadians who needed it, who used it to put groceries on the table, to pay their rent, to support their families at a time of uncertainty and crisis. We had Canadians' backs and we will continue to have Canadians' backs as long as it takes, whatever it takes. I will let the Conservatives continue to try and play politics and explain how they would not have done that for Canadians, but we have and we will continue to.

* * *

*[Translation]***TERRORISM**

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Montarville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, French President Emmanuel Macron called the Premier of Quebec to thank him for his unconditional support for freedom of expression.

The Prime Minister of Canada's phone did not ring because he said that freedom of expression had limits. Then, out of the blue, he changed his mind. The Prime Minister is now saying that we must “always” defend freedom of expression. What guarantee do we have that he will not change his mind again about this?

In any event, why did it take a diplomatic snub to make him understand that we must unequivocally defend freedom of expression when it is attacked by murderous Islamism?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I understand that the opposition parties are attempting to attack the government and play political games. That is very clear.

As I said last week, we will always defend freedom of expression. There can be no misunderstanding about that. We will be there to defend the fundamental rights of Canadians. We will be there to support our friends around the world, who face horrible and unacceptable acts. We will continue to defend the fundamental values and principles of all Canadians.

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Montarville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, apparently everyone misunderstood what he meant to say, including President Macron.

Europe is experiencing a troubling resurgence of Islamist terrorism, with three deadly attacks in the span of two weeks. Canada

needs to be a reliable, steadfast, unwavering ally to our European partners in the fight against murderous ignorance. However, the Prime Minister did not look at all like an ally to them last week. His dithering on freedom of speech made him look like a weak leader who could not decide between condemning fundamentalist violence and backing a radical Islamist fringe.

Why does he find it so difficult to acknowledge that there is no circumstance under which—

The Speaker: The right hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I encourage my hon. colleague to look at what I said last week.

I said that we will always defend freedom of speech. I said that we unequivocally condemn these unjustifiable, unjustified and unacceptable acts. I said that we would not allow Muslim communities to be defined by these murderers, these terrorists, who do not represent their religion.

That is exactly what I said last week, and I will continue to repeat that this week.

* * *

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

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the facts on COVID-19, the government has three stories on the pandemic warning system: The health minister has said it was shut off and they are investigating that decision; the Prime Minister has said the warning system was never shut off; the public safety minister just confirmed it was shut off, but he did not find out about it until we started asking questions. Which one of these stories is true?

● (1445)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there have been no changes in funding or staffing levels in that organization since 2015. We have continued to rely on experts and public servants to do the work they continue to do. Indeed, when reports came out, the health minister asked to follow up on some questions that were being posed and we are actually following up on that right now.

We have always put science at the forefront of our decision-making. We were acting and reacting to this pandemic from the beginning of January. We will continue to do whatever is necessary to keep Canadians safe through the rest of the time we are dealing with this pandemic.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister just said there were no changes to a system that two of his ministers said were shut down. There are consequences to shutting down our early pandemic warning system. The New York Times revealed that the World Health Organization handed key parts of the early work on COVID-19 over to China. A global health expert has referred to this as “an absolute whitewash”.

Why did the government muzzle Canadian officials, only to rely on Communist China for early news on the COVID outbreak?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on January 2, Dr. Theresa Tam convened a meeting of her provincial counterparts to talk about worrisome news coming out of China. Weeks later, we gathered the incident response group at the cabinet level to talk about this development. We continued to engage with scientists and doctors from around the world, including at the WHO, including our own internal capacities, to prepare for and respond to this pandemic.

We have learned many things since then and we will be better positioned in the future, but as it is, we will continue to do everything we can, as we have, to protect Canadians.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the public safety minister told committee he was not aware of anyone asking to close the border until days before they closed it. The Prime Minister just confirmed he was warned on January 2 by Dr. Tam and we now know that in February, officials at Public Safety were sending notes to government departments warning about the transmission risk of Canadians returning from abroad.

Why did the Prime Minister ignore warnings from his own public safety officials for over a month before he closed the border?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every single step of the way we leaned on experts, epidemiologists and international health experts on the pandemic for the best recommendations on how to keep Canadians safe. We moved forward on those, including setting up quarantine facilities for Canadians returning and bringing in extra measures at the borders. We were able to see, in those early days, a very low incidence of cases in Canada.

There are many things we are going to be looking back on and saying we should have done this differently or we should have done that differently, but I can say that every effort was made to do everything right and Canadians are benefiting from those decisions.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andr anne Larouche: Mr. Speaker, I have a point of order.

The Speaker: The hon. member for Shefford on a point of order.

Ms. Andr anne Larouche: Mr. Speaker, there is a problem with the interpretation, and I did not hear the question or the response.

The Speaker: We will try to fix that technical issue.

[*English*]

Is it translated into French?

[*Translation*]

The problem has been fixed.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as we know, the second wave is hitting harder and harder. The shortage of public health workers and the Liberal government's last-minute decisions since the beginning of the pandemic have left Canadians scratching their heads about the proper management of this pandemic.

Oral Questions

Can Canadians still have confidence in the government? Can they hope to spend Christmas with their families this year?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians can continue to have confidence in our government.

We have been there to support them since the beginning of the pandemic with public health measures, support for the provinces, and direct support for Canadians through the Canada emergency response benefit, the emergency wage subsidy and help for seniors, families and youth. We will continue to be there to support Canadians.

We all need to make an effort. The federal government will continue to be there and will work with the provinces, which are continuing their work. Canadians will also contribute to try to mitigate this—

The Speaker: The hon. member for London—Fanshawe.

* * *

● (1450)

[*English*]

WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Liberals love their pretty words when it comes to gender equality, but women are still waiting. Women are waiting for affordable child care. Women are waiting for equal pay. Canadian women still make 32% less than men, and our work should not come at a discount. After decades of inaction, the Liberals finally moved on pay equity, but today's PBO report shows that the Liberals are dragging their feet and the law is not being enforced.

Why do women still have to fight their own government for pay equity? Why do we still have to wait?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the past five years, we have taken many significant steps forward toward gender equality, but we know there is much more work to do. We have passed historic pay equity legislation and are working hard to implement it. We know this is a systemic change that is long overdue.

Oral Questions

We have started taking large steps toward it, but we will continue to work with all our allies in the House and beyond to ensure that we are making things much better in this country. We need gender equality. It is not just the right thing to do; it is the smart thing to do. That is why we will continue to work hard every day to achieve it.

* * *

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canada's largest federal infrastructure project is the Gordie Howe International Bridge, being built in my riding. The project will feature art representing the local history of the area. It will include European and indigenous art, but will unjustly exclude the historic and extremely important Black community. This very location was the epicentre of the Underground Railway for escaping slavery to freedom. African Canadians are being written out of our history by the Liberal government, a demonstration of systemic racism.

Will the Prime Minister commit right now, today, to making sure that he fixes this problem, turns it around and includes the African Black community's history? He can do it now. Do we have his commitment to make sure it gets done?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for his advocacy on this issue. It sounds like something we absolutely should be moving forward on.

I look forward to talking with the infrastructure minister and working with our first ever Minister of Diversity and Inclusion and Youth in the history of this country to ensure that we are doing everything we can to fight systemic racism, fight against anti-Black racism and make sure we are properly remembering all aspects of our history, because Black history is Canadian history, not just in February, but every month. We will continue to work together to make sure we do that.

* * *

SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since the very beginning of this pandemic, businesses in my riding of Kingston and the Islands have counted on our government for the support they need to keep their employees on the payroll and keep their doors open. Now, as we face a second wave of the pandemic, many businesses are doing their part by following public health orders, but they are worried. They are worried about being able to make it through this pandemic.

Can the Prime Minister tell the House what the government is doing to ensure businesses in my riding have the support they need to get through this second wave and are able to be in a strong position when we recover from this pandemic?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by thanking the member for Kingston and the Islands for his tremendous advocacy on behalf of workers and businesses in his riding.

We will continue to support small businesses across the country that have been hard hit by this pandemic. With the new Canada emergency rent subsidy, we will provide simple, easy-to-access rent

support until 2021. For those who are impacted by public health orders, we will make sure they have additional supports to cover up to 90% of their rent.

We are calling on all members of the House to help get the support to businesses across the country and make sure that it goes directly to tenants, not through landlords anymore.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for weeks the Conservatives have been asking questions about Canadian drone systems that have been diverted to the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, in violation of international treaties. We know that on April 23 the Prime Minister spoke with the President of Turkey. Pictures of these drone systems have now appeared in *The Globe and Mail*. Canadians deserve answers.

Did the Prime Minister agree to the Turkish President's request to approve these systems for export, yes or no?

• (1455)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have a rigorous export control system that ensures that as we export armaments and military equipment around the world, all the rules are followed.

When reports came out that possible Canadian technology was being used in Nagorno-Karabakh, we immediately suspended the relevant export permits to Turkey. We are following up on an appropriate investigation.

We need to make sure that Canadian-made equipment is not being used in illicit ways that are not aligned with the original contracts signed, and, of course, is never used to harm civilians or innocents.

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is interesting, but that was not the question.

This is a serious question, and it deserves a clear answer. Canada developed a drone system. This drone system was used in the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, in violation of international treaties. We know that on April 23, the Prime Minister spoke with the President of Turkey. The question is simple and deserves a clear answer.

During that conversation, did the Prime Minister approve the use and sale of Canadian drones in Turkey, yes or no?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the answer is no.

Oral Questions

[English]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals' northern drilling ban has been holding back our economy since it was imposed back in 2016. What is worse is that the government failed to consult with territorial partners before moving forward on this policy.

As it is slated for review next year and Canada's resource sector can play a pivotal role in our economic recovery, will the Prime Minister commit today to initiating the consultation with northerners that he neglected the first time around?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know how important it is to continue to develop our natural resources as we move forward into a renewed future and build back better. We know that natural resources will play a key role in developing the technologies of the future, from mining products like cobalt, lithium and nickel, which go into our batteries, to copper for our wiring, to rare earth minerals for our high-tech systems.

We know how important it is to move forward on natural resources, but we know we need to do it properly. That is always in partnership with indigenous peoples, with clarity for industry and with predictability for all.

* * *

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Iqaluit post office is one of the busiest in Canada, as Nunavummiut must order many items online. As expected, the pandemic has boosted this demand, and it has actually flooded the post office with more than it can handle. Residents of Iqaluit have been calling on the government to make upgrades to this facility for a number of years.

Can the Prime Minister explain why Nunavut continues to be underserved by his government?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, after years of the previous prime minister using the north for photo ops, we have made historic investments to support communities of the north, recognizing that northern sovereignty happens not with a few photo ops, but with real, substantive investments in the Canadians and people who live there.

That is why we will continue to work in partnership with northerners to move forward on a northern Arctic policy framework to ensure there are investments in infrastructure, investments in supports for the north and historic investments in food security and airline security. These are the things that matter to Canadians.

The Speaker: Before continuing, I want to remind hon. members that when there is heckling going on back and forth, it is hard on the interpreters' ears. I am sure nobody in this room wants to hurt the interpreters.

The hon. member for Rivière-du-Nord.

[Translation]

JUSTICE

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is interfering in judicial appointments.

Journalist Joël-Denis Bellavance has evidence that, in 2017, someone in the PMO contacted colleagues at the justice department at least four times to sing the praises of certain candidates. That is right, I said four times. Radio-Canada has evidence that, in 2019, a member of the Minister of Justice's staff shared concerns about what the PMO was requiring prior to judicial appointments. He even added that it created the potential for a scandal.

We know the Prime Minister is interfering in judicial appointments, but the big question is: Why?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have strengthened the role of the independent judicial advisory committees. We produced a more rigorous, open and accountable system. Appointments are based on merit and on the needs of the courts and each candidate's area of expertise.

We are proud of the highly qualified jurists who have been appointed under our strengthened system. They are from different backgrounds and, yes, from different political affiliations. Of course we consult broadly. First, the advisory committee supplies its list of names, then the minister makes a recommendation, and then due diligence is carried out.

● (1500)

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister will not answer, but that is okay. We know why.

The Prime Minister is meddling in order to favour Liberal judges. His close advisors put pressure on the Department of Justice. His ministers are consulted, as the Minister of National Revenue was in 2018. His MPs are consulted, as former MP Nicolas Di Iorio was. Constituency staff are consulted, as was staff in the office of the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food in 2018. The Prime Minister, ministers, MPs, staff: the entire Liberal machine is involved in judicial appointments.

Has the Prime Minister invented a new concept, namely systemic patronage?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all of our judicial appointments are based on merit.

We are proud of the extremely competent members of the legal profession who have been appointed since our improved system was introduced. Of course we consult widely. Due diligence is done after the minister has made his recommendation, which occurs after the judicial appointments advisory committee has provided a list of names.

*Oral Questions***AEROSPACE INDUSTRY**

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, countries around the world have recognized the importance of airline companies. France has provided \$22.7 billion in loans, subsidies and direct investments to its aerospace industry. Germany has provided \$9 billion to its airline industry through recapitalization and loan guarantees. All of our allies understand that air transportation is a priority.

When will the Liberal government get serious about supporting the aerospace industry?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that workers in Canadians businesses of all sizes are facing difficulties and economic uncertainty during the COVID-19 pandemic. We will continue to look at the specific problems that COVID-19 is causing to all industrial sectors struggling with unprecedented financial difficulties because of the pandemic.

We have always stood up for workers in the aerospace industry and will continue to do so.

[English]

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in one year, Canadian carriers have lost 14% of transatlantic capacity share. U.S. carriers are operating at 50% capacity, while our Canadian carriers are operating at only 25%. Leakage to the U.S. market is expected to grow as Canadians go to the U.S. for more inexpensive flights.

When will the government provide the airline sector with a plan so that Canada will not continue to flail in the international market?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, allow me to begin by pointing out that we are in a historic pandemic right now, and we have put in measures in Canada designed to protect Canadians.

We have heard the Conservative members opposite say, a few times, that we should follow the example of the Americans in how they are managing the pandemic. That is simply not what we are going to do.

We stepped up with over \$1.1 billion in support for Canada's airlines. We will continue to support them through this pandemic, through many of the measures we are voting on a little later this week. These are things we are doing to both support our industries and keep Canadians safe, unlike what the Conservatives seem to want us to do.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, finally this week, the government announced funding for the airline sector for only one region of Canada, leaving all other regions across Canada with reduced or eliminated service.

Flights from Fredericton to Halifax, Regina to Winnipeg and North Bay to Toronto have all been suspended. Other regions continue to wait for the government to act, wondering if their regional needs will ever be addressed.

Is this what regions can continue to expect as a response for this struggling sector, or will the government finally come up with a national, coordinated plan to help all regions of Canada?

• (1505)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I suggest that the member opposite should actually listen to her colleague who asked a really important question about supports for northern regions in this country.

We moved forward earlier this week with extra supports for northern carriers because that is a region that is particularly hard hit by the pandemic. We will continue to ensure that northerners who rely on air transportation to get food and basic supplies can continue to rely on that.

We have been there for Canadians right across the country from the very beginning. We will continue to be there for northerners and, indeed, for all Canadians.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last year, while Canadians were preparing themselves for the holidays, a then 10-year-old boy named Adam was wrongfully flagged as a possible security threat under the no-fly list. The Harper Conservatives, in a mad rush to promote themselves as tough, clumsily designed a system whereby people were flagged based on nothing more than their name. This unfortunately led to very public instances whereby young children simply travelling to watch a hockey game were singled out. We have heard from groups, such as the no-fly list kids, that the Conservatives' errors must be addressed.

Can the Prime Minister please inform the House when action will be taken to ensure that no more children will be falsely flagged?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my thanks to my colleague for Scarborough Centre for the important question and for her advocacy on the file.

After being alerted to troubling incidents involving children members of the no-fly list kids, we assured concerned parents that we would work to prevent this from ever happening again. Today, I am pleased to announce that final provisions of the Secure Air Travel Act have come into force to deliver centralized screening and a Canadian travel number. We can all agree that 10-year-olds should not have to worry about being publicly singled out when trying to watch their favourite hockey team in action.

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, over a year ago, the expert panel on money laundering in British Columbia estimated that over \$40 billion is laundered annually in Canada. The panel also highlighted that there are serious federal gaps, specifically with FINTRAC. This is a national problem requiring federal action.

Canadian families are being priced out of certain real estate markets. My question to the Prime Minister today is: Has FINTRAC increased its reporting to law enforcement agencies, and what are the numbers?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we continue to work with British Columbia and all of our partners on fighting organized crime and money laundering. This is an issue that, as the member opposite said, has impacts right across the country and in various real estate markets particularly. That is why we have moved forward with the national housing strategy, increasing affordability for Canadians.

We will continue to work with Canadians, even as we combat organized crime and money laundering, making housing more affordable, making neighbourhoods stronger and continuing to support Canadians through this pandemic and beyond.

Hon. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government has had five years to address this serious issue that costs our country tens of billions of dollars a year and results in home ownership being out of reach for many Canadians. For every single full year that we were in power, we held a top-10 position in Transparency International's corruption perceptions index. This past year, Canada fell out of the top 10 for the first time since the last time the Liberals were in power.

When is the Prime Minister going to show real leadership to solve this growing problem?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will highlight that unfortunately, because the member opposite brought up the Conservatives' time in office, I need to emphasize that they continued to cut resources for the RCMP to go after serious crimes like money laundering and organized crime.

We made investments to support our front-line police officers. We made investments to enable the RCMP to do more. We are working in partnership with British Columbia. We will continue to take very seriously these matters and we will continue to move forward on them.

* * *

FINANCE

Hon. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is stuck in the past, but the Transparency International report posted this year in 2020 is entitled, "Canada Falls from its Anti-Corruption Perch". It highlights the SNC-Lavalin scandal, saying that, "Countries usually take the biggest hit on the [corruption perception index] CPI when long festering corruption issues come to light in explosive ways. But this can also be the best time for officials to roll up their sleeves and finally tackle the problems."

This Prime Minister has literally made an art form of rolling up his sleeves. When is he going to move on to actually tackling the growing problem of money laundering?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said, after Conservatives cut investments in the RCMP, FINTRAC and the CRA, we actually made \$172 million in investments. So, it is not just about rolling up our sleeves, it is about actu-

ally delivering for these agencies, whether it is the RCMP, FINTRAC or the CRA that can actually go after money laundering. Those are the investments we made tangibly when Conservatives made cuts.

* * *

[Translation]

COVID-19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Ms. Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the workers in my riding of Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle have continued receiving a pay cheque because of the Canada emergency wage subsidy. However, this financial support is supposed to end in December 2020.

Can the Prime Minister tell the House what our government plans on doing to ensure that workers will continue to receive this support as we face the second wave of the virus?

● (1510)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for this important question for the workers of Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle.

The wage subsidy has provided important job security for more than 3.7 million people in Canada, as we continue to fight COVID-19. With Bill C-9, we will extend the wage subsidy until June 2021 so that Canadian businesses will be in a strong position when we emerge from the crisis.

I hope that all members will join us and support the extension of this important program.

[English]

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, people are scared. After months of first nations doing everything they can to stay safe, there is a COVID-19 outbreak at the Keeyask work camp where there are hundreds of workers. Manitoba Hydro has not shut down the camp. It is not sharing information with first nations, and there are concerns that it is using questionable testing techniques. This could put our entire region at risk.

Will the Prime Minister intervene directly on behalf of first nations and northern people? Will he call for immediate action to stop the spread of COVID-19 at Keeyask and throughout our region?

Business of Supply

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are obviously concerned by the outbreak of COVID-19 cases at the Keeyask Generating Station and we are monitoring the situation closely. We expect work on the Manitoba Hydro project to follow public health advice to keep workers and indigenous communities safe. We will support first nations leadership in working with their partners on measures appropriate to protect their communities.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—CONSEQUENCES OF THE PANDEMIC ON CANADIAN WORKERS AND BUSINESSES

The House resumed from November 3 consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: It being 3:12 p.m., pursuant to order made on Wednesday, September 23, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion relating to the business of supply.

Call in the members.

And the bells having rung:

The Speaker: The question is as follows. May I dispense?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

[Chair read text of motion to House]

• (1545)

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(Division No. 19)

YEAS

Members

Aboulttaif	Aitchison
Albas	Alleslev
Allison	Angus
Arnold	Ashton
Atwin	Bachrach
Baldinelli	Barlow
Barrett	Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu	Benzen
Bergen	Bergeron
Berthold	Bérubé
Bezan	Blaikie
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)	Block
Boudrias	Boulerice
Bragdon	Brassard
Brunelle-Duceppe	Calkins
Cannings	Carrie
Chabot	Champoux
Charbonneau	Chiu
Chong	Collins
Cooper	Cumming
Dalton	Dancho
Davidson	Davies

DeBellefeuille
d'Entremont
Desilets
Doherty
Dreeshen
Duvall
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Fast
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Gallant
Gaudreau
Généreux
Gill
Godin
Gray
Hallan
Harris
Hughes
Jeneroux
Julian
Kent
Kmiec
Kurek
Kwan
Larouche
Lehoux
Lewis (Essex)
Lloyd
Lukiwski
MacKenzie
Manly
Masse
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McCauley (Edmonton West)
McLean
McPherson
Michaud
Morantz
Motz
Normandin
Patzer
Pauzé
Plamondon
Rayes
Reid
Richards
Ruff
Saroya
Scheer
Seeback
Shin
Simard
Sloan
Stanton
Ste-Marie
Stubbs
Thériault
Tochor
Uppal
Vecchio
Viersen
Vis
Webber
Wilson-Raybould
Yurdiga

Deltell
Desbiens
Diotte
Dowdall
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Epp
Falk (Provencher)
Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock)
Fortin
Garrison
Gazan
Genuis
Gladu
Gourde
Green
Harder
Hoback
Jansen
Johns
Kelly
Kitchen
Kram
Kusie
Lake
Lawrence
Lemire
Liepert
Lobb
MacGregor
Maguire
Martel
Mathysen
Mazier
McColeman
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Melillo
Moore
Morrison
Nater
O'Toole
Paul-Hus
Perron
Poilievre
Redekopp
Rempel Garner
Rood
Sahota (Calgary Skyview)
Savard-Tremblay
Schmale
Shields
Shipley
Singh
Soroka
Steinley
Strahl
Sweet
Therrien
Trudel
Van Popta
Vidal
Vignola
Warkentin
Williamson
Wong
Zimmer— 176

NAYS

Members

Amos
Anandasangaree
Arya
Bagnell

Business of the House

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

* * *

[*Translation*]**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE****Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

There has been discussion among the parties and I think you would find unanimous consent for the following motion:

That, notwithstanding any standing order, special order or usual practice of the House, Bill C-9, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (Canada Emergency Rent Subsidy and Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy), shall be disposed of as follows:

(a) the second reading stage of the bill shall be taken up as the first order of the day on Wednesday, November 4, 2020, provided that at the expiry of time provided for Government Orders or when no member rises to speak, whichever comes first, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and put, forthwith and successively, every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill, without further debate or amendment, provided that any recorded division shall stand deferred according to the provisions of the order made on Wednesday, September 23, 2020;

(b) if the bill has been read a second time, it shall stand referred to a committee of the whole and paragraphs (c) and (d) of this order shall apply;

● (1550)

[*English*]

(c) on Thursday, November 5, 2020, at the conclusion of the time provided for Private Members' Business, the House shall resolve into a Committee of the Whole on the said bill and on the economy generally for a period not to exceed four hours, provided that

(i) the Speaker may preside,

(ii) the Chair may preside from the Speaker's chair,

(iii) the committee be subject to the provisions relating to hybrid sittings of the House;

(iv) the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance be invited to appear and the minister shall be questioned for four hours, provided that

(A) the Chair shall call members from all recognized parties and one member who does not belong to a recognized party in a fashion consistent with the proportions observed during Oral Questions,

(B) no member shall be recognized for more than five minutes at a time which may be used for posing questions,

(C) members may be permitted to split their time with one or more members by so indicating to the Chair,

(D) the rotation used for questions be the one used by the former Special Committee on the COVID-19 Pandemic, and

(E) questions shall be answered by ministers, and

(v) at the conclusion of the time provided for Committee of the Whole, the committee shall rise, the said bill shall be deemed reported to the House without amendment, and the House shall adjourn until the next sitting day; and

(d) the report stage of the said bill shall be taken up as the first order of the day on Friday, November 6, 2020, provided that

(i) the deadline for notices of report stage motions shall be 10 p.m. on Thursday, November 5, 2020, provided that copies of the notices shall also be provided to the House leaders of the recognized parties and, if required, the Order Paper and Notice Paper be published for the sitting day of Friday, November 6th, 2020,

(ii) the time provided for Government Orders shall be extended, if necessary, to allow for one representative of each recognized party to speak,

Bains	Baker
Battiste	Beech
Bendayan	Bennett
Bessette	Bibeau
Bittle	Blair
Blois	Bratina
Brière	Carr
Casey	Chagger
Champagne	Chen
Cormier	Dabrusin
Damoff	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Dong
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dzerowicz
Easter	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Ellis
Erskine-Smith	Fergus
Fillmore	Finnigan
Fisher	Fonseca
Fortier	Fragiskatos
Fraser	Freeland
Fry	Garneau
Gerretsen	Gould
Guilbeault	Hajdu
Hardie	Holland
Housefather	Hussen
Hutchings	Iacono
Jaczek	Joly
Jones	Jordan
Jowhari	Kelloway
Khalid	Khera
Koutrakis	Kusmierczyk
Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lattanzio	Lauzon
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lefebvre	Lightbound
Long	Longfield
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAtulay (Cardigan)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney
Martinez Ferrada	May (Cambridge)
McCrimmon	McDonald
McGuinty	McKay
McKenna	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod (Northwest Territories)	Mendès
Mendicino	Miller
Monsef	Morrissey
Murray	Ng
O'Connell	Oliphant
Petipas Taylor	Powlowski
Qualtrough	Ratansi
Regan	Robillard
Rodriguez	Rogers
Romanado	Sahota (Brampton North)
Saini	Sajjan
Samson	Sangha
Sarai	Scarpaleggia
Schieffe	Schulte
Serré	Sgro
Shanahan	Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simms	Sorbara
Spengemann	Tabbara
Tassi	Trudeau
Turnbull	Van Bynen
van Koeverden	Vandal
Vandenbeld	Vaughan
Virani	Weiler
Wilkinson	Yip
Young	Zahid
Zann	Zuberi — 152

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(iii) at the expiry of the time provided for Government Orders, when no member rises to speak at the report stage, or if the Speaker does not select any amendments for consideration at the said stage, whichever comes first, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith and successively, every question necessary to dispose of the said stage of the said bill, without further debate or amendment; provided that (A) any recorded division on any amendment considered at the said stage shall not be deferred, and (B) the motion for concurrence at report stage be deemed adopted on division, and

(iv) the said bill may be debated at the third reading stage at the same sitting, provided that, at the expiry of the time provided for Government Orders or when no member rises to speak at the said stage, whichever comes first, the said bill shall be deemed read a third time and passed, on division.

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

[Translation]

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

[English]

The House has heard the terms of the motion. All those opposed to the motion will please say nay. There being no dissenting voice, I declare the motion carried.

(Motion agreed to)

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

● (1555)

[Translation]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the Agreement between the Government of Canada and the Government of the Republic of Panama on Air Transport, done at Ottawa on February 6, 2020, and the Exchange of Letters Between the Government of Canada and the Government of the Republic of Chile constituting an Agreement to amend the Free Trade Agreement between the Government of Canada and the Government of the Republic of Chile, done at Santiago on December 5, 1996, as amended, done at Ottawa on August 26, 2019, and Santiago on May 8, 2020.

[English]

I also have the honour of tabling the Exchange of Notes constituting an Agreement to renew the Framework Agreement between the Government of Canada and the Government of the United States of America for Cooperation in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space for Peaceful Purposes, done at Washington on 9 September 2009, done at Ottawa on 11 May 2020 and on 4 June 2020, and the Exchange of Notes between the Government of Canada and the Government of the United States of America constituting an agreement amending Chapter 4 of Annex IV of the Treaty between the Government of Canada and the Government of the United States of America concerning Pacific Salmon, done at Ottawa on 28 January 1985, as amended, done at Ottawa on 24 June 2019 and on 1 October 2019.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I just want to point out that we did not see the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food on video when she voted. I was concerned that we did not see her. I do not want to compromise her vote, but we did not see her on video.

The Speaker: I consulted the clerks while the member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie was giving his speech and they saw the video. Sometimes there is a bit of a delay, but we saw the video.

I thank the member for his comments.

* * *

[English]

PETITIONS

PRODUCT LABELLING

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to present a petition today that calls upon the Government of Canada to require that warning labels on hazardous products include braille or a tactile symbol to aid those who are visually impaired.

This was brought forward by a resident in my riding in honour of a young constituent Jo-Hannah, who was born visually impaired. The signatories to this petition hope to see the government take this action as soon as possible.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am presenting petition number 10619712. The petitioners tabled this petition with the House of Commons some time ago. It was signed off at the point when the Government of Canada had not yet purchased the Trans Mountain pipeline.

However, since most of the funds are yet to be dispensed, it is timely to convey the petitioners' desires that all funds toward the Trans Mountain pipeline be cancelled, that no public monies be used to complete the pipeline and that the Government of Canada divert funds to renewable energies instead.

● (1600)

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise to present this petition, which calls on the House of Commons to formally recognize that Uighurs in China have been and are being subjected to genocide, and to use the Justice for Victims of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act, the Magnitsky act, to sanction those who are responsible for the heinous crimes being committed against the Uighur people.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Len Webber (Calgary Confederation, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition today from Canadians for peace in Cameroon. They are an informal network of people from across Canada, who are raising awareness about the humanitarian catastrophe in Cameroon, in particular in two minority English-speaking regions, since late 2016. More than 3,000 people have died, more than 200 villages burned and over 650,000 have been displaced. For almost four years, 800,000 children have not been to school.

These petitioners are calling on the Liberal government to publicly condemn the violence and human rights abuses perpetrated by all sides in the anglophone regions of Cameroon. Further, they want to see Canada's government put direct and sustained diplomatic pressure on the Government of Cameroon to engage in meaningful negotiations for peace, mediated by an independent third party such as the proposed Swiss talks.

FIREARMS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to be presenting four petitions in the House today.

The first petition draws the attention of the House to the order in council on firearms that was put forward on May 1 of this year. The petitioners highlight the fact that this order in council will do nothing to address the real problem of gun crime in this country because virtually all gun crime in Canada involves illegal or smuggled guns. Therefore, the petitioners call on the government to reverse that order in council and to instead put in place effective measures that combat the flow of smuggled guns into Canada.

PHYSICIAN-ASSISTED DYING

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition deals with Bill C-7, currently being considered at the justice committee. Petitioners highlight, as witnesses have also highlighted, the significant problems with the elimination of the mandatory 10-day reflection period and the elimination of other safeguards. The petitioners want the government to leave in place the 10-day reflection period, so that we do not have the possibility of same-day death taking place in Canada.

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the third petition is in support of Bill S-204, currently before the Senate. Bill S-204 addresses the horrific practice of forced organ harvesting and trafficking, and seeks to make it a criminal offence for someone to go abroad and receive an organ when there has not been consent from the person giving the organ.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the fourth and final petition highlights the situation of Uighurs and other Turkic Muslims in China. This petition asks the government to formally recognize that Uighurs in China have been and are being subjected to genocide, and to use the Justice for Victims of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act, the Magnitsky act, to sanction those who are responsible for the heinous crimes being committed against the Uighur people.

Routine Proceedings

CANADA PENSION PLAN INVESTMENT BOARD

Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour and privilege to present petition e-2615. This is a petition that was initiated by constituents in Nanaimo—Ladysmith who are concerned about the investments of the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board, and in particular, investments in fossil fuels.

The petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to direct the CPPIB to divest of all fossil fuel investments and to no longer entertain any fossil fuel investment opportunity; hire a qualified independent consultant to examine the total Canada pension plan fund portfolio of investments for the purpose of completing a value-at-risk analysis in 2020 and every four years thereafter, which will also be publicly reported; refrain from making private equity investments and to progressively divest the fund of these investments; and discontinue the use of borrowed money.

I would like to thank Brian Fisher and Erik Anderson for their work on this petition.

● (1605)

OPIOIDS

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to table this petition on behalf of people in my riding around the opioid crisis.

The petitioners cite that the preventable opioid overdoses resulting from fentanyl-poisoned drug sources requires action. More people have died in this public health crisis than from all public health emergencies in the last 20 years. They also cite that the current war on drugs has been costly, grossly ineffective and has resulted in widespread stigma towards addiction and those who use illicit drugs.

Criminalization of particular substances has resulted in the establishment of a drug trade that now traffics dangerous and lethal products such as fentanyl. By regulating to ensure safe sources with proper measures and bylaws, this will reduce the criminal element associated with street drugs.

The petitioners are calling on the government to declare the current opioid overdose and fentanyl poisoning crisis a national public health emergency under the Emergencies Act in order to manage and resource it with the aim to reduce and eliminate preventable deaths.

Government Orders

HUMAN RIGHTS

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I present a petition on behalf of Canadian citizens. They are drawing the attention of the House to an ongoing campaign against Uighurs within China, who are being suppressed, who are being arbitrarily detained and who are being separated from their children and other family members. Invasive surveillance is being used. The destruction of cultural sites has happened, as has forced labour and even forced organ harvesting. There is a concerted effort to take out this people group.

In fact, the petitioners note that the Chinese government's treatment of the Uighurs meets most, if not all, of the criteria for genocide as outlined in the UN's Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, and therefore, Canada cannot and should not stand idle.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all questions be allowed to stand at this time.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Speaker: I wish to inform the House that because of the deferred recorded division, Government Orders will be extended by 34 minutes.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS
[*English*]**INCOME TAX ACT**

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Finance, Lib.) moved that Bill C-9, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (Canada Emergency Rent Subsidy and Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy), be read the second time and referred to a committee of the whole.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask for unanimous consent to split my time with the member for Ottawa—Vanier.

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

[*Translation*]

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

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

[*English*]

The hon. Minister of Finance.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Speaker, I do not think I need to remind anyone in this place that we are battling an aggressive second wave of the coronavirus across Canada and around the world.

In order for us to create the conditions for a robust and lasting economic recovery, we must take the right steps now to keep Canadians healthy and safe. We have to do that to flatten the curve, conquer the coronavirus and put it behind us.

While we are doing that, we must mitigate the economic harm of this pandemic in the short term, but also in the long term. That is why I am very happy to speak today in support of Bill C-9, a series of measures that, taken together, will provide Canadians and Canadian businesses with urgently needed support.

● (1610)

[*Translation*]

We realize that the best economic policy is a sound health policy. Life will not get back to normal in our factories, malls, movie theatres and restaurants until the virus has been eradicated.

[*English*]

We know that the best economic policy is a smart health policy. Normal life, including in our gyms, shopping malls, movie theatres and restaurants, will only resume in full measure once the virus is truly beaten.

[*Translation*]

The reality is that we must fight against any outbreak of COVID-19 regardless of where that might be. The way we fight this virus is by limiting our social contacts. That also means limiting our economic activities. In return, we must support Canadians and businesses when they face revenue losses. That is the only thing to do that is both fair and practical.

[*English*]

This is precisely what Bill C-9 would achieve.

First, it includes a new Canada emergency rent subsidy to provide direct rent support until June 2021 for businesses and other organizations that are losing revenue because of COVID-19. It allows for coverage of up to 65% of rent or mortgage payments for businesses that suffer a revenue drop of 70% or more. Support will be fixed at this level until December 19, 2020. For businesses suffering a revenue loss of less than 70%, there will still be support in proportion to how much revenue they have lost.

Like the Canada emergency wage subsidy, the new rent subsidy will be delivered through the Canada Revenue Agency, providing easy-to-access support directly to businesses. Critically, it will be directly available to organizations that rent their premises as opposed to requiring participation from their landlords.

In addition to the new rent subsidy, eligible businesses, non-profits and charities will have access to an additional 25% subsidy through our new lockdown support. If businesses have to close their doors because of an emergency COVID-19 lockdown restriction or have to significantly restrict their operations as mandated by a qualifying public health authority, these businesses will have the additional support they need and deserve.

As business circumstances improve, the levels of support we provide will decrease. If, sadly, circumstances worsen, the level of support provided will increase. That is built into these programs, which are designed to be flexible and to provide targeted support where it is needed most.

In addition, Bill C-9 would extend the Canada emergency wage subsidy through to June 2021. This fulfills a commitment in the Speech from the Throne. As we know, the wage subsidy was initially put in place for 12 weeks as an emergency measure to help employers keep workers on the payroll.

[*Translation*]

Starting last spring, we consulted widely with businesses and their employees. We were told loud and clear that the program was essential. Bill C-9 extends that essential support. It freezes the subsidy rate at 65% until December 19 to ensure that organizations can continue to pay their employees during the second wave.

Together, thanks to the measures in Bill C-9, Canadian businesses and organizations will receive the help they need when they need it. Let's be clear: these measures are based not just on our willingness to help people, but also on the economic realities.

Our economic objective is to stave off long-term economic damage, whether for a major manufacturer or a small family restaurant. Every business we lose creates a void in a community and the repercussions of that loss are felt throughout the country. We must put a stop to that.

• (1615)

[*English*]

Our public health objective is to support local public health officials in the agonizing decisions they must make, and are making, in our fight against the coronavirus. If public health officials anywhere in Canada believe that limited local lockdowns are the best way to stop the spread of the virus, our government will step in with additional economic support for affected businesses. That is what these programs, particularly the lockdown support, will provide.

As the Prime Minister has said, we can and will do everything in our power to help Canadians through this pandemic. In doing so, we will build the foundation for a strong, equitable recovery.

I would like to close by briefly addressing some economic fundamentals.

When COVID-19 hit, Canada had the lowest net debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7. Today, following our country's most ambitious emergency response since World War II, we are still expected to have the lowest net debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7. Our borrowing costs are

at historic lows. Today's interest charges on Canada's debt as a share of GDP are the lowest in a century.

[*Translation*]

Our government is aware that the necessary fiscal measures for fighting the coronavirus are not unlimited. These are temporary but essential measures. These investments are a bridge to a safer and more prosperous future.

The proposed measures in Bill C-9, such as the new rent subsidy, the new lockdown support and the extended wage subsidy, are fundamental pillars of that bridge.

[*English*]

I ask all members of the House to join me in supporting Canadians and Canadian businesses as we confront this pandemic, as we conquer the virus and then, ultimately, as our economy comes roaring back. At a time when we see this global pandemic dividing so many societies around the world and thereby paralyzing their responses, I hope and trust Canadians will remain united.

We unanimously supported the income support measures. I hope we can do the same thing with these business support measures. We can get through this together.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to talk about the rent assistance program. Clearly, the program the government previously introduced was incredibly flawed, and I think everyone in the House knew it, as they were talking to the business owners who were struggling.

The government prorogued Parliament for six weeks to escape the WE scandal, and we have now been sitting in the House for almost seven weeks debating all sorts of legislation. The government says that supporting businesses through COVID is a priority, so why was Bill C-9 not introduced right after the Speech from the Throne? How many businesses in this country have had to shut down because of a program that was deeply flawed to start with and because of the government's unwillingness to move quickly to fix it?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Madam Speaker, let me start by emphasizing, which is really important for Canadian businesses to know, that these programs will be retroactive to September 27. Businesses can get rent support for the month of October. Of course, the previous CECRA program did cover the month of September, so businesses are getting support all the way through.

I would also like to emphasize that, taken together, the income supports the House has unanimously voted in favour of and the business support measures I am speaking about today, which I hope will be unanimously supported, will create an interlocking set of support measures that will be in place until next summer. These measures are targeted and flexible, and together they will get us through.

Government Orders

• (1620)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Madam Speaker, the question is quite simple. We welcome the bill, which includes several proposals the Bloc Québécois has made in the past. This shows that by working together we can come up with something worthwhile.

Nevertheless, there are some major oversights, such as air transportation, airports like the one in Quebec City, located very close to me, the aerospace industry, inter-regional transport, and so on.

Will there be any measures for these major sectors of our economy that have been very hard hit?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

Our government's approach is to begin by providing general programs targeting all businesses across the country that have suffered losses. I think that is a good start. We have brought in measures to support Canadians until the fall of 2021.

Today we are talking about measures to support all businesses, depending on the losses they have suffered, until the summer of 2021. I agree that after we pass this bill, we can then think about what else can be done.

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

I am a bit worried about her statement that these measures will not last forever.

Is she setting the stage for budget cuts and a return to austerity? Is that the Liberal plan?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Madam Speaker, I think our government has been very clear. We understand that now is not the time for austerity. At the same time, the measures we are talking about today are targeted measures to help our economy during the fight against the coronavirus. I am convinced the fight will not go on forever, so these measures will not be needed forever.

Hon. Mona Fortier (Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a privilege to be here today to support the timely passage of Bill C-9 by Parliament.

Today, I want to speak about some of the measures proposed in this bill that will help Canadians by providing essential support to get through the unprecedented economic crisis caused by the global COVID-19 pandemic.

Since the start of the pandemic, the needs of businesses and workers have been the basis for our actions and our progressive plan for a robust and lasting recovery.

As the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance stated, to get things right, we have to face the facts. The facts are that to slow the spread of the virus and eradicate it, we must follow public health guidelines, which require us to limit our social contacts and practise social distancing. That is the only way to do it.

This means that we need to ask people who are sick or who have sick children to stay home and not go to work. It means that we need to ask restaurants to serve fewer people or to shut down their dining rooms entirely. It means that we need to limit cross-border travel, even within our own country. It also means that we must ensure that Canadians have the support they need to abide by these restrictions.

It would be unrealistic and certainly unfair to ask workers to stay home or to ask businesses to close their doors without any financial compensation for their lost income. The government has made it clear that we are committed to helping all businesses and workers affected by the pandemic.

In our continued response to COVID-19 and as we look to recovery, we are bringing forward solutions that improve the quality of life of Canadians today and in the months and years to come.

We want to ensure that Canadians do not have to make impossible choices between paying their bills and putting food on the table. By supporting employers to keep their lights on and their employees on the payroll, by supporting workers and by supporting all Canadians through emergency response measures, that is exactly what we are doing.

• (1625)

[*English*]

We are here to bridge Canadians to the other side of this pandemic, and that is precisely what Bill C-9 would do.

The measures contained in Bill C-9 are the result of ongoing consultations with affected businesses. They include a new Canada emergency rent subsidy. This program would provide access to rent support until June 2021 for businesses and other organizations that have lost revenue in this crisis. It would do so by covering up to 65% of rent or mortgage interest payment for the hardest-hit businesses with a revenue decline of 70% or more until December 19. For businesses that have experienced a decline in revenue of less than 70%, there would be a gradually decreasing subsidy in line with the decline in revenues.

In short, all eligible businesses suffering a revenue drop would get rent support that is commensurate with how hard they have been hit. In this regard, the new rent subsidy proposed in Bill C-9 mirrors the successful Canada emergency wage subsidy. It would deliver more targeted accessible rent support to those who would need it most.

Like the wage subsidy, the proposed rent subsidy will be delivered through the CRA to make the application process easier for businesses. It will be available to businesses and other organizations that rent or own their premises. These measures will be directly available to tenants, without the need for intermediation by their landlords. The new rent subsidy represents an important new support to help businesses that are facing significant challenges as a result of COVID-19.

Bill C-9 would provide an additional 25% through the Canada emergency rent subsidy for qualifying organizations significantly affected by a mandatory public health order issued by a qualifying public health authority, as promised in the Speech from the Throne. We are calling this the lockdown support. We know that across the country, as we fight the second wave of COVID-19, public health officials have needed to impose new restrictions. That is their right to do, but it has cost businesses and their employees. By helping to offset up to 90% of rent and mortgage costs for hard-hit employers, the targeted support provided through the Canada emergency rent subsidy and the additional lockdown support would help businesses get through a new lockdown and help us all to do the right thing.

However, the fact is that rental costs are just one category of costs that businesses and employers are dealing with in the wake of COVID.

• (1630)

[*Translation*]

The need to cover payroll when consumer demand is low is another important part of the big picture. That is why we created the Canada emergency wage subsidy to help businesses, charities and not-for-profit organizations cover labour costs during the pandemic. The wage subsidy protects jobs because it enables those organizations to meet payroll and enables employers to rehire workers so they can continue to serve their communities and position themselves for a strong recovery.

Initially, the program was to last 12 weeks, from March 15 to June 6, 2020, and provided eligible employers with a 75% wage subsidy. We set out to improve the wage subsidy by consulting with businesses and employers. They told us that the subsidy was vital to keeping their employees on the payroll and that it had helped them rehire their workers. They shared ideas about how the wage subsidy could be adjusted to support businesses and workers as they continue to adapt to the challenges of COVID-19.

We listened and then did what was necessary. We made changes to the program so that all eligible employers, whose revenue was affected by the pandemic, now have access to it. We introduced a top-up subsidy for the most adversely affected employers.

In recognition of the vital support provided by the wage subsidy, we committed to extending it until June 2021, as we said we would in the throne speech. Over 3.8 million Canadian workers have already benefited from the wage subsidy.

Bill C-9 will make it possible to extend this vital support and make other changes to the program to ensure that it continues to help employers and that it responds to the changing health and economic situation. We continue to listen to businesses and workers about how we can strengthen the program. As part of this bill, we took measures to make the top-up subsidy more adaptable to unexpected changes in revenue.

Rather than using the existing three-month revenue decline test to calculate the top-up subsidy, the base subsidy and top-up subsidy will be determined on the basis of the year-over-year change in the eligible employer's monthly revenue for the current or previous calendar month.

Government Orders

[*English*]

What is more, to ensure these changes do not lead to a less generous wage subsidy, the wage subsidy program would include a safe harbour rule, applicable until December 19. This rule would entitle an eligible employer to a top-up subsidy rate that is no less than it would have received under the three-month revenue decline test.

Taken together, the measures included in Bill C-9 would mean that employers impacted by the pandemic—

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sorry, but the time has expired.

I would like to remind the minister that she needs to wear her headset so that her speech can be interpreted properly.

I encourage all members to do the same.

Questions and comments.

The hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Madam Speaker, I listened carefully to the minister's speech. She repeated several times that they listened. The problem is that it took them six months to take action.

Because of rules set out earlier, many businesses had to voluntarily scale back their activities in order to survive.

The Conservative Party proposed changes in May that have just been introduced now, six weeks into the new parliamentary session after the Liberal government prorogued Parliament. That is not exactly the kind of listening we expect from a government that says it is managing a crisis.

On top of that, we just watched all the Liberal members vote against a motion that would give Canadian businesses a little more breathing room and give them a break from CRA audits as they battle for survival.

Why did the minister's colleagues and cabinet, those who claim to be working hard for the prosperity of the middle class, vote against this motion that was all about helping Canadian businesses get through the crisis?

Government Orders

• (1635)

Hon. Mona Fortier: Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his question.

Since the start of the crisis, the government has implemented many programs for businesses, workers and Canadians to help get them through the first wave and then the second. That is why we introduced Bill C-9, whose objective is to present a new program for fixed costs such as rent.

In our discussions with many businesses from across the country and with chambers of commerce, we listened in order to determine how we could support businesses, not-for-profit organizations and, of course, charities. We believe that we have found an approach that will support businesses in the bill we are presenting today.

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for her speech.

Bill C-9 is a good bill, but it does not solve every problem. More specialized sectors such as air transportation and regional airports are going to need more targeted aid. Their losses are in the billions of dollars.

Although there is less air traffic, there is still the financial burden of costs associated with the provision of services such as emergency medical transportation and runway maintenance. In the case of the Mont-Joli airport back home, the losses are substantial. The Gaspé regional airport is running a deficit of \$800,000. The government thinks that it is helping air transportation by directly subsidizing the airlines, but that is not going to ensure the survival of airports.

Will the government provide direct financial support to regional airports?

Hon. Mona Fortier: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

As I mentioned earlier, from the beginning, we implemented many programs to support businesses and various sectors. We wanted to ensure that these programs would apply nationwide.

One such program is the regional relief and recovery fund, and we know that it has supported the efforts of regional development agencies across the country. More than \$1.5 billion has been allocated to help affected businesses and communities.

We will obviously continue to monitor changes in the sectors and the economy, and we will continue to support businesses and workers to ensure that we all make it through this crisis.

[*English*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): A brief question, the hon. member for Courtenay—Alberni.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, we just heard the minister say that she has been listening to small business. For six months we and small businesses have been letting her know that they cannot access the commercial rent assistance program.

The New Democrats support the changes. However, the Liberals have admitted that they have a design flaw in the commercial rent assistance program. The finance minister just said that they could and would do anything to help support small business with an equitable recovery. There is no equity here regarding the fairness of the roll out of the legislation. They need to backdate the program to April 1—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sorry. I asked the member for a brief question. We have to allow for the answer.

The hon. minister, a brief answer please because we are going to be running short on time.

Hon. Mona Fortier: Madam Speaker, as the Minister of Finance mentioned, we will retroactively bring this new program to September 27. As we know, the CECRA program provided support until September. We knew we needed to have an approach where tenants had direct access. That is why we are proposing an approach today that will support businesses and their fixed costs.

• (1640)

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Fredericton, Seniors; the hon. member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith, Health; the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, Foreign Affairs.

The hon. member for Carleton.

[*English*]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Madam Speaker, what is the solution for the mess we are in? The answer is that there are 20 million solutions. They are called workers. That is the size of Canada's workforce. We have 20 million men and women who get out of bed every day and go to work to produce the wealth of the nation. That wealth puts food on their tables, finances the roads upon which they and others drive, pays for our schools, hospitals and everything else we do that makes this country as splendid and as wonderful as it is.

Unfortunately, those workers have been deprived of work, many of them sent home because of health ordinances by local officials during the COVID-19 period. As many as eight million had to take assistance from the government in order to replace their lost jobs or, in the case of furlough, their lost income. Because governments deprived them of their income, those workers had every right to expect governments to replace that income. That, however, is not an excuse for the deliberate policy decisions of the government that have penalized workers who attempted to get back into their jobs as the shutdown began to be lifted.

For example, the early CERB program was pulled out of the hands of any worker who regained more than \$1,000 of their monthly income. Rather than being graduated slowly to ensure that each dollar earned was beneficial to the worker, the government penalized people for the crime of trying to rebuild their lives.

Then we had the wage subsidy, for which small businesses were punished if they committed the crime of recuperating more than 30% of their lost revenues. They had to be down by that 30% in order to qualify. If they earned \$1 more, they would get nothing at all, forcing many businesses to suppress their revenues, legally and necessarily, in order to continue receiving the support necessary to keep them alive. The same went for the rent program for which businesses had to be down 70% in revenue to qualify. It was another penalty imposed on businesses attempting to recover.

On May 2, I wrote an op-ed in the *Ottawa Sun* in which I proposed practical solutions that would allow workers or businesses to graduate, slowly and one step at a time, from these assistance programs in a way that ensured that they were always better off earning that extra dollar, taking that extra shift or serving that extra customer.

Finally, today we are debating legislation from the government that does those things. Finally, there is legislation that rewards, rather than punishes, workers for working and businesses for earning. That is what we have asked for all along. This was a painful lesson with great cost, and is one of the reasons why Canada has the highest unemployment rate of all G7 countries, save for Italy. Italy is of course the most socialist country in the G7, and the country from which the Liberal government tries its best to take examples. It is funny that the most socialist country has the highest unemployment, and our government is doing its best to compete for the prize of highest jobless rate in the G7 by replicating those same disastrous policies. However, we have the second highest unemployment rate: higher than the U.S., the U.K., France, Germany and Japan. There we are, barely under Italy in the rate of unemployment, as we enter now the seventh or eighth month of the pandemic crisis.

The government has had to learn, slowly and painfully, the cost to the economy of punishing workers and businesses, but this cost is not unique to COVID times. In fact, we in this country suffer from something I call the war on work. The war on work happens when governments punish wage earners by taking away, through clawbacks and taxes, a large share of each extra dollar a person earns.

• (1645)

Take, for example, someone who might be on disability assistance and who gets a job. They not only pay taxes on their earnings but start to lose their disability benefit at a combined rate that can at times exceed 100%. This war on work effectively makes it unaffordable for many workers to take an extra shift.

Even for people who are not on social assistance, this war on work exists. For example, just last week the reporter Jordan Press obtained a finance committee study showing that a single mother earning \$55,000 a year could lose as much as 70¢ on every extra dollar she earns. People in the lower income categories suffer a higher level of marginal effective tax rates.

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These are penalties people pay for the crime of getting out of bed in the morning and working hard. This is why our party is proposing there be a full review and reform of our tax and benefit systems to ensure people are always better off working, earning another dollar, taking another shift or serving another customer.

The war on work goes beyond the transfer and tax system. It goes to the regulatory system, which has thus far outright killed two pipeline projects because of the Prime Minister's opposition to them. The pipeline projects would have taken western crude to eastern refineries and to Asian markets, and would have created jobs for steel workers in central Canada, trades workers across the country, refinery workers on the east coast and of course energy workers in Alberta, Saskatchewan and British Columbia. Those jobs are now lost because the government prevented the construction of those very same projects.

It is not just pipelines that were affected. The Prime Minister successfully killed a massive \$20-billion mining project in northern Alberta: the Teck Frontier mine, which was supported by all the surrounding indigenous communities. These communities are often the greatest victims of the federal government's war on work. People want to go out and work hard, build their dreams, earn a great living and live a great life, but are prevented from doing so because the government penalizes and blocks projects that create opportunities.

Think of those opportunities and how we could unleash them. I remember being with the member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo about five weeks ago and meeting with local pipeline workers who are part of the Trans Mountain pipeline project, and how proud they were. The local indigenous communities are putting forward remarkable, great Canadian workers, who brought their skills to the front lines and were earning great wages, and rightly so. That is just one example of what we could multiply in this country if the government got out of the way and allowed more of these projects to go forward.

It is not just energy. It is not just resources. It is the construction of anything in this country. It takes three times as long for a warehouse to get governmental approval in Canada as it does in the United States of America. If a group of investors is in the business of building warehouses to produce a particular product and calculates that the wait time to get approval here is three times as long and far more uncertain, then the investors' money leaves our country to go and build somewhere else.

Government Orders

That is exactly the phenomenon we have witnessed in Canada over the last five years. Hundreds of billions of dollars have left the country. Canadian investment in the U.S. doubled while American investment in Canada fell by half. That is because money goes where it can build and earn a return. If governments prevent construction and returns from occurring, the money will go somewhere else. What it means is the jobs and wealth production happen outside of our country. What do we do to make up the difference? We have to import goods from abroad and borrow from foreigners to pay the difference, thus we witness our economy becoming more and more indebted.

It is not just the government that is now on a massive borrowing binge, but also businesses and households. The combined total of this, if we take households, corporations and governments, is a 380% debt-to-GDP ratio, which is the highest anywhere in the G7, with the exception of Japan.

• (1650)

These debts have, thus far, only been sustainable because of low interest rates, but low interest rates are not a sure thing forever. When those rates rise, our people will be shouldering an unmitigated disaster.

The only thing we can do to avert that disaster is to unleash the power of the free enterprise system to create jobs so that our 20 million workers, whom I identified at the outset of my remarks as the solution to this problem, can earn the salaries necessary to pay their bills and contribute to the governmental coffers so that we can continue to afford the programs and services upon which our people rely.

Today's bill is past due. It would finally remove the penalties on workers that I warned about in early May. Hopefully, it would allow us to reverse the damage that the government did throughout the summer. Hopefully, it would allow our businesses to get back on their feet to hire the necessary workers, to rebuild our workforce and unleash the mighty power of our 20 million great Canadian workers. Let us get to work.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, what the member forgets to mention when he talks about unemployment is that 75% of those who had to leave their jobs because of the pandemic have been returned to the workforce, compared with the U.S., which is just over 50%. That is a very important aspect that the member chose not to comment on.

The programs that have been provided to date by this government have been demonstrated to be very effective. All one needs to do is look at those individuals who are back in the workforce that had to leave the workforce because of the pandemic.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Speaker, we still have higher unemployment in Canada than in the United States of America. It is higher than in the U.S., the U.K., France, Germany and Japan. Frankly, only Italy, whose economy has been paralyzed by its debt-ridden socialist policies for more than a decade, is slightly higher than us in unemployment. As I said at the outset, the government is trying to replicate the Italian approach of a permanently larger gov-

ernment funded by deficits. That is exactly how the Italian economy got into such permanent hardship, even well before the crisis.

The member can celebrate that we no longer have the highest unemployment in the G7 because the Italians are slightly ahead of us due to their socialist policies but, for God's sake, are Liberals really going to start pumping their fists in the air and saying, "We're number six, we're number six"?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoulou, BQ): Madam Speaker, I really enjoyed my colleague's speech.

We share the same opinion on the government's tremendous and unprecedented capacity to wait too long before making decisions. I would like my colleague to tell me how many businesses have had to close their doors for good because the government does not make decisions quickly enough and does not immediately consider the proposals submitted by the other parties.

• (1655)

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

It is clear that some businesses were unable to survive because of unexpected and unjustifiable delays by a government that could well have taken our suggestions as early as May.

If a small restaurant has to close for three months or sees a drop in revenue during that same period, it will be unable to survive if it cannot access a commercial rent assistance program or if it is penalized by the emergency wage subsidy. Families are losing their life savings and it is precisely family businesses that have disappeared. This is an economic tragedy caused by this government's delays.

[*English*]

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for talking about the flawed design of the commercial rent assistance program, and how unfair it was for those who could not apply for the program because their landlords would not support them through the crisis. We have the government members right now patting themselves on the back saying they will backdate it to September 27.

Does my colleague support New Democrats in calling on the government to bring that back, and backdate the support to April 1 for those business owners who could not apply because their landlord would not support them, who are steeped in debt, and many of them facing bankruptcy?

I am sure the member is used to the Liberals not answering a yes-or-no question. Do the Conservatives support New Democrats in asking the government to backdate the program to April 1, yes or no?

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Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Speaker, we do support backdating the rental assistance to September, and that is why we will be allowing this to pass. That said, this entire mess related to the rent subsidy program is highly suspicious.

The Liberals said that CRA could not administer the rent assistance program and that, therefore, they had to go over to CMHC which does not do commercial real estate and is responsible for mortgage insurance. CMHC officials said they could do it either, and that they had to contract this out to a company whose vice-president is married to the Prime Minister's chief of staff. Now, the Liberals admit that they could have just given this to CRA all along and that there was nothing stopping them from having CRA do it.

The only reason we can assume that the Liberals ever punted this over to an outside company is that their Liberal friends and family members were intimately involved in its original delivery. It is quite a sad thing that so many businesses suffered for so long because the government put as its priority the helping of insider Liberals rather than small business owners and workers.

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Minister of Finance, in her comments earlier, seemed to take comfort in the fact that interest rates were so low. My colleague commented on interest rates as well. Could he further expand on the catastrophic effect a rise in interest rates will have, at some point in the future, on the fiscal position of the Government of Canada?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Speaker, it is really quite simple. When the debt-to-GDP ratio is somewhere around 400%, where we have \$4 of debt, public and private combined, for every dollar of GDP, they could assume that a 1% increase in the effective interest rate on our economy would be equal to 4% of our economy. Given that the economy only grows by 1.5% a year, that is like two and a half years of growth. It is an enormous impact. The Liberals say that is okay because the interest rates are low, but they never tell us what is going to happen when interest rates finally go up.

They also never tell us that the only reason interest rates are low is because the Bank of Canada is printing hundreds of billions of dollars in order to buy up government debt and suppress interest rates. It is not because the market has deemed that rates should be low; it is because the Bank of Canada has cranked up its printing presses. This is not a new idea. This has been tried by emperors and kings and governments for thousands of years and results always in the same consequence.

We know what happens when we debase a currency. It ends up costing the working people, by reducing the value of their wages, while enriching the insiders whose assets are appreciated in value. There is a massive wealth transfer from working poor to the super rich, and here we have a government in collaboration with the Bank of Canada, doing it all over again.

• (1700)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to go back to the issue of unemployment. Maybe I was right, which I was, when I made the statement that we have a much higher return rate than the United States: 75% versus 50%.

The member then went back and said we have such a high unemployment rate.

Prior to the pandemic, we had the lowest unemployment rate, historically in Canada, since unemployment stats were being taken. If we compare it to Stephen Harper's government, the rate now is considerably less, where we generated over a million jobs in less than four years.

I wonder if the member wants to provide a further comment in terms of how successful we were in working with Canadians and generating those jobs, and not only with the support of Canadians going into the pandemic, but we were able to return more Canadians back to work because of the programming that was put into place.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Speaker, the low levels of unemployment across the OECD in the pre-pandemic period are entirely the result of a large share of the workforce retiring, and therefore the unemployment rate dropped everywhere. Across the OECD almost every country in the world had record low unemployment up until the COVID crisis. Before the COVID crisis, Canada's unemployment was still higher than the U.S., the U.K., Japan and Germany. It was higher than those countries and only lower than socialist France and Italy, and it has worsened, moving behind Italy since that time, so now we only have Italy with higher unemployment than Canada in the G7.

So, the member finally says that we have recovered a larger share of our lost jobs than the Americans, but that is because we had a higher unemployment rate than the Americans going into the crisis. If a nation has a weak job market and a weak economy going into a crisis, obviously it is going to be weaker throughout that crisis, and we are seeing that happen now.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would ask for the consent of the House to share my time with my esteemed colleague from Abitibi—Témiscamingue.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): This being a hybrid sitting of the House, for the sake of clarity, I will ask for only those who are opposed to the request to express their disagreement. Accordingly, all those opposed to the hon. member moving the motion will please say nay.

Unanimous consent has been given.

The hon. member for Joliette.

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Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Madam Speaker, Bill C-9 would extend the Canada emergency wage subsidy until next summer and provide real commercial rent support. The Bloc Québécois has been pressing for both of these measures for some time, so I am glad I can finally congratulate the government on introducing them. That is why the Bloc supports this bill and would like to see it passed quickly, as set out in the motion moved earlier.

The most important economic factor for businesses is predictability. In the spring and summer, I repeatedly asked Mr. Morneau to make an effort to announce his intentions for a longer period of time. Businesses have tough choices to make and cannot make the best decisions when they do not know how long measures like the CERB and the wage subsidy are going to last. We know this because we were getting calls and having conversations with entrepreneurs in our ridings. Unfortunately, every measure was announced and extended at the last minute for a month at a time. It was month to month. Businesses were complaining.

Bill C-9 will fix the problem for the wage subsidy. I congratulate the Minister of Finance on being so responsive. It makes a big difference.

The same is true for commercial rent support.

The previous program, the Canada emergency commercial rent assistance program, was a joke. It was very poorly designed, too restrictive and did not provide enough assistance, not to mention that landlords could simply say no. That program did not cover SMEs that own their premises. It was not working, and money was not getting out the door. The government had planned to invest \$3 billion in the program, but barely \$1.3 billion was spent. That is not even half of what was intended. It was a dismal but predictable failure. The program was designed in such a way that it was not used to cover needs, which were unfortunately very real.

The new rent subsidy is much better designed. The participation of commercial landlords is no longer required. Support is more accessible and more flexible, so it is better adapted to the various situations that SMEs might be up against. Six months after promising it, the government is finally coming through with a program to support businesses and their fixed costs, something the Bloc Québécois was calling for.

I would like to give a brief chronology of events.

On April 11, 2020, after the Bloc Québécois threatened to stop co-operating with the government, it promised to bring in programs to cover the fixed costs of SMEs hit hard by the pandemic.

Two weeks later, on April 29, the government announced the Canada emergency commercial rent assistance program, which was implemented in May. As I said, that program was an absolute joke. It did not really cover the fixed costs for SMEs. The commercial rent assistance program ended in September, as did the wage subsidy.

It took until October 9 for the government to finally announce that it was bringing in a program to cover the fixed costs of businesses hard hit by the crisis. That includes rent, mortgages, insurance, and property tax. The government also announced it was extending the wage subsidy.

Nearly a month later, on November 2, the government introduced Bill C-9, and on November 4, we finally started debating it. It was about time, so thank goodness we did. That does not change the fact that the SMEs needed better measures to cover their fixed costs in the spring and summer, but better late than never.

Currently, nine out of 10 Quebecers live in a red zone. SMEs throughout Quebec need help covering their costs. We applaud the generosity of Bill C-9 for businesses, especially those in a red zone. Bill C-9 is good news. It is well suited to the commercial sector, but it does not solve everything.

A number of sectors have been hit very hard by the crisis and need targeted programs. I am thinking in particular about air transportation, including airports; aerospace; inter-regional transportation; hotel complexes in urban areas; the cultural and entertainment sector, including festivals; summer camps, sugar shacks and reception halls, which lost their entire 2020 season and are on the brink of bankruptcy. This is no joke.

The Bloc Québécois is starting to lose patience and is reiterating its demands to the government. We support Bill C-9, but we want sectoral programs. Time is of the essence. For example, we must absolutely support the aerospace industry. The situation is critical, and Quebec cannot lose this industry.

• (1705)

Providing hundreds of millions of dollars to Ontario's auto industry while snubbing the aerospace industry is an unbelievable injustice for this sector and Quebec's economy. That is just wrong.

There is an aspect of Bill C-9 that is more than problematic. In my opinion, it does not address a deep injustice. As drafted, it seems that Bill C-9 maintains the eligibility of political parties for the wage subsidy and also provides them with rent support. Do our constituents agree with this? Must Quebec and Canadian taxpayers pay to support rich political parties like the Liberal Party through their taxes and collective debt? I think not.

So far this year the Liberal Party has raised more than \$8 million. It received at least \$800,000 through the wage subsidy. Is it going to keep applying for the wage subsidy until next summer? Will it apply for the rent subsidy or will it pay it back? If yes, when?

What about my Conservative friends? So far this year the party has collected \$13 million. Have they paid back the wage subsidy as their leader promised? This deserves a clear answer. Will they put a stop to this serious ethical breach of applying for the wage subsidy, which is funded by taxes and taxpayers' debt?

Government Orders

For the Bloc Québécois, it was clear from the start. It is not up to taxpayers to fund our parties though the wage or rent subsidies. That is unacceptable. Can the Liberals say as much? Is this million-dollar party able to take its hands out of the cookie jar for once?

Bill C-9 is a good bill and it should be passed quickly. Our SMEs are struggling and time is of the essence. The government also needs to hurry up and put measures in place for targeted sectors, such as the aerospace industry.

Can the Liberal Party stop scheming about how to get rich at the expense of citizens? Can it stop applying for the wage subsidy, pay that money back and not apply for the rent subsidy?

We are in the midst of the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is time to help people and support the economy, not time to step up to the trough while doing so. I am asking the Liberal Party to raise its ethical standards by committing to act in an exemplary manner, serve the public and stop serving itself through its own programs. Enough with the gluttony.

• (1710)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, these programs, whether it is the wage subsidy or the rent subsidy, were developed and brought forward to help all Canadians and to help small businesses in particular. The legislation before us is as simple as that.

What we are debating today clearly demonstrates the government has recognized that, even though this new program was developed in the last eight months, there is a need to make modifications. Some of those modifications will be retroactive in order to, once again, protect businesses.

Does the member not agree that it is a good thing that virtually from the creation of the program only eight months ago, we have been able to successfully make modifications that will continue to support small businesses and the people of Canada?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Madam Speaker, I wholeheartedly agree. When the pandemic hit, we told the government that a wage subsidy would be a good thing. Denmark and other countries had it, so why not follow suit? We were pleased when it was implemented. The program is working well.

We repeatedly asked the Minister of Finance to extend the subsidy for a longer period of time. Businesses have been telling us that they do not know where they stand because they do not know if the subsidy is going to be extended or not. That makes it hard for them to make decisions.

We are pleased with the measures introduced today, and we support them. We want this bill to be passed faster than usual.

However, I think it is unacceptable that the Liberal Party, which has raised \$8 million so far this year, is using the wage subsidy to pay itself. The Liberal Party must pledge to stop using subsidies and repay the money it has received.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his presentation.

We know that the first version of the rent relief program for SMEs was poorly designed, since the vast majority of SMEs could not even access it. Following pressure from us as well as SMEs, a new version is now being proposed.

Does the member agree with the NDP that this assistance should be retroactive to well before September 27? We think all businesses that could not access the first version because it was so poorly designed should be able to access the new version retroactively so they can continue to operate, contribute to their communities and provide employment opportunities.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from New Westminster—Burnaby for his question.

I agree that the rent relief program was not working. The federal finance minister said that it was a provincial jurisdiction, but Quebec's finance minister, Mr. Girard, said that the way the program was formulated meant it was not a provincial jurisdiction and that it had been designed that way by the federal government.

We knew all along that it would not work. We got calls from many small businesses saying they were not eligible for the rent relief. Some business owners told us that they owned their premises but were not eligible for rent relief because they had a mortgage. Others said that their landlord did not want to apply. It was not working.

The program being proposed today is much better. It is retroactive to September 27. Should it be retroactive to the beginning of the crisis? That is an interesting question and I raised it with the government, but it does not seem open to that idea. It is looking ahead, because all of these programs are expensive. However, this is certainly something that we should study carefully, since many businesses are facing bankruptcy because their fixed costs were not covered during the summer.

• (1715)

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ): Madam Speaker, the Bloc Québécois has always been proactive in proposing solutions for SMEs. Incidentally, we want to thank the economic partners in our ridings, such as the Haut-Saint-Laurent RCM, the Beauharnois-Salaberry RCM and CLD, the Vaudreuil-Soulanges RCM and the Suroît-Sud CFDC.

Can my colleague explain the impact on these organizations? The time lag between the announcement of a program and its implementation—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Joliette for a brief answer.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Madam President, I thank my colleague from Salaberry—Suroît for the question.

Government Orders

Our job is to be a liaison between all these organizations on the ground that represent SMEs and the government. We repeat what we hear and propose what might work.

On April 11, we asked that fixed costs be covered. However, this measure will be retroactive only to September 27. The time lag between our request and the announcement is a bit too long.

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, Quebec recently announced that businesses in the red zone will remain closed until November 23.

As we enter the second month of the second wave, entire sectors of Quebec's economy are still waiting for adequate assistance from Ottawa.

With many businesses closer to bankruptcy than ever before, our business owners are emphasizing that the simplest, most effective and most transparent solution, both for them and for the government, would be to implement a program to help offset fixed costs.

Could we start discussing this and addressing the real needs of business owners, who are the backbone of our economy?

That is the take-away from the September 30 survey of 1,700 SMEs conducted by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. It also shows that 50% of Quebec businesses, or one in two, believe they would not easily survive a second wave of restrictions.

This same survey showed that 27% of SMEs will survive less than a year with the revenue they are currently taking in. Quebec's SMEs are saying that they need an average of \$25,000 to cover their fixed costs until December 2020. That is huge. The numbers speak for themselves. We need to act. We need to act intelligently and quickly, because our economic vitality is precisely what will help us pay down some of the debt we are currently accumulating. The future of our SMEs is at stake.

With Bill C-9, the government decided to extend the Canada emergency wage subsidy until the summer of 2021. That is a very good thing. When a federal measure or program is worth mentioning, the Bloc Québécois is not afraid to say it.

It is all well and good to extend the program until June 2021, but what will the parameters be as of January 2021? We know what they are until December 31, 2020, but we do not know what they will be from January to June. We do not know anything, even though, as my colleague from Joliette said, predictability is essential for our entrepreneurs.

I would also like to remind the Liberals that the wage subsidy is for businesses and organizations, not political parties. I will also remind the Conservatives of that. Quebeckers are still waiting for the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party to pay back the subsidy, which they used for political purposes. That is shameful.

I will get back to the subject of Quebec SMEs. Quebec has nearly 250,000 small and medium businesses that account for 93% of private-sector jobs, or 2.3 million workers who will contribute to rebuilding Quebec's economy and their families' quality of life. Would the government risk cutting that in half? SMEs are vital to Quebec's economy.

We know that the Government of Canada missed its opportunity to help our SMEs pay their rent during the first wave with the program that ended on September 30. Yes, the proposed wage subsidy in Bill C-9 is a good program, and the commercial rent subsidy is much better now, but it is not enough. When will the government come to the House with a substantive program that will actually help Quebec SMEs with their fixed costs?

Quebec has already taken steps to help SMEs with their fixed costs. Establishments in red zones are entitled to a refund of the bulk of their fixed costs for a maximum of \$15,000 for the month of October. Eligible costs include commercial rent, municipal and school taxes, interest on mortgages, utilities, insurance, telecommunications, permits, and association dues. Some 13,000 businesses are eligible to receive this help. Why did Canada not offer such effective help for fixed costs for our SMEs in Quebec?

The first version of the commercial rent assistance program was a failure. Whether a business survived or failed was in the landlord's hands because they could refuse to participate in the program and let the renters head for bankruptcy. Obviously we all got phone calls about this in our respective ridings.

In Bill C-9, with the new proposed version of the Canada emergency rent subsidy, the financial assistance will be offered directly to the renter. That is essential. It is also simpler.

However, it is terrible to see that it took the Liberals seven months to understand that this is what needed to be done. It was a waste of time, an unnecessary stress for people, the landlords and renters. It created conflict.

The proposed new version of the emergency commercial rent assistance seems a bit more flexible and open. That is an improvement, because some assistance was added to help businesses that own their buildings cover fixed costs like insurance, property taxes and mortgage interest.

● (1720)

Why not go further, though?

Bill C-9 does not reflect reality. It does not acknowledge that sectors are diverse and that businesses in our regions, such as hotels, cultural businesses and organizations, and even summer camps, have specific realities.

Tourism and cultural industries in Quebec are a crucial part of our regions and our culture. Tourism and cultural businesses have not been doing well for months now. These businesses do the majority of their business during the summer, but they posted huge revenue losses this year. Quebec's tourism and cultural industry experienced a drastic 60% drop in sales and a loss of \$3.4 billion in revenue, not to mention the countless businesses that were shut down.

Fixed costs represent 25% of expenses in the tourism industry. Could we look at creating a fixed-cost tax credit, on top of the commercial rent assistance program for small businesses in general, to give them a chance to get back on their feet during the next normal tourism season?

Fixed costs, once again, are commercial rent, municipal and school taxes, mortgage interest, electricity and gas bills, insurance, telecommunications costs, permits and association fees. At least, those are the fixed costs Quebec recognizes. Canada will need to do the same.

In our various interventions over the past few months, the Bloc Québécois has repeatedly insisted—and we continue to insist—on the importance of the recovery, which must of course be a green recovery and take the environment into account. We need to think about the future, and I mean beyond the next election.

One thing that really concerns me is the development of our regions. Recognized for their vitality on so many levels, our regions contribute massively to the natural and intellectual wealth of our urban centres. Their creative strength and innovative spirit open the door to new and effective avenues for community development.

I must insist on the need to stop pondering the idea of a regional development and recovery fund geared toward processing natural resources where they are found. A territorial innovation support program by and for the regions would also be welcome.

The Bloc Québécois firmly believes that any existing and future programs must be flexible and that we must be able to adapt the way they are administered to the regions' different realities. That is key. As we have seen with the issue of immigration, a one-size-fits-all approach too often does not work for the regions.

Because we want to establish a vision for the future and because our organizations and SMEs make an important contribution to the recovery, it seems clear to me that the CFDCs, for example, are well placed to help the various local and regional entities. This will help address the real needs of our communities and identify the priorities for recovery and the target industries.

The regional relief and recovery fund responded to the need for support that existed before the program was put in place and to the need to quickly get the funding out to our businesses. I would like to point out that this was a success in Abitibi-Témiscamingue.

What is more, the communities themselves are in the best position to target the appropriate innovation zones for their area. Since the pandemic began and even before, it is the communities themselves and their residents who have identified the most pressing needs and the business development opportunities.

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Simply put, Quebec and its regions know what is best for Quebec. In conclusion, six months after making that promise, the Government of Canada has finally come up with the fixed cost support program the Bloc Québécois pushed for. That is why, even though the program is not perfect, the Bloc Québécois and I would like to see Bill C-9 passed quickly.

• (1725)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, one of the issues, of course, is working with different levels of government. In the province of Manitoba, the provincial government has decided to get more engaged in terms of helping small businesses. I am wondering if my colleague could provide his thoughts regarding the role that different levels of government also have in terms of supporting small businesses in our many different communities.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Winnipeg North for his question.

As an MP, I observed something troubling during the first six months of the pandemic. I did not realize that there was excellent collaboration among various levels of government despite what we were hearing during question period. For one thing, I did not get the impression that there was any dialogue happening with the Government of Quebec. I especially did not get the impression that there was any support for our SMEs, including support for fixed costs and rent.

I sincerely hope that Bill C-9 will be passed quickly so the money can get out the door and into people's bank accounts fast. I encourage the federal government to sit down with the provinces and be as generous as possible with our SMEs, which make up the economic fabric of Quebec and its regions.

[*English*]

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, too many businesses in my riding are being excluded from the emergency business account, the CEBA, because contracts after March 1 are not included in the \$40,000 expenses required to access the loan. One constituent recently pointed out to me that many businesses did not begin feeling the effects of COVID-19 until well after March 1. In fact, the Liberal government did not even create a committee to begin studying the possible effects of COVID-19 until March 4, 2020. Business owners in my constituency and across Canada who have sacrificed so much during COVID-19 should be supported by their government. There are others across this country in similar situations.

I am wondering if my hon. colleague would agree with me that we need a change in the CEBA eligibility to allow expenses beyond the current March 1, 2020, deadline to help these small businesses who are struggling so hard.

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[Translation]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Vancouver Kingsway for his question and his concern.

At the beginning of the pandemic and long before the Canada emergency business account and RRRF program were brought in, I had a conversation with the Minister of Economic Development about the need to take care of small business owners, those who pay themselves in dividends, partnerships and very small businesses. Many farmers are in that situation. I was concerned about all the gaps.

The RRRF program addressed some of my concerns, but there is room for improvement. Like the emergency account, Bill C-9 and many other things, the devil is in the details. When programs are implemented, from here, in theory, it might look like everything is working well. However, in the regions, and small regions in particular, those programs are often ill suited to the reality. I therefore urge the government to be flexible to ensure that a maximum number of Quebec and Canadian businesses can survive this pandemic.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his sincere efforts and for protecting his region.

With the measures we must implement to support our SMEs, we must consider the cultural sector, which includes the performing arts, the living arts, all the performances that will be put on who knows when. Theatres may perhaps reopen one year from now. Will there be any dance companies and music groups left?

What should the Liberal government do to help our culture survive until these arts can take to the stage again?

• (1730)

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie for his excellent question.

I have something to confess. I am lucky enough to be living in a yellow zone. The Abitibi-Témiscamingue International Film Festival was able to hold its premiere screening in Rouyn-Noranda during this pandemic. Of course, very strict special measures were in place. However, as I was present that day, I can confirm just how important culture is. It is good for mental health and good for the soul to be able to attend such an occasion. It is vital that we invest in our creations and in our creators. This is part of the social fabric and part of what makes us happy to be Quebecers.

I call on the government to be compassionate and generous towards our creators. The future of Quebec's culture is at stake.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, first, I would like to ask for unanimous consent to share my time with the wonderful member for Courtenay—Alberni.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): This being a hybrid sitting of the House, for the sake of clarity, I will only ask those who are opposed to the member for New Westminster—Burnaby's request to share his time with the member for Courtenay—Alberni to express their disagreement.

[English]

Accordingly, all those opposed to the hon. member moving this motion will please say nay.

The House has heard the terms of the motion. As there are no dissenting voices, I declare the motion carried.

[Translation]

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

[English]

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, my thanks to members for allowing that shift in time. Of course, the member for Courtenay—Alberni has been integral to this legislation being brought forward, which helps to correct so many of the errors that were in the first version of commercial rent relief.

I would like to shout out, as I do when I'm talking about small and medium-sized businesses, to the New Westminster Chamber of Commerce, of which I have been a member for a long time, and the Burnaby Board of Trade, of which I have also been a member for many years. Both of which provide good spokespeople for the small businesses in the communities I represent in New Westminster—Burnaby.

I would like to start by talking about how the NDP and the member for Burnaby South, our national leader, saw the urgency, when the pandemic hit, for the federal government to put in place important programs so that people would have the wherewithal to put food on the table, to keep a roof over their heads and, when running a small business, to make sure that business continued to generate jobs in the community. From the very outset, we pushed for programs that would actually be put into place and support people right across the country.

The member for Burnaby South said at the outset that we needed to have in place an emergency benefit that would go to everybody in the country. The Parliamentary Budget Officer actually said that was the best approach. It would have cost less than what the government in the end, with NDP pressure, actually did, and it would have covered more people.

The government at the beginning was trying to rely on a very antiquated employment insurance program that simply did not work for most people who lost their employment. The old EI simply was not available to them. The government relying on that and putting in place a 10% wage subsidy was simply inadequate, so the NDP started its work. We pressed for a 75% wage subsidy because we knew that would help maintain jobs and that other countries had put in place a similar program. We pressed for an emergency response benefit that went to everybody. We were able to obtain substantial benefits going to people right across the country, and we pressed for renewal and pressed for renewal again. There are millions of Canadians, as a result of those efforts, who have access to an emergency benefit.

We pressed as well to make sure that seniors got an emergency benefit and forced through the House of Commons a unanimous motion to that effect. We also pushed for students to be covered. Initially, the government was very hostile to that. We pushed, prodded and fought. Ultimately, a student emergency benefit was put in place.

We fought as well for students who have disabilities or have dependents to get the same level of support that the emergency benefit provided to people who were out of work, and we succeeded in the fight to get that student CERB in place. We pressed for suspension of student loans.

We pressed for sick leave. Ultimately, as colleagues know, the member for Burnaby South was determined in this regard and we finally obtained universal sick leave, for the first time since the founding of our country, that applies to workers. Workers no longer have to have that desperate choice between doing the right thing and staying home, and putting food on the table for their families. That universal sick leave is, at the moment, only available for one year, but it represents significant progress for so many people who would, otherwise, be forced to go to work sick or simply not be able to feed their family.

Two areas where we fought are of particular concern because of the government's weak response and almost passive-aggressive push-back. On the one hand, it is people with disabilities who, from the very beginning, were forced to undertake additional expenses through this tragic pandemic, struggling as well to put food on the table and keep a roof over their heads. People with disabilities were completely ignored by the government and that contrasts vividly with the massive bailout given to our banking system. Finally, after seven months of pushing, fighting and forcing the government, an emergency benefit is going out, not to all people with disabilities but all people registered in the federal system.

• (1735)

All of these fights to get benefits for regular people, which the member for Burnaby South and the entire NDP caucus have been engaged in, contrast vividly with what the government actually did for big banks and big corporations. Within four days, the government moved to provide liquidity supports of \$750 billion, that is three-quarters of \$1 trillion, to Canada's big banks. These banks have, so far in this pandemic, reaped windfall profits of \$15 billion.

We know that in the next quarterly reports those staggering amounts will go up even more significantly because of all of the deferred mortgage penalties and interest charges that now are coming due. While small businesses are struggling, while people are struggling, the banking sector has reaped enormous largesse from the federal government. That is a program of the government, and it is one of only two programs that the government originated by itself, of its own efforts, without anybody pressing it to do it.

The other, of course, is the LEEFF program. As we saw initially at the beginning of this year, this was \$1 billion in forgivable loans to large Canadian corporations, with no transparency and no information being shared with the public. New Democrats do not believe that was the best approach to take. We believe in transparency. We believe that Canadians need to know where their tax dollars are going.

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This brings me to the issue of small business. From the very beginning, the member for Courtenay—Alberni, the member for Burnaby South and the entire NDP caucus pushed for small business loans to be made available through the CEBA. We pushed for that wage subsidy of 75%, which many other countries found to be particularly important, and for commercial rent relief for small businesses. The first version that was put in place over the summer was put in place in such a haphazard and irresponsible way that it did not benefit most of the people who could have benefited from it within small businesses.

The contract, as we know, was given without any tendering to a company that employs as one of its principals the spouse of the chief of staff to the Prime Minister. Initially the program was designed only for those who have commercial mortgages. The contract was given to a commercial mortgage company and it decided that anyone who had a commercial mortgage could access the program. The reality is that there was over \$1 billion that small businesses desperate to stay in business were unable to access.

Now, finally, because of the pushing and prodding of the NDP, we have a bill that is more in keeping with what we have been saying, from the very beginning, needed to happen for small businesses. However, the government and the official opposition are refusing to make it retroactive to April 1, even though there are so many thousands of businesses that have been unable to access the initial program.

The New Democratic Party will be bringing forward an amendment, and we are asking Liberal and Conservative MPs to vote for it. We are asking people right across the country, if they are in the small business sector and believe, as we do, that the small business sector and community businesses need to have the chance to grow, get through this pandemic and continue to contribute to jobs in the community, then they should tell their local Liberal or Conservative MPs to vote for the NDP amendment on Friday.

New Democrats will be putting forward the amendment so that small businesses that did not access the original landlord-driven, commercial mortgage-driven program will have access to the new program retroactively prior to September 27, right back to April 1. That is the amendment we intend to bring forward.

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New Democrats believe in small businesses. We believe that they are often the backbone of the community economy. We believe that social enterprises, community businesses and co-operatives working together often provide jobs and great economic benefit. That is why we are bringing forward this amendment. We hope that Canadians will react favourably to it and call or write their Liberal or Conservative MPs to tell them to vote yes on the NDP amendment, to make it retroactive prior to September 27, so that businesses can access the funding they should have had in the summer.

● (1740)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member talked about the NDP doing this and the NDP doing that. It takes away from the reality that there were many organizations and individuals that contributed to the necessary dialogue in order to make many of the changes required for a wide spectrum of programs that were introduced. I could cite numerous discussions among my Liberal colleagues in which we brought up ideas and thoughts that would improve upon these programs.

Has the NDP costed out in any fashion its proposed amendment? Does it have any sense of what that would be?

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, of course the government was receiving pressure from business organizations and people with disabilities.

I think it is important that we, as members of Parliament, report back to our constituents and to the country about what we have been fighting for through this pandemic. The issues we have raised are actually issues that have made a difference in people's lives.

I fail to see how the \$750 billion that the Liberals handed out through a variety of federal government institutions to the banking sector is making a real difference in people's lives right across the country. I fail to see that.

The government left over \$1 billion, about \$1.2 billion, on the table that was supposed to go to small businesses. It failed because of the complexity and the incomprehensible approach the government took on commercial rent relief. Let us put that \$1.2 billion into retroactive support for small businesses that could not access the program throughout the course of summer because of how the government structured it.

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, we have seen \$750 billion in liquidity supports and regulatory easing for Bay Street and the big banks, and \$81 billion in CERB. Now, here we are, talking about small business.

They want to act as if they are hearing it for the first time. Could the hon. member tell us if he was consulted as the critic for finance when the Liberal government put \$750 billion of our taxpayer dollars out to the banks, so they could lend it back to us with interest?

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, the member for Hamilton Centre is one of a number of key members of Parliament who have been standing up for regular Canadians throughout the course of this pandemic, and he has been doing a very strong, eloquent job standing up for regular people. They cannot be forgotten.

The member asks a very important question. As members know, I asked this very specific question at the finance committee to the former finance minister, and there was no answer. I asked the question to finance ministry officials, and there was no answer. I finally had to ask the question to the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions. Within a few days, they gave us an accounting of the \$750 billion of liquidity supports that the government had granted within days of the pandemic hitting.

However, people with disabilities had to wait over seven months to get a \$600 stipend to try to get them through the pandemic. To know that the government acted with such alacrity for the wealthiest and the most privileged among us, yet were holding off and denying people with disabilities the amounts they so desperately needed to weather this pandemic, should be a source of shame to any government member.

● (1745)

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is a huge honour and privilege to rise today on behalf of New Democrats and small businesses. Today is bittersweet. We have a bill coming forward, finally, with the changes that we, along with small businesses, chambers of commerce, business organizations and labour, have been asking for to get the support to businesses that they desperately need. The government shows it is listening to the changes we are asking for. However, there is not a lot of clarity about moving forward.

We are asking the Liberals, now that they have admitted they failed in the design of their programs, to fix them, not just to fix them moving forward but to make them retroactive. We just heard the finance minister and the Minister of Middle Class Prosperity talk about how they will do anything and everything to help people. They will support an equitable recovery and they are willing to back-date the commercial rent assistance program to September 27. The pandemic did not start on September 27. In fact, we know the previous program was dated for April 1. We do not understand why they would not back-date it to April 1 to make sure it is fair to everybody across this country.

Every day we hear of another business closing its doors permanently. Many could not access the commercial rent assistance program in the first place because their landlord would not apply, even though their neighbour's landlord applied and got access to it. One in three businesses had a landlord that was willing to go to bat and apply for the program. The other two-thirds did not have the same support and were left hanging out to dry. As we know, many are closing their doors as a result of this failed design of a program.

Lisa Bernard Christensen in my riding wrote that it is “too little, too late. I needed it 3 or 4 months ago, now the damage is done.” There are people like Lisa right across the country who want to see this program back-dated because they are steeped in debt or facing bankruptcy. This is about being equitable. The government talked about an equitable recovery. In all fairness, I do not know how the Liberals can justify not back-dating it, when they admit the program was flawed and broken and they are coming forward today with the fix.

We know we are going to have a huge deficit to pay for this global pandemic we are all enduring. In all fairness, it is going to be on the shoulders of everyday Canadians to pay this deficit back. It should really be on those who profited the most, the super-wealthy, those who can afford to chip in and help us get through this and who are going to benefit in the long run.

Likely, most of this will be left on the backs of everyday Canadians, our children, our grandchildren and even our great-grandchildren. It is not fair. If all Canadians are going to share the responsibility of paying these very important emergency funds back, those who were left out are also going to be responsible for paying them back and they are not getting access to them.

We will be putting forward an amendment calling on the government, and the Conservatives, who have not indicated their support, to back-date that program to April 1. We urge all parties to collectively come together and save many people from bankruptcy, many who are steeped in debt and need help to get back on track.

We have seen the government continually delay the rollout of these programs. They could have tabled this legislation in the summer, but they chose to prorogue Parliament. They made announcements that they were going to deliver a bill in early October, but here we are in November. They are delivering a bill and we are going to have to fast-track it through Parliament so that people can get the help they need. We do not even know when Canadians are going to be able to apply for the benefits from this new program. We do not know what the wage subsidy is going to look like in January, February and March.

As a tourism critic and as the member of Parliament for Courtenay—Alberni, which is a highly visited tourist destination, I know how important it is to have certainty and to know what it looks like. Otherwise, we are going to see more layoffs and more people not knowing if they are going to have a job moving forward. We need the government to take a look at moving forward, come up with a proper recovery plan and identify what the extension of the wage subsidy will look like.

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• (1750)

We need to also ensure that the government fixes its broken finance programs. Many businesses are facing liquidity issues, especially hotels and those in the tourism industry. Right now, the Tourism Industry Association of Canada says that only 12% of tourism applicants so far have been able to get access to the BCAP. Forty-three per cent have been outright denied. The government needs to fix these programs. Also, the LEEFF program needs to be fixed. Only two applicants have been approved.

We have so much work ahead of us and we need the government to act urgently. It keeps coming in with these programs after the fact. Here we are, again, talking about legislation to help people with rent that is dated back to September 27. That is not good enough. Rent was due on November 1, and that was missed. The way it is going, we will miss December 1 in supporting these businesses on these important fixed costs. We are now in the second wave. Are we going to get support in the third wave? Again, we do not know what that will look like.

We are hearing from indigenous businesses. They have not been included in the discussions for a lot of the rollout. On the wage subsidy, indigenous-led corporations were left out. We fought tooth and nail so they could get included in the wage subsidy program. The Indigenous Tourism Association represents many indigenous-led tourism operators across the country, and they are the most vulnerable tourism businesses. It took months to get the support needed to save many businesses. These businesses are looking forward. They need support now and some certainty. They have not had a lot of dialogue with the government on these programs to all them to offer their opinions. The design of many of the programs are flawed and do not serve their needs. The government needs to reach out to these important stakeholders.

We are also learning that a lot of employees in the tourism sector, for example, do not have certainty around their jobs. Nothing in this rollout would protect hospitality and tourism workers by having conditional sectoral support on establishing the right of first refusal for laid-off workers. Laid-off workers have no guarantees from their employers that their jobs will be restored or even offered when the pandemic subsides. We want to ensure these workers, who have given years of their lives to their workplaces, are given the first right of refusal, protecting them from further restructuring or being replaced by workers at a lower wage. We want to ensure the pandemic is not an opportunity for companies to restructure and cut labour costs.

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We welcome these important changes, but we want to ensure the government goes even further, that it backs up its statement on ensuring it is an equitable recovery. We need the government to backdate the commercial rent assistance program to April 1 to ensure that all those businesses that have been left out get access to those programs. Again, more and more businesses are going out of business, racking up debt or facing bankruptcy. The government needs to come to their rescue.

The government has left \$1.2 billion on the table from the previous commercial rent assistance program. It only spent \$1.9 billion of the allotted funds. According to the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, 128,000 businesses did get support from that program, but 400,000 businesses would have qualified had the government made it a tenant-driven program.

Another flaw in the previous program was that businesses which rented from a local government or government agency were immediately disqualified from applying for the program. I think of All Mex'd Up, a local taco shop in Port Alberni. It rents space at the Harbour Quay from the City of Port Alberni. It has been excluded. Now the government says that it will make it retroactive to September 27. It is too bad for those restaurants that closed their doors for public health and to protect everybody during April, May and June. The government is not going to help them for all those months.

I am urging the government to support us, backdate that program and support small business.

• (1755)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am intrigued by the fact that the NDP will be moving an amendment.

Is it the NDP's official position that any small business in the country that had a rental contract would be entitled to receive compensation from a program that would be developed by the NDP? Would every small business be eligible to receive it?

Mr. Gord Johns: Madam Speaker, that is an excellent question, and it is rare I get to say that to the other side.

This program was flawed in the beginning. We wanted to see it scaled with the wage subsidy. In fact, we have been asking for that. People who have lost 50% or 60% of their business did not qualify under the previous program, even if their landlord was on board. They did not meet the criteria because the threshold was 70%. Clearly, they needed help and should have qualified. Therefore, we are glad the government has changed that.

Under even the old rules, they should at least backdate it to April 1 for any tenant who was eligible under the previous rules. At a bare minimum, that should be the requirement. Businesses should be allowed to apply and get the same supports that their neighbours received. Businesses that had their landlords on board applied. Of that money, 50% was federal and provincial money. The government should let them have access to that money. The loss of those businesses and the bankruptcies will far outweigh the cost to fix this.

I hope the government is listening and does the right thing.

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, the government has bragged about all the consultations and feedback it has had from small business communities, yet we are in November, finally rolling out this program.

I will share this with the hon. member for Courtenay—Alberni. In my community there is a BIA, a small business on Locke Street. Last year that street was under construction, so its year-to-dates are way out of whack. It took losses last year that could never be reflected adequately this year. It has been left out of this program and it is on the precipice.

With the member for Courtenay—Alberni's experience as a critic for small business and fighting for small businesses, he talks about applying it to ensure nobody is left behind. Could he take a little more time and talk about all the businesses that continue to be left behind by the Liberal government?

Mr. Gord Johns: Madam Speaker, I know the member for Hamilton Centre is fighting so hard for the small businesses in his riding. I could not even think about how long it would take for me to talk about the number of small businesses that are bringing this to my attention, in my riding alone and in every riding in the country.

A number of businesses we have lost because the government has not fixed this program. However, many can still be saved. Many can stave off bankruptcy if the government does the right thing and backdates its program to April 1. It needs to do this in all fairness to those that have been left behind.

If the Liberals were truly listening to small business and their local chambers of commerce, they would know that it is unfair that some received support and others did not. The business that did not get it, if they are still going to this day, are paying a heavy price, and it is not fair to them.

Let us help them get through it. Let us get the support they need and do the right thing. We can all work together. They are expecting us to work together at a time like this, not to force an election when they are waiting for support, which is what the Liberals were considering doing two weeks ago. That would have meant months and months before businesses saw the help they needed. The government needs to move this quickly and it needs to adjust the bill and backdate it.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Before giving the floor to the hon. member for Saint-Laurent, I want to let her know that she will not have time to give her whole speech.

• (1800)

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos (Saint-Laurent, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am grateful to have the opportunity to talk about the government's plan regarding our support for businesses and the economic recovery in response to COVID-19.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, our government has been pursuing two goals, namely to protect Canadians' lives and to protect and safeguard businesses, jobs and the Canadian economy.

In the face of economic uncertainty, our government took decisive action to support businesses affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and to help protect the jobs that Canadians depend on.

Although some sectors of the economy are recovering, others are still dealing with lower revenues, increased costs and uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Many business owners and businesses in Canada still need help with cash flow and operating costs. That is why our government introduced an act to amend the Income Tax Act regarding the Canada emergency rent subsidy and Canada emergency wage subsidy.

[*English*]

Bill C-9 would implement new targeted supports to help hard hit businesses. These measures are designed to help businesses get through the second wave of this virus so they can protect jobs, continue to serve their communities and be positioned for a strong recovery.

From very early on in the first wave of the pandemic, it was overwhelmingly clear that one of the most important ways to help businesses survive these trying times was through rental supports. Many Canadian businesses either had to shut down for months on end or lost a significant percentage of their revenues, yet still had to pay rent to their landlords.

This is why our government quickly developed the Canada emergency commercial rent assistance program, or CECRA, to help businesses with rent so they could stay afloat during the pandemic. One of the problems with this program was that it required landlords to apply for assistance, rather than the businesses themselves.

Businesses reached out to me when this program was announced to let me know that, while they needed the rental support to make it through, their landlords refused to apply for the program and they were being forced to pay the full amount even when in some cases their revenues were non-existent. As much as I try my absolute best

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to help my constituents and the businesses in my riding that reach out to me to access programs, I had no idea what to tell these people who were at the mercy of their landlords.

What I did was raise these concerns at caucus, as did several of my colleagues, and I am extremely happy our comments were listened to. Through the new and improved version of CECRA, the Canada emergency rent subsidy, we are proposing to provide direct and easy-to-access commercial rent and mortgage support until June of 2021 to organizations and businesses that have been affected by COVID-19, with a subsidy of up to 65%.

[*Translation*]

The new rent subsidy builds on the Canada emergency commercial rent assistance program, designed for small businesses. This program has already supported more than 133,000 small businesses and 1.2 million jobs in Canada.

We have been working closely with small businesses from the beginning of the pandemic. The new rent subsidy will be better targeted, easier to access and paid directly to small business tenants.

[*English*]

What would this look like in real terms for Canadian businesses? Let us look at a hair salon, for example, that followed public health and safety precautions and closed to the public back in March or April, like Trimz hair salon in my riding. It opened again over the summer as it was allowed to serve the public at a much lower capacity, and limited its number of customers in order to follow social distancing guidelines.

In Quebec, hair salons have been given permission to remain open until further notice and were open in the months of September and October. Let us say that in October their revenues were down 25%. On top of this, they incurred \$2,500 in eligible rent costs for the first period of the rent subsidy—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): My apologies, but it being 6:04 p.m., pursuant to order made earlier today, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill now before the House.

[*Translation*]

If a member of a recognized party present in the House wants to request a recorded vote or request that the motion be passed on division, I invite them to rise and so indicate to the Chair.

• (1805)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I would request a recorded vote.

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The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Accordingly, pursuant to order made on Wednesday, September 23, the division stands deferred until Thursday, November 5, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

It being 6:05 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*Translation*]

CLIMATE CHANGE ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ) moved that Bill C-215, An Act respecting Canada's fulfillment of its greenhouse gas emissions reduction obligations, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

She said: Madam Speaker, I am deeply moved to rise today to present, support and defend the climate change accountability act on behalf of the Bloc Québécois, our team of MPs, our members and the thousands of Quebeckers who support us. It is a signal honour for me to be the author and sponsor of this bill.

I entered politics knowing my convictions. I am a democrat, a Quebec separatist, a feminist and an environmentalist. Today, my goal is to use my words, my arguments and my heart-and-soul sincerity to convince parliamentarians, every member of this assembly, of the merits of this bill. Given the chance, for years to come, it will be the cornerstone of our shared efforts to create an environmentally sound future.

Sustainability is a word that should resonate and make us think right now. For the past few months, we have all experienced something quite real that we could not quite grasp before, and that is how fragile the world is. The pandemic is not changing the laws of nature, but it is revealing new aspects, things we did not notice before, things that were hard to imagine or we simply did not want to see.

Our wealth comes from our efforts, but also very much from the services rendered by our natural environment. Environmental degradation increases health risks and compromises our economic well-being. More than ever, the relationship between environmental health and human health is becoming apparent.

The current challenge does not replace the previous one, it adds to it. Governments around the world will respond to the economic challenge as they responded to the health challenge. They will need to respond to the climate challenge better than they have in all these years.

The climate crisis is as real as the health crisis. I know that every party here in the House recognizes that. I believe that, as legislators, we have a common challenge that must be stated, affirmed and heard by everyone: The fight against the pandemic must not become an excuse for failing in the fight against climate change.

Let us now all agree that we will not be fooled by this false opposition, that it would be a complete failure on the part of public officials to respond to the great challenge of our time. Let us prove

together, despite our differences of opinion on certain issues, that democracy can produce better results.

This is not just rhetoric. The main goal of the climate change accountability bill is to help us put words into concrete action.

I have no doubt that there have been decision-makers in Canada in the past who were sincere about their desire to meet the challenges of climate change, but let's face it, Canada has never met its greenhouse gas reduction targets.

Canada has failed repeatedly. Canada had to withdraw from the Kyoto protocol. Between 1990 and 2017, Canada's greenhouse gas emissions increased by 18.9%. Over the same period, it should be noted that Quebec's emissions decreased by 8.7%. I might add that the Canada-wide statistic includes the Quebec data.

However, I am not willfully blind. Quebec is not perfect and there are still major challenges to be addressed. Like all highly industrialized societies, Quebec has a large environmental footprint, and much remains to be done to restore the balance between prosperity and environmental sustainability. However, in this federation, Quebec has made contributions to climate action even though it does not control all the levers that it should legitimately have to protect its territory. In short, that is Quebec's and Canada's political reality. The intent of this bill is not to retaliate, far from it.

Many states around the world have adopted framework legislation for climate governance. In general, the objective of these laws, commonly known as climate laws, is to make governments accountable for their climate action. Despite having a so-called progressive society, young people who are engaged and politicians who profess to be green, Canada does not have a climate law.

Canada's current target is to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 30% below 2005 levels by 2030. That was Stephen Harper's target.

According to the most optimistic projections, namely those that take into account the impact of reduction measures already announced, Canada will miss its target. Holding the government accountable for its climate action will prevent this failure from happening again. That is the bill's objective.

● (1810)

I want people to buy in. Everyone knows that pollution knows no borders, even though the sources of pollution are unevenly spread out throughout our territory. Our domestic and international climate policy must account for this unevenness. More specifically, if we want to be a world leader, if we want to convince the major polluters in the world to contribute, there is one fundamental thing we need to do: We need to lead by example and show that we are capable of fulfilling our own obligations.

We need to show some credibility if we want to be able to negotiate. It pains me to say this, but I think we lack any shred of credibility. We are offside but we need to get in the game.

Canada committed to reducing its greenhouse gas emissions under the Paris Agreement. Canada's commitment falls short of the global objective, but at the very least we should start by achieving our own objectives. The climate bill we are debating would allow us to do just that, since it would enshrine Canada's obligations under the Paris Agreement into Canadian law.

The act would provide for two essential things. First, it would set official reduction targets, increase them and set interim targets until we achieve the target of net-zero emissions by 2050. I believe that Liberal Party members will agree with this objective, since they were the ones who set it.

Second, the government's action plan should be assessed by a competent, independent authority. We can count on the commissioner of the environment to do that. We all agree that, in order to have enough teeth, climate legislation must include mechanisms that make it binding. That is what is proposed here by giving an entity that already has the confidence of the House the power to assess whether the government's actions are consistent with the legislation's objectives.

The Bloc Québécois released a comprehensive plan that included a variety of proposals for implementing a true green recovery. The government can draw upon that when developing an economic recovery strategy that addresses climate change.

The good thing about this bill is that it gives the government the freedom to choose the approach it wants to take to deal with this issue. The bill seeks to ensure that the government's choices are in keeping with Canada's international commitments and that the measures it plans to take are realistic and sufficient.

This bill is very simple, but it is of crucial importance. It already seems to have the support of the opposition parties. I have talked to NDP, Green Party and Conservative colleagues. They all agree that the principle of the bill is sound, they agree with the principle, and they recognize that Canada needs a bill like this as soon as possible.

I know that many people find it hard to grasp the concept of climate change because we cannot see it from one day to the next. We know we need to act locally, at home, by doing things like recycling, composting, choosing low-emission vehicles and minimizing our use of single-use plastics. There are many things we can do individually, but we need to do a lot more collectively.

The transition affects all regions and communities in Quebec and Canada because the effects of climate change are devastating and ubiquitous. Every region has its own unique economic realities and its own distinct challenges. Municipalities are grappling with erosion, insect pests are proliferating, fisheries are changing. We can observe the effects of climate change everywhere.

Back home, riverside municipalities have to deal with shoreline erosion. People have to abandon their homes because the location where they were built is no longer viable, as it is too risky. In my riding, Sainte-Luce-sur-Mer and Sainte-Flavie are the two municipalities in Quebec that are most affected by shoreline erosion. The

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people back home do not need to be reminded of the high tides of 2010 to raise their awareness of this issue. More than 40 homes were damaged along the river in Sainte-Flavie, which is a lot for a community of 800 people.

More than 50% of the coastline is susceptible to erosion in Quebec's maritime regions due to rising sea levels, storms, the absence of ice along the coast, the increased frequency of freeze-thaw cycles, milder winters and the advent of heavy rains in the winter, all of which are consequences of climate change resulting from human activity.

Farmers have to deal with drought and losing their harvest because of the unpredictability of the climate. People in the Baie-des-Chaleurs region fear for their respiratory health because pollution from nearby factories is degrading the air quality in the Gaspé region, which is so dear to us.

We need to make a major collective effort. We need to come together.

● (1815)

On a broad scale, it takes governments that take their responsibilities seriously, that have the courage to fulfill their commitments and that are not afraid to bring in drastic but necessary measures to combat the greatest challenge facing the next generation.

Unfortunately, Canada cannot boast about being at the forefront on this matter. Other countries have had the courage to act before us. It is possible to give up fossil fuels and live off solar, wind, hydro and geothermal energy. Not only is it possible, it is crucial.

I am thinking of countries like Morocco, which relied almost exclusively on imported oil back in the early 2000s. Today it generates more than 40% of the energy it needs thanks to a network of renewable energy plants, including the largest solar power plant in the world.

I am also thinking of the Netherlands, one of the most densely populated countries, with thousands of agricultural producers in a very small geographic area. They have learned how to produce more and better with less, meaning less water, less fertilizer, and less pesticide, and how to use their land sustainably, emitting less CO₂. The Netherlands is doing this and is the second-largest food exporter in the world.

Another example is Costa Rica, three-quarters of which was covered by forest a hundred years ago. Most of this forest was wiped out by uncontrolled logging in the 1980s. Then, the government took the bull by the horns and offered subsidies to owners who planted new trees. In just 25 years, the forest has reclaimed half of the country.

These countries are obviously different from Canada. They are not perfect, but they did the best they could with what they had, because their government was brave enough to take action. Canada needs a little bit of that courage.

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Ironically, regardless of how the American presidential election turns out, the U.S. is officially withdrawing from the Paris Agreement, as decided by the Republican President in 2017. That is shameful. It shows that we need to double down and set an example. We need to show that we are stronger than that. I cannot emphasize enough that we need to lead by example.

I cannot speak about the climate issue without mentioning Quebec's legitimate ambitions. Members can see where I am going with this. Canada is an oil-producing country, which provides the highest per capita funding for the gas and oil sector, whereas Quebec has access to a phenomenal amount of renewable natural resources such as forests, water, mining resources and agricultural land on its territory. Quebec has built a robust and renewable electricity network which, unlike Alberta's oil sands, will be an asset for the future.

We could become world leaders in renewable energy, energy efficiency and sustainable development. That is one of my favourite arguments for sovereignty. We recently marked the 25th anniversary of the referendum, and I must say that Quebec has really changed since that day, as have we. That does not affect the legitimacy of the bill. Quebec is positioning itself as an environmentally friendly model of wealth creation that is setting an example for the rest of the world. Canada should unreservedly follow its lead.

I need to cut my explanation short, but I am sure that members will have taken the time to study the mechanisms in this bill in minute detail before voting. I am confident they will have assessed its merits and will see that this bill is substantive, constructive, well thought out and well written, and no mere statement of principle or list of arbitrary measures.

This is my final argument. Members will have noticed that the bill is deliberately drafted in such a way as to preserve the room to manoeuvre that a democratically elected government needs to conduct public affairs and fulfill its mission in accordance with its party's legitimate political ambitions. Our goal is to ensure successful climate policy, not to tie decision-makers' hands.

That reminds me of one specific quote that reflects a governance style that inspires me. As Premier of Quebec, Pauline Marois skillfully managed a minority government like this government. At the beginning of her term, she said, "We will be flexible in our approach but remain firm on our objectives." Those are wise words.

The bill that I am introducing proposes that, for the future of the planet and climate justice, Canada be flexible in its approach but firm on its objectives in the coming years. I have the following question for the current government, which continues to repeat that it is committed to addressing climate change, and for the future government: Are they prepared to be firm on our objectives?

If so, I humbly invite them, on behalf of my constituents and with a sense of accomplishment in my heart, to vote in favour of the Bloc Québécois's climate change accountability bill.

● (1820)

[English]

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the member across the way for a tremendous presentation on some

very good work that she has done. I just came from the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development and we had the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada there. We were looking at its budget and the main estimates, which have gone from \$800,000 a few years ago to \$3 million in this coming year. There are a lot of new programs coming through the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada.

I am wondering whether the hon. member has looked at the work of the Impact Assessment Agency that is measuring the impact of the policies that we are putting forward in terms of her research for the bill.

[Translation]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

Of course we did a lot of research when preparing Bill C-215. It is based on an international agreement among a number of countries, the Paris Agreement. Canada ratified this agreement but is not obligated to enforce it in its domestic law. This bill would force Canada to be accountable on climate change.

The Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development is already conducting major studies and will be assigned others if this bill moves forward. I would be happy to talk to my colleague about that if he wants.

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Madam Speaker, I apologize but I am going to make my comments in English, to ensure that they are interpreted properly.

[English]

My hon. colleagues in the Bloc Québécois on this side of the House seemed to lionize, including in the bill, certain energy in Canada. We have to realize in Canada how fortunate we are to have a multitude of energy sources, a portfolio of energy sources of vast degrees. We have all kinds of oil, gas and hydroelectricity. We are the envy of the world for the diversity of our energy supply, including nuclear. Everyone envies Canada for the fact that we have so much good energy. The thing about energy that most people do not understand is how much pollution is associated with every form of energy. There is no clean energy. Every bit of energy has its cost. From hydroelectricity, to uranium, nuclear, oil and gas, everything has a land effect. We need to understand why we look at this in the sense of one energy source being bad and one being not so bad when they have different effects.

Could the member explain how she assesses the power energy from Quebec being less polluting and less different from the power energy from the oil and gas sector? I would love to hear that.

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[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his interesting question.

He is right. Canada has plenty of natural resources, which is what makes for that beautiful diversity. Unfortunately, I do not agree with him. There are indeed some energy sources that are more polluting than others, as scientists have proven time and time again. Solar, hydro and wind energy pollute a lot less than fossil fuels. This becomes even more obvious if you think of projects like Teck Resources' Frontier mine. The project proponents had to drop it because there were not enough investors, as people knew it was not viable in the short term.

I would like people to make the shift to more promising energy sources, that is, green energy. Unfortunately, oil and gas are not renewable energies.

• (1825)

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I really want to thank my colleague for her speech, which I greatly appreciated.

I agree with almost everything she said. I am not going to ask her any questions about GNL Québec. I will save that for other exchanges later.

This bill has been introduced in the past by the NDP, by Jack Layton and Megan Leslie. I also introduced a similar bill. We see how far we are from achieving the Paris targets and how important it is for Parliament to be accountable and ask the government questions about meeting those targets. What does my colleague think about that?

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question.

It is critically important. We totally agree on that. I was talking to my colleagues in the NDP who also worked on this. They made constructive comments on changes to make to the bill. I hope it will get to committee.

We have to talk about it more because we do not talk about the environment enough here. As I was saying, this is a crisis. Despite the health and economic crisis, the climate crisis is here and the next generation and my generation will pay the price. We have to talk about this more.

Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-215, an act respecting Canada's fulfillment of its greenhouse gas emissions reduction obligations.

The purpose of Bill C-215 is to ensure that Canada fulfills its obligations under the Paris Agreement, including by establishing targets for reducing Canadian greenhouse gas emissions and accountability mechanisms for emissions reduction.

More specifically, Bill C-215 includes a target of zero net emissions by 2050 and an interim emissions reduction target of at least 30% below the level of greenhouse gas emissions in 2005 by 2030. It also requires a centralized action plan that establishes five-year interim targets, from 2025 to 2040.

An annual report on the progress made in reducing Canadian greenhouse gas emissions must also be prepared and tabled in Parliament. The bill provides for a review of the action plan and annual progress reports by the commissioner of the environment and sustainable development and a review of the act every four years.

Achieving a prosperous future and net-zero emissions by 2050 remains a priority for the Canadian government. Canadians know that climate change is a threat to their health, and the government will continue to work on this issue.

Even as the world copes with the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change continues to worsen, and it is nearly certain that 2020 will be one of the four hottest years on record. As UN Secretary General António Guterres pointed out, climate change is not taking a break during the COVID-19 pandemic, so we cannot put climate action on hold.

Just as our government committed to supporting Canadians during the COVID-19 pandemic, we will continue to do the same with climate action. Canadians are already living the impacts of climate change and extreme weather events, such as the changing intensity and frequency of flooding, storms and fires, coastal erosion, extreme heat events, melting permafrost, and rising sea levels. All of these effects pose a significant risk to the safety, security, health and well-being of all Canadians, our communities, our economy and our natural environment.

Our existing measures to fight climate change and those to come will help Canada further reduce its emissions, support a growing economy and make life safer and more affordable for Canadians. In addition to these national commitments, Canada is a leader when it comes to international measures and the fight against climate change.

Climate change is a major global challenge, and that is why Canada and 194 other countries adopted the Paris Agreement to fight climate change. This agreement seeks to strengthen efforts to hold the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C and, if possible, to limit it to 1.5°C.

As a reminder, under the Paris Agreement, Canada committed to reducing its greenhouse gas emissions by 30% below 2005 levels by 2030. Canada is also determined to strengthen existing greenhouse gas reduction measures and implement new ones in order to exceed the greenhouse gas emission reduction goal by 2030.

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Canada is also a founding member of the Powering Past Coal Alliance, which was created to accelerate clean growth and climate protection through the rapid phase-out of traditional coal-fired electricity. The alliance currently has over 110 members.

Canada is taking part in many other climate change initiatives. For example, Canada is involved in the work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. From 2016 to 2018, it was co-chair of the Climate and Clean Air Coalition, which works to reduce short-lived climate pollutants. It is a member and co-chair of the Global Methane Initiative, an international partnership aimed at reducing methane pollution and advancing the recovery and use of methane as a cleaner energy source.

• (1830)

Despite the fact that COP26 was postponed to 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government of Canada is still making its international commitments to fight climate change a priority.

COP is not only a forum for negotiations that guide international climate action, but it is also an important forum for pursuing progress with international partners on many initiatives and maintaining bilateral relations on climate action and environmental protection.

COP will remain a forum where the Government of Canada can continue to showcase not only its efforts to combat climate change, but also many other initiatives that strengthen the integration of solutions based on nature, biodiversity and the oceans, such as phasing out coal, targeting zero plastic waste, enhancing protection for nature and promoting funding for coastal resilience.

Despite the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, I can assure my colleagues that Canada is pursuing and will continue to pursue initiatives and collaboration with its international allies. Our actions are more important than ever because the science is clear: we cannot wait for future generations to stop polluting or take action to adapt to the effects of climate change. We must act now.

If we are to meet our Paris target of holding the temperature increase to 2°C and pursuing efforts to limit that increase to 1.5°C, global emissions will have to achieve the net-zero emissions target by 2050. Canada recognizes these conclusions and agrees that additional work is needed, hence its commitment to achieving its net-zero emissions target by 2050 through a five-year national greenhouse gas emissions reduction milestone, based on the advice of experts and consultations with Canadians.

Canada is not alone. Nine countries have passed or are in the process of passing legislation to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050. These countries include France, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom. Including Canada, at least 120 countries, 14 regions, 398 cities, 786 businesses and 16 investors have committed to meeting this target. Clearly, several components of Bill C-215 reflect both the national and international priorities of our government.

I thank the hon. member for presenting such an important subject. I look forward to continuing discussions on measures that will enable us to fight climate change and achieve net-zero emissions by 2050.

• (1835)

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak this evening about the bill sponsored by the member for Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia.

The stated objective of this bill is to ensure that Canada fulfills its obligations under the Paris Agreement. That is definitely an objective that I support and my leader has pledged that the Conservative Party will fulfill it.

In fact the Paris targets themselves are Conservative targets. During my first mandate, the previous Prime Minister consulted every province on their reduction capacity and settled on a reduction of 30% below 2005 levels by 2030. That was presented as Canada's commitment under the Paris Agreement and continues to be the target today. This work was done in collaboration with the provinces and it focuses on maintaining economic opportunities. Furthermore, the Paris commitments are on all points in line with what my party stands for: environmental protection that is not at the expense of the economy, and respect for provincial jurisdictions and expertise.

Unfortunately, since this agreement was signed, the Liberal government has not taken any significant action to meet these targets and instead has led an ideological and divisive campaign. The Prime Minister said that we are on track to meet the 2030 objective. During the last campaign, he said several times that Canada was on track to meet the objectives.

That is not true now, and it was not true then. He now claims that they will exceed our objectives but he refuses to provide details. They cannot even achieve the bare minimum, yet they promise to exceed the targets without providing any reason other than a promise. That sounds about right for this Liberal government.

Let us look at the facts. The latest report from Climate Transparency shows that not only is Canada not on the right track to meet its Paris commitments, but we are also among the least prepared countries of the G20. Climate Action Tracker ranked this government's measures as "insufficient" and the government's own projections, which are surely the most charitable, say that Canada is not even close to meeting its objectives.

Let us look at where we are right now. Even with the massive spending on programs such as electric vehicle subsidies, even with the Liberal government's total destruction of our oil and gas industry and even with the federal government's complete refusal to cooperate with the provinces and instead favour a top-down approach, Ottawa knows what is best. We are not even close to meeting our targets.

We are now in a position where the government did not keep the Paris commitments made by the Harper government. However, the Liberals expect us to believe that everything is fine and that they are even going to exceed those targets. We should not ask questions because the Liberals simply cannot tell us how that will happen.

We therefore have a bill from a Bloc Québécois member. As I already said, I support the stated objective of developing a responsible plan to meet the Paris Agreement commitments made by the Harper government. In that sense, there are many aspects of this bill that I like and support.

It is a very intelligent idea to not merely legislate targets but instead focus on creating a plan. As we all know, Parliament cannot bind Parliament.

• (1840)

As such, enshrining targets in law with no plan to achieve them essentially has no legal force and would amount to nothing more than virtue signalling.

Fortunately, this bill calls on the government to create a framework and to present it to the House, where it can be studied and debated. We know the Liberal government detests parliamentary scrutiny. It even shut Parliament down to avoid scrutiny. As such, this bill's move to force the government to present a plan is welcome.

I am always in favour of greater parliamentary oversight. I like the requirement for the environment commissioner to review the plan. In addition to mandatory parliamentary review by the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, I like that the plan called for in the bill requires specific measures to achieve the targets and assess progress.

However, there are provisions in this bill that I find hard to accept. The Paris targets were negotiated with the provinces and supported by every party here, but the commitment to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050 was not among them. I am therefore surprised to see this concept in the bill when its stated objective is to comply with the Paris Agreement, which does not include a net-zero emissions target.

It is troubling that the bill is linked to our international commitments under the Paris Agreement and that it states at the outset that Canada is committed to an ideological goal of net-zero emissions by 2050. Whether 2050 is the right date should be debated in the House and should be the subject of extensive consultations with the provinces. The date of 2050 appears to have been chosen because it is a round number chosen by other nations, contrary to the Paris targets, which were based on science and consultation.

A promise in a Liberal platform is not the same as a well-established and agreed-upon target. This commitment requires further debate and study, and it is simply inappropriate to include it in this bill. I would have more confidence in the bill if it focused on the Paris targets, which all parties support, rather than an ideological commitment like achieving net-zero emissions by 2050.

I hope the member for Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia is listening to these concerns and is prepared to make a few changes.

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I think we can agree on many areas where we are on the same page, but that means focusing on science, not ideology. We agree on the Paris targets and want to see a plan brought forward by this government to get us there. Let us move forward with that.

[English]

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am very glad to be speaking in the House today in support of climate accountability legislation.

While the world has been reeling from the impacts of COVID-19, the climate crisis has not gone away. It poses an ever-increasing threat to our environment, our ecosystems, our food systems, the health of our families, the future and our children's future. It also threatens the economic well-being and health of our communities. I do not know if I can adequately communicate the fear and anxiety that young people have communicated to me about their future or that parents have expressed about what kind of world we are leaving to our children, but it is not just about the future. The impacts of climate change are already being felt in Canada, in the smoke from the climate fires, the fact that temperatures in Canada are increasing at twice the global rate and the impacts on permafrost. The impacts are felt particularly in the Arctic and along the coasts and are disproportionately felt by indigenous communities, rural communities and marginalized and racialized communities.

There is a broad scientific agreement that an increase in the global average surface temperature of 1.5 °C or more above pre-industrial levels would constitute dangerous climate change. Canadians want real action on the climate crisis, and they want a government to not just promise to fight climate change, but to actually deliver on that commitment. The Liberals have missed every single climate target, and we are not even on track to meet Stephen Harper's weak targets. In a fall 2019 report, the commissioner of the environment said there is no evidence to support the government's statement that its current or planned actions would allow Canada to meet its targets.

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The list of Liberal commitments on environmental targets that the current government has missed or is on track to miss is long. We are not even close to being on track to meeting our targets of selling 100% zero-emissions vehicles by 2040. The government committed to plant two billion trees by 2030, and not a single dollar has been allocated to that target. The clean fuel standard, a key part of the pan-Canadian framework on climate change, has been delayed. I could go on, but in many ways, all of these are symptoms of a government that has not been accountable to its climate commitments. Climate accountability is needed. This bill focuses on our climate targets. Reporting on how we get to those targets should include how the government intends to meet all of these vital climate-related policies.

As has been mentioned, in 2008 the United Kingdom created a climate accountability framework, the Climate Change Act. This act was the first of its kind and remains very highly regarded. It has served as a model for legislation in other jurisdictions including Sweden, Denmark, France, Germany, Spain and New Zealand. The U.K. has set five carbon budgets, and regular reporting to Parliament has enhanced transparency and accountability. The U.K. has an expert advisory committee, the committee on climate change.

Two years before the U.K. implemented its bill, in 2006, the leader of the NDP at the time, Jack Layton, introduced the first climate change accountability act in Canada. This bill passed third reading by a vote of 148 to 116, with the Harper Conservatives voting against it, but Jack Layton's bill died in the Senate. The NDP has introduced the climate change accountability act as a private member's bill in the 39th, the 40th and the 41st Parliaments, by Jack and also by former MP, Megan Leslie.

In this Parliament, my NDP colleague, the member for Winnipeg Centre, has put forward a bill, Bill C-232, an act respecting a climate emergency action framework, which would provide for the development and implementation of a climate emergency action framework. It explicitly outlines the need for an action framework ensuring the transition toward a green economy; increasing employment in green energy, infrastructure and housing; and ensuring economic well-being.

Importantly, it explicitly states that the climate emergency action framework, climate accountability legislation, must be built on a foundation that upholds the provisions in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

• (1845)

The bill we are debating today, put forward by my Bloc colleague, is a really good start. It is headed in the right direction, but I see some gaps and some areas that need strengthening.

First, as outlined in the member for Winnipeg Centre's bill, Bill C-232, climate accountability legislation must be explicitly built on a foundation that recognizes the inherent indigenous right to self-government, that upholds the provisions of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and that takes into account scientific knowledge, including indigenous science and knowledge, as well as the responsibilities we have toward future generations.

I applaud, in Bill C-215, the inclusion of interim targets every five years, although 2045 seems to be missing, and applaud the requirement to outline the methods, measures and tools for measuring and assessing greenhouse gas reductions. However, the bill needs strengthening in relation to what these targets will be. It relies on the Paris Agreement, and we need to acknowledge that the Paris targets and net-zero by 2050 are not enough. Our greenhouse gas reduction targets need to be ambitious and consistent with Canada's fair share contribution. They need to be strong targets that help us stay below a temperature increase of 1.5°C.

The last IPCC report is telling us that we need to at least cut our emissions in half by 2030, and the new targets need to reflect this. Yes, our targets need to be set into law, but we also need to include mechanisms so that they can be strengthened when the experts advise.

The next area that is in need of strengthening is accountability. We need experts involved not only in strengthening targets, but also in reporting and analyzing our progress. It is essential that these experts be at arm's-length, and their mandate needs to focus on climate accountability.

The NDP has pushed for an independent climate accountability office and the appointment of a climate accountability officer, who would undertake research and gather information and analysis on the target plan or revised target plan; prepare a report that includes findings and recommendations on the quality and completeness of the scientific, economic and technological evidence and analysis used to establish each target in the target plan; and advise on any other climate change and sustainable development matters that the officer would consider relevant to climate accountability.

Environmental advocates and organizations have also called for an independent arm's-length expert climate advisory committee drawn up from all regions of the country, one that would specifically advise on long-term targets, the five-year carbon budgets and climate impact reports. These experts would also monitor and report on governmental progress toward achieving the short-term carbon budgets, long-term targets and adaptation plans, and would provide advice to the government on climate-related policy.

Another element that we need to look at is carbon budgets, both national and subnational.

Private Members' Business

While all these areas need attention, I believe they can be addressed in committee. It is essential that we move forward with climate accountability legislation immediately. We needed it back in 2006, when Jack Layton first put it forward. We needed it when each iteration of the IPCC report came out, outlining the catastrophic impacts of global warming. We needed it last year, when young people were marching in the streets begging politicians and decision-makers to listen to science. We need it now.

The Liberals promised climate accountability legislation in their election platform and again in the throne speech. In fact, in the most recent throne speech, they said that they would immediately bring forward a plan outlining how they are going to meet and exceed Canada's 2030 emissions reduction goals. They also committed to legislating net-zero by 2050. That was back in September. I am not sure what the Liberal government's definition of "immediately" is, but it is now November and neither of these things have happened. If the Liberals vote against this bill, it will be another example of how they are content to make climate promises but are unwilling to take climate action. We need to remember that this is the government that declared a climate emergency one day and bought a pipeline the next.

I implore my fellow MPs to support this motion. I will be—

• (1850)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Repentigny.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to rise in the House today next to my colleague from Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, who is introducing Bill C-215.

Accountability is a welcome word. We approve of it when we see it at work in our everyday lives, in society. It is reassuring to be around people who are accountable. Being accountable means behaving in a meaningful and commendable way.

In this case, what does it mean to be accountable? For elected members like us, it means legislating climate accountability. It means honouring the wishes of those who expect us to take action and make progress.

In 32 years under four prime ministers, no fewer than nine different targets have been announced by the federal government. Canada failed to meet its targets for 2000, 2005, 2010 and 2012 and will fail to meet its targets for 2020, which were introduced by the Harper government.

Thirty years ago, Canadian greenhouse gas, or GHG, emissions were 602 megatonnes. In 2017, they had increased by 18.9% while in the same period Quebec had reduced its emissions by 8.7%.

The federal government needs to fully grasp what is happening. The most optimistic scenario would still see us fall 77 megatonnes short of meeting the target that Canada set for itself.

There is no excuse for inaction. Canada accounts for just 0.5% of the world's population but emits 1.5% of GHGs worldwide and ranks 10th among some 200 countries. Canada is among the devel-

oped countries that have been especially responsible for producing GHG emissions and destroying our planet.

As my colleague said earlier, a lot of analysis and thought went into this substantial bill. It is flexible enough to be sustainable, because sustainable climate action is how Canada can hope to join the ranks of countries that have taken action. With this bill, successive governments through 2050 and beyond will have the flexibility needed to continue working on it. Everything can be adapted depending on what has been achieved: plans, mitigation measures, policies, sectorial targets, and so on.

This climate accountability bill is measured and it was designed to guarantee that Canada can both take climate action and combat the health crisis. Our efforts will improve the health of humans and the environment. I often speak about the connection between the two in my speech, so I will repeat myself.

It is important to know that the links between human health issues and the impacts of climate change have been extensively studied and demonstrated. Whether it is air pollution or the virus, whose undeniable increase in transmission is rooted in the loss of biodiversity and climate upheaval, all populations are vulnerable. COVID-19 has provided some insight into this, but we should know that the effects existed before this pandemic. They were measured, and thousands of researchers were and are still working on the links between health and the environment.

I therefore believe that supporting this bill at this specific moment in time is undoubtedly one of the best ways to contribute to the government's efforts to combat the pandemic.

In 2007, the House of Commons passed the bill sponsored by the opposition member who today is the Leader of the Government, our hon. colleague from Honoré-Mercier. The Kyoto Protocol Implementation Act was intended for the most part as legislative protection for Canada's international ambitions and commitments.

In 2020, the Bloc Québécois is taking the initiative in the same spirit, but in the context of a climate crisis of unparalleled urgency. This bill seeks to ensure that Canada fulfills its commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and also its responsibility to take the essential steps needed to attain the reduction targets that the government itself has set.

• (1855)

I will now talk about a specific case, that of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer.

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Canada has shown leadership, in particular by helping less wealthy countries eliminate these substances through the deployment of resources for atmospheric monitoring of the Arctic and much more. Since 1987, this treaty has been signed by 165 member countries and the list of substances continues to be updated. This is a success story.

However, the challenge presented by the requirements and context of the Paris Agreement is so great that it is hard to believe we did not implement suitable measures. Even with the elimination of the substances listed in the Montreal Protocol, greenhouse gas emissions have continued to increase.

I participated in the various COPs since Paris. It was an opportunity to learn about the acceleration of the climate crisis in particular but also about the growing engagement and expertise on the issue.

Despite the fact that these are priorities in every forum—political, academic, economic and social—reminders are still needed. The way things are going, global warming could reach 4°C to 5°C by the end of the century, 2100.

Parents and grandparents should consider the fact that today's children will suffer the consequences throughout their lives. Children born today will be seniors at the end of the century. What will we leave them? A planet that is 4°C to 5°C warmer?

Oceans, freshwater and air and soil quality are all affected by phenomena linked to climate change. Other considerations are plants, animals, man-made structures, public health, public safety and the economy.

Clearly, not all legislation to fight greenhouse gases has the same impact, as my colleague said. Let us take a quick look at some of the nations with a record that inspires hope, courtesy of National Geographic and Climate Action Tracker. Other colleagues have named some of them this evening. Norway adopted legislation to reduce greenhouse gases to 40% below 1990 levels by 2030 and to 80% to 95% below 1990 levels by 2050. Electric cars made up 60% of the vehicles sold in March. We are not even close to that.

Would the United Kingdom be a case study? It cut greenhouse gas emissions by 44% between 1990 and 2018 all while growing its economy by 75%. In June of this year, the U.K. passed a law to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050.

I now want to talk about India. Its economy was booming, and the country made a choice to prioritize investments in renewable energy. It has already achieved its objective of meeting 40% of its energy needs through renewable energy. India had set this objective for 2030, but it is just 2020.

My colleague mentioned Morocco, which has the largest solar panel farm in the world. It is the size of 3,500 football fields. There is also Gambia, which committed to restoring 10,000 hectares of forest and savannah.

These examples show that everyone is doing their part. Countries big and small have a role to play in avoiding disaster. Canada should not be lumped in with Russia, Brazil, Saudi Arabia or its neighbour to the south when it comes to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Canada needs to step up and aim for progress. To make

progress, however, you have to take action, and my colleague's bill offers a way to do so.

• (1900)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to add some thoughts with regard to our environment. We all recognize how important it is not only for those of us here today, but also for future generations. I can assure members that the government and the Prime Minister take the environment very seriously, and I look forward to contributing more to this debate when it comes up next.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

• (1905)

[*English*]

SENIORS

Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Fredericton, GP): Madam Speaker, on October 23, I asked when the government would be implementing national standards for long-term care. I was pleased with the response from the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, and I am eager to hear him expand on his comments. However, I will take a moment to underscore the gravity of the situation facing workers and residents in long-term care homes.

I speak today as a Canadian, as a New Brunswicker, as a granddaughter and as a human being. This conversation must be centred squarely on the needs of people. COVID-19 has asked us to face ugly truths about our society, ones we knew existed but were happy to ignore until, sadly, for many it was too late.

As we know, it is older Canadians who face the greatest risk when it comes to COVID-19. Despite early warnings, our statistics demonstrate that while individuals 80 years and older represent only 12% of all COVID-19 cases to date, they make up 71% of the deaths. While only 15% of COVID-19 cases in Canada have been in long-term care facilities, they still represent 77% of all COVID-19 deaths in Canada.

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We know the seniors living in these homes, of which around two thirds are women, are vulnerable. Unfortunately, the people tasked with their care and protection are also vulnerable. A recent report has demonstrated that up to 90% of direct-resident care in long-term care facilities is provided by resident aids or personal support workers. These professions are notorious for their low wages and part-time hours. Of note is that almost 90% of these workers are women, often from racialized and marginalized groups, including newcomers; 25% to 30% work more than one job; and 65% report having insufficient time to properly complete care tasks. We are failing to support vulnerable workers to succeed and, in turn, we are leaving older Canadians with inadequate access to care.

I always like to bring these numbers home. Resident assistants in New Brunswick at a long-term care home will make between \$14 and \$16 an hour. They will work enough hours over the course of a year to bring home just \$24,635, which is \$6,000 less than the Canadian average for their colleagues in other provinces. To put that into perspective, it is only a little more than half of the 2018 market basket measure for Fredericton.

The New Brunswick Nurses Union recently released an eye-opening report, blowing the whistle on the state of long-term care in New Brunswick. Even though a 2019 study by the Canadian Health Coalition identified 4.1 hours of care per resident per day to be the minimum standard for quality care, the number of care hours prescribed by the Government of New Brunswick is only 2.89, and some homes are unable to meet even that low standard.

It is clear that long-term care homes, both private and public, take advantage of low-income, part-time and often marginalized workers. They struggle to maintain a full staff complement because the work conditions and pay are so meagre. They do not balance their teams of RAs and PSWs with adequate numbers of LPNs and RNs to handle the increasingly complex care required in these homes. The residents see fewer and fewer hours of care time with staff and their conditions worsen. Then in a pandemic, we see front and centre just how vulnerable they can be and what real risks emerge.

This is a question of how we treat our elders and it is a women's issue. However, at the end of the day, this is about human dignity, dignity for the residents of long-term care homes and dignity for the workers.

I have used data points from several different organizations, many of which have called for elements of long-term care to be pulled under the Canada Health Act. Many of these groups have called explicitly for the implementation of national standards. On October 26, I added my voice to that of the Canadian Health Coalition, the Royal Society of Canada and the Council of Canadians, among others.

The parliamentary secretary confirmed for me that day that his government would work with the provinces and territories to continue setting new national standards for long-term care. Could he please expand on those efforts?

Mr. Darren Fisher (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as I have said in the past, I really value the member and the work that she does in the House. I

know that she puts her money where her mouth is when she says that this is something that is very near and dear to her heart.

Canadians expect and deserve to receive the best quality of care no matter where that care is being provided. That is why it is absolutely critical to take action on long-term care in Canada, working with provinces and territories.

The pandemic has revealed long-standing issues in long-term care. There is no doubt about that. We saw this spring a number of facilities were not prepared to prevent and manage outbreaks. Facilities were frequently understaffed. In addition, lockdowns prevented family caregivers from visiting, making the staffing problems even worse. Infection prevention and control guidance was not always being followed. In some homes, rooms and bathrooms were shared, making containing the spread of outbreaks extremely difficult, and as we saw, the most vulnerable in our society suffered the consequences.

In light of COVID-19 and respecting provincial and territorial jurisdictional leads, the federal government has been working collaboratively, as I have said in the past, with our provincial and territorial partners to protect vulnerable Canadians in long-term care.

During the spring, Canadian Armed Forces members were deployed into long-term care facilities in order to assist the facilities experiencing the most difficulties controlling the spread of COVID-19. During the current resurgence, we are working with the Canadian Red Cross to support provinces and territories facing outbreaks in long-term care.

Up to \$3 billion in federal funding has been provided in support to provinces and territories to provide wage top-ups for low-income essential workers, which includes front-line workers in long-term care facilities. In addition, the safe restart agreements have been reached, which included \$19 billion in federal investments to help provinces and territories restart the economy while making Canada more resilient to waves of the virus.

This included \$740 million in funding to provinces and territories to support our most vulnerable populations, including infection prevention and control measures in long-term care, home care and palliative care. The Public Health Agency of Canada has published guidance to support the care of residents in long-term care facilities, as well as for infection prevention and control in long-term care and assisted living facilities as well as in-home care.

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This guidance was developed with the National Advisory Committee on Infection Prevention and Control and endorsed by the pan-Canadian special advisory committee. In order to support changes to infrastructure in long-term care facilities, the investing in Canada infrastructure program has been adapted to provide provinces and territories with added flexibility to fund quick-start, short-term projects, including health infrastructure such as long-term care facilities.

The federally funded Canadian Foundation for Healthcare Improvement and Canadian Patient Safety Institute have launched an initiative to spread promising practices in preventing and mitigating the impact of COVID-19 on long-term care and retirement homes. The goal of this initiative is to prepare participating facilities to be better able to prevent and manage any future outbreaks.

We are going to continue these efforts. In the recent Speech from the Throne, the government announced its intention to work with the provinces and territories to set new national standards for long-term care so that seniors get the best support possible. We will also look at further targeted measures for personal support workers who do an essential service helping the most vulnerable in our communities. We must better value their work and their contributions to our society.

Our government is committed to working in collaboration with provinces and territories to address the pressing needs in long-term care facilities, explore measures to increase the resilience of long-term care facilities and help prevent such significant challenges from ever recurring again.

● (1910)

Mrs. Jenica Atwin: Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his comments and commitment.

The pandemic is underlining the deep inequalities rooted in our communities, including the lived realities of those connected to the long-term care sector. I realize that what I am asking for is bold, but that is what we need, bold leadership that centres decisions around people. We need national standards in long-term care that will address the dignity of residents in their final years of life and respect the dignity of the workers. We need elements of the long-term care sector brought under the Canada Health Act.

However, leadership does not occur in a vacuum. We need to pair these changes with bold leadership on other fronts. The implementation of a guaranteed livable income would ensure Canadians have the means to enter their elder years on the solid foundation of a life lived with access to shelter, food and essential medications. National universal comprehensive pharmacare would ensure no one is forced to compromise essential medications just to make ends meet. A national mental health strategy that recognizes that mental health struggles are health struggles, with dedicated resourcing, would ensure Canadians can finally get the mental help that they need.

I know it will be a tough sell to the provinces as well. I know Premier Higgs in my home province has already indicated as much, but Canadians need it.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Madam Speaker, our government is committed to helping our most vulnerable receive the best possible care

in long-term care facilities. Our government has taken, and will continue to take, steps to respond to the significant challenges faced by long-term care facilities across the country in order to help avoid a repeat of the experience of the spring of 2020.

This commitment has been reaffirmed through the safe restart agreements, which include investments to support infection prevention and control in long-term care facilities, and through the Speech from the Throne, which outlines the intention of working with provinces and territories in setting new national standards for long-term care.

Residents in long-term care facilities should get the best support possible, no matter where they reside. We will also look into targeted measures that better value the work our personal support workers do in helping the most vulnerable Canadians across the country.

● (1915)

HEALTH

Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP): Madam Speaker, undetected and untreated mental health challenges can lead to grave consequences. A bad day can become a bad week, a bad month, and then a broken life. Absenteeism, job loss, dropping out of school, family breakdown, drug addiction, homelessness, violent behaviour and suicide are all strongly linked to mental health. How much suffering could we prevent if we recognized the real value of early intervention in mental health problems?

The downstream effects of poor mental health have heavy social costs associated with them that affect both families and communities. These include loss of business due to employee absenteeism, loss of tax revenue, classroom disruptions, loss of customers due to unsafe streets, increased policing costs, ambulance call-outs and emergency room visits. The list goes on. These costs are borne by all of us, and they leave us with fewer resources to put toward other important priorities.

Julie Chadwick recently wrote a three-part series that highlighted the fact that Nanaimo's homelessness crisis is a mental health crisis. During a point-in-time count in Nanaimo earlier this year, 60% of individuals experiencing homelessness self-reported ongoing mental health issues. Mental health services in Nanaimo-Ladysmith, as well as in communities all across Canada, are under-resourced and underfunded.

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When institutions such as Riverview Hospital in Vancouver were shut down in the 1980s, there was no plan in place to care for people with complex mental health issues. There is still no plan in place, and the ramifications of the lack of planning and lack of action are being lived out on the streets of our communities. The amount of suffering is enormous. We need housing with wrap-around services for individuals with complex mental health needs. These people are among the most vulnerable in our society, and they need specialized care and protection to stabilize their lives.

In addition, more accessible treatment facilities are needed for people who have self-medicated with alcohol and drugs to relieve mental health issues and are now suffering with substance use disorders.

It is far easier to help someone going through a rough patch in life than it is to try to help someone whose life has fallen apart. Helping people in the early stages of mental health challenges begins with eliminating the stigma. Men, in particular, suffer from fear, shame and even guilt associated with asking for help. We need to make mental health care accessible.

As the Minister of Health pointed out, mental health support is available to all Canadians free of charge through the Wellness Together Canada portal. I acknowledge the government's efforts in providing this service to Canadians in response to the COVID crisis. Unfortunately, it is not accessible to everyone and it is not enough. The services offered through the Wellness Together Canada portal require Internet access. They require the ability to navigate to different websites and register for different services. Online counselling requires privacy.

These are circumstances and abilities that most of us take for granted, but when we pause and think about it, we understand that many people in Canada are left out. The Wellness Together Canada portal does not replace the need to fully cover mental health care services in the Canada Health Act. It cannot replace the need for an ongoing relationship with a professional when a person is experiencing mental health challenges.

Canada needs to invest in early detection and treatment of mental health problems, from our education system throughout our society. Fully including mental health care in the Canada Health Act is the right thing to do, and now is the right moment to act.

Mr. Darren Fisher (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his care and concern on this very important topic, and for giving me the opportunity to speak about mental health and how we are supporting Canadians during this very difficult time.

Prior to COVID-19, mental health was a significant concern, with one in three Canadians experiencing mental illness or problematic substance use during their lifetime. Our government recognizes the seriousness of this problem and has taken a comprehensive approach to mental health. In budget 2017, we provided \$5 billion over 10 years to provinces and territories to improve Canadians' access to mental health services.

Through these investments, jurisdictions have expanded access to community-based services for children and youth, provided integrated health and mental health services for people with complex

needs, and spread proven models of community mental health care and culturally appropriate interventions.

We recognize that COVID-19 has created stress and anxiety for many, particularly for those who do not have ready access to the regular support networks or have a pre-existing mental health condition.

In April 2020, a survey conducted by Mental Health Research Canada showed that self-reported levels for high anxiety had quadrupled compared to pre-pandemic levels, and those for depression had doubled. In addition, it found that significantly fewer Canadians had been able to access in-person mental health supports since the start of this pandemic. The positive impacts of various social supports and other coping mechanisms have diminished considerably.

In response, our government took quick action to address the immediate mental health needs of Canadians and to alleviate some of the burden on provinces and territories. We launched Wellness Together Canada on April 15, offering a broad range of free mental health and substance use supports in both official languages to all Canadians on a 24-7 basis.

These supports include access to peer support networks, social workers, psychologists and other professionals for confidential chat sessions, phone calls and counselling. In addition, Wellness Together Canada features a dedicated text line for health care workers and front-line personnel. As of October 27, over 530,000 individuals from provinces and territories have accessed Wellness Together Canada in over 1.5 million distinct web sessions.

We have provided \$7.5 million in funding to Kids Help Phone to provide young people with mental health support during the pandemic. Since the start of this pandemic, it has experienced a significant surge in demand and is projecting to reach at least 3 million young people in 2020, in comparison to just 1.9 million in 2019.

In July, \$500 million of additional support was provided to provinces and territories for immediate mental health and substance service needs as part of the \$19-billion safe restart agreement. These initiatives, taken collectively, provide a comprehensive response to address mental health needs arising from the pandemic and lay the groundwork for long-term improvement.

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We recognize there is more to do. The mental health of Canadians will continue to be impacted by the pandemic over the coming years. As stated in the Minister of Health's mandate letter and the 2020 Speech from the Throne, the federal government is committed to doing even more to improve access to mental health resources. This includes the development and implementation of national standards to improve access to timely, high-quality mental health services across Canada.

Improving access to mental health services will require the combined efforts of all levels of government and many stakeholders. Our government will work closely with provinces and territories to develop access standards that are evidence-based and consistent with the level of services Canadians expect and deserve. Canadians have made it clear that they expect more from their health care system, and that is—

• (1920)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith.

Mr. Paul Manly: Madam Speaker, the COVID-19 crisis has created anxiety and has negatively impacted the mental health of many Canadians. Swift and bold action by the government helped ease the worst of that anxiety and gave people hope that help was available.

Too many young Canadians today are suffering from severe climate anxiety. The climate emergency is draining away their hopes for the future. Swift and bold government action is needed to combat climate change, and the anxiety and despair it creates.

COVID-19, climate anxiety, financial and work stress, loneliness and alienation are a few of the causes of the mental health crisis, which could hit any one of us and affects all of us. We need to help people before their lives fall apart. Fully including mental health care under the Canada Health Act is the bold action needed to address this crisis.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for the kind words and the acknowledgement of the work that our government has done and is continuing to do.

Our government is committed to increasing the availability of high-quality mental health services. Wellness Together Canada does provide Canadians access to needed mental health supports, including tailored content and approaches for vulnerable populations. We are promoting Wellness Together through targeted social media and communications campaigns. We will continue to work with the Wellness Together consortium to make improvements to this very important mental health resource.

We look forward to further continued collaboration with the provinces, territories and other stakeholders to improve the quality and accessibility of mental health services and supports for all Canadians.

I thank the member for his continued collaboration on this very important topic.

• (1925)

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to raise an issue that is of increasing concern to, I think, parliamentarians from all parties without regard to partisanship or advantage.

As Canadians, we are keenly aware that the region of Nagorno-Karabakh in the Caucasus between Azerbaijan and Armenia is experiencing a conflict that is disproportionately affecting the people of Armenia. There is real risk of an ethnic cleansing in the offing.

I raised this issue on October 27, and I have to say that I was very pleased that the Prime Minister responded to my question, but there are many areas that need to be further discussed. I wish we had the opportunity to have more time on the floor of the House to discuss what is happening in the region and how we, as Canadians, can exert more influence.

As we all know from discussions that we have had in the House, Canadian drones sold to Turkey ended up being used by Azerbaijan against Armenia. We know that Azerbaijan has by far the greatest cache of weaponry and sophisticated modern weapons. From the media accounts I have seen, it is estimated that it has bought as much as \$20 billion of weaponry compared to Armenia's half a billion dollars. Azerbaijan is better funded for building up armaments after the completion of a pipeline that allowed it to have oil wealth to pour into munitions. This is a tragic situation since the 1980s, in this region that the Armenians regard as their homeland of Artsakh.

We have many Armenian Canadians and a huge diaspora. They are friends and constituents of mine. I think of Raffi, and his contribution to our culture and society, and film director Atom Egoyan. They are all calling out to us to do more to protect family and friends they have left behind in Armenia.

I heard that the Azerbaijani army used white phosphorus munitions recently to try to bomb Armenians who were hiding in the old forest outside of the cities, and imperilling endangered species as well. Clearly, the military sales from Turkey, Israel and Russia to Azerbaijan have created a much worse and more dangerous conflict than what we have seen over decades.

The question I raised is: What more can we do?

The Prime Minister said that we have a rigorous arms control export strategy. I think it needs to be more rigorous. We certainly could exert more pressure on Turkey, because we are both NATO allies. Turkey is a member of NATO. Canada and other NATO allies could do more to push for a peace process that is meaningful. However, I am certainly concerned by the fact that Canada does not have a diplomatic presence on the ground. The closest embassy and diplomatic service that we have to this conflict is all the way in Moscow. I think there is more we can do.

The hon. parliamentary secretary is here for adjournment proceedings this evening, and I know him to be very thoughtful and also concerned.

Peace-building is hard work. We tend to pay attention to peace-building when regions around the world flare up, but this flare-up could not be happening at a worse time for the people of Armenia as they lose their shelters and homes while also in a COVID pandemic, and the impacts are all that more severe.

I certainly look forward to the conversation we will have over the next six minutes or so to discuss what more Canada can do and what more the world can do to protect peace in the region and restore it to stability.

Mr. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is quite an honour for me to be surrounded by Green Party questions. They are all thoughtful and important questions for us to be dealing with in Parliament and for the government to consider.

We remain deeply committed and concerned about the continuing military action that is going on in Nagorno-Karabakh. We are concerned the ceasefires that had been negotiated, which were facilitated most recently by the United States, were very quickly violated, and we continue to call on external parties to stay out of this conflict as we support the creation of a verification mechanism by the OSCE Minsk Group. The government has been clear that a comprehensive resolution can only be achieved through negotiated settlement, not military action.

With respect to our diplomatic presence, the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands has raised an important point. Canada's bilateral relations with both Armenia and Azerbaijan are managed through our embassies: in Moscow for Armenia and in Ankara for Azerbaijan. These diplomatic missions have allowed us to develop strong ties with both Yerevan and Baku.

There are advantages here. I will be very clear that I have always called for a greater diplomatic presence in many parts of the world, including in Yerevan, and I have done it over many years. However, even without an on-the-ground diplomatic presence, I think our diplomats in Moscow and Ankara have been very good at providing clear and concise information to the Canadian government. We also get our information from diplomatic sources within those countries and from like-minded partners, particularly OSCE partners and members.

Our embassies in Moscow and Ankara have been proactive. They have done good work on this conflict situation. They have kept in contact and have provided us with important information. Of course, they also support Canada's regular communications with the governments of Armenia and Azerbaijan through their diplomatic representatives in Ottawa.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs has been in direct and frequent contact with his Armenian counterpart on this issue, as well as his European counterparts. They are working toward a peaceful solu-

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tion. As we all know, Canada is a member state of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the OSCE, along with Armenia and Azerbaijan. Through its permanent mission to the OSCE in Vienna, Canada contributes very importantly to the multilateral efforts, and supports the work of the Minsk Group in trying to bring an end to this conflict situation.

The issue of arms exports was raised, and I want to comment on that briefly. As soon as the minister heard there was a possibility arms were being used for purposes they were not intended for, he immediately suspended export permits. That is still under consideration for sure.

We remain very concerned about the humanitarian response too, particularly in this time of COVID. To date, we have contributed a total of \$450,000 to the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement to address humanitarian needs. We will continue to do more as we are called upon to share in our responsibility.

● (1930)

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, indeed the OSCE Minsk Group has been doing very significant work. However, it has been unable, despite many years of effort, to bring the parties together for a durable peace. It seems as though the conflict that has simmered and raged in different eruptions over a period of decades merely needs the application of more armaments to blow up, as it did through the summer and to this moment.

I certainly hope Canada can do more. We are seen by the world as a “good guy” country in this conflict, and I believe there is more that can be done.

I thank the hon. parliamentary secretary for his comments. I think that all of us in Parliament should put a larger priority on what we do in peace building, in investing in peace and in making sure the world knows that crimes against the people of Armenia will not be tolerated. We will not stand by.

Mr. Robert Oliphant: Madam Speaker, we remain deeply committed to the continuing problem and to trying to find peaceful solutions. We recognize that armed solutions are never the right way to go. We will only achieve peace through a negotiated settlement and not through military action.

A number of years ago, I visited the region and I know the existential crisis that many Armenian Canadians, we well as Armenians around the world, find themselves in. We take that seriously and we will continue to engage, knowing that the best way is for Canada to contribute whatever we can to a peaceful solution, to a negotiated settlement and to ensure that we will establish peace and goodwill in this region once again.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:35 p.m.)

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