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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



CONTENTS

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

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, January 25, 2021

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayer

● (1105)

[Translation]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Mona Fortier (Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

There have been discussions among the parties, and I believe that, if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent for the following motion:

That, notwithstanding any standing order, special order or usual practice of the House, until Wednesday, June 23, 2021:

- (a) members may participate in proceedings of the House either in person or by videoconference;
- (b) members who participate remotely in a sitting of the House are counted for the purpose of quorum;
- (c) any reference in the Standing Orders to the need for members to rise or to be in their place, as well as any reference to the chair, the table or the chamber shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the virtual nature of the proceedings;
- (d) the application of Standing Order 17 shall be suspended;
- (e) the application of Standing Order 62 shall be suspended for any member participating remotely;
- (f) in Standing Orders 26(2), 53(4), 56.1(3), and 56.2(2), the reference to the number of members required to rise be replaced with the word “five”;
- (g) documents may be laid before the House or presented to the House electronically, provided that:
 - (i) documents deposited pursuant to Standing Order 32(1) shall be deposited with the Clerk of the House electronically,
 - (ii) during Routine Proceedings, members who participate remotely may table documents or present petitions or reports to the House electronically, provided that the documents are transmitted to the Clerk prior to their intervention,
 - (iii) any petition presented pursuant to Standing Order 36(5) may be filed with the Clerk electronically;
 - (iv) responses to questions on the Order Paper deposited pursuant to Standing Order 39 may be tabled electronically;
- (h) should the House resolve itself in a committee of the whole, the Chair may preside from the Speaker’s chair;
- (i) when a question that could lead to a recorded division is put to the House, in lieu of calling for the yeas and nays, one representative of a recognized party can rise to request a recorded vote or to indicate that the motion is adopted on division, provided that a request for a recorded division has precedence;

(j) when a recorded division is requested in respect of a debatable motion, including any division arising as a consequence of the application of Standing Order 61(2) or Standing Order 78, but excluding any division in relation to motions relating to the budget debate, pursuant to Standing Order 84, or the business of supply occurring on the last supply day of a period, other than as provided in Standing Orders 81(17) and (18)(b), or arising as a consequence of an order made pursuant to Standing Order 57,

(i) before 2 p.m. on a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday, it shall stand deferred until the conclusion of Oral Questions at that day’s sitting, or

(ii) after 2 p.m. on a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday, or at any time on a Friday, it shall stand deferred until the conclusion of Oral Questions at the next sitting day that is not a Friday, provided that, if a recorded division on the previous question is deferred and the motion is subsequently adopted, the recorded division on the original question shall not be deferred;

provided that any extension of time pursuant to Standing Order 45(7.1) shall not exceed 90 minutes;

(k) when a recorded division, which would have ordinarily been deemed deferred on a Wednesday governed by this order, to no later than the expiry of the time provided for Government Orders, or to immediately before the time provided for Private Members’ Business, is requested, the said division is deemed to have been deferred until the conclusion of Oral Questions on the same Wednesday;

● (1110)

(l) for greater certainty, this order shall not limit the application of Standing Order 45(7);

(m) when a recorded division is to be held, the bells to call in the members shall be sounded for not more than 30 minutes, except recorded divisions deferred to the conclusion of Oral Questions, when the bells shall be sounded for not more than 15 minutes;

(n) until such a time as a remote voting application is ready to use, recorded divisions shall take place in the usual way for members participating in person and by roll call for members participating by videoconference, provided that members participating by videoconference must have their camera on for the duration of the vote;

[English]

(o) in relation to the development of a remote voting application, the House administration be directed to begin the onboarding process of all members as soon as possible and conduct two comprehensive simulations with all members being invited to attend;

(p) after the two simulations outlined in paragraph (o) have been completed and after the Speaker has received a notice from the House leaders of all recognized parties in the House stating that they are satisfied that the remote voting application is ready to be used, starting the next sitting day and concluding on Wednesday, June 23, 2021, the Speaker shall so inform the House and recorded divisions shall take place in the usual way for members participating in person or by electronic means for all other members, provided that:

(i) electronic votes shall be cast from within Canada through the House of Commons electronic voting application using the member’s House-managed mobile device and the member’s personal House of Commons account, and that each vote requires visual identity validation,

(ii) the period allowed for voting electronically on a motion shall be 10 minutes, to begin after the Chair has read the motion to the House and members voting electronically may change their vote until the electronic voting period has closed,

Business of the House

(iii) in the event a member casts their vote both in person and electronically, a vote cast in person takes precedence,

(iv) any technical issues encountered by:

(A) members of recognized parties shall be brought to the attention of their respective whip, and that whip may then rise before the results are announced to indicate to the Speaker the voting intention of the identified members of their party,

(B) members not part of a recognized party shall be brought to the attention of the Speaker and the member shall immediately confirm to the Speaker how they cast their vote, before the results are announced,

(v) the whip of each recognized party have access to a tool to confirm the visual identity of each member voting by electronic means, and that the votes of members voting by electronic means be made available to the public during the period allowed for the vote,

(vi) the process for votes in committees of the whole take place in a manner similar to the process for votes during sittings of the House with the exception of the requirement to call in the members,

(vii) any question to be resolved by a secret ballot be excluded from this order; and

(q) during meetings of standing, standing joint, special and legislative committees and the Liaison Committee, as well as their subcommittees, where applicable, members may participate either in person or by videoconference and witnesses shall participate remotely, provided that the priority use of House resources for meetings shall be established by an agreement of the whips and, for virtual or hybrid meetings, the following provisions shall apply:

● (1115)

(i) members who participate remotely shall be counted for the purpose of quorum,

(ii) except for those decided unanimously or "on division", all questions shall be decided by a recorded vote,

(iii) when more than one motion is proposed for the election of a chair or a vice-chair of a committee, any motion received after the initial one shall be taken as a notice of motion and such motions shall be put to the committee *seriatim* until one is adopted,

(iv) public proceedings shall be made available to the public via the House of Commons website,

(v) in camera proceedings may be conducted in a manner that takes into account the potential risks to confidentiality inherent in meetings with remote participants,

(vi) notices of membership substitutions pursuant to Standing Order 114(2) and requests pursuant to Standing Order 106(4) may be filled with the clerk of each committee by email, and

r) that, following the adoption of this order, the sitting be suspended to the call of the Chair to permit members to participate by videoconference, and, when the sitting resumes, the House shall proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business for a maximum of one hour.

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to clarify something.

[English]

I first want to say that I am pleased to be here with my colleagues to work on behalf of all Canadians.

[Translation]

I would like to draw the attention of the House to the fact that paragraph j) of the motion brought forward by the minister that we just agreed to adopt states the following:

j) when a recorded division is requested in respect of a debatable motion, including any division arising as a consequence of the application of Standing Order 61(2) or Standing Order 78, but excluding any division in relation to motions relating to the budget debate, pursuant to Standing Order 84....

When the minister was reading it earlier she said, "relating to the project debate, pursuant to Standing Order 84".

I would like the minister to confirm whether we are talking about a "budget" or a "project".

[English]

Hon. Mona Fortier: Mr. Speaker, this is on the standing order.

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, let me be even more specific.

The minister has the text in front of her. Let us look at paragraph j), which is on line 6. The minister read the word "project", but the text we agreed to adopt uses the word "budget". I believe the minister said "project", but the word should have been "budget". Could she just clarify that she meant to say "budget"?

Hon. Mona Fortier: Mr. Speaker, "budget" is the right word.

The Speaker: Does the hon. minister have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Speaker: The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

The Speaker: We will suspend for five to ten minutes to let members join the sitting virtually.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 11:19 a.m.)

SITTING RESUMED

(The House resumed at 11:28 a.m.)

* * *

● (1125)

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing this House that the Senate has passed the following bill, to which the concurrence of the House is desired: Bill S-2, An Act to amend the Chemical Weapons Convention Implementation Act.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[Translation]

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed from October 27, 2020, consideration of the motion that Bill C-238, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (possession of unlawfully imported firearms), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today as Parliament resumes its work. I hope that you had a good holiday. It is nice to see you again, Madam Speaker.

I am very pleased to speak to gun control, an issue that has broad consensus in Quebec. I thank my colleague from Markham—Unionville for his work and for introducing this bill that seeks to amend the Criminal Code to impose harsher sentences on those who unlawfully import firearms.

I will begin by sharing the Bloc Québécois' criticisms of Bill C-238. I will also take this opportunity to point out that the Liberal government made commitments to prohibit all military-style assault rifles, ban semi-automatic assault rifles and give municipalities the authority to ban handguns. Those commitments have been slow to materialize.

It goes without saying that the Bloc Québécois supports stricter gun control, especially for handguns. The vast majority of Quebecers agree. This bill needs to be studied in committee, but we do have some concerns, which I will come back to.

We all want to combat violence, and more specifically gun violence. Given the dire consequences, there is no excuse for the Canadian government's complacent attitude towards gun control.

I want to talk about a few deeply disturbing stories.

“A troubled, hate-filled young man was able to kill six people, seriously wound five and traumatize 25 others for life, including four children, in less than two minutes, because he had easy access to firearms. This is what someone armed with a Glock pistol and five 10-round magazines can do.” That is a quote from the co-founder of the Quebec City mosque, about the massacre that happened there on January 29, 2017. Everyone remembers that tragic day in Quebec's capital city.

What we find so very upsetting is that the weapon used was acquired legally. The legal availability of handguns has not changed even though a September 2019 Angus Reid poll showed that 72% of Quebecers want more restrictions on access to handguns.

There has been no progress despite the fact that seven out of 10 Canadians support a handgun ban. The federal government could have been expected to take this statistic more seriously. Moreover, there has been no progress despite Statistics Canada data showing that the number of gun homicides grew steadily from 2016 to 2019, an increase that closely tracked the dismantling of measures—

• (1130)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I have to interrupt the hon. member for Avignon—La Mitis—

Private Members' Business

Matane—Matapédia because the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands is rising on a point of order.

[English]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, the interpreter has indicated twice that the sound quality is not good enough for her to interpret. Maybe we could look into getting that fixed.

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We have to check the sound quality because the interpreter is having a hard time hearing the member. I see that the hon. member has her headphones and microphone on. Is everything plugged in?

The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

[English]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, the interpreter also indicated that there are other people who are not muted, which is making it difficult for the interpreters to hear.

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I would like to remind all members participating virtually that they have to mute their microphone so that the interpreters can hear only the person speaking.

The hon. member for Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia.

• (1135)

Ms. Kristina Michaud: There has been no progress despite data from Statistics Canada showing that the number of gun homicides increased every year between 2016 and 2019 and that this surge in homicides tracks closely with the Harper government's major dismantling of control measures starting in 2012.

In a letter sent to the Minister of Public Safety in November 2019, relatives of victims of the shootings at the Polytechnique, Dawson College, and the Quebec City mosque, as well as the father of a police officer killed in the line of duty, unanimously called on the Liberal government to implement an immediate moratorium on the sale of assault weapons and a permanent ban on the importation and manufacture of handguns.

Private Members' Business

As members know, in August 2018, Montreal city council passed a motion calling on the federal government to ban assault weapons and handguns. The mayor of Montreal, Valérie Plante, stated at the time that approximately 30% of violent crimes committed between 2013 and 2016 involved a weapon and that two-thirds of these were handguns. Despite all these good reasons to take action to more broadly limit access to weapons, gun violence continues to be widespread on our streets. Bill C-238 specifically seeks to amend the Criminal Code to impose tougher penalties on those who illegally import firearms, with minimum sentences of three years for a first offence and five years or more for repeat offences.

Increasing the length of minimum sentences is a good thing, but we are concerned that this will unfortunately not have a marked impact on the importation of illegal weapons. More importantly, we are concerned that it will not have a significant impact on reducing violence in our communities.

The Conservatives' desire to address the issue of access to firearms is legitimate, but is it genuine? Unfortunately, history has shown us otherwise. My concern is that a bill like this one could be used as a justification for refusing to support broader restrictions on military-style assault weapons and handguns.

Although organized crime groups often use imported or stolen weapons, and I strongly believe we need to address this issue, a large number of violent crimes are committed with weapons that were legally imported or obtained, as was the case with the attacks at the Quebec City mosque, Dawson College, the former Métropolis and École Polytechnique in Montreal. At the end of the day, if we want to stop such massacres from happening, we need to ban handguns and military-style assault rifles, which exist only to kill human beings and have no place in our society.

How are they still allowed in this country? How have successive federal governments ignored calls from Quebecers and Canadians to ban these weapons, which are designed to slaughter human beings and carry out unspeakable acts of violence? The government has made promises in the past.

In September 2019, the Prime Minister said that assault weapons, like the semi-automatic AR-15 rifles used in many massacres in recent years, would be banned if Canadians re-elected the Liberal Party. He also said that a Liberal government would work with the provinces to empower municipalities to ban handguns.

This is meant to be a cautious approach, but the government has yet to follow through. We have to wonder how cautious an approach can be if people continue to have access to such deadly weapons after Quebec and the rest of Canada have experienced—

• (1140)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I am sorry to have to interrupt the member again, but there seems to be a problem with an echo.

When I speak French, do the members hear the interpretation well?

The hon. member for Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia has done everything she can. All I can do is ask her to speak more

slowly for the rest of her speech in hopes that that will help the interpreters.

Ms. Kristina Michaud: I am so sorry, Madam Speaker.

We are in the midst of a crisis, a pandemic, and countless people have been victims of the deadly combination of increased violence and greater psychological distress. If the Liberal government truly wanted to do the responsible thing about firearms, now would be the time.

Tougher restrictions should have been implemented a long time ago. It is time to take action. Bill C-238 may not look like it would have a negative impact on efforts to control firearm usage, but it does not fix the problem. Sadly, it is not the answer we are seeking to a much bigger problem. The government cannot and must not allow itself to believe that this kind of measure counts as taking action on gun control. This measure is a sneaky and downright dishonest response to the pleas of thousands of families whose loved ones were collateral victims of shootings that have happened over the years in our communities, whether the weapons involved were legally imported or not.

We would of course like to see this bill sent to committee for study. I hope the other opposition parties will be supportive and that the government will work with us to bring in broader, more restrictive measures, because the safety of our fellow citizens is at stake.

[English]

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Madam Speaker, I wish everyone a happy new year. It is very good to be here in the House again virtually, and I certainly hope that 2021 will be much better than 2020.

Today I am here to speak about Bill C-238, a bill that talks about the possession of unlawfully imported firearms.

I represent a rural riding. I grew up in a household where several of my family members were legal gun owners. They followed the rules, and I was taught gun safety as a matter of respect. I grew up eating wild meat, and hunting was a significant part of my family life.

I have met with many legal gun owners in my riding who have talked about the frustration they feel about the rules always focusing on them rather than addressing their legitimate concerns about illegal guns and how they get into our communities. This is such an important subject.

I have also heard from constituents across Canada who are very concerned about gun violence in their communities. We heard a couple of examples earlier today. We look at the realities of domestic violence when guns are used and the awful violence we have seen across Canada, and I believe that all Canadians really want to see this addressed.

Private Members' Business

Today I am here to specifically discuss the bill before us, which would amend section 96 of the Criminal Code to impose a mandatory sentence of three years for possession of a firearm known to be illegally imported to Canada, increase the maximum sentence from 10 to 14 years and a few others things. This is an offence that I agree should be taken very seriously. In fact, an amendment like this to the Criminal Code would be something I could discuss and agree to. However, this bill is written in a way that will lead it to follow the same path a similar bill did in 2013, and the Supreme Court of Canada ruled it unconstitutional.

I have worked with the House of Commons legislative team to write several pieces of legislation. This is a lot of hard work, and I know that the amazing folks here provide feedback about what will work and what may have some potential challenges for the legal system in Canada. I am very curious about why the member has brought forward legislation that is unconstitutional, when the need to bring forward laws to improve this gap is so very important. I am not interested in supporting legislation that will be defeated in the Supreme Court of Canada, cost a lot of taxpayer dollars and not support the safety of communities.

Not too long ago, I met with a group of gun owners in my riding. It was a very informative meeting, and what I heard repeatedly were two main points: One, when we look at gun policy in Canada, we must have a renewed focus on keeping illegal guns out of our country; and two, we need more education in Canada about the strong rules we have around guns, which would allow people to better understand the rules and hopefully create a sense of increased safety. I will address both of these points today.

I agree that keeping illegal guns out of Canada must be something we see an increased investment in. Between 2011 and 2015, we saw the Canada Border Services Agency, the CBSA, under the previous Conservative government, cut over 1,000 positions. This is important because it has left a significant gap in the capacity of CBSA to do the work to reduce the number of guns being smuggled into Canada illegally. This concerns me greatly.

About two years ago, a constituent invited me to come to the shooting range with him in the riding. He wanted to showcase the rules and how he followed them. I agreed so that I could learn the realities of these folks in my region.

The first thing he told me was that I would have to come to his house to ride with him, as he could not stop his vehicle to pick me up with a gun in his vehicle. The rules in Canada meant that he had to go straight to the range. At his home, he showed me the way he stored his guns, separate from ammunition and with everything locked away. He also showed me how guns were safely transported. I learned a lot that day, and I really appreciate the time he took with me.

He also shared that he felt very concerned about gun violence in Canada. He knew that the things that had happened across our country, that had seen people killed and had brought fear to our communities, were very concerning and needed to be addressed in a meaningful way. He also felt that the majority of gun owners follow the rules very carefully. Figuring out how to identify the ones that did not and stopping the movement of illegal guns were his main priorities.

● (1145)

In 2018, our leader wrote a letter to the Prime Minister challenging the government to address the root causes of gun violence in our communities, the key things that really should be addressed in a meaningful way, such as poverty, substantive housing, and addressing people before they get to a place where violence has become an everyday reality. He also asked the PM to increase supports to the CBSA to give it the capacity to stem the illegal flow of guns from the United States into our country. What have Canadians seen? At this point, the Liberals have only returned 200 positions of the 1,000 the Conservatives cut. That is simply not enough.

I also want to say that I agree with my constituents and the idea that Canadians need to better understand the rules legal gun owners follow in this country. A few years back, I took a course required for Canadians to receive their possession and acquisition licence. Sid Nielsen, a constituent of mine, has been teaching this course for many years and has done a fantastic job.

My classmates were a wide variety of people. I remember one in particular was a woman who had no plan to ever use a gun, but her husband owned several, and they wanted to make sure that, if anything happened to him, she could follow the rules of keeping the guns safe. I think this speaks to a really important point, which is that there are many important stories of how people are trying to be safe in Canada.

It is time to take a stand that is meaningful. I hope this member takes the intent that I believe he meant and creates legislation that is actually constitutional, so we can start to address in a meaningful way how to stop illegal guns from coming into our country.

I also hope to continue to push the Prime Minister to make sure that our communities are safer and provide more resources where they are needed in the front lines to stop gun violence and also to make sure that we have more CBSA agents to stem the flow of illegal guns into Canada. Gun violence is very scary. I think when Canadians across this country look at some of the terrible realities we have faced, we want to make sure that the laws are there to protect us all. Let us work on that together.

● (1150)

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to rise and speak on Bill C-238, an act to amend the Criminal Code regarding the possession of unlawfully imported firearms. I would like to thank my colleague, the member for Markham—Unionville, for his thoughtful and hard work on this critical issue.

Private Members' Business

I am extremely proud to represent the people of South Surrey—White Rock and to call this beautiful part of our great nation my home, but despite the many great things about this vibrant, wholesome community, my constituents and I share a growing concern about gang-related gun violence on our streets. Over the holidays, tragedy struck our community and nearby. On December 28, Tequel Willis was shot eight times as he exited a taxi in Surrey. Tequel was 14 years old. He was pronounced dead on the scene. He is believed to be the youngest-ever victim of gang violence in B.C.

A day earlier, emergency services responded to a call for help in Surrey and found 19-year-old Harman Singh Dhesi with gunshot wounds. He later died in hospital. Unfortunately, these are not isolated incidents. In a four-day stretch earlier this month, 28-year-old Dilraj Johal from Surrey was found dead with gunshot wounds in neighbouring Richmond; Anees Mohammed, 29, was shot and killed in Steveston Community Park, which is in a riding close to mine; and Gary Kang, 24, was gunned down in his parents' Surrey home, which is actually very close to where I live. Something needs to be done to address this grim reality.

Our hard-working Canadian border agents who process around 100 million travellers annually have seized more than 4,200 guns at the border since 2014, but despite their best efforts, which I commend them for, experts believe many smuggled guns go undetected. While it is difficult to know exactly how many firearms get through customs illegally, some estimates suggest 70% or more of crime guns in Canada are smuggled in. We also know that two in five homicides committed in Canada in 2019 were committed with a firearm, 60% of which were handguns.

I am concerned not only because of the recent violence in my community, but also because my Lower Mainland riding shares a border with the United States. Along that border are two legal border crossings, Douglas and Pacific Highway. My community is also home to the Peace Arch Provincial Park, which runs along the border and allows visitors from both sides to visit without officially making entry into the neighbouring country. In addition to the southern border, B.C. shares a second border with Alaska, and the harbours along our Pacific coast receive international shipments every day.

Our neighbours to the south are our closest allies, our biggest trading partner and, in many cases, our friends and family, but the fact remains that it is much easier to access guns south of the border and too many of those guns are winding up on Canadian soil. That is why I support my Conservative colleague's private member's bill to increase the penalties for the possession of unlawfully imported firearms. Bill C-238 would address the problem in two ways: by increasing mandatory sentencing and making it more difficult for persons charged to be released on bail.

Let us first consider the mandatory sentencing. If one is prosecuted by indictment, this bill would raise the minimum sentence for possessing an unlawfully imported firearm that the person knows was obtained by the commission of a crime from one to three years, and the maximum sentence from 10 years to 14 years. Section 718 of the Criminal Code sets out six objectives for sentencing. The first three are (a) denouncing unlawful conduct, (b) deterring offenders and (c) separating offenders from society. The increased sentences under Bill C-238 would accomplish all three.

The longer sentences would make clear to all Canadians that the possession of a smuggled firearm is a serious offence that will not be tolerated, effectively denouncing the activity in the clearest of terms. The threat of an increased penalty would deter some criminals from possessing these smuggled arms. This deterrence, in effect, should also affect the supply chain. Less demand for smuggled guns should mean less smuggled guns in the first place. As for separating offenders from society, those convicted of this dangerous crime would be kept off the streets for longer, ensuring that they are unable to commit additional, potentially dangerous, crimes.

Last October, the NDP member for St. John's East argued, as did the member for North Island—Powell River today, that the mandatory minimums in this bill are unconstitutional. Both members pointed to the 2015 Supreme Court decision in *R. v. Nur*.

• (1155)

In that case, the court struck down the minimum sentence for possession of a prohibited or restricted firearm with access to ammunition, but the law in that case is distinguishable from the bill at hand.

In *Nur*, Chief Justice McLachlin, writing for the majority, reasoned that the three-year minimum sentence for possession of a prohibited or restricted firearm with access to ammunition violated section 12 of the charter as cruel and unusual punishment, because when applied not to the actual facts of that case but to reasonably foreseeable facts, the sentence would not fit the crime.

One reasonably foreseeable scenario the court used as a hypothetical was “the licensed and responsible gun owner who stores his unloaded firearm safely with ammunition nearby, but makes a mistake as to where it can be stored.” The court explained that in this reasonably foreseeable hypothetical, the minimum sentence would be grossly disproportionate to the crime. According to the court, the “bottom line” was that the possession of a prohibited or restricted firearm with access to ammunition offence “foreseeably catches licensing offences that involve little or no moral fault and little or no danger to the public. For these offences three years' imprisonment is grossly disproportionate to a fit and fair sentence.”

Clearly, the court's reasoning in *Nur* would not apply here. The possession of an illegal smuggled firearm that the accused knows was obtained through crime is not a mere licensing offence involving no moral fault or danger to the public. There is no reasonably foreseeable scenario in which someone, by licensing error or otherwise, accidentally violates the law against possession of a smuggled firearm that they knew was illegally obtained. To the contrary, these are guns that are bought and sold on the black market with their serial numbers shaved off, used in the commission of dangerous crimes. The mandatory minimums in the bill, I believe, are both constitutional and warranted.

The bill would also subject those charged with possession of a smuggled firearm to reverse-onus bail. For most crimes, the onus at the bail hearing is on the prosecution to show why the accused should be detained. However, subsection 515(6) would provide that for several enumerated crimes, this onus would be reversed, and instead the accused would have to show why they should be released.

Under the current scheme, several firearm-related offences already call for reverse-onus bail. This includes weapons trafficking and possession for purposes of weapons trafficking.

As mentioned earlier, my community has recently experienced a spike in gun violence, with victims tragically as young as 14 years old. As a member of Parliament and mother, there is no higher moral obligation for me than the need to keep our children and communities safe. Simply put, this bill would make my community and many like it across Canada safer places to live. That is why I support Bill C-238 and urge other members to do the same.

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, happy new year to you and to all my colleagues joining us virtually from around the country. It is a pleasure to see everyone and to reconnect in this format.

I am pleased to speak today on Bill C-238, which was introduced by the member for Markham—Unionville in February of last year and would propose to amend the Criminal Code, as we have heard throughout the discussions this morning.

First of all, I applaud the laudable objective of curbing illegal gun activity and I appreciate that the sponsor sees these measures as important for targeting organized criminal activity. Violence through firearms poses a real and significant public safety risk to many communities, including those that have experienced mass shootings. Nevertheless, I am of the view that this bill should not be supported, and I will explain why.

The government has repeatedly acknowledged that gun violence and gun crime is an increasing problem in Canadian society that needs to be addressed with a comprehensive strategy. This was recently reiterated in the Speech from the Throne in September of 2020. That is why the mandate letters of the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Public Safety have committed to the implementation of a robust set of firearms amendments, including the imposition of stronger penalties for gun smuggling. It is also why the government has already taken concrete steps to curb firearms violence, including the May 1, 2020, prohibition on military-style assault rifles with a two-year Criminal Code amnesty and a buyback program.

Private Members' Business

● (1200)

[Translation]

On May 1, 2020, the government delivered on its commitment regarding military-style assault weapons by implementing a regulation banning 1,500 models of assault-style firearms that pose a significant threat to public safety and are not necessary for hunting or sport shooting.

The government also issued an order to give law-abiding firearms owners a two-year amnesty period to protect them from criminal liability while they take steps to comply with the act. By so doing, the government was clear: It took measures to enhance public safety while reducing unnecessary risk for the public. As part of these measures, the government also sought to guarantee that law-abiding firearms owners would not be punished.

I strongly believe that this balanced and comprehensive approach is preferable to the narrower approach proposed by the bill. The illegal firearms market in Canada is primarily supplied by smuggled firearms or firearms stolen from private residents or commercial establishments. Given its proximity to Canada, the United States is the primary source of firearms for Canada, particularly handguns smuggled into Canada. The majority of illegal firearms in the U.S. originate in the U.S., but may occasionally come from other countries, such as Canada.

[English]

Reducing firearms smuggling into Canada is a key part in the fight to reduce access to illegal firearms in this country. Smuggled firearms that make their way into communities are a serious public safety issue and can be used to commit serious offences tied to organized crime. Bill C-238 proposes to increase the maximum penalty and the mandatory minimum penalty of imprisonment for the possession of a smuggled firearm, prohibited weapon or other object. Bill C-238 would also impose a reverse onus on an accused in an application for judicial interim release, more commonly known as bail, when the accused is charged with the possession of a smuggled weapon. This means that unless the accused can demonstrate why their pretrial detention was not justified, they would remain in custody pending trial.

Private Members' Business

While the objectives of the private member's bill are well intentioned in that they propose to address firearms crime among other things, the government does not support the bill, as it raises serious legal and policy concerns, some of which have been addressed by earlier speakers. Given the scope of the offence, I am very concerned that the increased mandatory minimum penalties would lead to significant charter scrutiny, but just as important, mandatory minimum penalties generally produce system inefficiencies and delays in the criminal justice system. They are also known to have disproportionately negative impacts on indigenous peoples, Black and other visible minority Canadians, something that should be of key concern to all parliamentarians as we confront and seek to address the systemic racism that is pernicious in the criminal justice system.

In addition, the reverse onus would be novel in the current bail regime and would treat accused persons charged with the same offence differently, depending on how the possessed firearm was illegally obtained.

The government has been in the process of considering these important issues for quite some time. In October of 2018, the Minister of Public Safety began a series of consultations with Canadians on the issue of handguns and assault-style firearms. The consultations included eight in-person round tables with 77 stakeholders' written submissions, and almost 135,000 Canadians responded to an online questionnaire. The summary report published on April 11, 2019, indicated that Canadians believe that a comprehensive and multi-faceted approach is needed to combat firearms violence in Canada. Of note, firearms smuggling and border security were identified as among the most prominent concerns of Canadians.

• (1205)

[Translation]

The government has comprehensively set out a path forward to address gun violence, including banning assault-style firearms, providing an amnesty period and a firearms buy-back program, and working with provinces and territories to give municipalities the ability to further restrict or ban handguns. The government has taken other measures, such as the establishment of reporting legislation or a type of red alert to make it easier to remove firearms from people who pose a danger to themselves or others, and measures to combat gun smuggling and trafficking.

Recently, in the Speech from the Throne of September 23, 2020, the government reiterated its commitment to combat firearms smuggling.

[English]

When the Minister of Public Safety announced the ban, he also announced that the government would be introducing other measures to keep firearms out of the hands of criminals, including increasing safe storage requirements and strengthening the law around firearms smuggling and trafficking. The government has made funding of up to \$327 million available over five years through the initiative to take action against gun and gang violence, combat gun-related violence and gang activities, including by supporting law enforcement in community-led projects focused on prevention.

It is my understanding that more than \$200 million is now flowing directly to the provinces and territories to target initiatives that best meet the unique needs of individual communities to advance efforts in the areas of prevention, gang exit, outreach and awareness training, as well as enhanced intelligence sharing and law enforcement capacity. With the funding allocations, jurisdictions have made investments to support new law enforcement activities, including specialized training and education initiatives and improving data collection and information sharing.

[Translation]

As far as reducing gun violence is concerned, the government knows that a comprehensive approach must also include measures to remove from the market guns that present the biggest danger to public safety, as well as a combination of measures on the criminal use of firearms, including preventive measures and law enforcement, as well as harsher sentences.

[English]

Although the laudable objectives of this bill may be well-intentioned, I remain of the view that a more comprehensive approach, with the benefit of parliamentary review and debate in both Houses, would be the more appropriate course of action. I urge all members, therefore, to oppose this bill.

Mr. Bob Saroya (Markham—Unionville, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is good to be back and to see all members here.

I rise today to urge my colleagues to support my private member's bill, Bill C-238, an act to amend the Criminal Code with regard to possession of unlawfully imported firearms, a bill that would put the criminals using smuggled guns behind bars for longer and make communities safer by raising the standards on dangerous criminals being released on bail.

This is a bill that all GTA residents need and have been calling for. The numbers do not lie. Since 2015, gun violence has grown in Toronto. In 2018, there were record high numbers of deaths. In 2019, there were record high numbers of shootings.

The year 2020 should have been different, as COVID-19 forced people to work from home, and millions of GTA residents changed their routines. The active nightlife, festivals and events were all cancelled. Once very busy streets were now ghost towns. However, that did not stop the violence at all. In 2020, even with a worldwide pandemic, there were over 450 shootings and 40 deaths.

*Government Orders***GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

Gun violence has become all too common in places that used to be considered safe. The stories of people waking up to gunshots or being called about loved ones' deaths are heartbreaking. Those people have been promised action but have not seen any results.

I believe the Liberal government has approached this issue in the wrong way. It has focused on gun bans. For its plan to work, violent criminals would have to suddenly start following the law. We know that criminals are not getting a licence to buy firearms that would require taking a course and having a background check. Criminals are buying smuggled guns, just like they are buying smuggled drugs. A gun ban would do little, if anything, to stop them.

The former chief of police of Toronto stated that 82% of hand-guns used in crimes are smuggled in from the United States. The Ontario solicitor general put the numbers at 84%. More recently, Peel Regional Police reported that 74% of the guns they seized were from south of the border.

The problem is not just smuggled guns; it is also about how we treat criminals who are caught with these guns. The truth is that when they are arrested, they are released on bail within days. They can have a smuggled gun back in their possession within hours.

We need to target the criminals using these guns. Criminals need to know that the use of smuggled guns is a serious offence and that they will do real time behind bars if they are caught. As I have said before, there is no excuse for criminals to have these weapons. If someone has a smuggled gun, they are a real threat to public safety. When they are arrested, neighbours do not want them to get out on bail. The former chief of police reported that criminals getting arrested and being released on bail is far too common.

No one bill will stop the gun violence in Canada, but Bill C-238 is an excellent first step to making my riding of Markham—Unionville and all Canadians safer. I encourage every member to vote for this bill. It would keep dangerous criminals off the streets and save lives. If there are any concerns regarding Bill C-238, they can best be handled in committee.

• (1210)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The question is on the motion.

[Translation]

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

[English]

Mr. Bob Saroya: Madam Speaker, I request a recorded vote.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): To the order made earlier, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, January 27, at the expiry of the time provided for oral questions.

[English]

ECONOMIC STATEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2020

Hon. Deb Schulte (for the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance) moved that Bill C-14, An Act to implement certain provisions of the economic statement tabled in Parliament on November 30, 2020 and other measures, be now read a second time and referred to a committee.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, happy new year to all my colleagues in the House and everybody who is participating in this hybrid Parliament today.

I will be splitting my time with my hon. colleague from Kingston and the Islands, and I understand that I will need unanimous consent to be able to do this.

• (1215)

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

There is unanimous consent. Accordingly, the House has heard the terms of the motion and, there being no dissenting voice, I declare the motion carried.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak on behalf of the residents of my riding of Davenport, whom I am honoured and blessed to represent in this venerable House on Bill C-14.

I will be speaking specifically to some of the important measures that are included in Bill C-14, an act to implement certain provisions of the economic statement tabled in Parliament on November 30, 2020 and other measures.

Since the onset of COVID-19, the Government of Canada has remained steadfast in its commitment to do whatever it takes to protect the health and safety of Canadians and to help Canadian businesses weather the storm. The recently tabled fall economic statement outlined the government's actions to date and proposed new measures to support Canadians through the COVID-19 pandemic. These investments are a down payment on a growth plan of roughly three to four per cent of GDP, or between \$70 billion and \$100 billion over three years, to jump-start Canada's economy once the virus is under control.

Bill C-14 is an important step in the government's plan. It would urgently move forward with measures from the fall economic statement that would provide immediate assistance to families with young children, students and businesses, and measures that would help protect the health and safety of Canadians.

Government Orders

For example, the bill would ensure that Canadians whose Canada emergency response benefit claim has been delayed could receive the income support that they are eligible for after the end of this year. This bill would also amend the Food and Drugs Act to help prevent and alleviate future drug shortages by allowing the government to make regulations to require that pertinent information on potential shortages and activities related to food, drugs and other items be provided to the Minister of Health, when necessary.

The fall economic statement also moves forward with a plan to set new national standards for long-term care, in recognition of the tragic deaths from COVID-19 that we saw in the spring, in the fall and right now. It seeks to establish a \$1 billion safe long-term care fund that would help provinces and territories protect seniors and our most vulnerable. In particular, Bill C-14 would provide funding of up to \$505.7 million over the coming months to support long-term care facilities, including funding to prevent the spread of COVID-19 infection, outbreaks and deaths in supportive-care facilities.

Our federal government also recognizes that the emotional and mental health effects of the pandemic on Canadians will continue as we face the second wave and public health measures continue to be in place. Indeed, half of Canadians report that their mental health has worsened during COVID-19. Bill C-14 would provide funding to improve vital access to virtual care and mental health tools. This would include important investments to bolster distress centres and provide further support for the Wellness Together Canada portal, which connects Canadians to peer-support workers, social workers, psychologists and other professionals to help address mental health and substance use issues. These investments would help ensure that Canadians have the mental health support they need when they need it the most.

In addition to the \$505.7 million for long-term care, this bill would provide funding of up to \$395.6 million to support a range of initiatives to help Canadians cope during the pandemic and to continue our fight against the virus, including the following: mental health and substance use programming, innovative approaches to COVID-19 testing, virtual care and mental health tools, medical research, treatments and therapeutics, vaccine funding and development, border and travel measures, and isolation sites.

As the members of the House know well, the spring saw many challenges, as everything shut down across the country to reduce the spread of the virus. Suddenly, kids were out of school, day cares were closed and many families with young children had to find temporary alternatives to their regular child-care arrangements. These challenges often meant higher, unanticipated costs for Canadian families with children.

● (1220)

Our federal government is committed to helping the many families who have been struggling with a wide range of expenses as a result, from providing care to buying tools for at-home learning, such as books and computers, and often more costly temporary child-care arrangements.

That is why the federal government is proposing, through Bill C-14, to provide immediate relief for low- and middle-income families with young children who are entitled to the Canada child bene-

fit or CCB. For these families, we are proposing to provide up to \$1,200 in 2021 for each child under the age of six. This would represent an almost 20% increase over the existing maximum annual CCB payment and would have a meaningful impact on families in need of this support during the pandemic.

This support would automatically be delivered to families who are entitled to the CCB, and have a net income at or below \$120,000, through four tax-free payments of \$300. Families entitled to the CCB who have a net income above \$120,000 would receive four tax-free payments of \$150, for a total benefit of \$600. The first of these payments would be made within a week or two of the passage of Bill C-14, as I understand, with subsequent payments occurring in April, July and October of 2021.

This temporary assistance would directly benefit about 1.6 million families and about 2.1 million children during a period when families are still grappling with the financial impacts they are facing as a result of this pandemic.

We must also recognize how young people continue to suffer from economic impacts due to COVID-19. When the pandemic struck, many students had to leave school. Internships and summer jobs became scarce as Canadians did the right thing and stayed at home. The government is working to ensure that the pandemic does not derail the futures of students. We are determined to take a number of measures to help youth continue in their careers and in their schools.

In addition to proposed measures from the fall economic statement that would provide more opportunities for young people to gain work experience, our government is also proposing support to ease the financial burden on recent graduates. This important measure, which has received praise from the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations, would bring \$329.4 million in relief to up to 1.4 million Canadians who are looking for work or are in the early stages of their careers.

It would also help graduates from low- and middle-income families, who tend to have higher overall debt levels, as well as recent graduates with disabilities, given that 37% of borrowers who identified as a person with disabilities participated in the repayment assistance plan of the Canada student loans program in 2017-18.

In conclusion, it is clear that Canadians need our support to weather the storm as we continue to fight against COVID-19. That is why I implore all hon. members to join me in swiftly passing Bill C-14 to enable the government to move forward with implementing these important measures from the fall economic statement, to protect the health and safety of Canadians, to support students and recent graduates, and to help families with young children in need.

Government Orders

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the hon. member referred specifically to something. She said that what the government has been making over almost the last year has been “a down payment on a growth plan”.

That is so telling. There were two choices at the beginning of this. It was about investing in Canadians and giving them the supports and tools they needed to get through this pandemic so we could come out in a better position than if we had not. The alternative was to essentially let everybody fend for themselves.

Can the member comment as to how she thinks things would have been had the government not taken these very important steps to invest in Canadians? How much better off will we be as a result of this work?

• (1225)

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Madam Speaker, when we are introducing these bills and big spending packages, sometimes it is easy, in the way we speak, to forget that COVID-19 is still strong in this country and we are still battling it very strongly.

The number one thing we need to keep doing is to continue to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. In fighting this pandemic, we need to ensure there is enough support for our long-term care facilities, enough support for our families, enough support for our youth, enough support within Health Canada and all the different regions, and enough support for our businesses. We are not going to be able to move forward into a strong economic recovery otherwise. If we did not spend this investment, we would not be able to move forward and restart our economy in a successful way.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The raise hand function on Zoom, with the updated software, does not appear to work. I have been attempting to intervene. I think a number of other members have as well. Therefore, that needs to be fixed.

I would have liked to ask the hon. member a question.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member is correct because I did not see any raised hands.

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I wish the hon. member a happy new year.

The provisions in Bill C-14, as the hon. member mentioned, provide about \$100 a month for lower-income families of support for children, yet we know the average costs now for programs for early childhood education run about \$2,000 a month.

My question is very simple. Why are the supports so small for families that are really struggling to make ends meet through this pandemic? Why has the government not actually put into place recommendations that have come from child care advocates across the country to invest vigorously and robustly \$2 billion into helping to build the foundation for a national child care system?

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Madam Speaker, I also want to wish the hon. member a happy new year.

I think the hon. member knows that we have spent almost \$400 billion in supports to help not only Canadian families and workers,

but also businesses through this pandemic. The measure that he is referring to is with regard to the additional dollars we are providing, totalling up to \$1,200 for each child under the age of six, for the next year. It represents a 20% increase over the maximum annual CCB payment. This is to provide some additional support.

If I can go through the \$381 billion we have already spent and the amount of money we have set aside for child care to support families in a number of different ways, the government has shown time and time again that we will step up when we need to. We will be there for families. We will have the backs of families. If this is not enough, then we will come back with even more funding and more supports as time goes on.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I really hope we can get the issue in Zoom resolved as soon as possible so members have the opportunity to raise their hands virtually.

It is great to be back in the House after our recess. We have important work to continue to do on behalf of Canadians. I am very much looking forward to being part of that. It is good to see my colleagues again, in person and virtually.

My remarks today touch primarily on three issues: long-term care, child care supports for Canadians and the supports we have seen to provincial and territorial partners throughout this pandemic as well as what we should anticipate from this government moving forward.

First, I want to acknowledge the fact this has been a very difficult year for Canadians right across the country. Indeed, it is going to be difficult throughout the winter as well. People are making tough decisions right now about what they need to do to get through this pandemic. To understand and know that we are all in this together and that their federal government is there to support them I think is reassuring for many Canadians.

As we get through this, I really hope we quickly see things start to get better now that we can see the light at the end of the tunnel, with the vaccines being distributed not just in our country but indeed throughout the world.

I want to talk about long-term care and other supportive care facilities and how this government has been responding to that.

We know the majority of people who had fallen quite ill and passed away as a result of COVID-19 were residents of long-term care facilities. One of the most alarming issues for me when I started to see data coming out of these facilities back in the spring, summer and into the fall was the disconnect between the different levels of long-term care facilities and how successful they were at containing the virus.

Government Orders

We have discovered in Ontario that there are three different levels of long-term care facilities: those owned by municipalities, and in Ontario each municipality is required to own at least one long-term care facility; not-for-profit long-term care facilities; and for-profit facilities. Those that were owned by municipalities did a much better job of containing COVID. Those that were not-for-profit long-term care facilities did almost as good as the municipalities. Unfortunately the for-profit long-term care facilities seemed to have the most fatalities and number of outbreaks and, as a result, saw the most strain. That is not to say that all for-profit long-term care facilities are going to experience these larger problems. Many out there have done things very effectively and should be complimented on that. However, many, unfortunately, were not as successful. Therefore, we have to get to the root of why that happened and why there are gaps, in particular, in the standards of care for our most vulnerable.

Since the beginning, this government has worked with the provinces and territories to fight the outbreaks in long-term care homes. For example, it helped provide PPE, contact tracing and direct assistance through the Canadian Red Cross. Despite the fact long-term care facilities are regulated by the provinces, the federal government acknowledged it had a lead role to play in helping the provinces get through it.

Therefore, the government proposed investments in the fall economic statement, such as: \$1 billion allocated to establish a safe long-term care fund that will help provinces and territories protect people in long-term care and support infection, prevention and control; \$6 million over two years to the Canadian Foundation for Healthcare Improvement to expand its long-term care initiative; \$1 million to engage with third parties to help identify resources to conduct readiness assessments in long-term care facilities and facilitate training on infection, prevention and control; and \$2.4 million over three years for Health Canada to increase its capacity to be able to support and undertake policy initiatives, as was the commitment in the Speech from the Throne.

● (1230)

In the Speech from the Throne, the government indicated that it wanted to move toward developing national standards when it came to long-term care. This is not to say that the federal government wants to impede on the jurisdiction of provinces, but as with other legislation, like the building code, the federal government sees a role in helping to establish some of those objectives and standards that exist so they can be adopted across the country if provinces and territories see the need to adopt them. As we have seen with the national building code, most provinces have adopted it. My understanding is that only two provinces in the country, Ontario and Quebec, have their own building codes. Therefore, national standards, although not to be imposed upon provinces, can be there for provinces to use as a resource in order to establish best practices.

The other item I will talk about, as I indicated earlier, is with respect to early childhood learning and child care. We know that this pandemic has created very difficult and challenging times for child care providers. Indeed, their jobs are much more difficult than they were before. It has made the work of over 200,000 early childhood educators and child care workers across the country uncertain. People are uncertain about their jobs and what the child care system

will look like moving forward. Now is the time to make long-term, sustained investments so every Canadian family has access to affordable, high-quality child care for their children.

In the fall economic statement, a first step laid the groundwork for a Canada-wide child care system in partnership with our provinces and territories, which ultimately take the lead on this very important issue. Also being proposed are investments in 2021-22 of \$420 million for provinces and territories to attract and retain early childhood educators. There is a growing need for childhood educators. There is uncertainty. The government sees a role in providing that certainty and ensuring that Canadians who are interested in early childhood education see that there will be work for them as we come through this pandemic.

● (1235)

Finally, I want to talk about the supports for provinces and territories. Quite a bit has been said over the last year about supports. I am extremely proud to be part of a government that has been there for Canadians through supporting our provinces, but it has not ended and it will not end yet. For 2020-21, \$85 billion of support has been provided to provinces and territories throughout the country, and there is more to come.

What is being proposed with respect to the fiscal stabilization program is indexing the payment of \$60 per capita, which was set out in 1987, to a total economic growth per person of \$170 per person, which is nearly triple. The capital continues to grow with economic growth per person in future years. The higher cap will apply to claims for 2019-20 and onward.

This federal government has been there for Canadians directly through programs like the CERB and various other programs throughout this pandemic. It has been there to support provinces and territories by giving them the resources they need to successfully take care of Canadians. Indeed, it is there to ensure they can help develop policy to make a better Canada, a Canada that has quality of life moving forward. As we come out of this, we need to learn from things such as what has been happening in long-term care facilities to ensure we develop policies that will improve the quality of life for everybody.

• (1240)

Mrs. Tamara Jansen (Cloverdale—Langley City, CPC): Madam Speaker, the hon. member mentioned that for-profit care centres were a big problem. Here in my city, just down the street from me, there was a for-profit care centre that actually had to disallow public health care workers from coming in because they were only given two sets of gloves and two masks for a full month. They had no PPE.

I would like to understand how he can blame for-profit care centres when PPE was nowhere near available.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, what I said, and I am sure the member was listening very closely to my comments, was that at least in Ontario, in the way the data is coming out, people were more likely to die as a result of COVID-19 in a for-profit facility compared with a municipally run or not-for-profit facility. Then I qualified that by saying this was not the case for all for-profit facilities, but is a trend within them.

My intention was not to try to attack one particular sector in long-term care, but rather to identify, using data, where the problems are so we can use that information to develop good policy to improve the quality of life for Canadians.

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoulu, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

He talked about seniors, families and workers, among other things. My question is on students, who are suffering during the pandemic from a mental health and financial perspective.

The bill would suspend interest on Canadian student loans. Since Quebec administers its own loans and bursaries program, I wonder if what is being suggested here includes a compensatory transfer to Quebec on a per capita basis for post-secondary students.

[English]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I am a member for Ontario, and in Ontario students primarily tap into OSAP, the Ontario secondary loan program, and they can also get a federal component of that. What we are referring to in this document is just the federal component of it, not the provincial part of it.

The member raises a good question and a good point, and this is something that I think should come up in the finance committee when the fall economic statement is delivered so its members can discuss it and make sure we are giving the best opportunity for students and young people to be successful. At the end of the day, we are all depending on that and we all want to see students successful. Making sure they have the tools and resources from the government to do that is to everybody's benefit.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I wish the member a happy new year.

He spoke at quite some length about early childhood education and child care, but there is a problem with the bill. The government is building up the fall economic statement and saying it is moving to put into place early childhood education. We know it requires an investment of \$2 billion this year to set that foundation, yet the government did not do that. At the same time, it is providing

Government Orders

about \$100 a month per child to lower-income families, but we know those families are paying \$2,000 a month for early childhood education and child care.

At a time when families are struggling and really trying to have the wherewithal to take care of a myriad of things, including keeping a roof over their heads and putting food on the table, the government, through a variety of federal institutions, provided \$750 billion to Canada's big banks this year in liquidity supports.

How does that jibe with this critical need to put in place national child care? Why is the government spending \$750 billion to support Canada's banks and not providing supports to Canadian families?

• (1245)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I know the hon. member asked this question of my colleague as well. She indicated that there are many different supports going out to Canadians, and if we look at one in isolation, it is not going to be helpful.

To the member's point, when it comes to child care, it is about working with our provincial and territorial partners. These have to be collaborative solutions. We are not going to do it all on our own. We need to work with them, and that is what I talked about in my speech.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Madam Speaker, if this pandemic has taught us anything, it is to be prepared for the unexpected, to anticipate risks before they metastasize so that we can protect ourselves and secure our future.

Today, I rise in the House of Commons to draw the attention of members to a growing risk of danger to our families, our businesses and our entire country. It is the risk of the \$8.6 trillion of household, corporate and government debt that is quickly accumulating on the shoulders of Canadians. This amount equals 387% of our GDP, a record ratio that is higher than the ratios in many countries that have in the past experienced devastating debt crises.

Before our eyes glaze over, though, I want to remind members that a debt crisis is not just something that bankers and financial analysts talk about in the Report on Business from The Globe and Mail or on BNN. Research by reputable academic institutions shows that in the case of a financial crisis, house prices can drop by a third; stock markets, meaning people's savings, can drop by half; the economy can drop by 9%; and unemployment can rise seven percentage points.

Here is the human toll of that. The University of Calgary published a study recently showing that there is a two percentage point increase in suicides for every one percentage point increase in unemployment. Imagine the human cost of 7% unemployment. More data is now showing an inextricable link between opioid abuse and unemployment. Depression and homelessness result from these types of crises.

Government Orders

What is the nature of the risk? How serious is it? How likely are we to face it? We have to look to history. In their now-legendary book *This Time is Different*, Harvard economists Carmen Reinhart and Professor Ken Rogoff wrote about what they call eight centuries of folly. They studied debt crises in 66 countries across five continents. As they write in their opening, “Each time, the experts have chimed, ‘this time is different’—claiming that the old rules of valuation no longer apply and that the new situation bears little similarity to past disasters.” With this breakthrough study, they found definitively that experts are wrong.

They lay out five standard leading indicators for a forthcoming financial crisis. I will go through them very quickly: first, falling economic output; second, a large debt buildup; third, rising household leverage; fourth, asset inflation; and fifth, large current account deficits. Do these five standard leading indicators apply to us?

Let us start with the first one: falling output. Last year, in 2020, our GDP dropped 5.5%, blowing a more than \$100 billion hole in our economy. That is a massive reduction in our economy, and it means that we have \$100 billion less to service our debts. On the first test, from *This Time is Different*, we do have falling economic output. It does not matter who is to blame. It does not matter that it was COVID that caused it. What matters is the math, and the math does not lie.

Let us move on to the second standard leading indicator: debt buildup. The amount of debt that a country can shoulder depends on the income that it produces to service that debt. According to the great Canadian economist John Kenneth Galbraith, “All crises have involved debt that, in one fashion or another, has become dangerously out of scale in relation to the underlying means of payment.” That underlying means of payment, of course, is GDP, so let us look at the size of our debt and how much it has grown.

Since the beginning of 2015, our total debt, public and private, has gone from \$6.1 trillion to \$8.5 trillion, a nearly 40% increase in our debt. During that time, our GDP has only grown by 13%.

• (1250)

In other words, our debt levels are growing almost three times as fast as our GDP, the underlying means of payment. We have now reached a level of debt to GDP of 387%, as I said earlier, but I did not tell you that it is an all-time record and nearly twice the size of the typical ratio over the last 60 years in Canada.

Here is some more staggering information: The debt-to-GDP ratio of Greece when it had its massive sovereign debt crisis 10 years ago was 330%. In the United States, during the great financial crisis that came out of the mortgage bubble, their debt was 375% of GDP. In other words, our debt levels in Canada today are higher than they were in the United States and Greece when they massive, iconic and devastating debt crises in the recent past. Therefore, we need now to pay heed as to why we think we can avoid the same thing. The only difference between them then and us now is that interest rates are low, but they will not stay that way forever.

What is the composition of our debt? Where does it come from? The answer is threefold: it is government, corporate and household debt.

Let us start with government debt. This year for the first time on record, Statistics Canada shows that the gross debt of all levels of government in Canada is bigger than the GDP. It just exceeded 100%, 100.3%, to be precise, in the third quarter of 2020. That has never happened before. Our debt levels are higher than they were in the 1990s when we had our own miniature near default of the federal government. That time it was 92%, so our debt levels are higher than ever before when it comes to government.

Before the government rises to claim that we have the lowest debt in the G7, as a share of GDP, that is just wrong. The only reason that Finance Canada calculates it that way is that uses the assets of the CPP and the QPP to deduct from our overall net debt level without using the corresponding liabilities those funds must pay. As a result, if one were to ignore that and look at our gross debt, we have higher debt levels than both Germany and, I believe, France in the G7. That means we do not have the lowest debt levels in the G7 and cannot be worry-free and fool ourselves that our sustained buildup of government debt is not a problem.

This year has seen a spectacular and never-before-seen increase in that debt. Our fiscal deficit is \$381 billion. That is almost seven times bigger than the previous all-time average and equals 17% of our GDP. Let us put that into perspective.

In World War I, our deficit-to-GDP ratio was 8%. In the Great Depression, it was 6%. In the great global recession it was 4%. In other words, our deficit as a share of the economy and adjusted for inflation is currently twice what it was at its peak in World War I, three times what it was at its peak in the Great Depression and four times what it was in the great global recession. Only in the Second World War was it bigger, and our ancestors, when they came back from the war, immediately began repaying that debt, running the biggest surpluses ever in 1947, and then increasing the size of our economy elevenfold in the two-and-a-half decades that followed, which allowed them to pay it off quickly. Nobody is suggesting that we will come anywhere near to those kinds of surpluses or growth rates in the post-COVID era, which means that our debt situation is arguably more ominous for the country than it was even back then. Thus, on that criterion, the second standard leading indicator of a sustained buildup of debt, Canada meets that criterion as well.

We move on to household debt levels. Canada has the highest level of household debt as a ratio of disposable income in the G7. In fact, recently, our level of household debt grew to bigger than the entire Canadian economy, again setting records. These ratios mean that our households are carrying more debt than our economy can reasonably be expected to support.

• (1255)

According to the president and CEO of CMHC, “Canadians are among world leaders in household debt. Pre-COVID, the ratio of ... debt to GDP for Canada was at 99 per cent.... These ratios are well in excess of the 80 per cent threshold above which the Bank of International Settlements has shown that national debt intensifies the drag on GDP growth.” In other words, an international body like the Bank for International Settlements says that countries should not go above 80%, and yet pre-COVID we were at nearly 100%. Since that time, debt levels have risen even higher.

That is the third criterion for a forthcoming debt crisis, rising household leverage. Now we move onto the next one, which is asset inflation.

In Canada today, the assets that Canadians own in the country are worth 17 times the size of the Canadian economy. The historic average is 12 times. In other words, our asset values are quickly outpacing our economy. That cannot go on for long, because, of course, assets can only be purchased out of the income generated in the economy. Those assets break down into two parts: financial assets and real estate assets, more or less.

With financial assets, we look at the S&P/TSX, the broadest index in the country. Until a few years ago, the market value of that index had never exceeded the size of our economy. It was always smaller than GDP. That changed in the last 24 months, and has suddenly rocketed up to 120%, according to Rosenberg Research, a leading economic research firm. That one index is now worth 120% of GDP. That has never happened before. The companies in that index need to generate their profits from the economy, and therefore the value of the stocks on the index cannot get completely out of touch with the ability of the economy to generate income and support those stock prices.

Then we move on to real estate, where prices are up \$65,000 this year. Can members imagine that in a year when our economy has lost over \$100 billion in economic output and hundreds of thousands of people have lost their paycheques and been forced into their homes that somehow we found all of this money to buy real estate? In fact, from the beginning of 2019 to mid-2020, the inflation of our assets in this country has been worth more than our entire economy. There has been \$2.7 trillion of asset inflation in an economy worth just over \$2 trillion. That would be like someone making more money every year from the appreciation of their house than the salary they take home from work.

It would be nice if it could happen forever and we could simply float on a bubble up to prosperity, but we know that in the end our assets are only worth what we can afford to pay for them. Can Canadians afford the real estate they have right now? Members can ask RBC and the CMHC. The CMHC says that for a home to be affordable for a family, the family should not have to spend more than 30% of its income on housing. According to RBC, the average

Government Orders

right now is 50%. That means that for the average person to afford the average house, 20 percentage points more from their family budgets has to go to housing. That is with record low interest rates. When rates rise, those payments will only become more expensive.

Do we have asset inflation in Canada? We have it like we have perhaps never seen before. Asset inflation is the fourth leading indicator of a forthcoming debt crisis.

This brings us to the final leading indicator that these Harvard economists developed through studying 800 years of history of debt crises, which is current account deficits.

To oversimplify this for the purpose of saving us some time, current account deficits are basically the amounts someone buys in excess of what they sell. In essence, Canada buys imports and sells exports. The truth is that we buy a lot more from the rest of the world than we sell to it.

• (1300)

Since 2015 to the present, Canada has run current account deficits of approximately \$300 billion. In other words, we bought \$300 billion more from the world than we sold to it, and we borrowed to make up the difference. How else would we do it? If we buy more than we are selling, there are only two ways to do it: we drain our savings or we rack up debt. We have been doing a little of both, but most of all, we have been adding debt. The result is that we are taking on more and more obligations for our prior consumption.

I would like to say that all of this debt has been used to invest in productive assets like factories, software, patents and other things that will generate income to pay off that debt, but the evidence shows that the overwhelming preponderance of the new debt has been going to immediate consumption. In fact, data from after the government's programs came in, programs that I believe were meritorious and had to happen, showed that much of the money leaked out of the country because, as Canadians, we were all buying or importing things from abroad more than we were producing and sending abroad. That means that last year we were again running a large trade deficit and adding to our overall debt load in the process.

Government Orders

In the months of April and May 2020, Canadians borrowed an extra \$80 billion from foreigners according to David Dodge, who published a recent piece on this for the Public Policy Forum. He specifically asked how long it will be possible for Canadians, for our country, to borrow from the world in order to buy from the world before the world gets tired of lending us money. The bottom line is that we have a large and consistent current account deficit, the second largest in the G7, second only to Japan's. That is an unavoidable problem that we will need to confront because the world is not going to view our economy as a charity case. The lenders of the world will expect to be paid interest on all of the debt that we carry forward.

In fact, the only way to pay off that debt is to generate powerful incomes. Unfortunately, since 2012, Canada has exported more investment than it has brought in by a net amount of \$800 billion. In other words, we are sending our investment to productive assets in other parts of the world while they are sending us debt. They get factories, software, patents or pipelines, and we get large-scale debt. That is the fifth measurement of whether or not a debt crisis will strike, and we can say definitively that with our \$300 billion in current account deficits the last five years, Canada indeed meets this standard leading indicator that is necessary to trigger a debt crisis.

There are five indicators and we check every single box. What can we do about it? The answer is that we need to unleash the power of our productive economy to clear the way for job creation.

This is red tape week. Let us eliminate the red tape that prevents businesses from hiring. Let us approve large-scale projects like the Teck Frontier mine in Alberta, or the LNG facility in Saguenay. These are tens of billions of dollars in economic activity. Let us make this the fastest place in the world to get a construction permit. Right now we rank 34th out of 35 OECD nations on that. Let us be the fastest place to build a factory or build a pipeline or some other economic infrastructure that pays wages and can reimburse our debts and support our prosperity. Let us change the tax and regulatory rules that get in the way of first nation communities trying to develop commerce and resources on their reserves. Let us remove the penalties for low-income people to get off social assistance so that they can get back to work. Let us allow our newcomers as immigrants use their qualifications by giving them permits to work in fields they are qualified in, like the professions and the trades. Let us replace what has become a credit card economy with a paycheque economy, and in that way alone, we will secure our future.

• (1305)

[Translation]

Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Happy new year, Madam Speaker. I am happy to be back in the House.

[English]

I want to thank my colleague from Carleton for his lesson on the economy and on debt financing. It is quite clear from the tenet of what he is proposing or certainly saying that the situation we are in is untenable. Certainly in all the investments we made in Canadians in the past year, there was a choice to be made. On this side of the

House, we decided to invest in Canadians, and he is deriding us for accumulating debt.

I want the member for Carleton to comment on the fact that we have invested too much in Canadians. Why did we accumulate debt? It was to help Canadians weather this storm and weather the worst pandemic we have faced as a nation during our lifetimes.

The government has brought forward a lot of programs, including the CERB, the wage subsidy, the rent subsidy, the mortgage deferral payments, the support for indigenous communities, the CE-BA loans, the regional relief and recovery fund, and the billions of dollars of transfers provided to the provinces to ensure the health and safety of Canadians. Which program would he have not brought forward?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Before I return the floor to the hon. member for Carleton, I would like to talk to those members who have raised the question of the hand function that does not appear to be working in Zoom. We have asked the staff to work toward resolving the issue.

As an interim solution, I would suggest that members who wish to ask a question during questions and comments turn on their cameras and physically raise their hands. The table officers will keep a list of those who wish to intervene.

[Translation]

I would also ask members who do not wish to speak to turn off their cameras, to make it easier to identify those who do wish to speak. I thank hon. members for their co-operation.

[English]

The hon. member for Carleton.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Speaker, the member asked what we would have done differently. First, we would not have gone into this crisis having already added \$100 billion of debt before the very first case of COVID-19. That is the first thing. The Liberal government inherited a balanced budget and blew through \$100 billion of debt before COVID-19 even arrived on the scene.

Second, we would have ensured that the COVID crisis would not have spun out of control here in Canada the way it did, because we would have closed the border. We told the Liberals and we are on the record as saying we would have closed the border. They had military intelligence in December telling them of the risk, yet they let 60,000 people come into this country from China between December and March, causing the disease to spread quickly.

We would have approved rapid testing more quickly so that Canadians could get back into their jobs safely. We would have procured vaccines on a priority basis, rather than leaving us at the back of the pack. All of these things would have saved a fortune.

Finally, what would we do differently going forward? When we come out of the COVID crisis, we would unleash the engine of free market productive economic growth that produces paycheques for people, rather than shutting down the economy by blocking enterprises, as the Liberal government has done in project after project. We also reject their proposal to make all the COVID spending permanent. In this bill, they have asked for an increase in the debt limit of another \$700 billion. That is irresponsible.

• (1310)

[Translation]

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Madam Speaker, the member talked about the deficit and the kind of plan he would implement.

I would like him to comment on the aerospace industry, which we believe should be strengthened and supported. How does he see that sector, which seems to have been abandoned entirely, fitting in to the economic recovery plan?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Speaker, the Conservative Party clearly supports the aerospace sector. I am a little surprised to hear the Bloc Québécois is of the same opinion, because the aerospace sector uses fuel. Airplanes run on fuel. To my knowledge, there is not a single airplane that can fly without fuel. Furthermore, petroleum products represent the lion's share of our exports.

We support all industries. Our aerospace sector has the ability to compete globally. This would also mean that our airplanes would be fuelled by the cleanest and most ethical oil, oil from Alberta, Saskatchewan and Newfoundland.

[English]

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to wish my hon. colleague a happy new year.

He spoke a lot about debt. I want to speak with him about people who have been left behind: people with disabilities, seniors, students, and indigenous people. Although, like the member, we need to certainly watch spending, I do not think it should be on the backs of people.

I want to ask the member about paying for the debt. The Conservative government, when it has been in power, has fought to support its corporate friends. I want to know if the member agrees with me that one of the ways we can pay for the debt is by fighting against tax havens and tax loopholes and going away from the Conservatives' tradition of helping their rich friends.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Speaker, first, that is a complete falsehood. Conservatives have spoken out against corporate welfare. We were the first party to stand in the House and insist that the wage subsidy not go to paying dividends. I warned, on the floor of this House of Commons, the then finance minister, Bill Morneau, that if he did not ban it, corporations would use the wage subsidy to pay dividends to executives and wealthy shareholders. He ignored me, and that is exactly what they did. We, on this side, were the

Government Orders

ones who spoke out against it. We are the party that opposes corporate welfare.

However, the member asked about these tax revenues that they want to generate by closing loopholes and shutting down, as we call them in French, the "*paradis fiscaux*". Of course we agree that everybody should pay their own fair share, but I find that when these left-wing governments take office, although they always claim that rich people will pay, rich people never end up paying, and it ends it being the middle class and the working people who get the full bill.

The current government cannot produce a single, solitary shred of evidence that it is raising any new money from the rich. Yes, the Liberals raised the rate, but there is not one annual filing from Revenue Canada that shows it generated a nickel in new revenue. The poor will end up paying for—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Questions and comments, the hon. member for Regina—Lewvan.

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to be back here in 2021. Let us hope we have a much better year than 2020.

My colleague and friend from Carleton laid out a very well-reasoned argument about what is going on and how our government is continuing to leave Canadians behind.

The Liberal government continues to try to pit us against working Canadians in saying we want to leave people behind. There is nothing further from the truth.

Here is my question. Does the member see a plan by the current finance minister and government, because we know there has not been a plan put forward in over 600 days for how we are going to get Canadians back to work, how we are going to secure the future for Canadians going forward, and how we are going to get 600 people at Evraz steel in Regina back to work in the pipeline sector? That is the question I have for my hon. colleague.

• (1315)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: That is a good question, Madam Speaker. The reality is we have to secure the future by moving to a paycheque economy from a credit card economy.

The credit card economy that the government wants to create would permanently lock in annual spending increases forever and add another \$600 billion of debt. That is what the Liberals are seeking authorization for in this bill: to raise the national debt to \$1.8 trillion. That is the credit card economy. It only ends in tears.

Government Orders

The paycheque economy is one in which we unleash the power of enterprise to build pipelines so that the steelworkers in the member's riding can actually get jobs making the steel that goes into that pipe and the energy sector workers can get full global prices for their oil, rather than letting the Americans continue to rip us off. It means unleashing the construction of the Teck Frontier mine, for which the permit could still be approved, or expediting the approval of the LNG, a \$14-billion project in Saguenay that could put thousands of Quebeckers permanently to work exporting clean, green Canadian natural gas that will lower global emissions by displacing dirty foreign coal.

This is the kind of free enterprise agenda that would produce paycheques, and paycheques alone will secure our future.

[Translation]

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Madam Speaker, I wish you, my colleagues and all staff of the House of Commons a happy new year.

I ask the House for consent to share my time with my esteemed colleague from Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques.

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

The House has heard the terms of the motion. There being no dissenting voice, I declare the motion carried.

The hon. member for Thérèse-De Blainville.

Ms. Louise Chabot: Madam Speaker, Bill C-14, which we are reviewing today, appears to build on certain measures in the economic statement the government released last November. It is very troubling, however, that, like the economic statement, this bill does not address glaring needs such as increased health care transfers and financial assistance for seniors.

There is no picture or sound, despite the fact that this unprecedented health crisis, which is turning Canadians' lives upside down, requires a strong signal from the government. "We are there for Canadians." "We will always be there for Canadians." These are statements we recognize and that are familiar to us, because they have been repeated so often by the Prime Minister. They are just words, however; not actions. What is missing is a concrete, tangible vision to get us through this second wave and help us address the economic recovery in the near future. What is the plan?

In terms of health, we can only repeat that the most important, most sensitive, most useful and most constructive help we could give the provinces and territories would be a tangible and significant increase in Canada health transfers. This increase should reduce the gap between the federal government's contribution and the provinces' contribution to health care, which is growing year by year.

In 2019, Quebec, the other provinces and the territories funded 40% of all health care expenditures, while the Canadian government funded only 22%. According to Conference Board of Canada data, based on the current growth rate, the federal contribution to health care will drop to below 20% by 2026.

It does not take a mathematician to understand that this recurrent deficit has a considerable impact on the provinces' ability to support and strengthen their health care systems. The federal government will probably once again tell us that it is there to support the provinces and that it has injected \$19 billion, but we all know that the problem is that these amounts are not recurring.

If the government was really listening to and hearing the provinces and Quebec, it would know that they need security and predictability, not conditional piecemeal investments based on the mood of the day.

Must I remind you that thousands of front-line workers have been fighting the pandemic every day, day after day, for 11 months?

What do they need? They need us to recognize their work and support them in their efforts to treat people and save lives. How can we do that? By granting the federal transfers demanded by those who have the expertise and the responsibility for the organization and delivery of health care: the provincial governments.

These workers really do not need the government to come in once again playing games and trying to interfere in provincial jurisdictions.

Today, the government announced \$1 billion in assistance for the creation of a fund for long-term care facilities. The fund will come with conditions and accountability measures.

The Quebec health care system, which is currently grappling with a pandemic, does not need the additional burden of never-ending accountability measures. Quebec does not need the federal government interfering in its jurisdiction, trying to develop a new set of national standards. There are enough standards and rules already in place.

If someone needs to be accountable, it is the federal government, given its inability to develop financial self-sufficiency when it comes to the vaccine. We know, we see the delays. Apparently, in Quebec, there have been delays in the delivery of vaccines since last week. We will not be able to vaccinate people at the planned rate. When it comes to accountability, it is high time that the government told the truth about the vaccine delivery schedule.

● (1320)

I will say it again. Front-line workers in Quebec need two things: that the federal government increase its health care transfers and that it do so unconditionally.

Businesses and workers are suffering from the pandemic, and the government needs to respond appropriately. The Bloc Québécois has often pointed out the ineffectiveness of the Canada emergency rent subsidy.

Since last June, both the Quebec government and the Canadian Federation of Independent Business have been pointing to the program's complexity and lack of flexibility. We are therefore pleased with the adjustments to the program proposed today, even if they should have been made long ago.

In terms of specific assistance for the hardest-hit sectors, including tourism, the hotel and restaurant industry, lodging, art, culture and communications, on November 3 I told the House about the particular difficulties these sectors were facing, and provided the figures to back it up.

At the time, more than 56,000 workers had lost their jobs in these industries in Quebec alone. We now know that the situation has gotten worse, and the Bloc Québécois has been tirelessly asking for specific meaningful measures for these key economic sectors in Quebec.

The bill provides \$206 million for the regional relief recovery fund, or RRRF, for businesses that are unable to benefit from other federal programs. A total of 25% of that funding should go to tourism operators.

We are pleased that the government listened to reason and responded to our many calls in that regard. However, aside from the RRRF-related announcements, we still do not have any details about what some of the other programs that were announced will look like, for example, the business credit availability program for hard-hit sectors.

How is it that, nearly two months after announcing this program, the government still cannot tell us how this program will work? The crisis is far from over and workers and business owners need targeted support.

Today, 181,000 small and medium-sized business owners plan to close for good. Over half of the 40,000 workers in the hotel industry are unemployed.

Lastly, the aerospace industry and the air transport sector have clearly been left out. Let us remember that these sectors are in crisis. In September, companies in the Quebec aerospace sector had laid off more than 4,000 of the 43,000 workers in the industry, according to the Aéro Montréal cluster. The government must take its responsibilities and develop a Canadian strategy for the aerospace industry. The Bloc Québécois has called for this on several occasions. What is the government waiting for to support workers?

In conclusion, the demands of the Bloc Québécois send a strong signal about health. Help and support for workers is a priority. We know that the transfer between the Canada emergency response benefit and the Canada recovery benefit is not working. Day after day, workers face endless delays in applying for CRB support.

We experienced it with the Quebec parental insurance plan, and now with self-employed workers. It takes six to eight weeks to get an answer, and we are told that is because of the checks that need to

Government Orders

be done. That is unacceptable. These workers are unemployed and have no income.

If the checks need to be done, then let us shorten the delays. Once again, we are seeing that the government was not ready to respond to this crisis.

• (1325)

Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Thérèse-De Blainville for her speech.

She spoke about health transfers. The federal government has transferred more than \$20 billion during the pandemic. That is more than the existing transfers planned between the provinces and the federal government. Of course, the additional transfers need to be financed.

My question is very simple. How should the federal government finance this extra spending? Obviously, there are only a few ways to do that: either increase Canada's annual debt, raise taxes or cut programs.

I would like to know what programs the hon. member would be prepared to cut.

Ms. Louise Chabot: Madam Speaker, my answer to my colleague, the parliamentary secretary, is simple: It is a matter of political choice.

I already anticipated that we would be told that \$19 billion has already been invested, with an additional \$1 billion now, for long-term care standards. I would remind the member that these are one-time payments. Agreement after agreement, Canadian transfer payments, which are supposed to be permanent, predictable and recurrent, are being cut.

We are not asking the government to cut funding anywhere else, but rather to assume its responsibilities and give the provinces and territories their fair share of the funding allocated.

[English]

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am very concerned with aspects of this bill, specifically with the debt ceiling being raised far beyond what spending projections were. I wonder if my colleague has any comments on the borrowing authority far exceeding the projected spending levels.

[Translation]

Ms. Louise Chabot: Madam Speaker, of course we should be concerned about the debt. As parliamentarians, we must always be sensitive to the budgets presented to us. It is worth noting that I was elected over a year ago and I have yet to see a budget.

Indeed, this is a matter of some concern, but not to the point of underestimating the money the government needs to spend right now on health and to support our most vulnerable populations.

• (1330)

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

Government Orders

What is happening now is that the Liberals are handing out millions of dollars to big businesses, which pass on this money to their shareholders in the form of dividends. Because of confusion over the Canada recovery benefit, workers are now being forced to repay significant amounts of money, tens of thousands of dollars in some cases. These workers were earning about \$5,000 a year, so we are talking about the poorest Canadians and Quebecers. Sadly, the Liberals have decided to target them.

Will my colleague join the NDP in calling on the government to stop going after these workers?

Ms. Louise Chabot: Madam Speaker, my political party always stands up for workers and we always will.

We supported the emergency measures when people really needed assistance. It is despicable that the government is now not prepared to implement these new programs and measures. I mentioned this in my speech.

It is disappointing to see that the government is going after people who did not even receive CERB and are now caught up in red tape, and it is equally disappointing to see people with no job and no income who have yet to receive their Canada recovery benefit.

Matters of tax fairness are always a priority for the Bloc.

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Madam Speaker, first, let me tell you how excited I am to be back here with you and all my colleagues to debate matters of the utmost importance in the House. I hope that everyone enjoyed these weeks off, as the coming months will bring enormous challenges.

The House will be engaged in crucial debates for the next few weeks, and the Liberal government's rather chaotic management of the COVID-19 pandemic will surely keep us busy. The Liberal government's intentions will be closely scrutinized by the opposition parties, the public and the parliamentary press, ever alert for the blunders that have been far too common with this government. All members will have to be vigilant to prevent other strategic mistakes, such as those committed intentionally or inadvertently by the government, in an extraordinary situation that requires constant rigour and leaves next to no room for error.

Madam Speaker, I hope you recharged your batteries and, above all, had the opportunity to spend quality time in lockdown with your family, no doubt to their great delight.

My Bloc Québécois colleagues and I are refreshed and ready to begin the winter session of the House. I would add that the entire population of Quebec already knows that, true to our commitments of the past few months, there will be no compromising on our part when it comes to defending Quebec's interests fully and completely. As we have said over and over again, what Quebec wants, the Bloc wants. Quebec makes a choice, and the Bloc makes it happen.

In the same way, our day-to-day commitment and what we have achieved so far in this Parliament mean that we can honestly say that the Quebec caucus—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I apologize, but apparently your microphone is not connected or is

not plugged in properly. The interpreters are having a hard time hearing you. Could you please unplug it and plug it back in?

It seems to be working better now.

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Madam Speaker, our day-to-day commitment and what we have achieved so far in this Parliament mean that we can honestly say that the Bloc Québécois caucus is reliable and proud.

This strong, heartfelt preamble to the main topic of my speech will help my colleagues better understand the scope of my comments and recognize the amount of time I spent poring over Bill C-14, an act to implement certain provisions of the economic statement tabled in Parliament on November 30, 2020 and other measures, which was tabled in the House on December 2 by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and came before the House this morning. To summarize, this bill outlines and gives details about some of the measures announced by the federal government in the speech that the minister gave when presenting her economic statement aimed at supporting Canadians and fighting the COVID-19 pandemic.

Members will recall how long the government waited before bringing this bill before the House for an in-depth study. In fact, in December, the government did everything it could to fast-track the study of Bill C-7 on medical assistance in dying, which was being systematically blocked by the socially conservative fringe of the Conservative Party. Everyone has their own battles to fight. I will not say what I think of these petty delaying tactics that put the interests and fundamental rights of hundreds of our fellow citizens in peril. Unfortunately, these people must wait for the government to legalize a situation they have considered carefully and an important decision that they want to make calmly, rather than witness an interminable, agonizing debate dragged out for crass partisan reasons.

To return to my speech, this bill, short as it is, makes major changes to several existing laws. I hope that these changes will contribute significantly to effectively advancing the welfare of all of our constituents. The Bloc Québécois does not take this approach lightly. If the government introduces a bill that makes sense and that is in the interest of Quebecers, we will support it. However, the government must demonstrate that the bill is neither partisan nor pandering to particular groups, which is what we have been seeing for far too long from the Liberals, even in a minority government.

As everyone knows full well, and as the Bloc Québécois reminds the House on a daily basis, the Liberal Party has in its DNA an outrageous obsession with centralization that undermines the spirit of the Constitution that it shoved down Quebec's throat in 1982. Our NDP colleagues have always blindly followed the Liberals' lead in this matter. They act like the Liberals' lackeys, always eager to gather the crumbs that their masters leave behind in exchange for an ideological promiscuity that changes with the political winds.

To get back to Bill C-14, the government intends to amend a wide range of existing laws, enhancing them in some cases, but in an unfair way, as the Quebec governments of the past six decades would agree.

Regarding the best interests of Quebec taxpayers, most of the legislative amendments proposed by the Liberal government to the tax laws will have little or no effect on the current situation in Quebec. In fact, by amending the Canada Student Financial Assistance Act, the government is merely confirming the soundness and relevance of Quebec's student financial assistance program, which was established by Daniel Johnson Sr.'s government in the late 1960s. Premier Johnson was only continuing the work of the Lesage government, whose most imposing and important figures were undoubtedly Paul Gérin-Lajoie and René Lévesque.

Quebec offers one of the best student loan and bursary programs in the western world. This extraordinarily progressive approach has made our researchers, engineers, thinkers and numerous creators famous the world over, all thanks to the excellence of our university network.

• (1335)

Take, for example, my alma mater. The Université du Québec à Rimouski is internationally recognized for its marine acoustic research and the number of world-renowned researchers it has doing cutting-edge research on ecosystems like the unique, majestic St. Lawrence River. The same goes for Université Laval, the Université de Sherbrooke, the Université de Montréal and McGill University for medical and pharmaceutical research. Quebec ingenuity continues to grow. It is because of the student funding program developed by the Quebec government that we can be proud of the major breakthroughs in the medical research that is so important to us today.

During this devastating pandemic, I know that my counterparts in other provinces understandably envy Quebec for the prominent place that our researchers, scientists and doctors have on Canada's team.

For decades, the Quebec government has stood up to the federal government and demanded that Ottawa respect Quebec's constitutional prerogatives. The pride of a people gives rise to the significant benefits and advantages that forge a true nation.

If the government wants to make up for the weaknesses in its legislation concerning financial assistance for students in the rest of Canada, it should consider fair compensation for young Quebecers who are treated well by Quebec, but not so well by the federal government. It is a simple matter of fairness.

Government Orders

Speaking of fairness, I would be remiss if I failed to mention a fundamentally unfair aspect of the government's action during the pandemic. Despite the billions of dollars in financial support that were announced and given to the Prime Minister's friends and family, we know that those who have clearly been the most unfairly and personally affected by COVID-19 are seniors, that is, our parents, grandparents and great-grandparents, if we are lucky.

It is unfortunate that the government has once again failed our seniors, when they are the ones whose financial situation has seriously deteriorated because of the many protective measures put in place for them by the various levels of government. I am very concerned about the fact that, apart from a single lump-sum payment last summer, the Liberal government failed these people who came before us and literally built a society of which we can be proud. To me, that is a slap in the face to an entire generation who, it seems to me—

• (1340)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but his time is up.

The member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am very familiar with Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, the region the hon. member represents.

The people there are proud, but also quite eloquent. I am thinking about Guy Caron, the former MP for that riding. He was a worthy representative of that riding in the House of Commons. Every time he rose, everyone listened. He made important contributions to the debates.

I must say that I am disappointed that the hon. member chose to hurl a bunch of insults at all the other members of the House. That is inappropriate. I hope he will reflect on that and put more substance into his speech next time.

The part of his speech that I found interesting had to do with student rights. As we all know, the government refused to freeze all student loan payments. Unfortunately, there was only talk of interest rates. In this crisis, the government needs to go much further.

What are the potential repercussions of forcing students in Quebec and Canada to make student loan payments during the crisis?

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Madam Speaker, I listened carefully to the inappropriate comments of my colleague from New Westminster—Burnaby.

Government Orders

I invite him to reflect on the fact that he sent all the municipal councils in Quebec a bill for a pan-Canadian pharmacare program, despite knowing that this is a Quebec jurisdiction. His political party has an ideological habit of encroaching on areas of provincial jurisdiction. Moreover, he decided to send this without consulting the members of Parliament who were democratically elected by the people. The member should stop lecturing us on morality and respect. We can do without a scolding from the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

Of course, as I mentioned in my speech, Quebec already has its own loan and bursary program. Why should it have to pay twice and do twice the work?

Again, I do not think my colleague understands. We are not the ones who invented the Constitution. What we are saying today is to play by the rules. We will talk about respect later.

• (1345)

[English]

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, I believe my hon. colleague, like me, was elected in 2019. Neither I nor he, if my memory serves correct, has seen a budget by the government, yet here we have a kind of hybrid measure, with a spattering of new programming, new spending, a massive debt ceiling authority to borrow and increases.

I am wondering if the member opposite would care to comment on the fact that it has been, as I understand, around 600 days since we have seen a budget from the current government.

[Translation]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Madam Speaker, I listened carefully to the remarks of my colleague from Battle River—Crowfoot and I thank him for his question. Clearly, the \$382 billion deficit is unprecedented and we are in an unprecedented situation. Does that warrant spending extraordinary amounts without any accountability? The answer is no.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer was clear on the Liberal government's spending plan presented in late November. If the plan's objective is to get the economy back on its feet after the pandemic, it will likely not succeed. The best economists have weighed in and said that the plan to balance the budget will not work. I will reiterate my colleague's comments: There must be greater transparency and a true plan for addressing this unprecedented situation.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to wish everyone a happy new year.

We are jumping right into issues that will have a major impact on the future of all Canadian families across the country during the pandemic. I would like to start by talking about some of the impacts we have already seen. I know that my speech will be interrupted by question period and that I will finish it after that.

I would like to start by emphasizing how important it is for all parliamentarians to work together to mitigate this crisis, a crisis that is having a massive impact on every city and town in Canada and leaving no part of the country unscathed.

[English]

Just this weekend, we commemorated the sad one-year anniversary of the first COVID case in Canada. Since the identification a year ago of the first COVID case, 20,000 Canadians have died as the pandemic has ravaged this country.

I think all of us understand the importance of underscoring the incredible courage and bravery of front-line health care workers. They have gone to work often at peril of their lives, and dozens have perished during this pandemic. The impacts of COVID have been devastating, and we as parliamentarians need to underscore their courage and dedication in a time of immense tragedy, when in each and every case those health care workers were putting their lives on the line.

We are going through a pandemic that will have repercussions for years to come. I think back to the Spanish flu epidemic and the lessons we can pull out of what was such a tragic pandemic a century ago. In so many cases and in so many countries, the financial and economic repercussions of the Spanish flu, even after the actual pandemic itself had lessened and then ceased, were felt for over a decade afterward, so my comments today are not just about what we need to do now, but also about what we need to do over the course of the next decade. This is when the financial and economic repercussions are felt.

We need to be bold. We need to take action in a way that not only brings Canadians through this pandemic, hopefully safely and with their health intact, but lays the foundation for rebuilding afterward in a way that ensures that the decade-long economic and financial repercussions that will hit so many Canadian families will actually be addressed by the federal government, and it will provide supports to communities right across the country.

• (1350)

[Translation]

Bill C-14 is certainly not a bold response to the pandemic's devastating repercussions. A closer look at what is in this bill makes it clear that the government does not know how to respond boldly to all the challenges Canadians are facing.

When I look at the substance of this bill, I can see that it is a long way from meeting the expectations of Canadians going through this pandemic and taking a financial and economic hit. Overall, this bill offers a little help, and that is good. A little help is better than nothing, for sure.

It is important to say that the government could dare to do more and go much further. As the leader of the NDP, the hon. member for Burnaby South, and the entire NDP caucus have already made very clear, help is needed now. We need to look at each and every element of the bill and see what is missing.

Long-term care is getting help, help that is clearly needed. We are seeing that the epicentre of this pandemic is in Quebec's long-term care homes and in long-term care centres across the country. In these places, we are seeing thousands of deaths resulting from a lack of rules aimed at reinforcing standards of care provided there.

Our seniors deserve better in all the services they receive. A billion is not much when we look at what the government has done since this crisis began. From the beginning, we have seen the government offer \$750 billion to Canada's major banks. Government members will say that this liquidity support is not just coming from the government, but from a number of sources. The fact remains that in the few days when the pandemic hit hardest in March, the government had to act quickly, and its first act was to provide \$750 billion to Canada's major banks. The government's first instinct was to say that it needed to come to the aid of Canada's banks, and it made \$750 billion available to that sector.

If all the expenditures under this bill are spent, seniors will receive just under \$1 billion. The ratio is 750 to one: \$1 billion for Canada's seniors, who have died by the thousands during this pandemic, but \$750 billion for the banking sector, which has already made \$30 billion in profits since the pandemic began. What message is the government sending by throwing so much money at Canada's big banks? Is that our priority?

Meanwhile, this bill has only crumbs to offer, and that includes the Canada child benefit. Yes, \$100 a month certainly helps, but what is really needed right away is a \$2-billion investment to lay the foundation for a national child care system. The unemployment rate continues to rise, and economic difficulties have existed since before the pandemic. Canadian families already had, on average, the highest level of family debt among the most industrialized countries as a result of policies put in place by previous Conservative and Liberal governments. The government could have done better, much better, and been bold enough to do more than simply offer \$100 a month to families struggling to keep their homes and put food on the table.

• (1355)

The bill also mentions student loans. The government is suspending student loan interest payments. However, students trying to get through this crisis as best they can still have to repay their student loans. Even if interest rates are lower, the amount of the loans are minimal when we think of all the difficulties they are experiencing. Just compare the amount of student loan interest that has been suspended with the \$750 billion in liquidity supports given to major Canadian banks.

With respect to pharmacare, next month we will have the opportunity to vote on Bill C-213, which will establish the legal framework for pharmacare. I must say that we are seeing strong support for this bill across the country. As a Bloc Québécois member mentioned, dozens of Quebec municipalities have just expressed support for this bill, which will establish a universal pharmacare plan that all Canadians will be able to access. Unions in Quebec and across Canada are also calling for a plan that will leave no one behind.

With the pandemic, we are talking about tens of millions of people who do not have access to a pharmacare program, either be-

cause they lost their job or because they do not have access to a protection plan through their employer. Bill C-14 could have included certain aspects that the NDP will bring forward during the vote in Parliament next month, but right now, that too is being left out.

I know that my time is nearly up, but I would like to say that the most disappointing thing about this bill, even though some aspects are rather positive, is the government's lack of ambition at a time when Canadians are going through an unprecedented crisis.

• (1400)

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby. He will have seven minutes and two seconds when we resume debate.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Derek Sloan (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, the Keystone XL cancellation is a stunning blow to all Canadians. This affects far more than Alberta and Saskatchewan. There is hardly a small town in Ontario that does not have a business that manufactures for the energy industry.

While this cancellation is lamentable, this is precisely the goal of the Paris agreement and the Liberals' net-zero bill, Bill C-12. The fact that this cancellation occurred on the same day the U.S. rejoined the Paris agreement is telling.

Shutting down projects like Keystone will not decrease global oil demand, but will ensure Canada gets a lower price for its oil, receives less tax revenue and more Canadians remain out of work. It will ensure that we import more oil from Saudi Arabia and others that have awful environmental and human rights track records.

I know why the Liberals and others will be supporting this bill, but I am very surprised the Conservatives and Erin O'Toole will be supporting this.

I am voting against Bill C-12, and I hope some of my former Conservative colleagues will have the courage to stand against this assault on our energy industry.

God bless Canada and all our natural resources.

Statements by Members

The Speaker: I know we have been away for a while and we tend to forget the rules, but I want to remind the hon. members that we cannot name another member by their name, just by the riding from which they come or their title in the House.

* * *

TAMIL HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. Maninder Sidhu (Brampton East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to honour Tamil Heritage Month.

My riding of Brampton East is home to a dynamic, talented and hard-working Tamil population. Canadians of Tamil heritage make up an important piece of our community fabric and I am thrilled that January was unanimously passed by Parliament as a month to commemorate Tamil heritage and celebrate the many achievements and contributions to our country.

As we reflect together with the Tamil community, I know myself and many Tamil-Canadians are heartbroken and devastated by the destruction of the memorial monument at the University of Jaffna.

I would also like to acknowledge the terrific work of the Brampton Tamil Seniors Association, as it has been working hard to reduce social isolation and improve connectivity among seniors in the Brampton community.

This past year has presented a huge challenge to organizations such as it to find new ways to safely support the active participation of seniors in society. They have stepped up in a major way and have risen to the occasion to ensure those who are most vulnerable in our society continue to feel valued and cared for.

I encourage all Canadians to celebrate and reflect on the richness of the Tamil culture and language. Happy Tamil Heritage Month.

* * *

YORK—SIMCOE

Mr. Scot Davidson (York—Simcoe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, York—Simcoe has a story to tell. Together, we have shown incredible spirit and resilience in the face of great challenges this past year. I would like to take this opportunity to highlight some of the unsung heroes of my community.

Teenagers Sarah and Emily Dahlgren from Bradford are two such heroes. They raised \$50,000 dollars for the local food bank through hard work and by inspiring the entire community. Bob Goodlad from Keswick Flowers and Gifts was a shining light on Mother's Day last year when he helped provide flowers to residents of a local senior's home with the assistance of John Benyik from York EMS. The Bailey family from Bailey's Homestead provided meals for front-line workers when they were needed most.

Of course we recognize the food bank and shelter workers, as well as the countless small businesses owners who are giving back, even while fighting to keep their businesses alive, including the restaurant owners and farmers who are feeding the hungry. These inspiring individuals and our community are what give me hope as 2021 gets under way.

WHITBY CAREMONGERS

Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Whitby, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in March of last year, as the pandemic began to shut down our entire country, a group of dedicated community volunteers in Whitby banded together to ensure nobody was left behind.

I want to congratulate and thank everyone involved in the Whitby Caremongers. From organizing multiple community-wide food drives with hundreds of volunteers, to setting up phone lines and delivering food and other essentials to seniors in isolation, to creating a gift card collection program before the holidays to make sure that children from Whitby did not go without these holidays, these incredible people have helped keep our community safe and healthy and have stepped up to the plate during a challenging time. By showing they care about each other, these outstanding volunteers, these Caremongers, have demonstrated community resilience and achieved an immeasurable impact.

On behalf of the people of Whitby, I want to say a big heartfelt thank you to the volunteers across our community. They have shown compassion and given so much during a challenging year, and they enrich our community.

* * *

● (1405)

[Translation]

2016 ATTACK IN OUAGADOUGOU

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, five years ago, on January 15, 2016, there was an attack on Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso. That traditionally peaceful country was plunged into abject violence entrenched in politics and religion. This attack reverberated all the way to Quebec, because six people from Lac-Beauport were killed. Those generous people were there as volunteers building a school to help a community continue to live in peace and have access to education, so the children can contribute to the collective well-being when they grow up.

Gladys Chamberland, Yves Carrier, Charlelie Carrier, Maude Carrier, Louis Chabot and Suzanne Bernier, your names are etched into our memories and our hearts. We wish you were still with us. We live by your example, which showed us that gestures both big and small help make this world better through education.

I want their families and their many friends to know that we remember them.

MARIE-PAULE KIROUAC

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Sherbrooke, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to mark the passing of a great woman from Sherbrooke on January 6. Marie-Paule Kirouac played a key role in the creation of Maison Aube-Lumière, a palliative care home for people in the advanced stages of cancer. She was also the organization's first executive director.

Ms. Kirouac was a fighter. She never backed down from a challenge. She was an amazingly determined and caring woman who did everything she could to ensure the well-being of others. I know this because I had the privilege of working with her for 10 years while I served on the Maison Aube-Lumière's board of directors.

She did not take no for an answer. During fundraising campaigns, no one was able to exude as much empathy or convey the importance of the Maison Aube-Lumière's mission quite like she could.

I offer my deepest condolences to her family and friends.

Thank you for everything, Ms. Kirouac.

* * *

[English]

TEAM MURPHY

Mr. Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, residents in our part of eastern Ontario are standing behind a friend and a leader who has always been there for us. For years, David Murphy has volunteered and raised money for numerous causes in Cornwall and area. Whether in the boxing ring, flipping burgers at a barbecue, or even shaving his head, David's energy has been inspiring. Now David needs us.

He needs our prayers and best wishes as he battles cancer and an uncertain future. However, in typical Murphy fashion, he is not focused on himself, but rather on helping others. He is selling Team Murphy T-shirts to help cancer patients with gas cards and other expenses. His fundraising goal was about \$1,500, and to date the effort has raised \$5,000 and counting.

David Murphy embodies the Canadian spirit. He is strong, caring and giving. I urge my friend David to keep fighting, and I thank him for his endless community work. We are all behind him on Team Murphy.

* * *

CONVERSION THERAPY

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I am honoured to stand before you to shed some positive light during these challenging times from my riding of Kingston and the Islands. I am proud to inform the House that Kingston City Council voted unanimously at its last council meeting to pass a motion banning the practice of conversion therapy, making Kingston the first city in Ontario to ban conversion therapy practices.

Conversion therapy is a harmful practice that targets vulnerable LGBTQ2+ Canadians, which can lead to lifelong trauma. I am glad to hear that Kingston as a community has stepped up to ban these

Statements by Members

practices. I especially want to thank Councillor Bridget Doherty and Mayor Bryan Paterson for bringing this motion forward and indeed all the city councillors for taking this position.

I look forward to working hard with my colleagues in the House at the federal level to ensure Bill C-6 gets passed as law and conversion therapy is banned right across Canada.

* * *

● (1410)

BURNS NIGHT

Hon. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today Canadians of Scottish heritage celebrate the memory and legacy of poet Robert Burns. Over 260 years after his birth, Burns endures because he spoke strongly to people through his words, which still resonate today. They are words of empathy, humanity and unity.

It was my father who taught me Burns's *Auld Lang Syne*, *To a Mouse* and *My Heart's in the Highlands*. Then, my dad gave me his treasured book of Burns' poetry, which had been passed down from his father. The leather cover was long gone and the pages were worn and tattered, but the book remains one of my most prized possessions. The poems are a "cup o' kindness" during difficult times. After all, Burns' abiding message is one of fellowship and love for others.

To each of my friends, I wish an uplifting virtual Burns Night supper filled with dance, pipes, poetry and song.

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NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Kerry Diotte (Edmonton Griesbach, CPC): Mr. Speaker, "lame", "weak" and "wimpy" are words that describe our Prime Minister's reaction to the cancellation of the Keystone XL pipeline. On day one as U.S. president, Joe Biden dealt a crippling economic blow to this country and his own by derailing that project. The PM boasted that he was the first world leader Biden called. How did he stand up to the new president? He did not. He said he was disappointed by the cancellation, but he shrugged it off, saying that the new president was just keeping a campaign promise.

The Prime Minister needs to stop daydreaming about his last Caribbean vacation, get back to work, get the president back on the phone and tell him that this is no way to treat a best friend, that both countries need this pipeline and that he must reverse this decision immediately.

*Statements by Members***ORDER OF CANADA**

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on December 31, a Charlottetown constituent was named to the Order of Canada.

In his forties, he walked away from a secure government job to invest everything he had into a bankrupt cookware company. That company, best known by its brand Paderno, went on to tremendous success and provided stable year-round careers for a growing number of families in Prince Edward Island over the last 35 years.

His involvement with Atlantic Beef Products is also a story of resurgence. The beef plant was a major drain on government coffers when this constituent became chairman of the board. After building a strong team and then a strong brand, Atlantic Beef flourished. It is profitable and is providing meaningful employment to Islanders.

His commitment to his community was on display when he led the capital fundraising campaign for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, which raised \$23 million in 2010. This would not have been possible without the support of my mom, Joan, and I could not be more proud of my dad, Jim Casey, on his appointment to the Order of Canada.

I send my congratulations to my dad.

* * *

[Translation]

SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED BUSINESSES

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada's small and medium-sized businesses are feeling the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The hospitality, culture and arts sectors have had to cut a massive number of jobs. For men and women across the country, dreams of owning a business and creating a legacy have been dashed.

Small and medium-sized businesses in Canada need a solid recovery plan.

The Conservatives are known for their expertise in economics. The previous Conservative government skilfully navigated the 2008 economic crisis, emerging stronger than all other G7 countries. Canadians deserve the best. The Conservatives continue to work with the government to build the Canada of the future.

Future measures to support small and medium-sized businesses must focus on helping these businesses, and Canadian jobs, survive long term.

* * *

[English]

CANADA-U.S. RELATIONS

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada's Conservatives would like to congratulate President Joe Biden and Vice-President Kamala Harris on their inauguration. Canada and the United States enjoy a unique relationship, unlike any in the world. We share a geography, similar values, common interests and family ties. We share the largest trading relation-

ship in the world and note that the first call the President made to a foreign head of government was to Canada.

[Translation]

We have a shared future. Our successes and failures hinge on our co-operation on matters such as trade, investments and diplomacy.

● (1415)

[English]

The Canada-U.S. relationship has never been more important as we focus on vaccine distribution and securing North America's economic recovery. Canada's Conservatives look forward to working with the new Biden administration.

* * *

[Translation]

COVID-19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals claim to want to help workers, but that is not the case.

Because of the Liberals' gross incompetence, thousands of people were told that they were entitled to the CERB. The truth is that the government changed the rules halfway through the game. Today, the government is asking those people to pay back the money they received, money that they have already spent on groceries or rent. The Liberals could not care less about that because they are completely out of touch with reality.

Honest workers have been misled by the Liberals. Rather than supporting these workers in this time of crisis, the Liberals are bleeding them dry. If there is one thing that we have come to expect from the Liberals, it is their lack of courage. In this case, the courageous thing to do would be for the Liberals to tax the wealthiest Canadians to fix their mistake and restore some semblance of tax fairness in this country.

The courageous thing to do would be for the Liberals to admit their mistakes and fix them but not at the expense of the most vulnerable. The courageous thing to do would be for the Liberals to focus on people's real priorities, namely, the pandemic, vaccines, and our health care system and public services, rather than on plans to build billion-dollar pipelines.

* * *

[English]

HEALTH

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Manitoba has just emerged from 11 weeks of code red restrictions that had all Manitobans staying at home and staying apart during the holidays. The ongoing lockdowns have put 5,600 Manitoba businesses at risk of permanently disappearing and many have already closed, impacting thousands of workers who had good-paying, stable jobs.

These last three months, and frankly the last year, have been extremely difficult for my constituents. They deserve a federal government that has their backs and secures vaccines for Canadians so we can get our economy back on track and return to our normal lives. However, this week Manitoba will receive zero doses of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine and all new vaccination appointments have been halted as a result.

Despite this critical situation, the Prime Minister took his time in calling the CEO of Pfizer. Meanwhile, other world leaders were calling and securing vaccines for their countries and will receive their vaccine shipments while Canada is left behind. Canadians deserve a real plan to secure vaccines now.

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[Translation]

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Governor General had to resign as a result of her abusive behaviour.

As far as we Quebecers are concerned, she should not be replaced. Instead, the position should be abolished. The Crown symbolizes the monarchy, which has no place in a democratic society.

The situation the Prime Minister now finds himself in also reflects his own sloppiness. Ms. Payette's problems with staff relations are nothing new. Obviously, the Prime Minister simply failed to do any checks in advance. He wanted to put on a good show. He got his good show, but it is going to cost us \$150,000 a year for the rest of her life.

The same can be said of vaccinations. He made a big show of it when the first doses arrived, but he did nothing to ensure a steady supply. It is the same story with borders: He lectures everyone, but does nothing to actually stop people from travelling. The Prime Minister would rather put on a show than do his job. Quebecers are sick of paying for his debacles.

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[English]

SUDBURY WOMEN'S CENTRE

Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Sudbury, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Sudbury Women's Centre is celebrating its 40th anniversary with a 40 years, 40 days, \$40,000 fundraiser from January 27 until March 8, which is International Women's Day. Since August 1981, the centre has been working to provide a safe place for women to seek help and refuge when, at times, there is nowhere else to turn.

The pandemic remains a major challenge for survivors of gender-based and domestic violence and the organizations that serve them. Since last April, the centre has been assisting clients with basic needs like food and hygiene items through delivery and curbside pickup. It offers peer support over the phone, and still delivers such programs as Self-Compassion and Collective Kitchen. The centre enables women to reclaim their self-worth and drive.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

On average, more than 9,000 women use it each year. Before the pandemic, an average of 150 to 250 women visited the centre each week.

[English]

I want to thank the workers and volunteers of the centre for their continued leadership in our community.

ORAL QUESTIONS

● (1420)

[English]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last fall Conservatives asked the Prime Minister what he was going to do to protect the thousands of jobs related to the Keystone XL pipeline. The Prime Minister's answer was that he called President Biden. Those workers deserved better than one phone call leading to pink slips.

Why did the Prime Minister bet the jobs of thousands of Canadians on a single phone call to the President?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is simply not the case.

From the very beginning we have been there to support oil and gas workers across the country, including in Alberta and Saskatchewan. That is why seven years ago, when I was a mere leader of the third party in the House of Commons, I went down to Washington to advocate for the Keystone XL pipeline to a room full of American Democrats, to talk about the interconnectedness of our energy security but also to advocate for more leadership on climate change.

Over the past five years, we have demonstrated that investing in oil and gas and fighting climate change can go together—

The Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Prime Minister for confirming he has had no success with the U.S. relationship for seven years.

The government's response since the Americans decided to kill Keystone has been complete surrender. Canadians are being told it was a campaign promise the Liberals did not want to interfere with. The Liberals are now telling Canadians just to move on.

Is this the kind of mail-it-in effort from the Prime Minister we are going to get when hundreds of thousands of Canadians are worried about their economic future?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, how quickly the Leader of the Opposition forgets that the past four years were characterized by this government consistently standing up for Canadians right across the country, whether by protecting supply management, whether by protecting the cultural exemption, whether by protecting our steel and aluminum workers, whether by moving forward on defending Canadian interests against the previous administration or by working hand in hand on both fighting climate change and creating new jobs with this current administration.

We will stay focused on sticking up for Canadians every step of the way.

* * *

HEALTH

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in just a few days he has already lost thousands of jobs in both Canada and the U.S. from inaction.

We also know, on vaccines, that the government was talking to Pfizer last fall about logistics. It has known for months there were going to be problems with production. It did not plan for it. This week, there will be no deliveries of the Pfizer vaccine. Next week, our order has been cut by 86%, which is more than any other country.

Why are Canadians always paying for the Prime Minister's failure to act quickly?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, from the very beginning, we knew there would be challenges with the global supply chains around vaccines as they were developed, which is why we set out and succeeded in signing more contracts with more different companies for more doses per Canadian than any other country in the world. We know that momentary delays are happening on Pfizer, but we will be receiving hundreds of thousands of doses later in February and we are still on track to vaccinate over three million Canadians by the end of Q1, and everyone who wants it by September.

[Translation]

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, across Canada, 18% of vaccine deliveries have been reduced. This week, there have been no vaccine deliveries, no distribution plan and delivery delays. This is increasing the concerns of Canadians. The Prime Minister must act now.

When will the Liberal government take action to get more vaccines?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we continue to talk with all the different vaccine companies because we have been able to sign contracts with more vaccine companies to get more potential doses per Canadian than any other country.

We are disappointed by Pfizer's interruption, but we continue to receive deliveries from Moderna. We continue to work with the other companies to get vaccines to Canada more quickly.

I can reassure Canadians. Our goal remains to have at least three million Canadians vaccinated by the end of March and everyone—

● (1425)

The Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we need more doses. This week, in the middle of a pandemic, Canada will not be getting a single dose.

There is a significant delay in Canada's vaccine supply. At long-term care homes and seniors' residences, vaccinations are on pause. This is a crucial time for all Canadians. This week, there will not be a single vaccine.

Why are we still behind on vaccines and other measures during this pandemic?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I understand that the Leader of the Opposition is looking to score political points, but he must not sow fear among Canadians. He must not deliberately mislead Canadians.

We will still receive doses from Moderna. There will, indeed, be a temporary interruption in deliveries from Pfizer, but we are working very closely with the company to ensure that we receive more doses in a few weeks when their factory is once again operational. We will be able to vaccinate everyone by September. We are on track to meet our objectives for the end of March.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is nice to hear the Prime Minister say that members must not mislead people. Perhaps he should listen to his own advice.

The media is reporting that Quebec has had to postpone vaccinations for parents and grandparents in Quebec because of delays in shipments from Pfizer, which were already in short supply, on top of the delays that had been announced in mid-January.

I want to hear it from his own mouth. How many vaccines will we receive from Pfizer this week?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we told the provinces a few weeks ago, the Pfizer deliveries were interrupted because the company is retooling its Belgian plant. Pfizer will be sending us hundreds of thousands of doses in a few weeks, but deliveries are on hold for now. However, the good news is that, because we negotiated agreements with several companies, we are still getting doses from Moderna. We are working with Pfizer and other manufacturers to get as many doses as we can as quickly as possible.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the answer is zero deliveries.

I would like to hear him tell Quebec seniors that these delays are a good thing.

On January 21, Global News reminded us that Pfizer had asked the finance committee for improvements to the corporate tax regime, tax incentives for the industry and changes to drug pricing procedures in Canada.

Is the Prime Minister at all concerned about the fact that, even as Pfizer is delaying and cancelling deliveries, it is asking Canada's finance department for more favourable treatment?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the good news is that we negotiated several contracts with different companies just in case there were interruptions with any of them. That is the good news. Our plan heading into negotiations was solid.

Unfortunately, the leader of the Bloc Québécois is once again hinting at conspiracy theories behind various issues. We are working with all the vaccine manufacturers to deliver as many vaccines as possible across Canada. We have a plan to vaccinate everyone by September, and we will keep that promise.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we have lost more than 19,000 people to COVID-19, including front-line workers and seniors. Families are mourning the loss of their loved ones.

Why is the Prime Minister advocating for an election instead of putting all his efforts into protecting the public and making sure that everyone is vaccinated?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is the leader of the NDP who is talking about elections.

We are focused on delivering vaccines to Canadians and helping seniors across the country. That is why we are working with the provinces on standards for long-term care and working with the Red Cross and the Canadian Armed Forces to help our seniors. We will continue to focus on what Canadians want, which is to provide the help Canadians need.

We made a promise to be there for everyone, for as long as necessary, and we are going to keep that promise.

• (1430)

[*English*]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we have lost over 19,000 Canadians to COVID-19, and that is a staggering number. However, it is not just a number: These are real people, like Yassin Dabeh, a 19-year-old Syrian refugee who fled war to end up losing his life to COVID-19 while working in a long-term care centre, a for-profit long-term care centre.

Why is the Prime Minister spending time preparing for an election when he should be spending all of his time protecting Canadians by making sure that everyone has access to a vaccine?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we made a promise to Canadians that we would have their backs, whatever it took, as long as it takes to get through this pandemic, and that is what we are focused on.

I will allow the leader of the NDP to talk about elections all he wants, but our focus is on delivering for Canadians and supporting Canadians through the tragedies and the incredible heroics we are seeing on display right across the country from our front-line workers. There are far too many tragedies, but we know that Canadians are continuing to be there for each other, and this government will continue to be there for them.

Oral Questions

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to check the Prime Minister's math. He said that every adult would be vaccinated by September, which is 32 weeks away, and all the leading COVID-19 vaccines require two doses. There are approximately 30 million adults in Canada and under 2% have received a single dose so far. This means that Canada, on average, needs to be administering roughly two million doses per week to meet this goal. This week's total is zero.

How the hell did this happen, and what are the Liberals doing to fix it?

The Speaker: I know that everyone has been away for a while and parliamentary language is something that we tend to forget, and so I just want to remind everyone that certain words do rank as unparliamentary. However, I know it was slip-up and do not think it was planned.

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is no question that we share the urgency of Canadians to obtain vaccines as soon as possible. With more than 1.1 million vaccines distributed across this country to date, we are on track to have three million Canadians vaccinated by the end of March, and all Canadians who wish to be vaccinated will have access to a vaccine before the end of September 2021.

We are on track with our strategy. This is a temporary interruption, and we will make sure we deliver for Canadians, because nothing is more important.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to congratulate Romania, Poland, Italy, Spain, the Czech Republic, France and other countries for receiving doses from Pfizer this week, as their governments negotiated more favourable terms with drug companies than Canada's procurement minister. We know why the procurement minister will not release the details of these contracts: It is because she executed a terrible deal.

What are the Liberals doing to fix their deadly screw-ups and get us vaccines?

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, we secured, under seven APAs, the largest number of doses per capita of any country in the world. We also made sure not to put all our eggs in one basket so that in case there are interruptions in the supply chain, we will be able to draw on other companies' deliveries.

To that end, we will be receiving over 300,000 doses from both Pfizer and Moderna next week alone. We will have six million doses in this country before the end of March. Then, going on through the rest of the year, we will see millions and millions more vaccines—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill.

Oral Questions

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would argue that this week Canada is receiving the lowest per capita amount of vaccines, because we are receiving zero. Zero is zero; it is not something that is there. I do not know why the procurement minister does not understand that. We do not have the same favourable terms as other countries do, and that is her fault. It is the Prime Minister's fault.

Not having a plan is not going to cut it. What is the government going to do to get us vaccines now?

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is inaccurate to say that we do not have a plan. On the contrary, we have secured more vaccines per capita than any other country in the world. We will see 20 million vaccines coming in from Pfizer and Moderna alone in Q2. We will see 70 million vaccines coming in from these companies prior to the end of September.

That is the plan, and we are on track.

● (1435)

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Maccabi Healthcare Services, an Israeli health care provider, reported a 60% reduction in COVID-19 infections three weeks after the first vaccine was administered. Here in Canada, our economy is suffocating and people are in lockdown and suffering pointlessly just because this Prime Minister screwed up negotiations with vaccine manufacturers. No fewer than 20 countries, including England, Ireland and Denmark, are way ahead of Canada in per capita vaccine administration.

Why is the Prime Minister refusing to tell Canadians the truth?

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the retooling is temporary. Canada is in a good position. Retooling is not causing us to lose a single dose. Canada received vaccines in December before many other countries, and we are on track to vaccinate at least three million people by the end of March. Let us not forget that some countries, such as Japan, New Zealand, Australia and South Korea, have not even started vaccinating at all yet.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister is providing examples of countries that are doing worse than Canada, but why not look at those that are doing better? We currently rank 24th in the world among large countries in terms of vaccinations per capita. We have been saying all along that the contracts have been mismanaged, and now the facts are clear.

When will the Prime Minister come clean to Canadians and admit that he did a poor job of negotiating the contracts?

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is nothing wrong with the contracts.

We feel the same sense of urgency as Canadians to secure these essential vaccines as quickly as possible. More than 1.1 million vaccines have been distributed across the country so far. Canada ranks among the top five G20 countries in COVID-19 vaccinations.

Our government is responsible for this file and we will not stop until the job is done.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we may rank fifth in the G20, but we rank 24th when compared to countries like the Seychelles, which is ahead of Canada. That is not normal.

We have been pointing out problems with the contracts since November and December. These problems are now playing out, as we learn that no vaccines will be distributed in Canada this week. That is not normal for a country that claims to have the best vaccine portfolio in the world. We want the facts, and that means getting vaccines.

Will the minister confirm whether someone somewhere is leading this government and will get us vaccines as quickly as possible?

[English]

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by saying this:

[Translation]

This is a completely temporary situation, as we are working hard to ensure that every Canadian who wants a vaccine gets one.

Canada remains well positioned, since we rank in the top five of G20 countries when it comes to per capita vaccination. We plan to vaccinate three million people by the end of March and at least 13 million people by the end of the second quarter, and we are on the right track.

* * *

AIR TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the government is reluctant to stop people from travelling from Quebec and Canada to other countries, even though, for almost a year now, many preventive measures have been proposed and could even have been implemented, had it not been for the government's stubbornness.

The government also promised to force companies that receive assistance to reimburse airline tickets. Airlines, even foreign ones, have received the Canada emergency wage subsidy. They have received assistance.

Will the government at least force the airlines to refund the cost of tickets for people who have cancelled their pleasure trips?

● (1440)

[English]

Hon. Omar Alghabra (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are aware of how frustrating the situation is for Canadians. We are very much supportive of our airline industry and sector. Discussions are ongoing with the airline sector to prepare a support package, but members can rest assured that no support package will happen without refunds for passengers and support for our regional routes.

* * *

[Translation]

HEALTH

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the government is twiddling its thumbs while people are losing their jobs and thousands of people are not getting their refunds. Now it is in the hands of the courts. In an initial ruling today, the courts indicated that the companies must refund the flights.

The Prime Minister spends his time lecturing Quebec during his press conferences in front of his residence. What is he doing to stop tourists from travelling south? He is doing nothing. What is he doing to ensure that they quarantine when they return? He is doing nothing. What is he doing to prevent foreign variants from entering the country? He is doing absolutely nothing.

It is January 25, and for the tourist arriving at the airport today it is business as usual. When will the Prime Minister take action?

[English]

Hon. Omar Alghabra (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, we are very much aware of the situation. We are considering all options. Let me remind my colleague that since March 2020, we have advised all Canadians to avoid unnecessary or non-essential international travel. We have put extra measures in place. We have banned foreigners from travelling to Canada for non-essential purposes. We have also implemented pre-departure testing to ensure that all arrivals to Canada are tested for COVID before arrival.

[Translation]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the government is still busy tackling the issues that came up over the holidays. A month later, Ottawa has yet to do a single thing to prevent non-essential travel or to monitor quarantines.

A month after the U.K. alerted the world about a new variant of COVID-19, Ottawa is doing nothing to control the borders and Ontario was hit by a massive outbreak at a long-term care facility.

Everyone is calling on the federal government to restrict travel and oversee the quarantines.

When will they take action? What are they waiting for?

[English]

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at every step of the way, we have used science and evidence to advise

Oral Questions

our country on how best to respond to COVID-19 from those very early days when we were undertaking screening at the border, increasing measures to ban foreign nationals and asking Canadians to forgo non-essential travel. We have some of the strictest measures in the world, including a 14-day quarantine that is enforced and is enforceable by all provinces, territories and local police officers. We need to work together in enforcement as Canadians, provinces and territories to make sure that people adhere to quarantine, and in fact Canadians largely are. We will continue that work and, as my colleagues have said—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Battlefords—Lloydminster.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Mr. Speaker, protecting our seniors and those who care for them must be a priority. An efficient and timely vaccine rollout for long-term care residents and staff is critical to preventing the deadly outbreaks that we are seeing across the country, but our premiers are now reporting that they have run out of vaccines.

With a drop in supply and with uncertainty about the schedule moving forward, strong federal leadership is needed, but once again the Prime Minister is missing in action. When will sufficient doses be available to protect our seniors in long-term care?

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I share the concern about our long-term care residents. My own father is 90 years old and is also waiting for a vaccine. I am working with my department and the Government of Canada extremely hard every single day to ensure that all Canadians will have access to a vaccine as soon as possible.

That is why we are assured that we will receive over 300,000 vaccines next week, and those will be distributed to the provinces and territories. From there, the vaccines are going to ramp up, and we will see millions and millions of vaccines rolling into this country in the next quarter.

Why? It is because this government—

● (1445)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Barrie—Innisfil.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, at the height of an unfolding tragedy at the Roberta Place long-term care centre in my riding, our local health unit has effectively run out of vaccines. The shortage is so serious that seniors, their families, PSWs and front-line health care workers have been told that there is no timeline for when to expect their first doses or vital second doses. We have run out of vaccines at the most critical point in this crisis.

Minister, what do I tell families who are calling me, some in tears, about when they should expect their vaccines, when they know other countries are still getting their vaccines and Canada is not?

Oral Questions

The Speaker: Once again, I just want to remind hon. members to place their questions through the Chair and not directly to the person they are asking.

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, I share the concern about long-term care residents and all people in this country.

We have administered fewer vaccines in this country than we have received, so there are still vaccines that are being utilized, and we will indeed see vaccines ramping up by the hundreds of thousands in this quarter and by the millions for the rest of the year. We are on track to have vaccines for all Canadians before the end of September, because we will stop at nothing to ensure that all Canadians have access to a vaccine this year. That is our promise and that is what we are working on.

Mr. Scot Davidson (York—Simcoe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, residents of The Elden of Bradford in York—Simcoe were supposed to be getting their vaccines last week, but their vaccination clinics were cancelled, and residents are now being told that they will have to wait until the end of February because of Canada's shortage of the Pfizer vaccine. With outbreaks in long-term care homes on the rise again, these delays are unacceptable and deadly. Not enough is being done to protect our most vulnerable.

Why is the Prime Minister failing to show leadership to ensure that Canada has the vaccines needed to protect our citizens?

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Ontario has reported about 100,000 doses that have not been utilized as of yet. Therefore, the claim that the province has run out is simply inaccurate.

That does not take away from the importance of continuing to receive vaccines into this country, and we will continue to do that. There will be 300,000-plus next week, building up over the first trimester, and then going on into the rest of the year. This is our goal. We have the largest number of doses per capita of any country in the world, and that strategy is still on track for this country.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a scathing internal audit has exposed disarray and chaos at the Public Health Agency of Canada. The audit notes limited public health expertise at senior levels and a lack of emergency response capacity, and it even revealed that incorrect information was being fed to Canada's chief public health officer. Today, as Canada's vaccine deliveries shift from week to week, it appears that many of these problems remain unresolved.

How does the minister explain this appalling state of affairs, and can she assure Canadians that these serious gaps are being addressed?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at every step of the way, Canada's response has been based on science and evidence. I want to thank Dr. Tam for her excellent leadership during this time. I will also thank the Public Health Agency of Canada employees who have worked so hard on behalf of Canadians all across this country. We will continue to spare nothing to ensure the agency has what it needs to continue to deliver for Canadians.

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, prior to Christmas, cases of trench fever were found in my riding. This is a disease of extreme poverty. That is abhorrent, and it is a result of the long-standing lack of investment. Our front-line organizations have the ability to address the needs of our community but often lack the resources to respond and provide care for individuals in need. We need help now.

Will the government commit to making additional investments in front-line organizations in my riding of Winnipeg Centre so that individuals can stay safe from this current health crisis?

● (1450)

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every step of the way, we have worked closely with provinces and territories on our COVID-19 response, including the challenges that many organizations are facing in caring for some of the most vulnerable. I continue to have those conversations with health ministers, including the minister from the member's province.

We will continue to ensure that the provinces have what they need as they face this crisis and all the circumstances it causes along with it.

Ms. Jean Yip (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today marks one year since the first COVID-19 case was identified in Canada. Since then, the virus has drastically changed our ways of life, as we have all taken unprecedented measures to stop the spread of the virus.

Since the start of the pandemic, the federal government has been there to support the provinces and territories to combat the virus, especially in the harder hit provinces of Ontario and Quebec.

Could the Minister of Health update the House on what steps our government has taken to combat the COVID-19 pandemic and keep Canadians safe?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Scarborough—Agincourt for her incredibly hard work to protect the people in her riding.

Together, as a nation, we have worked to keep Canadians safe by securing millions of items of PPE, COVID tests and vaccines for provinces, territories and indigenous communities. We funded the Canadian Red Cross to provide rapid help in hot spots, including in long-term care homes across the country. Our military has helped to ensure that seniors stay safe in some of the hardest hit homes in the provinces of Quebec and Ontario. We funded hundreds of millions of dollars in research to support our scientists to better understand how to fight this virus.

I thank our health care heroes, essential workers and every Canadian for working so hard and sacrificing so much to save lives and protect each other.

* * *

[Translation]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada's official opposition recognized that the Chinese government was committing a genocide against the Uighurs and other Turkic Muslims. Two consecutive U.S. administrations have recognized this genocide, which new secretaries Anthony Blinken and Janet Yellen recently confirmed.

What is the Government of Canada's position?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada takes these allegations of genocide very seriously. From the outset, Canada declared that the international community had to work together to investigate the serious human rights violations in Xinjiang. The mounting evidence of a systematic campaign of repression cannot be ignored. Canada will continue to work with its partners and exert pressure for an independent international organization to conduct an investigation so that impartial experts can directly observe and report on the situation.

[English]

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there was absolutely no realistic chance that independent investigators would be allowed into East Turkestan. That is merely a delay tactic.

Donald Trump and Joe Biden do not agree on much, but both their administrations have now recognized that Uighurs and other Turkic Muslims in China are being subject to ongoing genocide.

There is no time for more delays or more investigations. These determinations are very clear from our allies and partners. When will the government join the Biden administration and recognize this genocide?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me repeat that Canada takes allegations of genocide very seriously. From the beginning, Canada has said that the international community has to work together in order to investigate the egregious human rights abuses taking place in Xinjiang. Mounting evidence of a systematic campaign of repression cannot be ignored.

Canada will continue to collaborate with its partners and push for an investigation by an international independent body so that impartial experts can observe and report on the situation first-hand.

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GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government ignored the viceregal appointments committee so it could hand-pick the Governor General. It had, as John Ivison of the National Post quoted sources, a candidate “too spectacular to say no to.” It turns out that the only thing spectacular was the damage the Prime Minister caused with this decision.

Oral Questions

Will the Prime Minister commit to consulting the opposition in using the viceregal appointments committee, so that this country's next Governor General does not end up in the same spectacle as the last one?

● (1455)

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week, after receiving a report with respect to workplace conditions at Rideau Hall, the Prime Minister accepted the resignation of the Governor General. In the interim, as my colleague knows, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Chief Justice Wagner, can ensure all of the constitutional continuity in this role.

The government has made no decisions with respect to the selection or the recommendation of a successor for Her Majesty and will have more to say about that in due course.

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada has a shortage of vaccines, its economy is floundering and we no longer have a Governor General. One person is responsible for this situation and that is the Prime Minister. It was the Prime Minister who decided not to use the committee that we, the Conservatives, created. This committee could have identified the problems, but no, the Prime Minister decided that he knew what was best for everyone and he made a personal decision without consulting anyone, which has led to the current situation.

Why did the Prime Minister not do the bare minimum?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague and friend for his question.

As he is well aware, the Prime Minister accepted the Governor General's resignation last week. The chief justice of the Supreme Court will carry out the constitutional duties of the position in the meantime. The government has not yet made any decisions about the process or measures that must be taken to recommend the best person to Her Majesty the Queen. We will provide more details in due course a few weeks from now.

*Oral Questions***HEALTH**

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Quebec mobilized its health care resources to organize a massive vaccination campaign, the largest in history. However, not one dose was delivered this week. Not one. Quebec did everything in its power to vaccinate people, but Ottawa once again failed in its responsibility to procure vaccines for Quebecers.

Can the Prime Minister give formal assurances today that Quebec will receive doses of the Pfizer vaccine next week?

[English]

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to reiterate something I said earlier. The temporary reduction with the Pfizer deliveries will not impact our overall deliveries for the quarter. Indeed, we will see 300,000-plus doses arriving, starting next week. This will go toward meeting our quarterly goal, which we are on track to meet, of six million doses from Pfizer and Moderna into the country, and those will be distributed to all provinces and territories, including Quebec.

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the federal government is unable to confirm today that it will receive doses of the Pfizer vaccine next week. A government with foresight seeks solutions to help its people, does it not?

We know that there are delays in procuring the Pfizer vaccine as a result of work being done on the plant in Belgium. However, Pfizer has another plant in Michigan. The Prime Minister spoke to U.S. President Joe Biden on Friday.

Did he at least take the initiative to ask him to intervene with Pfizer so that Canada can get vaccines from Michigan?

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for her question. I want to say that I am in constant contact with our international partners. I have been in touch with our ambassador since the beginning of the vaccination process. We are open. We have taken advantage of every opportunity for Canadians.

* * *

[English]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Gary Vidal (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in building the most environmentally friendly pipeline in the world, some first nations were looking to solve intergenerational poverty in their communities. They were anticipating improvements to education, housing, health care and social programs. It meant real jobs, real growth, real progress and, most important, real hope.

Could the Minister of Indigenous Services tell the House what he has done to advocate for these communities that lost their opportunity to advance toward self-determination when Keystone XL pipeline was cancelled?

• (1500)

Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the Prime Minister said directly to the President on Friday, we are disappointed in this decision. First and foremost, our concern is with the thousands of workers, indigenous and non-indigenous, and their families that are impacted by this decision.

I spoke to the Alberta energy minister the morning of the inauguration. The message to her, Albertans as well as to the minister of energy for Saskatchewan was that we would be there to support these workers. We are proud of the work they do. We will need their hard work and ingenuity to lower emissions and keep our oil and gas sector strong and prosperous for years to come.

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, about 1,000 people in my constituency lost their jobs on Wednesday last week.

After half a decade of pain in the energy sector, there was finally a glimmer of optimism when work on Keystone XL began. Canada's world-class energy industry has been attacked long enough by the government. My constituents are suffering, and all Canadians are paying the price.

Can somebody, can anybody, in the government not just give up, but commit to reach across the border to our allies and stand up for the future of these workers and their families?

Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are not happy about this decision.

We made a strong argument for this project at every level and in every way we could, from Ambassador Hillman to the Prime Minister. I spoke, weekly, with Minister Savage and the former member for Edmonton—Leduc, James Rajotte throughout the fall.

The governments of Canada and Alberta stood shoulder to shoulder in Washington, virtually, to make the case together. We made the case for Canada and the President of the U.S. has made a decision to honour his campaign commitment.

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the cancellation of the Keystone XL pipeline is devastating for workers across Canada and especially here in Alberta.

This is the second time that a U.S. president has tried to kill this project, and the second time that the Prime Minister has pretended to be disappointed. The left pretends that cancelling this project is about the environment. Meanwhile Russia, Iran, Nigeria and Venezuela cheer the decision.

The job losses that come with this decision are not pretend jobs. Instead of playing pretend, why does the Prime Minister not actually stand up for Alberta, stand up for Canada and remind the U.S. President who their friends actually are?

Oral Questions

Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Harper Conservatives had years to get Keystone XL done, and what was their strategy? Nothing. There was no strategy except throwing public insults, negotiating in the media, and doing nothing to support the thousands of energy workers, except beating their own chests.

We will not take any lessons from that side of the House on getting projects built or supporting energy workers. We need to focus now on the best strategy to get the best outcomes for workers and for the continued competitiveness and prosperity of our oil and gas industry.

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HUMAN RIGHTS

Ms. Ya'ara Saks (York Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as International Holocaust Remembrance Day falls this week, Jewish communities across Canada are alarmed by rising anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial.

The recent desecration of Montreal's Shaar Hashomayim Synagogue was horrifying, but sadly not surprising to the Jewish community or other faith communities often targeted by hate.

Could the Minister of Foreign Affairs tell the House what the government is doing to fight anti-Semitism in Canada and around the world and to honour the memory of the six million murdered in the Holocaust?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the member for York Centre's question, and condemn in the strongest possible terms the despicable anti-Semitic attack that occurred at Shaar Hashomayim in my community.

Anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial have absolutely no place in our society. This is why Canada has appointed the Hon. Irwin Cotler as Canada's special envoy on preserving Holocaust remembrance and combatting anti-Semitism to lead this work. I am confident that, as special envoy, Mr. Cotler will help advance Canada's efforts to promote Holocaust education, awareness and remembrance and take meaningful action to combat anti-Semitism at home and abroad.

* * *

SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business has warned that one in six businesses is thinking about shutting down permanently. Calgary Forest Lawn is home to the famous International Avenue, where many new Canadians are living their dream of owning their own small business. They are extremely disappointed at the government's lack of an adequate vaccine plan, causing further financial and mental stress. If we hope to have a functioning economy again, we need our small businesses to succeed.

Will the minister commit to providing an actual plan instead of a mouthful of platitudes, or will this be another botched job like the vaccine plan?

• (1505)

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I take issue with the comment that this is a botched vaccine plan. Indeed, we have the highest number of doses per capita of any country in the world. We were one of the first countries to begin vaccinating its citizens, and we have been told by both Pfizer and Moderna at the bargaining table that we were one of the first countries in line with them as suppliers.

This is a temporary reduction in Pfizer's vaccine shipments. We are on track to have three million Canadians vaccinated by the end of the first quarter, and we will have all Canadians with access to a vaccine prior to the end of September—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in the last few weeks I have met with a number of new small businesses that had the misfortune to open just prior to the pandemic. They include Ohana Deli Market in Sun Peaks. In every case, the owner put their heart, soul and, in some cases, their life savings into their dreams. These businesses have fallen through the cracks and the government refuses to offer them a lifeline.

Can the minister reassure these entrepreneurs she is working on a solution and that they will not be left behind?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is really important in the massive support programs that we have put in place for Canadian businesses, such as the wage subsidy and rent subsidy, to also ensure the integrity of those programs. That is something we take very seriously. With new businesses, there are challenges in doing that. Having said that, I take this question very seriously. It is something I hear about too and I am concerned with, and it is something we are looking at closely.

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the economic recovery is about to take a nosedive. The vaccination campaign, which is the only way out of the crisis, has just hit a wall.

According to CFIB, 180,000 businesses could close down and 2.4 million additional jobs could be lost, mostly in the arts, culture, tourism and food service industries.

What measures is the government proposing to help business owners hang on for another eight to 10 months, if the majority of the country is not vaccinated by September 2021?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

Oral Questions

I completely agree that my priority as Minister of Finance is to support our businesses, especially our small and medium-sized businesses. That is why we have introduced extraordinary programs to support them, programs like the Canada emergency wage subsidy, the Canada emergency rent subsidy and additional measures for businesses targeted by new lockdown measures.

As for tourism, we announced additional supports in November. We will continue—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Brome—Missisquoi.

* * *

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Mrs. Lyne Bessette (Brome—Missisquoi, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, communities across Canada are extremely concerned about the rise of Islamophobia, online hate speech and other forms of prejudice that have only intensified throughout the pandemic. We have all seen that words can lead to violence.

As parliamentarians, we recognize that we all have a duty to lead by example. We must engage in respectful dialogue and remain open to debating ideas to hear the views of Canadians in order to work towards a society where everyone is free to thrive with dignity.

Could the Minister of Canadian Heritage tell the House what our government is doing to combat the promotion of hatred and violence online?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Brome—Missisquoi for the question.

Hate speech has no place in our society. Our government will continue to take ambitious, meaningful measures to combat online radicalization and the violence that may ensue. We recently announced funding for YMCA Canada's "Block Hate" initiative to combat cyberviolence and online hate speech.

This project will examine hate speech trends across Canada and work with experts to develop online tools and training for Canadians.

* * *

● (1510)
[English]

AIR TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is shocking and unacceptable that nearly a year into this pandemic, tens of thousands of Canadians have still not received refunds for flights that were cancelled by the airlines. Now the Prime Minister is telling Canadians to cancel any travel plans they may have booked for this spring.

Canadians want to do the right thing and stay home, especially in light of these new strains of the virus. Will the Prime Minister guarantee that Canadians who do as he is asking and cancel their flights will receive full refunds?

Hon. Omar Alghabra (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the conversation he and I had last

week. I wanted to reach out to him and all of my critics to ensure that they know that I am willing to work with them on issues that matter to Canadians.

As I said earlier, we are very much aware of the frustrations many Canadians have because of the lack of refunds. We as a government have already committed \$1.1 billion to support key players, such as airport authorities and regional airlines. Discussions are ongoing with the airlines to ensure that Canadians get their refunds and that regional routes are retained.

* * *

HOUSING

Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP): Mr. Speaker, the world's ultra wealthy use Canadian real estate to launder money and evade taxes. At the same time, corporations, numbered companies, hedge funds and real estate investment trusts are squeezing huge profits from residential properties. As a result, rents are skyrocketing, affordable housing is disappearing and more Canadians are experiencing homelessness. Will the government introduce strong regulations to stop the predatory activities that are distorting Canada's housing market and making homes unaffordable?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is an issue that our government is absolutely seized with. That is why, in the fall economic statement in November, I announced our plan to introduce a tax-based measure to target specifically the unproductive use of domestic housing in Canada owned by non-residents and non-Canadians. It is something we are definitely focused on.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

There has been discussion among the parties and if you seek it, I hope you will find unanimous consent to adopt the following motion:

That, notwithstanding any standing order, special order or usual practice of the House, a bill standing on the Order Paper in the name of the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, entitled *An act to amend the Canada Recovery Benefits act and Customs act*, be deemed to have been introduced and read a first time, deemed read a second time and referred to committee of the whole, deemed considered in committee of the whole, deemed reported without amendment, deemed concurred in at report stage, and deemed read a third time and passed.

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

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

* * *

TERRORIST DESIGNATION OF PROUD BOYS

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

We have consulted with the other parties and sincerely hope that if you seek it you will find unanimous consent for the following motion:

That the House call upon the government to use all available tools to address the proliferation of white supremacist and hate groups, starting with immediately designating the Proud Boys as a terrorist entity.

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

Accordingly—

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, may I ask the hon. member a question before it is put to a vote?

● (1515)

The Speaker: What is that?

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the hon. member would be amenable to adding the other white supremacist group, Soldiers of Odin, to the motion.

The Speaker: I will have to check with the table to see exactly what the rules are on that.

I will continue with the original motion and get it done, and if the hon. member wants to continue the discussion after, maybe she can come back to the House along with the hon. member and propose a further motion.

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

It is agreed.

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

[Translation]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

HEALTH

Mr. Ron McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the third report of the Standing Committee on Health in relation to Bill C-210, an act to amend the Canada Revenue Agency Act with regard to organ and tissue donors. The committee has studied the

Routine Proceedings

bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House without amendment.

[English]

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Ms. Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Orders 104 and 114, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the eighth report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding the membership of committees of the House and I should like to move concurrence in the eighth report at this time.

● (1520)

The Speaker: This being a hybrid sitting, for the sake of clarity I will ask all those opposed to the request to express their disagreement. Accordingly, all those opposed to the hon. member moving the motion will please say nay.

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)

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GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8)(a), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 253 petitions. These returns will be tabled in an electronic format.

* * *

PETITIONS

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a parliamentary Subcommittee on International Human Rights, along with two U.S. presidential administrations, have concluded Beijing is committing crimes of genocide against Uighurs in China. Evidence makes it clear that the Chinese government's treatment of the Uighurs meets the criteria for genocide as outlined in the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

I therefore table a petition from concerned Canadians calling on the federal government to find its voice by recognizing that Uighurs in China have been and are being subjected to genocide and using the powers of the Magnitsky act to sanction Chinese Communist Party officials responsible for the heinous crimes being committed against the Uighur people.

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I present a petition today in the House of Commons formally recognizing that Uighurs in China have been and are being subject to genocide. We talked about this earlier in question period, and I want to salute the two members from the Conservative Party who brought this up yesterday in a news conference. All Canadians should be ashamed of the government for not standing by Uighurs in China.

Routine Proceedings

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is urgent for the Government of Canada to listen to these petitioners, do the right thing and recognize the clear evidence that there is an ongoing genocide in East Turkestan in China.

The petitioners call upon the government to recognize the genocide; affirm that the government has a responsibility to protect under the genocide convention and that these are commitments the government has made; stop the delay tactics by calling for on-the-ground investigations that will never happen; and indeed impose Magnitsky sanctions to hold those responsible for these heinous crimes accountable.

I commend this petition to the consideration of all members.

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise virtually to also table a petition related to the genocidal persecution of Uighurs in China. The petitioners note the reported forced sterilizations, concentration camps, forced labour, forced organ harvesting and a number of other extremely odious and horrific acts of genocide.

The petitioners call upon the government to undertake two specific items: first, to recognize that genocide has been and is currently under way in China; and second, to undertake action, specifically the use of the Magnitsky act to sanction those responsible.

* * *

• (1525)

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Questions Nos. 209, 210, 215, 216, 219, 224, 226, 228, 229, 231, 235, 236, 238, 242, 250, 254, 257, 260, 261, 269, 272, 274, 278 to 280, 283, 290, 291, 298, 299, 309, 311, 332 and 344.

[Text]

Question No. 209—**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:**

With regard to air travel complaints sent to the Canadian Transportation Agency (CTA) since February 1, 2020, and broken down by month and subject: (a) how many air travel complaints were received; (b) what is the status of the complaints in (a) (e.g. resolved, investigation ongoing, no action taken yet, etc.); (c) what is the CTA service standard relating to resolving air travel complaints; and (d) what specific action, if any, did the CTA take to ensure that the processing and investigation of complaints would continue during the pandemic?

Hon. Omar Alghabara (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to air travel complaints sent to the Canadian Transportation Agency, CTA, since February 1, 2020, broken down by month and subject, the answers for part (a) are as follows: February: 4776, March: 3625, April: 2349, May: 1396, June: 1128, July: 1199, August: 897, September: 943, October: 1029, and November: 260, as of November 10. The total is 17,602

The CTA is currently processing the complaints received for the period referenced. A detailed breakdown of the subject of each complaint is not available.

The CTA reports on the subject of complaints received in its annual report. The 2019-20 annual report can be found at: www.otc-cta.gc.ca/eng/publication/annual-report-2019-2020#sec10

With regard to part (b), of the complaints referenced in part (a), the CTA has processed over approximately 6,000 complaints since February 1, 2020.

With regard to part (c), the answers are as follows. With regard to facilitation, of all air travel facilitations closed, 80% are completed within 30 calendar days/20 business days from the communication of the initial position of both parties to the conclusion of facilitation.

With regard to mediation, of all air travel complaint mediations closed, 100% are completed within 30 calendar days/20 business days or within such longer period as requested by both parties.

With regard to adjudication, 80% of all air travel complaint adjudications are processed within 120 calendar days/85 business days from the opening of pleadings to the issuance of a decision, net of any pleadings filed beyond the standard answer/reply period, as established in the dispute adjudication rules.

With regard to part (d), between March 25 and June 30, 2020, the CTA temporarily paused interactions with airlines related to dispute resolution activities, to permit them to focus on immediate and urgent operational demands like repatriating Canadians stranded abroad. However, during this period, CTA staff continued to triage and process complaints, communicate with passengers and address issues raised where possible.

Notwithstanding the pause and the sudden and sustained shift to remote work, the CTA has maintained productivity levels comparable to last year's. It has processed over 6,000 complaints since the beginning of the pandemic, including over 3,100 complaints pertaining to flight disruptions.

The CTA anticipates that resolution of complaints filed in the period after the APPR came fully into force and before the pandemic disrupted global air travel will be facilitated by the major inquiry it launched in February 2020, which focuses on alleged failures by airlines to respect their communications-related obligations under the APPR. The report of an inquiry officer assigned to gather evidence on those allegations was recently published.

Question No. 210—**Mr. Martin Shields:**

With regard to Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC): (a) what specific support measures, if any, is VAC taking to ensure that branches of the Royal Canadian Legion are able to cover their operational costs and financially survive the pandemic; and (b) does VAC have any statistics or projections on the financial impact of the pandemic in relation to Legion branches, including how many branches may not survive without assistance from VAC and, if so, what are the statistics or projections?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a) and part (b), Canada's COVID-19 economic response plan has helped to protect millions of jobs, provide emergency support to families and keep businesses afloat throughout the pandemic.

Routine Proceedings

Through Bill C-4, an act relating to certain measures in response to COVID-19, the Government of Canada is providing \$20 million to support veterans organizations facing hardship due to COVID-19. All funds were to be provided to veterans organizations by December 31, 2020.

The Government of Canada is helping organizations that serve veterans access the money they need to replace critical charitable and other revenue lost because of COVID-19. The veterans organizations emergency support fund, VOESF, will give them the resources needed to continue to operate and support the veterans community.

The \$20-million veterans organizations emergency support fund was announced in November 2020, as part of the Government of Canada's COVID-19 economic response plan. It was created to support veterans organizations experiencing financial challenges due to COVID-19. The \$20-million VOESF will help the recipients cover operational costs like rent, utilities, administration and wages, and will allow them to continue to deliver important services for veterans and their families throughout the global pandemic.

Organizations that access these funds will be able to continue their work with veterans and their families during a time when it is needed most.

On December 17, 2020, the Minister of Veterans Affairs announced that \$2.8 million from the VOESF will go to 38 veterans organizations across Canada. These organizations are in addition to the four announced when the VOESF was launched in November 2020: Royal Canadian Legion, ANAVETS, True Patriot Love and VETS Canada.

Through the VOESF, the government was able to help a total of 42 organizations that serve over 280,000 veterans.

These organizations play a critical role in supporting the well-being of veterans and their families across the country. They carry out a range of services, such as mental health support, social and community support, commemoration efforts, animal therapy, healing through physical activity, healing through nature and counselling.

On December 21, 2020, the Royal Canadian Legion announced the Legion branches that will receive support through the VOESF. The Legion, the largest veterans organization in Canada, received \$14 million from the Government of Canada to distribute to its branches across the country. This funding will help Legion branches with operational expenses such as rent, insurance, utilities and administrative costs so they can focus on providing important programs, services and support to veterans and their families, and continue their strong community presence. To date, 701 branches of the Legion have been supported through the VOESF and more funds will be disbursed in the coming weeks by the Legion's Dominion command.

The Legion's branches are some of the government's most important partners in supporting veterans, and in making sure that Canadians remember the sacrifices they have made. The Government of Canada has provided them with the funding they need to make it through the pandemic and continues to work together with the Legion on behalf of veterans and their families.

Question No. 215—Mr. Jeremy Patzer:

With regard to the application process for Senate appointments since October 28, 2019: (a) how many applications were received for Senate appointments; (b) of the applications in (a), how many were unsolicited applications and how many were nominated; and (c) of the nominated candidates, how many were nominated by (i) government employees, (ii) parliamentary staff, (iii) ministers or members of Parliament within the governing party?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the number of applications and nominations received for Senate appointments will be disclosed by the independent advisory board for Senate appointments in its next report to the Prime Minister.

The process to nominate an individual for a Senate appointment involves submitting a form via the advisory board's website with the name of the person or organization and email of the nominator; the name, email and province/territory of residence of the nominee; and a description of why the person would be well suited for the role.

The advisory board does not collect or track the title or place of work of the nominator, and it keeps the nominator's information confidential. All individuals need to apply, whether they were nominated or not, by submitting an application package through the advisory board's website.

Question No. 216—Mr. Dan Mazier:

With regard to Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada limiting its research activities as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic: (a) what research activities were reduced; (b) what research activities continued unimpeded; (c) what research activities remain suspended; and (d) what is the specific plan regarding when each of the research activities, which remain operating at less than full capacity, will resume operating at full capacity?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), at the beginning of the COVID-19 shutdown, most of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's, AAFC, research and development centres remained open in a limited capacity to take care of non-research, critical services such as care of livestock and collections, insects and germplasm, and the maintenance of specialized equipment and bio-containment facilities; and activities to ensure long-term stewardship of land and protect long-term studies, maintain plant germplasm, field equipment and infrastructure, maintain bee colonies and hives, and provide critical material to the sector, e.g., breeder seed.

In May and June, many field-based research projects that were time-sensitive to the planting season resumed, including registration/co-op trials, early generation variety plots to support genetic development, agronomic trials, integrated pest management research and agri-environment research.

Routine Proceedings

AAFC started re-entry back into its research facilities in the middle of August. As of October 13, 2020, all 20 AAFC research centres have resumed a number of laboratory, greenhouse and barn research activities.

With regard to part (b), projects and activities that could be conducted virtually have continued throughout the pandemic.

With regard to part (c), many of AAFC's research projects are reduced in capacity activity-wise due to COVID-19, but the extent to which these reductions will be evident at the end of fiscal has yet to be determined, as circumstances are still evolving.

With regard to part (d), specific plans to resume full operations of research activities have not been established at this time. AAFC continues to monitor the situation and is ready to adapt its approach as appropriate. The health and safety of AAFC employees continues to be the number one priority in all decision-making matters, and the department will be closely monitoring the situation across the country and continuing to adhere to guidance from local and provincial authorities.

Question No. 219—Mr. Randy Hoback:

With regard to the decision by the government to have Nuctech security equipment installed in Canadian embassies and consulates and the subsequent contract awarded to Deloitte to review purchasing practices for security equipment: (a) what is the complete list of Canadian embassies, consulates, or other missions abroad that have installed the X-ray scanners from Nuctech; (b) what is the total value of all contracts Nuctech has had with Global Affairs Canada (GAC) since November 4, 2015; (c) what is the value of the contract awarded to Deloitte to review the purchasing practices for security equipment; (d) what is the scope of the Deloitte review; (e) when will the review be completed, and will the results be made public; and (f) did the government receive any written guarantees from Nuctech that any information obtained, either directly or indirectly, from the company's dealings with GAC or the government, would not be provided to the Chinese government and, if so, what are the details of any such guarantees?

Mr. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a) and part (b), Global Affairs Canada has not purchased any X-ray scanners from Nuctech.

With regard to part (c), information on contracts worth more than \$10,000 for the time period requested is available under proactive disclosure on the Open Government site at: <https://open.canada.ca>.

With regard to part (d), Deloitte was mandated to conduct a review of Global Affairs Canada's procurement process for security equipment, including a review of the go-forward options for the use of the recently established standing offers for security equipment and a review of the procurement options to support the future acquisition of mission equipment, including a review of the appropriateness of creating a new national security exception for security equipment.

With regard to part (e), the final versions of the review in French and English were received on November 19, 2020, and were provided to the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates on November 27, 2020. They are available at: www.ourcommons.ca/Committees/en/OGGO/StudyActivity?studyActivityId=10994670

With regard to part (f), Global Affairs Canada has not purchased equipment from Nuctech, therefore no guarantees have been sought.

Question No. 224—Mr. Dave Epp:

With regard to rent increase notices issued to clients renting space in government-owned buildings during the pandemic: (a) how many rent increase notices have been issued since March 1, 2020; (b) what was the average increase in (i) percentage, (ii) dollar amount; (c) as of March 1, 2020, what was the vacancy rate in government-owned buildings for (i) retail space, (ii) other clients; and (d) what is the current vacancy rate in government-owned buildings for (i) retail space, (ii) other clients?

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, here is the information with regard to rent increase notices issued to clients renting space in government-owned buildings during the pandemic. With regard to part (a), from March 1, 2020 to November 5, 2020, in Public Services and Procurement Canada-owned buildings, 42 rent increases have been issued to tenants that do not require rent relief, are currently not participating in the rent deferral program or the Canada emergency commercial rent assistance, CE-CRA, and are currently paying full monthly rent. There are 60 notices of rent increases as per the lease provisions that have not been issued to tenants that are currently participating in the rent deferral program or the Canada emergency commercial rent assistance, CE-CRA.

With regard to part (b), the average increase was 1.82% and \$1,839.66. The amount increase ranged from \$-905.72 to \$24,650.78.

With regard to part (c), the vacancy rate in government-owned buildings as of March 1, 2020, was as follows: as of March 31, 2020, the marketable vacancy retail space was 5,600m², which represented 6.7% of PSPC's complete retail space of 83,000m² within its portfolio.

For other clients, this is not applicable.

With regard to part (d), the current vacancy rate in government-owned buildings as of November 5, 2020, is as follows: as of November 1, 2020, the marketable vacant retail space is 6,300m², which represents 7.5% of PSPC's complete retail space of 83,800m² within its portfolio. It should be noted that the increase in vacancy, compared to March 31, 2020, is due to leases that have ended since that time; and there was an additional 800m² of new retail space added since March 31, 2020.

For other clients, this is not applicable.

Question No. 226—Mr. Dan Mazier:

With regard to the Emergency Support Fund for Cultural, Heritage and Sport Organizations: (a) how many applications has the government received for funding; (b) what is the total amount dispersed by the fund since its official formation; (c) how many applications were from the constituency of Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa; (d) how many applications were received from applicants in the province of Manitoba; (e) how many of the applications in (d) were successful; and (f) what are the details of all funding provided through the fund, including (i) recipient, (ii) amount, (iii) location, (iv) organization type, (v) federal riding?

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to Canadian Heritage, or PCH, the answer to part (a) of the question is 6,143. The answer to part (b) is \$390,697,000. With regard to part (c), PCH's financial system does not capture information by federal riding. The answer to part (d) is 234. This number does not include applications from the athlete assistance program as these are disclosed on an annual basis. The answer to part (e) is 231. This number does not include successful applications from the athlete assistance program. With regard to part (f), information pertaining to grants and contributions is publicly available on the Open Canada website at <https://search.open.canada.ca/en/gc/>.

With regard to the Canada Council for the Arts, the answer to part (a) of the question is 7,083. The answer to part (b) is \$62,685,608, and the answer to part (c) is three. With regard to part (d), the answer is 184. The answer to part (e) is 98. With regard to part (f), disclosure of grant and prize recipients can be found at <https://canadacouncil.ca/about/public-accountability/proactive-disclosure/grant-recipients>.

With regard to Telefilm Canada, the answer to part (a) of the question is 665, and the answer to part (b) is \$29,450,367. With regard to part (c), Telefilm Canada's operational system does not capture information by federal riding. The answer to part (d) is 22, and the answer to part (e) is 18. With regard to part (f), information pertaining to grants and contributions can be found at <https://telefilm.ca/en/transparency/proactive-disclosure/grant-contribution/reports-by-quarter>.

Question No. 228—Mr. Damien C. Kurek:

With regard to statistics related to federal correctional inmates since 1980: (a) how many inmates were sentenced to serve two or more life sentences; (b) of the inmates in (a), how many were granted parole, conditional release, or compassionate release; and (c) of the inmates in (b), how many reoffended while on parole, conditional release or compassionate release?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Correctional Service of Canada is unable to provide a response to this question, as doing so would involve the extraction and analysis of a significant amount of information, which cannot be completed within the given time frame.

Question No. 229—Ms. Leona Alleslev:

With regard to information on services provided by Canada Post since October 2017 and broken down by province or territory and by month for each part of the question: (a) what was the volume of lettermail; (b) how many letters received postmarks the day they were mailed; (c) what are the Canada Post lettermail delivery time performance standards; (d) what were the average, median and mean delivery times for the lettermail; (e) what volume and percentage of the lettermail were delivered exceeding the performance standards; (f) how is the loss of lettermail determined and reported; (g) what volume and percentage of lettermail was lost; (h) what is the audit process to evaluate the security, effectiveness and timeliness of the end-to-end lettermail pickup to delivery process; and (i) how many audits were conducted?

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, for the volume of letter mail, refer to the attached annex. It was not possible to provide a breakdown of the data by province and territory and month by month within the allotted time.

Routine Proceedings

With regard to part (b), unless a piece of mail is tracked, Canada Post Corporation, CPC, cannot determine what is not delivered. CPC would know the volume of mail through its machines but not how much "should have" gone through the machine, i.e., inducted but not processed. Similarly, CPC would not know what was processed but not delivered.

Regarding part (c), according to the Canadian Postal Service Charter, the delivery time performance standards are two business days within a community, three business days within province and four business days between provinces.

With regard to part (d), from October 2017 to November 2020, CPC's on-time delivery performance within the above-mentioned two, three and four business day standards was 95.4% in 2017, 93% in 2018 and 95.3% in 2019. The 2020 delivery performance is not yet available. CPC is unable to provide a breakdown of this data by province and territory and month by month within the allotted time.

Regarding part (e) of the question, the volume and percentage of letter mail delivered beyond or past CPC standards was 4.6% in 2017, 7% in 2018 and 4.7% in 2019. The 2020 performance is not yet available. CPC is unable to provide a breakdown of this data by province and territory and month by month within the allotted time.

With regard to parts (f) and (g) of the question, please refer to the answer for part (b).

Routine Proceedings

Regarding part (h), security of the mail is accomplished through a number of security controls. It starts from the security of mailboxes, which were designed with security in mind and are the result of years of evolution and enhancements, from the metal used to construct the boxes to the design of the locks to secure the inducted products through the course of post. These are tested with the assistance of many key stakeholders and suppliers, engineers, as well as internal knowledge of the security environment. The mail is then brought to depots where ongoing threat, risk and vulnerability assessments are conducted. The security assessment is called a facility security index, or FSI, which is a holistic security assessment based on the Royal Canadian Mounted Police threat risk assessment approach. The process assesses not only the physical security and controls at the facility but also compliance to these controls and to security processes. As a result, an extensive report is provided to management with action plans and a follow-up audit that will be conducted for any significant deficiencies, along with proper communication plans on recommended corrective and preventive measures.

With regard to part (i) of the question, at the beginning of 2020, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, 11 FSI reviews were conducted. As these are normally focused on larger urban outlets, where there is a higher risk of COVID exposure in conducting these audits, once the pandemic began attention instead shifted to conducting rural reviews at smaller rural corporate outlets. As such audits take less time to complete than FSIs, with FSIs taking typically a week and rural reviews being completed within a day, more reviews could be conducted, with more than 226 completed so far. In comparison, 39 FSI reviews were completed throughout 2019, 25 in 2018, and 50 in 2017, which was when the process was implemented.

Question No. 231—Mr. Randall Garrison:

With regard to the government's commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions produced by its departments and, specifically for the Department of National Defence (DND): (a) what are the current greenhouse gas reduction targets for DND; (b) what is DND's current status with meeting those targets; (c) have the greenhouse gas impacts of replacing the CF-18 fighter jets been taken into account in the department's gas reduction targets and plans; (d) have greenhouse gas impacts been incorporated into the bidding and selection process for new fighter jets; and (e) what action is the government taking to ensure the impacts of greenhouse gas emissions from the new fighter jets are mitigated in their operation and maintenance?

Ms. Anita Vandenbeld (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, National Defence is taking concrete steps to reduce its carbon footprint in its real property and its fleets. This includes greenhouse gas emissions reduction measures such as energy performance contracts at defence installations across the country, clean energy purchases and improved energy management.

National Defence's continued investments to upgrade and replace critical National Defence infrastructure and fleets will contribute to the government's efforts to reach net-zero emissions by 2050.

With regard to part (a) of the question, when "Strong, Secure, Engaged", Canada's defence policy, was released in 2017, National Defence's goal was to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40% from 2005 levels by 2030. More recently, National Defence, in its 2020-23 defence energy and environment strategy, has adopted a

more ambitious target that aligns with the Government of Canada's greening government strategy. This is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from its real property and commercial light-duty fleets, where feasible, by 40% from 2005 levels by 2025, and to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050.

Separate from its real property and commercial light-duty fleets, National Defence is also committed to bringing emissions from its national safety and security operations fleets to net zero by 2050, in accordance with the Government of Canada's updated greening government strategy. For the national safety and security fleet, which is comprised of Canadian Armed Forces aircraft, marine vessels and tactical land vehicles, the 2050 target will consider the use of environmentally friendly technologies and low-carbon fuels when available, affordable and operationally feasible.

With regard to part (b), National Defence's 2016-19 defence energy and environment strategy committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 40% from 2005 levels by 2030. As of March 31, 2020, National Defence has reduced its emissions from its real property and commercial light-duty vehicles fleets by 31% below 2005 levels and is on track to reach the 40% reduction target by 2025, a full five years ahead of the original schedule.

Greenhouse gas emissions from National Defence's national safety and security fleet operations, however, are 11% above 2005 levels as of March 31, 2020. These emissions are tied to Canadian Armed Forces activities required to ensure the safety and security of all Canadians. These emissions will vary over time, as the number of times that the CAF is deployed will impact the amount of emissions that are emitted.

National Defence is committed to ensuring its activities are conducted in a sustainable manner without compromising the safety and security of the members of the Canadian Armed Forces.

As outlined in the 2020-23 defence energy and environment strategy, National Defence is committed to exploring the use of alternative energy options in national safety and security-related fleet operations. Canada is leading the path in this area as one of the few countries making a commitment to manage its military fleet in a sustainable manner.

Regarding parts (c) and (d) of the question, through Canada's defence policy, "Strong, Secure, Engaged", National Defence commits to reducing greenhouse gas emissions while remaining operationally effective. The defence energy and environment strategy commits the department to make every effort to consider environmental and energy implications of its purchase decisions, operations and asset management.

Under this strategy, all new military equipment procured is required to consider energy efficiency to reduce overall operating costs and environmental impacts.

As part of the future fighter capability project's life-cycle cost evaluation process, aircraft that have lower fuel consumption are favoured, which affects the greenhouse gas emissions of the aircraft. It is anticipated that newer propulsion systems technology in future fighter aircraft may result in reducing greenhouse gas emissions of the new aircraft fleet.

National Defence is also investigating the use of alternative fuels with a reduced carbon footprint for its fleets.

With regard to part (e), as the future fighter aircraft will be replacing an existing capability, the overall impacts on greenhouse gas emissions are anticipated to be similar to those generated by the existing CF-18 fleet. However, operational emissions may be reduced as a result of newer propulsion systems technology in the future fighter aircraft. The level of emissions will also depend upon how often these aircraft are used.

National Defence is also working to reduce the emissions for maintenance activities by improving maintenance practices and facilities. The Bagotville and Cold Lake facilities that will house the future fighter aircraft will be designed and constructed to increase energy efficiency wherever possible.

National Defence is committed to demonstrating leadership in environmental and energy sustainability and will continue to strive to meet its obligation to manage its assets and operations efficiently.

Question No. 235—Mr. Dan Albas:

With regard to the government's response to Order Paper question Q-35, which stated that the government provided "up to \$30 million to small and medium-sized forest sector firms" during the pandemic: (a) which firms received the funding; (b) how much did each firm receive; and (c) on what date did each firm receive its payment from the government?

Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, following the announcement by the Minister of Natural Resources on July 10, 2020, Natural Resources Canada consulted stakeholders and finalized the implementation plan for this initiative. This program will provide up to \$30 million to small and medium-sized forest sector operations to offset costs associated with the implementation of COVID-19 health and safety measures.

With regard to part (b), contribution agreements with participating provinces and territories have advanced, with most expected to be completed in early January. Provinces and territories were allocated base-level funding, supplemented by a top-up increment that is based on a combination of each jurisdiction's share of total forest sector employment and each jurisdiction's share of total trees planted. Once agreements are in place, participating jurisdictions will compile and submit claims for reimbursement to the federal government. Once claims are validated and paid, this will enable provinces and territories to reimburse eligible small and medium-sized forest sector businesses, likely starting in early 2021.

With regard to part (c), eligible costs will have been incurred by companies between April 1, 2020, and March 31, 2021. Payments

Routine Proceedings

will be made on a retroactive basis and participating jurisdictions will report which firms received support. As this program is ongoing, there is insufficient information available to answer this question.

Question No. 236—Mr. Kerry Diotte:

With regard to the government's commitment to modernize the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD): (a) how much funding has been committed toward modernizing NORAD; and (b) what is the breakdown of the funding commitment by year for each of the next five years?

Ms. Anita Vandenbeld (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as outlined in Canada's defence policy, "Strong, Secure, Engaged", National Defence is committed to continental defence and to the protection of North America. This includes commitments to ensure that the North American Aerospace Defense Command, NORAD, is modernized to meet existing and future threats and challenges.

In response to part (a), National Defence is currently examining a wide range of capability requirements and potential investment opportunities with regard to NORAD modernization. This includes examining the best way to fulfill the direction in the Minister of National Defence's mandate letter regarding the renewal of the North Warning System.

Delivering on these commitments will build on the significant investments in core continental defence capabilities already included in "Strong, Secure, Engaged". These include the commitments to acquire six Arctic and offshore patrol ships, 88 future fighter aircraft, remotely piloted systems for enhanced surveillance capabilities, and improved space capabilities for Arctic surveillance and communications.

In response to part (b), Funding and timelines specifically earmarked for the modernization of NORAD have yet to be determined. These decisions will take into consideration the full range of threats and challenges facing Canada and North America and will be informed through consultations with the new administration in the United States.

Routine Proceedings

Investments will be informed by, and build on, the multi-year, \$133-million programmed investment by Defence Research and Development Canada's all-domain situational awareness, ADSA, S&T program, which is now close to completion. This S&T program explored enhanced domain awareness of air, maritime surface, and maritime subsurface approaches to Canada and North America, with a focus on the Arctic. The highly successful ADSA S&T program made significant progress in several key areas, including over-the-horizon radar, which could support a future system of systems against evolving threats. The knowledge gained from the ADSA S&T program will inform scientific advice for the modernization and augmentation of the North Warning System capability as part of such a system of systems.

Question No. 238—Mrs. Alice Wong:

With regard to the government's response to the request or pending request from the mayor of Vancouver to decriminalize a number of illegal drugs, including cocaine, fentanyl and crystal meth, within the city: (a) will the government allow cocaine, fentanyl and crystal meth to be decriminalized within the city; and (b) does the Prime Minister still hold the position that "[w]e're not looking at full decriminalization at all", which he stated in an interview with Global News that aired on September 24, 2019?

Mr. Darren Fisher (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada's approach to substance use issues has been comprehensive and collaborative, guided by our federal drug strategy—the Canadian drugs and substances strategy (CDSS), introduced in late 2016. The CDSS takes a public health-focused approach and lays out our framework for evidence-based actions to reduce the harms associated with substance use in Canada. It includes four key pillars—prevention, treatment, harm reduction, and enforcement.

Since 2016, the Government of Canada has taken urgent action to address the overdose crisis through significant federal investments of over \$600 million, as well as legislative and regulatory action. This includes working with provinces and territories to improve access to harm reduction services such as supervised consumption sites, increase access to pharmaceutical-grade alternatives to the illegal contaminated supply, i.e., a safer supply, raise awareness of the risks of opioids, and remove barriers to treatment, including stigma. More recently, to build on funding provided in budget 2018 and budget 2019, the government provided an additional \$66 million over two years, starting in 2020-21, to support community-based organizations responding to substance use issues, including to help them provide front-line services in a COVID-19 context.

The Government of Canada recognizes that in many regions of the country the COVID-19 pandemic is exacerbating long-standing challenges regarding substance use and the overdose crisis, with some communities now reporting record high numbers of overdose deaths, hospitalizations, and emergency medical service calls. To help address these challenges, the Government of Canada has taken actions to implement important measures to enable the health system to better meet the needs of people with substance use disorder during the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, we have issued class exemptions to pharmacists and eased restrictions on the transportation of controlled substances to make it easier for people to access the medications they need during the COVID-19 pandemic while following public health advice, such as physical distancing. We have also made it easier for overdose prevention sites to be es-

tablished rapidly in temporary community shelters and other locations. In addition, through Health Canada's substance use and addictions program, the Government of Canada is providing funding to support 11 projects in providing a flexible safer supply of pharmaceutical-grade medications for people with opioid use disorder in British Columbia, Ontario and New Brunswick. These investments will help provide pathways to care and treatment.

The COVID-19 pandemic has worsened the ongoing overdose crisis. We have lost too many Canadians to overdose, and all levels of government must redouble our efforts to save lives. For example, the federal government has been working with the Government of British Columbia and Mayor Stewart on options that respond to their local and regional needs, guided by the recommendations of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police and the Public Prosecution Service of Canada. We are reviewing the City of Vancouver's request to address criminal penalties for simple possession of small amounts of controlled substances, and the Government of Canada will continue work to get Canadians who use substances the support they need.

The Government of Canada will continue to encourage the formation of partnerships between law enforcement and health and social services to help divert people who use drugs away from the criminal justice system and towards appropriate health services and social supports. For example, in May 2017, the Government of Canada passed the Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act. This act provides some legal protection for individuals who seek emergency help during an overdose. The Government of Canada is also funding a three-year project in Peterborough, Ontario, to develop a multi-sector response, with a team dedicated to caring for people at risk of experiencing overdoses, in order to direct people away from the justice system and into care. Further, on August 18, 2020, the Public Prosecution Service of Canada issued guidance to prosecutors directing that alternatives to prosecution should be considered for simple possession offences, except when there are serious mitigating circumstances. This policy is available at <https://www.ppsc-sp-pc.gc.ca/eng/pub/fpsd-sfpg/fps-sfp/tpd/p5/ch13.html>.

The overdose crisis is a complex public health issue, but the Government of Canada is committed to working closely with provinces, territories, and key stakeholders to address substance use issues and to ensure that people who use drugs have the support they need.

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 242—Mr. Eric Duncan:**

With regard to directives given by the Minister of Canadian Heritage to the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission since January 1, 2016: what directives have been given and what was the date of each directive?

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Canadian Heritage has the power to issue directives to the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, CRTC, exclusively under subsection 23(3) of the Broadcasting Act. Moreover, directives under subsection 23(3) pertain exclusively to conditions imposed by the CRTC to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the corporation, in consideration of those conditions. The minister has not issued any directive under that section since January 1, 2016.

However, the Governor in Council, GiC, may issue directions to the CRTC under subsections 7(1), 26(1) and 27(1) of the act. The GiC may also request the CRTC to “hold hearings or make reports on any matter within the jurisdiction of the [CRTC]” under subsection 15(1) of the act.

Since January 1, 2016, the GiC requested one report under subsection 15(1) of the act. The request, dated September 22, 2017, P.C. 2017-1195, was to report to the GiC no later than June 1, 2018 in regard to the following matters: a) the distribution model or models of programming that are likely to exist in the future; b) how and through whom Canadians will access that programming; c) the extent to which these models will ensure a vibrant domestic market that is capable of supporting the continued creation, production and distribution of Canadian programming, in both official languages, including original entertainment and information programming.

Since 2016, the GiC has issued one direction to the CRTC under subsection 27(1). The directive, dated April 3, 2020, P.C. 2020-231, was in respect of the implementation of the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement, CUSMA.

Other than the aforementioned two matters, the GiC has not issued any directions to the CRTC during the time frame in question, and the Minister of Canadian Heritage has not issued any directives to the CRTC during the same period.

Question No. 250—Mr. Marty Morantz:

With regard to the government's response to Order Paper question Q-6, regarding loans made under the Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA): (a) what specific types of businesses are classified as “other services”, and what are examples of such businesses; (b) what specific types of businesses are classified as “public administration”, and what are examples of such businesses; and (c) did any of the CEBA loans classified as “public administration” go toward any province, territory, municipality, or other level of government and, if so, what are the details of any such loans, including (i) amount, (ii) recipient?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Export Development Canada, EDC, is proud to be part of the Government of Canada's response to COVID-19. EDC collaborated in the design of the Canada emergency business account, CEBA, and works to deliver the program by providing support to Canadian financial institutions through funding, validation checks and administration. EDC will continue with current stimulus initiatives, as well as work to identify new opportunities, along with our government partners, to meet the evolving needs of Canadian companies.

In response to (a), Canada emergency business account or CEBA data, as it relates to industry, is reported in the Standard Industrial Classification, SIC, or the North American Industry Classification System, NAICS, when available and provided by the financial institutions. “Other services” as reported in Order Paper question Q-6 includes the following SIC and NAICS classifications.

SIC code R, “Other Service Industries” as per Statistics Canada, <https://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p3VD.pl?Function=getVD&TVD=53446&CVD=53447&CPV=R&CST=01011980&CLV=1&MLV=4>, includes the following subsectors: amusement and recreational service industries, personal and household service industries, membership organization industries, other service industries.

NAICS code 71, “Arts, Entertainment & Recreation” as per Statistics Canada, <https://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p3VD.pl?Function=getVD&TVD=307532&CVD=307533&CPV=71&CST=01012017&CLV=1&MLV=5>, includes the following subsectors: performing arts, spectator sports and related industries; heritage institutions; amusement, gambling and recreation industries.

NAICS code 81, “Other services (except public administration)” as per Statistics Canada, <https://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p3VD.pl?Function=getVD&TVD=1181553&CVD=1181554&CPV=81&CST=01012017&CLV=1&MLV=5>, includes the following subsectors: repair and maintenance; personal and laundry services; religious, grant-making, civic and professional and similar organizations; private households.

Details identifying a specific recipient cannot be provided without prior consent from the financial institution and the borrower. CEBA is administered by EDC, who is working closely with Canadian financial institutions to deliver these loans to qualifying businesses.

In response to (b), CEBA data as it relates to industry is reported in SIC or NAICS, when available and provided by the financial institutions. “Public administration” as reported in Order Paper question Q-6 includes the following SIC and NAICS classifications.

SIC code N, “Government Service Industries” as per Statistics Canada, <https://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p3VD.pl?Function=getVD&TVD=53446&CVD=53447&CPV=N&CST=01011980&CLV=1&MLV=4>, includes the following subsectors: federal government service industries, provincial and territorial government service industries, local government service industries, international and other extra-territorial government service industries.

Routine Proceedings

NAICS code 91, "Public Administration" as per Statistics Canada, <https://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p3VD.pl?Function=getVD&TVD=1181553&CVD=1181554&CPV=91&CST=01012017&CLV=1&MLV=5>, includes the following subsectors: federal government public administration; provincial and territorial public administration; local, municipal and regional public administration; aboriginal public administration; international and other extra-territorial public administration.

Details identifying a specific recipient cannot be provided without prior consent from the financial institution and the borrower. CEBA is administered by EDC, who is working closely with Canadian financial institutions to deliver these loans to qualifying businesses.

In response to (c), details identifying a specific recipient cannot be provided without prior consent from the financial institution and the borrower. CEBA is administered by EDC, who is working closely with Canadian financial institutions to deliver these loans to qualifying businesses.

As per the requirements of the program set out by the Government of Canada and found on the CEBA website, <https://ceba-cuec.ca/>, when applying for a CEBA loan the borrower needs to confirm that it is not a government organization or body, or an entity wholly owned by a government organization or body; that it is not a non-profit organization, registered charity, union, or a fraternal benefit society or order, or an entity owned by such an organization, unless the entity is actively carrying on a business in Canada, including a related business in the case of a registered charity, that earns revenue from the regular supply of property/goods or services; that it is not an entity owned by any federal member of Parliament or senator; that it does not promote violence, incite hatred or discriminate on the basis of sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, colour, race, ethnic or national origin, religion, age, or mental or physical disability, contrary to applicable laws.

Question No. 254—Mr. Warren Steinley:

With regard to the economic impact of the government's Clean Fuel Standard: (a) did the government do any analysis on the impact of the Clean Fuel Standard on Saskatchewan's economy and, if so, what are the details and findings of the analysis; (b) did the government do any analysis on the impact of the Clean Fuel Standard on Saskatchewan's oil and gas industry and, if so, what are the details and findings of the analysis; (c) did the government do any analysis on the impact of the Clean Fuel Standard on Saskatchewan's agricultural sector and, if so, what are the details and findings of the analysis; and (d) has Farm Credit Canada done any analysis or projections on the impact of the Clean Fuel Standard on farm incomes and, if so, what are the details and findings?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the proposed clean fuel standard regulations were published in Canada Gazette, part I, on December 19, along with the regulatory impact assessment statement, which includes provincial, regional, and sectoral considerations. These documents can be found at <http://www.gazette.gc.ca/rp-pr/p1/2020/2020-12-19/html/reg2-eng.html>.

Question No. 257—Mr. Kelly McCauley:

With regard to the Deloitte report on contracts with Chinese-based companies, referenced by Global Affairs Canada at the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates on November 18, 2020: (a) what was the date that the report was commissioned; (b) what was the date that the report was delivered; (c) what was the final cost of the report; (d) what was the scope of the report; (e) what

was the title of the report; (f) what were the findings or conclusions of the report; and (g) was the report tendered competitively and, if not, why not?

Mr. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following reflects a consolidated response approved on behalf of Global Affairs Canada ministers. In response to (a), the report was commissioned on August 10, 2020.

In response to (b), the report was delivered on November 19, 2020.

In response to (c), information on contracts worth more than \$10,000 for the time period requested is available under "Proactive disclosure" on the Open Government site at <https://open.canada.ca>.

In response to (d), Deloitte was mandated to conduct a review of Global Affairs Canada's procurement process for security equipment, including a review of the go-forward options for the use of the recently established standing offers for security equipment and a review of the procurement options to support the future acquisition of mission equipment, including a review of the appropriateness of creating a new national security exception for security equipment.

In response to (e), the title was "Global Affairs Canada: Security Equipment Procurement Review".

In response to (f), Deloitte conducted an independent review of the procurement process for security equipment. The review confirms that officials followed all the rules and policies related to security equipment and that there were opportunities for improvements in the areas of increased integration of security in the materiel management life cycle, broader consultation throughout the procurement process for security equipment and additional guidance with respect to publishing technical requirements. Global Affairs Canada's revised procurement approach, currently under development with Public Services and Procurement Canada, will integrate these recommendations and will include consultations with security experts and possibly creating a national security exception to limit solicitations to trusted suppliers with the required security clearances.

In response to (g), the report was tendered competitively.

Question No. 260—Ms. Heather McPherson:

With regard to Canada's emergency wage subsidy since its creation, broken down by province: (a) which enterprises have applied for the subsidy; (b) of the enterprises in (a), which enterprises have been eligible for the subsidy; and (c) what is the reason for refusal for each of the enterprises that have not been deemed eligible?

Routine Proceedings

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what follows is the response from the CRA as of November 25, 2020, the date of the question. With regard to parts (a), (b) and (c), the COVID-19 Emergency Response Act, No. 2, S.C. 2020, c. 6, notes that CEWS is available to qualifying entities, sets out definitions for the terms that apply to the emergency wage subsidy and provides definitions of both eligible employees and qualifying entities. The CRA's role is to administer legislation as it has been approved by Parliament and assented to by the Crown.

While this legislation amends the Income Tax Act, affording discretion to make public the name of any person or partnership that makes an application for CEWS, it does not permit the publication of specific CEWS application information, including province or reason for denial in the manner requested in the question.

As of November 25, 2020, a public registry of CEWS recipients was in development. Once it is available on Canada.ca at <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/subsidy/emergency-wage-subsidy.html>, it will allow Canadians to identify employers benefitting from the CEWS.

As of November 25, 2020, though the CRA has begun a preliminary small-scale CEWS post-payment audit program, it has not yet compiled statistics on reasons for denying claims. Therefore, the CRA cannot answer the question in the manner requested.

Question No. 261—Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:

With regard to the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) program, since its inception: (a) what is the total amount paid out through the program; (b) how many individual companies have received payments, broken down by (i) country of physical address, (ii) country of mailing address, (iii) country of the bank account the funds were deposited into; (c) for all of the companies in (b) that are located in Canada, what is the breakdown down by (i) province or territory, (ii) municipality; (d) how many audits have been conducted of companies receiving CEWS; and (e) for the audits in (d), how many have found that funding has been spent outside of Canada?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with respect to the above noted question, what follows is the response from the CRA as of November 26, 2020, the date of the question. The COVID-19 Emergency Response Act, No. 2, S.C. 2020, c. 6, notes that Canada emergency wage subsidy, CEWS, is available to qualifying entities, sets out definitions for the terms that apply to the emergency wage subsidy and provides definitions of both eligible employees and qualifying entities. The CRA's role is to administer legislation as it has been approved by Parliament and assented to by the Crown.

With regard to part (a), financial transactional data regarding amounts "paid out" and "received" as suggested in the question is not available in the manner requested. Rather, general statistical information is available on Canada.ca regarding the CEWS, including total approved applications, all approved applications by value, the number of applications received and the dollar value of subsidies paid. This information can be found under "Claims to date - Canada emergency wage subsidy (CEWS)" at <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/subsidy/emergency-wage-subsidy/cews-statistics.html>.

With regard to parts (b)(i), (b)(ii) and (b)(iii), information is not captured in the manner requested in the question.

With regard to parts (c)(i) and (c)(ii), financial transactional data regarding amounts paid out and received, as suggested in the question, is not available in the manner requested. Rather, general statistical data on CEWS claims providing the total approved claims broken down by province/territory where applicant resides, industry sector and size of applicant is available on the Canada.ca website at <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/subsidy/emergency-wage-subsidy/cews-statistics/stats-detailed.html> and can be found under "CEWS claims – detailed data". Information is not available by municipality.

With regard to part (d), as of November 26, 2020, the date of the question, the CRA had not launched its CEWS post-payment audit program.

However, the CRA did launch a small scale CEWS post-payment audit research project that targets a limited sample. The intent of this pilot project is not only to learn about audit and verification challenges, including the types of non-compliance and the levels of compliance with respect to this benefit program, but also about conducting compliance activities during the COVID-19 pandemic and, by extension, other global crises. The CRA can confirm that as part of this research project, as of November 26, 2020, the CRA has contacted over 700 taxpayers and business in many ranges.

With regard to part (e), since the CRA has not yet launched the full CEWS post payment audit program, the CRA is not yet tracking audit results in the manner requested in the above-noted question.

Question No. 269—Mr. Scot Davidson:

With regard to the announcement made by the then Minister of Foreign Affairs in Barrie, Ontario, on October 9, 2019, promising a four-year, \$40 million funding commitment for Lake Simcoe: (a) how much of the \$40 million commitment was or will be delivered in (i) 2019, (ii) 2020, (iii) 2021, (iv) 2022, (v) 2023; and (b) what are the details of all funding actually delivered since October 21, 2019, as part of the commitment, including (i) date, (ii) amount, (iii) recipient, (iv) project description?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, contained in the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada's mandate letter is a commitment to develop further protections for and take active steps in the cleanup of the Great Lakes, Lake Winnipeg, Lake Simcoe and other large lakes.

Environment and Climate Change Canada is currently exploring approaches to further protect and restore vital freshwater ecosystems to support the delivery of the minister's freshwater-related mandate commitments, including Lake Simcoe.

Question No. 272—Mr. Randall Garrison:

With regard to Health Canada's approval of the first HIV self-test kits for use in Canada and the government's promise to distribute 60,000 of these self-test kits: (a) how and through what program will the government distribute these test kits; (b) how many of the 60,000 self-test kits will be designated for distribution to communities who face greater barriers to accessing testing and in particular to guarantee access to Indigenous, racialized and low income people, and those who live in rural and northern communities; and (c) what are the long-term plans to ensure continued broad and free distribution to those most at risk?

Routine Proceedings

Mr. Darren Fisher (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), the Public Health Agency of Canada itself does not undertake the distribution of self-test kits, as this does not fall under its jurisdiction. The REACH/MAP Centre initiative will be distributing test kits. There will be 60,000 self-tests kits made available through an implementation science program led by the REACH/MAP Centre initiative at St. Michael's Hospital. This initiative was made possible through funding from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, along with other sources.

The REACH/MAP Centre initiative is working with two key community-based organizations to support access to and distribution of 60,000 self-test kits across Canada, with peer navigation services free of charge and a telehealth platform. The launch of this program is expected to begin on January 1, 2021. Self-test kits will be distributed throughout the country via the Community-Based Research Centre, CBRC, for gay, bisexual, transgender, two-spirit and queer men, GBT2Q; and Women's Health in Women's Hands, WHIWH, will distribute to racialized women from the African, Black, Caribbean, Latin American and South Asian communities.

With regard to (b), as noted above, the CBRC and WHIWH, two key community-based organizations involved in the REACH/MAP Centre initiative, have networks throughout Canada and are recognized for engaging with indigenous, racialized and low-income people. Distribution will be possible through mail, thus allowing reach to those who live in rural and northern communities.

With regard to (c), the distribution of self-test kits and the provision of associated services falls under the jurisdiction of the provincial and territorial governments.

Question No. 274—Mr. Chris d'Entremont:

With regards to the role of First Nations fisheries and reconciliation: (a) how many meetings or briefings has the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans had regarding reconciliation since November 20, 2019; and (b) what are the details of all meetings in (a), including the (i) date, (ii) attendees, (iii) location, (iv) purpose of the meeting or briefing?

Hon. Bernadette Jordan (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, implementing the Marshall decision is critical to the work of reconciliation, and it is a priority of our government. The Minister of Fisheries, Oceans, and the Canadian Coast Guard has met and continues to meet on a regular basis with first nations leadership and commercial industry representatives. Our government is working with communities to discuss their fishery plans and reach agreements. Together we will ensure that the treaty right to pursue a moderate livelihood is implemented in a way that ensures safe, orderly and sustainable fishing. Our goal is, and always has been, to develop a strong, stable and productive fishery for the benefit of everyone involved.

Information regarding briefings is proactively disclosed in accordance with the Access to Information Act and can be found at https://search.open.canada.ca/en/bn/?sort=score%20desc&page=1&search_text=bn-search-orgs=Fisheries%20and%20Oceans%20Canada.

Question No. 278—Mrs. Shannon Stubbs:

With regard to the national security review of the proposed takeover of TMAC Resources Inc. by Shandong Gold Mining Co. Ltd.: (a) when was the review ordered; (b) when will the review commence; (c) when is the review expected to be

completed; (d) when will the government make a decision on the proposed takeover; and (e) has the government received any communication from the Chinese government advocating for the approval of the takeover and, if so, what are the details of any such communication?

Mr. Ali Ehsassi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry (Innovation and Industry), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, under the Investment Canada Act, all foreign investments are subject to a national security review. Canada remains open to investments that create jobs, growth, access to global trade and value chains, and long-term prosperity for Canadians, while protecting Canada's national security interests. Reviews are conducted on a case-by-case basis as part of a rigorous and evidence-based process.

With regard to the proposed investment, Innovation, Science and Economic Development can confirm that on October 15, 2020, TMAC publicly announced that an order for the national security review of the investment under the act was made by the Governor in Council and that on November 27, 2020, TMAC announced that the national security review of the investment was extended for a further period of up to 45 days.

Further details of specific transactions under review are subject to the confidentiality provisions of the Investment Canada Act.

Question No. 279—Mr. Mark Strahl:

With regard to the Employment Insurance fund: (a) what was the balance of the fund as of March 1, 2020; (b) what is the current balance of the fund; (c) how much has been withdrawn from the fund for Employment Insurance payments since March 1, 2020; and (d) how much has been withdrawn from the fund for other programs such as the Canada Emergency Response Benefit since March 1, 2020, broken down by program?

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), the balance of the fund as of March 1, 2020, is not available. However, the audited financial statements of the employment insurance operating account were prepared for the year ended March 31, 2020. These statements were tabled in the House of Commons as part of the Public Accounts of Canada, section 4, consolidated accounts, as at March 31, 2020. Financial information related to measures in response to the Canada emergency response benefit is captured separately in these statements: <https://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/recgen/cpc-pac/2020/pdf/2020-vol1-eng.pdf>

With regard to (b), the current balance of the account is not available, as the fiscal year is still in progress. The audited financial statements will present the balance of the fund for the year ending March 31, 2021.

With regard to (c), the total benefits and support measures charged to the employment insurance operating account since March 1, 2020, are not available, as the fiscal year is still in progress. The total benefits and support measures charged to the employment insurance operating account for the period from April 1, 2020, to March 31, 2021, will be presented in the audited financial statements for the year ending on March 31, 2021.

Routine Proceedings

With regard to (d), the total benefits and support measures charged to the employment insurance operating account since March 1, 2020, are not available, as the fiscal year is still in progress. As per section 153.111 of the Employment Insurance Act, the employment insurance operating account will be credited by an amount determined by the Minister of Finance that corresponds to the total cost of the employment insurance emergency response benefit under this act, including all costs related to the benefit and its administration. We can confirm that this is the only Canada emergency response benefit that will be paid but later funded by the consolidated revenue fund out of the employment insurance operating account, as seen at <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/E-5.6/page-39.html#h-1261609>.

Question No. 280—Mr. Peter Kent:

With regard to the impact of the changes to the broadcasting industry proposed in Bill C-10, An Act to amend the Broadcasting Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts: (a) does the government have a projection of what the Canadian media market will look like in five years without the changes in Bill C-10; (b) does the government have a projection of what the Canadian media market will look like in five years with the changes in Bill C-10; (c) what are the government's projections related to the scenarios in (a) and (b); and (d) if the government does not have the projections in (a) or (b), then on what basis are the changes proposed in Bill C-10 being made?

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), yes, the government has projections of what Canadian production will look like in five years without Bill C-10.

With regard to (b), yes, the government has projections of what future contributions to Canadian content will look like in five years with the changes in Bill C-10. With regard to (c), a major goal of Bill C-10 is to ensure that all broadcasters, including Internet giants, contribute in an appropriate manner to the Canadian broadcasting system. The bill gives the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunication Commission, CRTC, the tools it needs to effectively regulate online broadcasters. To that end, the government prepared estimates of what Canadian content production would look like in both a scenario without Bill C-10, and with the inclusion of online broadcasters in the Canadian regulatory framework after the adoption of the measures in Bill C-10.

In further response to (a), with regard to a business-as-usual projection of future production volumes for Canadian television content, internal PCH projections find that without Bill C-10, falling commercial broadcasting revenues are expected to lead to a decline in the production of Canadian television content of around \$1 billion by 2023 when compared with 2018. The projected decline would represent a 34 per cent decrease in production volume between 2018 and 2023.

This figure relates to total volume of Canadian television production, i.e., the total budgets of all television productions that meet the definition for "Canadian content" in a given year. In addition to Canadian television broadcasters, there are many other sources of financing for television production in Canada, including the Canada media fund, foreign financing, Canadian distributors and federal or provincial tax credits. Statistical analysis of historical data for 2012 to 2018 from multiple sources was used to create these projections. Statistical relationships between broadcasting revenues and production were determined and applied to arrive at projections for production.

In further response to (b), with regard to the projection of Bill C-10's impact on future contributions to Canadian audio and audiovisual content, internal PCH estimates find that if the CRTC requires online broadcasters to contribute to Canadian content at a similar rate as traditional broadcasters, online broadcasters' contributions to Canadian music and stories could amount to as much as \$830 million annually by 2023.

This figure relates to total regulatory requirements imposed by the CRTC on broadcasters to contribute to Canadian content and creators, rather than total volume of Canadian production, which relates to producers' spending on Canadian content, drawing from multiple sources of financing. The contributions of online players would result in total contributions to Canadian content and creators in 2023 being 35 per cent higher than in a scenario where traditional broadcasters alone spend on Canadian content.

There are two main sources of uncertainty in this estimate of Canadian content funding. Firstly, since online broadcasters typically do not provide data to the CRTC or publicly disclose their revenues, projections were prepared based on estimates of online revenues and historical trends in those estimates. Secondly, after holding public hearings, the CRTC may impose regulatory requirements on online and/or traditional broadcasters that vary from its current practices. This could significantly change the number above, which is based on online broadcasters contributing at similar levels as traditional broadcasters do now.

It is important to note that \$830 million in contributions from online players does not equate to an \$830 million increase in production volume, e.g., the effect will not make the \$1 billion loss a \$170 million loss. In practice the impact on production volume may be more or less than \$830 million, depending on the extent of any "spillover effects" and several other factors that cannot be estimated with available data.

With regard to (d), it is not applicable.

Question No. 283—Mr. Philip Lawrence:

With regard to the section on page 116 of the Fall Economic Statement 2020, which reads, "CRA will allow employees working from home in 2020 due to COVID-19 with modest expenses to claim up to \$400, based on the amount of time working from home": (a) how many Canadians does the government project will be eligible for the deduction; (b) what is the required amount of time working from home to be eligible for the full \$400 deduction; (c) what is the required amount of time working from home to be eligible for a deduction less than \$400, and what is the formula used to calculate the eligible deduction amount; and (d) what is the specific eligibility criteria to determine if someone who worked from home is eligible for this new deduction, as opposed to the traditional work from home deductions for individuals who worked from home prior to the pandemic?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the response from the CRA is as follows. With regard to part (a), the CRA cannot respond in the manner requested as it does not have information on the projected number of Canadians who will be eligible for the deduction.

Routine Proceedings

With regard to part (b), if an employee worked more than 50% of the time from home for a period of at least four consecutive weeks in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, they can claim \$2 for each day they worked from home during that period. They can then also claim any additional days they worked at home in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The maximum amount of \$400 would be achieved at 200 days working from home due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

With regard to part (c), if an employee worked more than 50% of the time from home for a period of at least four consecutive weeks in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, they can claim \$2 for each day they worked from home during that period. They can then also claim any additional days they worked at home in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The formula to calculate the deduction is \$2 x the total number of days the employee worked from home in 2020 due to COVID-19, to a maximum of \$400.

With regard to part (d), the deduction for home office expenses itself is not new. Rather, the CRA has introduced a new temporary flat rate method to simplify claiming the deduction for the 2020 tax year. However, employees can still choose to use the existing detailed method if they have larger claims. The eligibility criteria to use the new method are as follows: they worked from home in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic; they worked more than 50% of the time from home for a period of at least four consecutive weeks in 2020; they are only claiming home office expenses and are not claiming any other employment expenses; their employer did not reimburse them for all of their home office expenses.

Question No. 290—Mr. Eric Melillo:

With regard to the government's COVID-19 vaccine distribution plan for Indigenous and remote communities: (a) what is the government's specific plan for vaccine distribution; (b) during which month is each community projected to receive enough doses of the vaccine to inoculate the population; and (c) how will the vaccine be delivered or made available to those living in the most extreme remote communities, including those where traditional transportation methods may not be readily available?

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, insofar as Indigenous Services Canada, ISC, and its Special Operating Agency, Indian Oil and Gas Canada, are concerned, the response is as follows. With regard to (a), Indigenous Services Canada is working with the Public Health Agency of Canada, PHAC, the Canadian Armed Forces, CAF, and the National Operations Centre for COVID Vaccine Logistics, and provinces and territories to plan and implement vaccine distribution to all indigenous populations. According to the most recent guidance of the National Advisory Committee on Immunization, NACI, indigenous peoples have been identified as a first priority population for receiving the vaccine. For decades, indigenous peoples have been neglected and subjected to systemic discrimination in Canada's health care institutions. This historic and continued discrimination has resulted in an understandable mistrust in Canada's health care systems. We will continue to work with all partners, including provinces and territories, to ensure cultural safety and respect for first nations, Inuit and Métis when administering the COVID-19 vaccine.

Further sequencing recommendations will be made based on considerations of ethics, equity, feasibility and acceptability, such as the clinical characteristics of the vaccines and the exact timing of

supply. Allocations of vaccines and their rollout will be informed by NACI advice, with outreach and collaboration with indigenous partners.

With regard to (b), as of December 23, 2020, Pfizer and Moderna are the only vaccine candidates to have received authorization from Health Canada and the first shipments of these vaccines have been received at various locations and are being administered to priority populations. COVID-19 vaccines will be distributed in Canada in a phased manner, and it is anticipated that supply will begin to meet demand over the course of 2021. The quantity and schedule of availability of vaccines will be the subject of ongoing discussion with provinces and territories who will manage rollout and delivery. The following webpage shows the total vaccine distribution amounts by province and territory, and its updated weekly: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/prevention-risks/covid-19-vaccine-treatment/vaccine-rollout.html#a4>

With regard to (c), given the varying storage requirements of different vaccine candidates, planning is under way to determine the best way to safely deliver vaccines to remote communities. Efforts to support coordinated planning include an Indigenous Services-led COVID-19 vaccine planning working group with regional representatives, indigenous partners, PHAC, and provincial/territorial representatives.

Provinces and territories receive an allocation of the federally procured COVID-19 vaccine and are responsible for allocating the vaccine to all of those within their jurisdiction, including first nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. Indigenous Services Canada is working with partners to advocate for the prioritization for of first nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples to receive the COVID-19 vaccine and to support the planning and logistics. ISC will support vaccine distribution capacity in communities if needed.

Question No. 291—Mr. Michael Kram:

With regard to page 25 of the Liberal Party of Canada election platform, which stated that "we will merge existing financial and advisory services currently scattered between several agencies into Farm Credit Canada (FCC)": (a) what specific action, if any, has been taken since the 2019 election related to the commitment; (b) which specific entities and services will be merged into FCC; (c) as a result of this merger, how many jobs are expected to be (i) eliminated, (ii) transferred to FCC, broken down by entity; and (d) what is the timeline for this merger, including a timeline of when each entity merged into FCC will wind down their own separate operations, if applicable?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in early 2020, the government began analyzing the platform commitment referenced by the member of Parliament for Regina-Wascana in Q-291 on December 3, 2020, with respect to Farm Credit Canada. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada had been in the process of undertaking an environmental scan of the agricultural financial lending situation in Canada, including agriculture and agri-food-sector-related financial products and services, including those offered by FCC. An approach to implementing this commitment was being developed in alignment with the mandate letter for the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food. This work was put on hold with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020.

Question No. 298—Mr. Alexandre Boulerice:

With regard to the design and implementation of the Canada Infrastructure Bank's \$10 billion growth plan announced on October 1, 2020: (a) were contracts awarded to private suppliers and, if so, how many; (b) what are the details of each of the contracts awarded in (a), including the (i) date the contract was awarded, (ii) description of goods or services, (iii) volume, (iv) final contract amount, (v) supplier, (vi) country of the supplier?

Mr. Andy Fillmore (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the design and implementation of the Canada Infrastructure Bank's \$10-billion growth plan announced on October 1, 2020, and contracts awarded to private suppliers, Infrastructure Canada has nothing to report.

Question No. 299—Mr. Alexandre Boulerice:

With regard to the Canada Revenue Agency and spending related to the "Panama Papers" and "Paradise Papers": (a) were contracts awarded to private-sector suppliers, and, if so, how many; and (b) what are the details for each of the contracts in (a), including the (i) contract award date, (ii) description of the goods or services, (iii) volume, (iv) final amount of the contract, (v) supplier, (vi) country of the supplier?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with respect to the above-noted question, the CRA did not award any contracts related to the "Panama Papers" and "Paradise Papers" to private sector suppliers for the period of December 1, 2019, to December 4, 2020, the date of the question.

Question No. 309—Mr. Kevin Waugh:

With regard to the Emergency Support Fund for Cultural, Heritage and Sport Organizations: (a) what is the total amount dispersed through the fund since March 1, 2020; (b) what are the details of funding provided through the fund, including the (i) recipient, (ii) location of the recipient, (iii) amount?

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to Canadian Heritage and (a), the answer is \$390,697,000. With regard to (b), information pertaining to grants and contributions is publicly available on the Open Canada website at https://search.open.canada.ca/en/gc/?sort=score%20desc&page=1&search_text=&gc-search-orgs=Canadian%20Heritage. This website excludes awards provided by the athlete assistance program, as these are disclosed on an annual basis, at the conclusion of each fiscal year.

With regard to the Canada Council for the Arts and (a), the answer is \$62,685,608. With regard to (b), disclosure of grant and prize recipients can be found at <https://canadacouncil.ca/about/public-accountability/proactive-disclosure/grant-recipients/recipients-2017-present?form=submitted&page=1&year=all&disci->

Routine Proceedings

pline=Strategic+Funds&program=COVID-19+Emergency+Support+Fund&recipient=&province=all&city=&area=all&riding=all&Sort1=Recipient&Sort2=Recipient&Sort3=Recipient&firstfiscyear=2017&lastfiscyear=2147483647

With regard to Telefilm Canada and (a), the answer is \$29,687,367. With regard to (b), information pertaining to grants and contributions can be found at <https://telefilm.ca/en/transparency/proactive-disclosure/grant-contribution/reports-by-quarter>

Question No. 311—Mr. John Nater:

With regard to Canadian diplomats and diplomatic staff suffering from symptoms associated with what is commonly known as Havana Syndrome: (a) on what date did Global Affairs Canada (GAC) first become aware that diplomats and diplomatic staff in Cuba were suffering from symptoms; (b) what specific symptoms does GAC acknowledge are associated with Havana Syndrome; (c) how many current or former diplomats, diplomatic staff, or their family members have reported experiencing symptoms; and (d) why did the government warn diplomats in 2017 not to say anything about the symptoms experienced by those stationed in Havana?

Mr. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following reflects a consolidated response approved on behalf of Global Affairs Canada ministers.

Since the beginning of the health incidents, the health, safety and security of diplomatic staff and their families has been the top priority.

Canada's diplomatic staff and their families have Global Affairs Canada's full support. This has been a very distressing experience for these diplomats and their families, and the department will continue to take the necessary steps to help them.

While we are exploring all avenues, no definitive cause of the health incidents has been identified to date.

For privacy and security reasons, we cannot comment on the specifics of the ongoing investigations, individual cases, nor on specific security and briefing measures.

Question No. 332—Mr. Blaine Calkins:

With regard to the decision by the government and Destination Canada to no longer fund tourism promotion related to hunting and outfitting: (a) when was the decision made; (b) who made the decision; (c) was any analysis done on the impact of such a decision on the economies of areas of Canada that rely on hunting and outfitting tourism, and, if not, why not; (d) if an analysis was conducted, what are the details, including findings; and (e) did the government or Destination Canada consult or notify the hunting and outfitting tourism industry in relation to the decision, and, if so, what are the details?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada continues to value the contribution of the hunting and outfitting sector to the Canadian tourism economy.

Routine Proceedings

For the 2016-2018 period, Destination Canada received a one-time, special funding envelope of \$30 million to launch a major tourism campaign in the United States. This campaign, entitled "Connecting America", included a co-operative marketing fund where Destination Canada co-invested into its partners' integrated U.S. marketing initiatives. Partners were invited to submit proposals for various initiatives that focused on specific activity-based markets, i.e., hunting, fishing, skiing, festivals and events, culinary. Destination Canada did not lead the creative on any of these co-op marketing initiatives.

In 2017, one initiative led by Tourism Saskatchewan for a national hunting program was submitted and approved as part of this co-op marketing fund. Destination Canada co-invested funds alongside partners Tourism Saskatchewan, Travel Manitoba and Spectacular Northwest Territories for a national program designed to generate awareness of hunting opportunities in Canada and to enable Canadian partners to gain a foothold in the hunting-focused U.S. travel industry.

Canada's regional development agencies, RDAs, work to advance and diversify the regional economies. Through regular programming, RDAs have provided support to the hunting and outfitting industry to expand, modernize, and diversify its product offering, as well as support for marketing. To support the stabilization of the economy as a result of the impacts of COVID-19, RDAs are delivering the regional relief and recovery fund, RRRF, designed to provide liquidity support to small and medium-sized enterprises and stabilize the economy. Tourism operators in the outfitter sector are eligible recipients of the RRRF. Projects are searchable on the Open Government website: <https://search.open.canada.ca/en/gc/>

Question No. 344—Mr. Alex Ruff:

With regard to applications received by the government for a new Possession and Acquisition Licence (PAL) or a new Restricted Possession and Acquisition Licence (RPAL), during the COVID-19 pandemic: (a) what was the exact date when new applications for PALs and RPALs (i) stopped being processed during the pandemic, (ii) began being processed again; and (b) how many new (i) PAL, (ii) RPAL applications were processed between March 15, 2020, and December 1, 2020, broken down by week?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a)(i), the Canadian firearms program stopped data entry of new applications for possession and acquisition licences into the Canadian firearms information system by the central processing site the week of March 16, 2020. Chief firearms officers continued to approve applications that had already been entered into the Canadian firearms information system.

With regard to (a)(ii), the Canadian firearms program restarted the data entry of new applications for possession and acquisition licences into the Canadian firearms information system by the central processing site the week of April 13, 2020.

With regard to (b), the requested information is provided in Annex 1. Statistics for the period between March 15 and December 1, 2020, for new applications for possession and acquisition licences, non-restricted or restricted, associated to the data entry of these applications by the central processing site.

[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the supplementary response to Question No. 173 originally tabled on December 9, 2020; the government's responses to Questions Nos. 206 to 208, 211 to 214, 217, 218, 220 to 223, 225, 227, 230, 232 to 234, 237, 239 to 241, 243 to 249, 251 to 253, 255, 256, 258, 259, 262 to 268, 270, 271, 273, 275 to 277, 281, 282, 284 to 289, 292 to 293, 294 to 297, 300 to 308, 310, 312 to 316, 318 to 331, 333 to 343, 345 and 346; and a response to starred question 317 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 206—Mr. Philip Lawrence:

With regard to the Next Generation Human Resources and Pay project: (a) what is the total projected budget for the project; (b) what are the project's anticipated (i) start-up and implementation costs, broken down by type of expense, (ii) ongoing or yearly operating costs; and (c) what is the projected date of when the system will be implemented for each department, agency or other government entity, broken down by entity?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 207—Mr. Michael D. Chong:

With regard to the government's reaction to measures taken by the Chinese government against those living in Hong Kong: (a) how many asylum and refugee claims have been granted, since January 1, 2019, to those who were previously living in Hong Kong; (b) how many asylum and refugee claims from individuals in Hong Kong does the government project will be received in the next 12 months; (c) has the government made contingency plans to ensure that safe return of all Canadians who wish to return, including those with dual citizenship and, if so, what are the details of such plans; and (d) what specific steps, if any, has the government taken to ensure that Canadians in Hong Kong are not arbitrarily arrested or detained under the guise of the so-called national security law?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 208—Mr. Philip Lawrence:

With regard to each contract signed by the government since March 1, 2020, with a value greater than \$10 million: (a) what specific measures, if any, were taken by the government to ensure that taxpayers were getting value for money, broken down by each contract; and (b) what are the details of each contract, including (i) vendor, (ii) amount, (iii) description of goods or services, (iv) whether or not the contract was sole-sourced?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 211—Mr. Scott Aitchison:

With regard to training provided to Canadian Armed Forces public affairs staff, since January 1, 2016: (a) what is the total value of the contracts awarded to the companies or individuals that provided the training; and (b) what are the details of each related contract, including the (i) vendor, (ii) amount, (iii) date, (iv) type of training provided (public speaking, social media, etc.), (v) file number?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 212—Mr. Gary Vidal:**

With regard to Indigenous Services Canada's provision of personal protective equipment (PPE) for Indigenous peoples in Canada since January 1, 2020: (a) what is the total amount requested by First Nations communities and other Indigenous organizations, broken down by type of PPE (masks, face shields, etc.); (b) what is the breakdown of (a) by (i) date of request, (ii) name of First Nations community or organization making the request, (iii) amount requested, broken down by type of PPE; and (c) what are the details of each PPE delivery provided to First Nations and other Indigenous organizations, including (i) date of delivery, (ii) recipient community or organization, (iii) amount delivered, broken down by type of PPE?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 213—Mr. Bob Zimmer:

With regard to the Invest in Canada Hub: (a) since March 12, 2018, how much has been spent on hospitality or ticket purchases related to attracting foreign investment; and (b) what are the details of all expenditures in (a), including (i) date, (ii) amount, (iii) number of guests or tickets purchased, (iv) location, (v) vendor, (vi) description of event, (vii) number of government officials in attendance, (viii) number of guests in attendance, (ix) companies or organizations represented?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 214—Mr. Bob Zimmer:

With regard to the Business Credit Availability Program (BCAP): (a) how many businesses have received loans from (i) Export Development Canada, (ii) the Business Development Bank of Canada, (iii) other sources under the BCAP program since the pandemic began; (b) how many applications for loans under the program were declined; (c) what is the total value of loans provided under the program; and (d) what were the median and average value of loans provided under the program?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 217—Mr. Dan Mazier:

With regard to the Universal Broadband Fund: (a) how many applications has the government received for funding; (b) what is the total amount dispersed by the fund since its official formation; (c) how many applications were classified as originating from a local government district; (d) how many applications were received from applicants in the province of Manitoba; (e) how many of the applications in (d) were successful; and (f) what are the details of all funding provided through the fund, including (i) recipient, (ii) amount, (iii) location, (iv) project description or summary?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 218—Ms. Lianne Rood:

With regard to the government's announcement in May 2020 to provide \$77 million to assist food processors with their COVID-19 protection and adaptation plans: (a) how much of the funding has been provided to date; and (b) what is the breakdown of how much funding each food processor received by (i) name of recipient, (ii) type of processor (beef, pork, produce, etc.), (iii) amount, (iv) location?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 220—Mr. John Nater:

With regard to the statutory responsibilities of ministers: what are the statutory responsibilities of the Minister of Rural Economic Development?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 221—Mr. Glen Motz:

With regard to the requests for information received by the government from the Parliamentary Budget Officer since January 1, 2017: what are the details of all the instances where some or all of the information requested was either withheld or redacted, including (i) the specific request, (ii) date of request, (iii) number of pages withheld or redacted, (iv) title of the individual who authorized the redactions or the refusal to provide all of the information, (v) reason for the redactions or refusal to provide the information?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 222—Mr. Ben Lobb:

With regard to the recommendation by the Chief Public Health Officer that Canadians use a three-layer non-medical mask with a filter: (a) how many non-medical masks purchased by the government since March 1, 2020, (i) meet this cri-

terion, (ii) do not meet this criterion; and (b) what is the value of the masks purchased by the government that (i) meet this criterion, (ii) do not meet this criterion?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 223—Mr. Dave Epp:

With regard to expenditures made since January 1, 2018, for non-public servant travel, and broken down by department, agency, or other government entity: (a) what is the total of all expenditures, broken down by object code; (b) what are the details of each trip taken in relation to expenditures made under the classification non-public servant travel - Key stakeholders (code 0262), or similar classification, including (i) date, (ii) origin, (iii) destination, (iv) mode of travel (train, air, etc.), (v) cost of trip, broken down by type of expense (accommodation, airfare, etc.), (vi) organization represented by traveller, (vii) purpose of travel or description of events requiring travel; and (c) what are the details of each trip taken in relation to expenditures made under the classification non-public servant travel - Other travel (code 0265), or similar classification, including (i) date, (ii) origin, (iii) destination, (iv) mode of travel (train, air, etc.), (v) cost of trip, broken down by type of expense (accommodation, airfare, etc.), (vi) organization represented by traveller, (vii) purpose of travel or description of events requiring travel?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 225—Mr. Jamie Schmale:

With regard to the Canada Student Service Grant program and the original decision to have WE Charity administer the program: was an Official Languages Impact Analysis conducted on the program, and, if so, (i) who conducted the analysis, (ii) on what date was the analysis completed, (iii) what were the findings of the analysis, (iv) which Minister signed the analysis?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 227—Mr. Glen Motz:

With regard to the backlog of evidence processing in the RCMP crime laboratories: (a) what is the current backlog for each category and type of evidence submitted, including DNA, swabs, fingerprinting, firearms, fabric evidence, non-firearm weapons, and any other type of evidence, broken down by laboratory; (b) what was the expected timeline to deliver evidence prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, broken down by laboratory; (c) what is the current expected timeline to deliver evidence, broken down by laboratory; (d) how many times have the RCMP laboratories sent notices or requests to prosecutors, police officers or police services seeking an extension for the originally projected timelines; (e) in the last 24 months, how many evidence submissions have been rejected because of (i) lack of capacity to do the analysis, (ii) lack of response from the officer or prosecutor who sent in the evidence, (iii) inaccurate or poorly collected evidence, (iv) lack of personnel with the skills needed to do the work, (v) decision by the evidence laboratory that the evidence was not needed or relevant, (vi) decision by the evidence laboratory that they would not process evidence because they were already processing something similar; (f) in the last 24 months, how much work has been outsourced to private laboratories to deal with overflow, broken down by month, year, and the laboratory it was sent; (g) in the last 24 months, how many times was outsourcing of work requested by laboratories and rejected by management due to financial considerations; (h) in the last 24 months, how many times has the RCMP sent out any notice, communication or information declining to process certain evidence or types of evidence; (i) how many employees and vacant positions in evidence laboratories currently exist, broken down by evidence laboratory; (j) how many new staff have been hired in the last 24 months; (k) in the last 24 months, how many employees have left or retired; (l) over the last six months, are there any open positions requiring critical skills, in any of the evidence laboratories, thus limiting the amount of work done by the laboratory, and, if so, what are the details; (m) have any of the RCMP evidence laboratories sought support, work sharing, transfer of work to municipal, provincial or private sector laboratories for evidence they lacked the capacity, skills or equipment to process, and, if so, what are the details; and (n) how many notices have been sent in the last 24 months that evidence would be available for prosecutors or police in time for trial?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 230—Mr. Don Davies:**

With regard to the federal tobacco control strategy for fiscal year 2019-20: (a) what was the budget for the strategy; (b) how much of that budget was spent within the fiscal year; (c) how much was spent on each component of the strategy, specifically, (i) mass media, (ii) policy and regulatory development, (iii) research, (iv) surveillance, (v) enforcement, (vi) grants and contributions, (vii) programs for Indigenous Canadians; (d) were any other activities not listed in (c) funded by the strategy and, if so, how much was spent on each of these activities; and (e) was part of the budget reallocated for purposes other than tobacco control and, if so, how much was reallocated?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 232—Mrs. Kelly Block:

With regard to advertising by agencies and Crown corporations under the Finance portfolio since January 1, 2016: (a) how many advertisements have been created in total, broken down by year and by type (internet, print dailies, radio, television, etc.); (b) what is the media authorization number and name of each advertisement listed in (a); (c) what are the details of each advertisement or campaign, including the (i) title or description of the advertisement or campaign, (ii) purpose or goal, (iii) start and end date of the campaign, (iv) media outlets running advertisements, (v) name of the advertising agency used to produce the advertisement, if applicable, (vi) name of the advertising agency used to purchase advertising space, if applicable, (vii) total amount spent, broken down by advertisement and campaign; and (d) what are the details of all contracts awarded related to advertising, including any contracts awarded to advertising or production agencies, including the (i) vendor, (ii) amount, (iii) start and end date, (iv) title or summary of each related campaign, (v) description of goods or services?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 233—Mrs. Kelly Block:

With regard to the Canadian Armed Forces or the Department of National Defence creating dossiers on journalists since November 4, 2015: (a) how many dossiers on journalists have been created; and (b) what are the details of each dossier created including the (i) journalist, (ii) news outlet, (iii) date created, (iv) section that created the dossier (public affairs, defence strategic communication, etc.), (v) observations, analysis or comments contained in dossier?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 234—Mr. Steven Blaney:

With regard to the government's Joint Support Ship program and the report of the Parliamentary Budget Officer, dated November 17, 2020: (a) why did the government choose the more expensive option rather than purchase the vessels from Chantier Davie Canada Inc.; (b) why was the estimated savings of \$3 billion with the Davie option not the deciding factor in the government's choice not to use Davie; (c) does the government accept the findings of the Parliamentary Budget Officer as accurate, and, if not, which specific findings does it not accept; and (d) has the government conducted an assessment of the capabilities of the Asterix and Obelix as commercial vessels converted for military purposes versus those of the built-for-purpose Joint Support Ship program, and, if so, what were the findings of the assessment, or, if not, why not?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 237—Mr. Kerry Diotte:

With regard to expenditures on social media marketing and management companies, broken down by department, agency, Crown corporation or other government entity: (a) what is the total amount spent each year since January 1, 2016; (b) as of November 11, 2020, what are the details of all social media accounts that are managed, in whole or in part, by a company, including (i) platform, (ii) handle or account name, (iii) name of the company managing the account, (iv) type of work being done by the company (writing posts, scheduling, promoting, etc.); and (c) what are the details of all contracts signed since January 1, 2016, including the (i) vendor, (ii) amount, (iii) date and duration of the contract, (iv) which social media accounts are covered by the contract, (v) detailed description of goods or services provided?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 239—Mr. Kyle Seeback:

With regard to the Veterans Affairs Canada service standard of 16 weeks for decisions in relation to disability benefit applications, for applications received during the 2019-20 fiscal year: (a) how many and what percentage of applications received a decision within (i) the 16-week standard, (ii) between 16 and 26 weeks, (iii)

greater than 26 weeks; and (b) how many such applications have yet to receive a decision?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 240—Mr. Eric Duncan:

With regard to privacy breaches since November 1, 2019, broken down by department, agency, Crown corporation or other government entity: (a) how many privacy breaches have occurred; and (b) for each privacy breach, (i) was it reported to the Privacy Commissioner, (ii) how many individuals were affected, (iii) what were the dates of the privacy breach, (iv) were the individuals affected notified that their information may have been compromised and, if so, on what date and by what manner?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 241—Mr. Eric Duncan:

With regard to social media posts that were posted and later deleted or edited on government accounts since January 1, 2019, and broken down by department, agency, Crown corporation, or other government entity: what are the details of all such posts, including the (i) subject matter, (ii) time and date of the original post, (iii) time and date of the deletion or edit, (iv) description of the original post including the type of post (text, still picture, video, etc.), (v) summary of the edit, including the precise differences between the original post and the revised post, (vi) reason for the deletion or edit?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 243—Mr. Damien C. Kurek:

With regard to expenditures on, and use of, isolation or quarantine accommodations during the pandemic: (a) how many (i) foreigners, (ii) Canadian citizens or permanent residents have required the government to provide isolation or quarantine accommodations since August 1, 2020; (b) what is the total amount spent by the government on such accommodations since August 1, 2020, broken down by month; (c) what are the details of all such accommodations and in which municipalities and provinces are such accommodations located, including (i) municipality, (ii) province or territory, (iii) type of facility (hotel, dorm rooms, etc.); and (d) are individuals requiring such accommodations required to reimburse the taxpayer for the cost associated with the accommodation and, if so, how much has been received in reimbursements (i) prior to August 1, 2020, (ii) since August 1, 2020?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 244—Mr. Brad Vis:

With regard to the government's Rapid Housing Initiative: what are the details of all funding commitments provided to date under the initiative, including (i) date of commitment, (ii) amount of federal commitment, (iii) detailed location, including address, municipality and province, (iv) project description, (v) number of housing units, broken down by type of housing?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 245—Mr. Brad Vis:

With regard to funding provided under the Social Development Partnerships Program since January 1, 2016: (a) what is the total amount of funding provided under the program, broken down by year and by province or territory; and (b) what are the details of all projects or programs funded through the program, including (i) date of funding, (ii) amount of federal contribution, (iii) recipient, (iv) purpose of funding or project description, (v) location of recipient, (vi) location of project or program, if different than recipient?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 246—Ms. Monique Pauzé:**

With regard to the fossil fuel sector and the renewable energy sector, and for all the departments and agencies affected: (a) what regulatory amendments, including amendments to federal-provincial partnership programs, have been made since March 15, 2020, that affect the funding or regulation of one of these sectors, including (i) the duration of each of these amendments, (ii) the impact of each amendment; and (b) for these two sectors, what financial support measures have been implemented (i) through programs administered by Export Development Canada, (ii) by any other governmental or quasi-governmental department or agency?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 247—Mr. David Sweet:

With regard to electric vehicle charging stations installed on government property, since January 1, 2016, that are primarily for the use of government employees, such as the stations near West Block or the stations adjacent to parking spots reserved for high-level government officials, such as the President of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency: (a) what is the location of each such charging station; (b) who has access to each of the stations, broken down by location; (c) what was the total cost to install each of the stations, broken down by location; and (d) for those stations that are adjacent to reserved parking spaces for government employees, how does the public have access to each station, if they are available to the public?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 248—Mr. David Sweet:

With regard to contracts signed by any government department, agency, Crown corporation, or other government entity, and Bensimon Byrne, since November 4, 2015, and including any contracts that were not or have yet to be posted on the government's proactive disclosure websites: what are the details of all such contracts, including the (i) start and end dates, (ii) amount, (iii) description of goods or services provided, (iv) title and summary of any related advertising campaign, (v) title of the official who approved the contract, (vi) reason the contract was not made public through proactive disclosure, if applicable?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 249—Mr. Warren Steinley:

With regard to the ongoing process to replace the government's VIP aircraft, including the Airbus and Challenger planes used to transport the Prime Minister and other ministers: (a) what is the projected timeline when each aircraft will be replaced; (b) what is the projected cost to replace each aircraft; (c) what specific action to date has been completed in relation to the process of replacing each aircraft; (d) what replacement options have been presented to the Minister of National Defense, the Prime Minister, or the Minister of Transport in relation to the replacement option; and (e) for each option in (d), what is the anticipated location where each aircraft would be built?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 251—Mr. Kenny Chiu:

With regard to the 2017 report presented by the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, entitled "Starting Again: Improving Government Oversight of Immigration Consultants": what specific action, if any, has the government taken in response to each of the committee's 21 recommendations, broken down by each of the specific recommendations?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 252—Mr. Kenny Chiu:

With regard to the mandate letter of the Minister of Diversity and Inclusion and Youth: (a) which of the items in the mandate letter have been fully accomplished to date; (b) which of the items are currently being worked on, and what is the expected completion date of each of the items; and (c) which of the items are no longer being pursued?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 253—Mr. Kenny Chiu:

With regard to the response from the Minister of Immigration Refugee and Citizenship (IRCC) to Order Paper question Q-45 about visitors coming to Canada for the sole purpose of giving birth on Canadian soil, which stated that "IRCC is researching the extent of this practice, including how many non-residents giving birth are short-term visitors by engaging the CIHI and Statistics Canada": (a) what is the projected timeline for this research project; (b) how many people from IRCC have

been assigned to work on this project; (c) on what date did IRCC "engage" the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) and Statistics Canada; (d) what information has been provided to IRCC to date from CIHI or Statistics Canada, broken down by date the information was provided; and (e) are provincial health authorities, including the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux Quebec, being engaged as part of the ongoing research?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 255—Mr. Gary Vidal:

With regard to both formal and informal requests received by Indigenous Services Canada for ministerial loan guarantees, since January 1, 2016: what are the details of all such requests, including the (i) date the request was received, (ii) name of the First Nation or organization making the request, (iii) value of the loan guarantee requested, (iv) value of the loan guarantee provided by the government, (v) purpose of the loan?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 256—Mr. Kelly McCauley:

With regard to sole-sourced COVID-19 spending since March 13, 2020: (a) how many contracts have been sole-sourced; (b) what are the details of each such sole-sourced contract, including the (i) date of the award, (ii) description of goods or services, including volume, (iii) final amount, (iv) vendor, (v) country of vendor; (c) how many sole-sourced contracts have been awarded to domestic-based companies; and (d) how many sole-sourced contracts have been awarded to foreign-based companies, broken down by country where the company is based?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 258—Mr. Kelly McCauley:

With regard to reports, studies, assessments, and evaluations (herein referenced as "deliverables") prepared for the government, including any department, agency, Crown corporation or other government entity, by Deloitte since January 1, 2016: what are the details of all such deliverables, including the (i) date that the deliverable was finished, (ii) title, (iii) summary of recommendations, (iv) file number, (v) website where the deliverable is available online, if applicable, (vi) value of the contract related to the deliverable?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 259—Mr. Kelly McCauley:

With regard to personal protective equipment (PPE) procurement with AMD Medicom: (a) how many units of PPE have been produced for Canada by AMD Medicom since the contract was awarded, broken down by type of PPE; (b) how many units of PPE have been delivered to the government by AMD Medicom since the contract was awarded, broken down by type of PPE and date of delivery; (c) how many units of AMD Medicom PPE are being held in government storage facilities; (d) how many units of AMD Medicom PPE are being held in AMD Medicom storage facilities; (e) how many government storage facilities are there to hold PPE; (f) of the storage facilities in (e), how many are (i) full, (ii) empty; (g) what is AMD Medicom currently producing at, broken down monthly by type of PPE; (h) what was the date of the first shipment by AMD Medicom to the government; (i) what was the date of the first shipment received by the government; (j) since the contract was awarded, how many units of PPE were turned away due to lack of storage facilities; (k) of the units in (j), when were they (i) turned away, (ii) finally delivered; and (l) of the PPE delivered by AMD Medicom, how many units have been distributed to the provinces, by province, month and type of PPE?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 262—Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:

With regard to the Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance (CECRA) program, since its inception: (a) what is the total amount paid out through the program; (b) how many individual companies have received payments, broken down by (i) country of physical address, (ii) country of mailing address, (iii) country of the bank account the funds were deposited into; (c) for all companies in (b) that are located in Canada, what is the breakdown down by (i) province or territory, (ii) municipality; (d) how many audits have been conducted of companies receiving the CECRA; and (e) for the audits in (d), how many have found that funding has been spent outside of Canada?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 263—Ms. Lianne Rood:**

With regard to the government's fleet of aircraft: (a) what are the make and model of each aircraft owned by the government; (b) how many of each make and model does the government own; (c) what is the estimated cost to operate each aircraft per hour, broken down by make and model; and (d) what is the estimated hourly (i) fuel usage, (ii) greenhouse gas emissions and carbon footprint of each aircraft, broken down by make and model?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 264—Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:

With regard to federal funding in the constituency of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke between January 2018 and November 2020: (a) what applications for funding have been received, including for each the (i) name of the applicant, (ii) department, (iii) program and sub-program under which they applied for funding, (iv) date of the application, (v) amount applied for, (vi) whether the funding has been approved or not, (vii) total amount of funding allocated, if the funding was approved, (viii) project description or purpose of funding; (b) what funds, grants, loans, and loan guarantees has the government issued through its various departments and agencies in the constituency of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke that did not require a direct application from the applicant, including for each the (i) name of the recipient, (ii) department, (iii) program and sub-program under which they received funding, (iv) total amount of funding allocated, if the funding was approved, (v) project description or purpose of funding; and (c) what projects have been funded in the constituency of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke by recipients tasked with sub-granting government funds (e.g. Community Foundations of Canada), including for each the (i) name of the recipient, (ii) department, (iii) program and sub-program under which they received funding, (iv) total amount of funding allocated, if the funding was approved, (v) project description or purpose of funding?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 265—Mr. John Barlow:

With regard to Health Canada's proposed front-of-package and food labelling modernization regulations, and other mandatory labelling changes: (a) what are the details of all proposed or ongoing changes to nutrition and ingredient labelling and all compliance timelines; and (b) when will Health Canada announce the alignment of compliance timelines for each change for labeling in the food and beverage industry, broken down by change?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 266—Ms. Raquel Dancho:

With regard to the new College of Immigration and Citizenship Consultants becoming the official regulator of immigration and citizenship consultants: (a) how will the college be funded; (b) what is the projected budget for the college for each of the next five years; (c) what specific powers or enforcement mechanisms will be available to the college; (d) what will be the organizational structure of the college; (e) will all immigration and citizenship consultants be required to be members of the college; (f) what is the timeline for when the college will be operational; (g) what is the timeline for enforcement powers given to the college to come into effect; and (h) will there be any demographic or geographical requirements or considerations for the selection of board members and, if so, what are the details?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 267—Ms. Raquel Dancho:

With regard to the government's position regarding the admissibility to Canada of individuals who have faced politically motivated charges in Hong Kong or China: (a) are foreigners convicted of politically motivated charges in Hong Kong or China barred from entry into Canada as a result of the politically motivated charges; (b) what directives have been issued, or measures taken, to ensure that border and immigration officials do not reject admittance to Canada based on politically motivated charges; and (c) what is the list of offences, which would normally bar admittance to Canada, that the government will consider to be politically motivated if the charges were laid in Hong Kong or China?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 268—Mr. Jacques Gourde:

With regard to the government's promise of \$1.75 billion over eight years in compensation to dairy farmers resulting from concessions made under Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement and the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership: (a) how much com-

pensation has been or will be delivered to dairy farmers, broken down by each of the next eight years, starting with the 2020-21 fiscal year; and (b) on what date in each of the fiscal years will the payments be sent?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 270—Mr. Colin Carrie:

With regard to bonuses or performance pay given to government executives at the director level (EX-01) or higher, who were assigned duties related to the development, rollout, or implementation of the Phoenix pay system, and broken down by year since January 1, 2016: (a) what is the total amount of expenditures on bonuses or performance pay for such executives; and (b) how many such executives have received bonuses or performance pay?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 271—Mr. Dean Allison:

With regard to conditions placed on individuals receiving national interest exemptions related to travel restrictions or quarantine requirements during the pandemic: (a) how many individuals have received national interest exemptions since March 1, 2020; (b) of the individuals in (a), how many have had conditions placed on their exemption; (c) what is the breakdown of the type of condition placed on individuals (geographic restriction, limit on time in Canada, etc.), including the number of individuals subject to each type of condition; and (d) what costs have been incurred by the government in relation to facilitating national interest exemptions, broken down by item and type of expense?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 273—Mr. Chris d'Entremont:

With regard to the ongoing issues related to the Indigenous Nova Scotia lobster fishery, since November 20, 2019: (a) how many briefings has the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans had from the departmental scientists in charge of Lobster Fishing Areas (LFA) 33, LFA 34 and LFA 35 regarding the state of the lobster fisheries; (b) what are the details of the briefings in (a), including (i) the date, (ii) subjects of the briefings, (iii) whether the briefing was requested by the minister or recommended by the department; (c) how many meetings has the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans had with stakeholders regarding the state of the lobster fisheries; and (d) what are the details of all meetings in (c), including the (i) date, (ii) meeting summary (iii) stakeholder groups in attendance, (iv) location?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 275—Mr. Peter Kent:

With regard to the acquisition of buildings by government departments or agencies, since December 1, 2019, for each transaction: (a) what is the location of the building; (b) what is the amount paid; (c) what is the type of building; (d) what is the file number; (e) what is the date of transaction; (f) what is the reason for acquisition; and (g) who was the owner of the building prior to government acquisition?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 276—Mr. Peter Kent:

With regard to the acquisition of land by government departments or agencies, since January 1, 2016, for each transaction: (a) what is the land location; (b) what is the amount paid; (c) what is the size and description of the land; (d) what is the file number; (e) what is the date of transaction; (f) what is the reason for acquisition; and (g) who was the owner of the building prior to government acquisition?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 277—Mr. Dan Mazier:**

With regard to Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Business Risk Management Programs (BRMs), AgriStability, AgriInvest, AgriInsurance and AgriRecovery: (a) what is the total amount of funds budgeted in fiscal year 2019-20 for AgriStability, AgriInvest, AgriInsurance and AgriRecovery; (b) what is the total amount of funds dispersed in fiscal year 2019-20 for AgriStability, AgriInvest, AgriInsurance and AgriRecovery; (c) what is the total amount of funds for AgriStability, AgriInvest, AgriInsurance and AgriRecovery dispersed in the last 10 fiscal years, broken down by (i) fiscal year, (ii) business risk management program, (iii) province, (iv) sector; and (d) what is the total percentage of agricultural producers who have accessed AgriStability, AgriInvest, AgriInsurance, and AgriRecovery in the fiscal year 2019-20, broken down by (i) business risk management program, (ii) province, (iii) sector?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 281—Mr. Chris Warkentin:

With regard to the government's level of co-operation with investigations or analysis conducted by the police or any officer or agent of Parliament, such as the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner: (a) since January 1, 2016, how many waivers has the government signed to allow for complete and unrestricted co-operation and sharing of information between the government and those conducting the investigation or analysis; and (b) what are the details of each waiver, including the (i) date, (ii) types of records covered by the waiver (protected, cabinet confidence, etc.), (iii) entity with which the waiver allows information to be shared (RCMP, Commissioner of Lobbying, etc.), (iv) subject matter of the investigation?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 282—Mr. Robert Kitchen:

With regard to government revenue from taxes or duties related to cannabis sales: (a) what was the original projected revenue from these taxes or duties in (i) 2019, (ii) 2020; (b) what was the actual revenue generated from these taxes or duties in (i) 2019, (ii) 2020; (c) what is the breakdown of (a) and (b) by revenue source (GST, excise tax, etc.); (d) what is the projected revenue from these taxes or duties in each of the next five years; (e) what percentage of cannabis sold in Canada does the government estimate is currently sold through (i) legal distributors, (ii) illegal drug dealers; and (f) what was the amount of revenue generated, broken down by month, related to cannabis sales between (i) March 1, 2019, and December 1, 2019, (ii) March 1, 2020, and December 1, 2020?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 284—Mr. Ron Liepert:

With regard to government expenditures on aircraft rentals since December 1, 2019, broken down by department, agency, Crown corporation and other government entity: (a) what is the total amount spent on the rental of aircraft; and (b) what are the details of each expenditure, including (i) amount, (ii) vendor, (iii) dates of rental, (iv) type of aircraft, (v) purpose of trip, (vi) origin and destination of flights, (vii) titles of passengers, including which passengers were on which segments of each trip?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 285—Mr. Ron Liepert:

With regard to the various financial relief programs put in place since March 1, 2020: (a) what is the total amount dispersed through each measure to date, broken down by program; and (b) what is the estimated level of fraudulent applications for each program, including (i) estimated percentage of fraudulent applications, (ii) estimated number of fraudulent applications, (iii) estimated dollar value of fraudulent applications?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 286—Mr. Jeremy Patzer:

With regard to the Minister of Middle Class Prosperity: (a) since the minister was sworn in on November 20, 2019, how many members of the middle class have seen their prosperity (i) increase, (ii) decrease; and (b) what metrics does the minister use to measure the level of middle class prosperity?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 287—Mr. Luc Berthold:

With regard to contracts issued by ministers' offices for the purpose of media training, since December 1, 2019: what are the details of all such contracts, includ-

ing the (i) vendors, (ii) dates of contract, (iii) dates of training, (iv) individuals for whom the training was for, (v) amounts?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 288—Mr. Luc Berthold:

With regard to polling by the government since December 1, 2019: (a) what is the list of all poll questions and subjects that have been commissioned since December 1, 2019; (b) for each poll in (a), what was the (i) start and end date each poll was in the field, (ii) sample size of each poll, (iii) manner in which the poll was conducted (in person, virtually, etc.); and (c) what are the details of all polling contracts signed since December 1, 2019, including the (i) vendor, (ii) date and duration, (iii) amount, (iv) summary of the contract, including the number of polls conducted?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 289—Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:

With regard to the Canadian Armed Forces: (a) since 1995, what is the number of attempted suicides amongst active and former Canadian Armed Forces members, both regular and reserve force, broken down by (i) year, (ii) service status, (iii) branch, (iv) rank; (b) since 1995, what is the number of suicides amongst active and former Canadian Armed Forces members, both regular and reserve force, broken down by (i) year, (ii) service status, (iii) branch, (iv) rank; (c) what government agency, directorate and office has the ability or responsibility to collect and maintain data related to suicides and attempted suicides by former and current members of the Canadian Armed Forces; (d) what is the step by step protocol and procedure for collecting data on attempted suicides and suicides by past and present Canadian Armed Forces members; and (e) if there is no protocol or step by step process, what would the process be to collect and maintain this data?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 292—Ms. Michelle Rempel Garner:

With regard to the Prime Minister's announcement in May 2020 of an agreement with CanSino Biologics Inc. (CanSinoBIO) in relation to the development of a potential COVID-19 vaccine: (a) what were the original details of the agreement, as understood by the government in May 2020; (b) on what date did the government first become aware that the agreement would not proceed as planned; (c) on what date did the government become aware that shipments of Ad5-nCoV were being blocked by the Chinese government; (d) what reason, if any, did the Chinese government provide to the government for blocking the shipment; (e) has the government transferred any money or any type of expenditures to CanSinoBIO since January 1, 2020, and, if so, what is the total amount sent, broken down by date of transfer; (f) what are the details of any contracts signed with CanSinoBIO since January 1, 2020, including the (i) amount, (ii) original value, (iii) final value, (iv) date contract was signed, (v) description of goods or services, including volume; (g) was the National Security and Intelligence Advisor to the Prime Minister advised of terms of the terms agreement prior to the Prime Minister's announcement, and, if so, did he approve of the agreement; (h) was the Department of National Defence or the Canadian Security Intelligence Service informed of the details of the agreement prior to the Prime Minister's announcement, and, if so, did they raise any concerns with the Office of the Prime Minister or the Privy Council Office; and (i) what were the results of any security analysis conducted in relation to CanSinoBIO?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 293—Mr. Luc Berthold:

With regard to the government's decision not to conduct an Official Languages Impact Analysis in relation to certain items announced since January 1, 2020: (a) why was an Official Languages Impact Analysis not conducted on the proposal to have WE Charity run the Canada Student Service Grant; (b) what is the complete list of items approved by Treasury Board since March 13, 2020, that underwent the required Official Languages Impact Analysis prior to submission; (c) what is the complete list of items approved by Treasury Board since March 13, 2020, that did not undergo an Official Languages Impact Analysis, prior to submission; and (d) for each item in (c), what is the government's rationale for not abiding by the Official Languages Impact Analysis requirement?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 294—Mr. Damien C. Kurek:**

With regard to the consultations that have taken place since 2018 regarding potential changes to the seed royalty regime: (a) what is the complete list of entities consulted; (b) what is the number of independent producers consulted; (c) what specific concerns were raised by those consulted, broken down by proposal; and (d) is the government currently considering any changes to the seed royalty regime, and if so, what are the details, including the timeline, of any potential changes?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 295—Mrs. Rosemarie Falk:

With regard to the statement of the Vice-President of Guyana, in August 2020, that, "it's a Canadian grant and there will be a Canadian consultant," in reference to the appointment of Alison Redford to assist in developing Guyana's oil and gas sector: (a) what are the details of the grant, including the (i) date, (ii) amount, (iii) purpose, (iv) department and program administering the grant; (b) what are the details of any other grants, programs, initiatives, or expenditures that have provided any assistance to Guyana's oil and gas sector since November 4, 2015; and (c) did the government conduct any analysis on the impact that the development of the Guyana oil and gas sector will have on the Canadian oil and gas sector, and, if so, what were the findings of the analysis?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 296—Mr. Alexandre Boulterice:

With regard to investments in Canada Revenue Agency tax compliance measures to crack down on international tax evasion, since the 2016–17 fiscal year, broken down by fiscal year: (a) how many auditors specializing in foreign accounts have been hired; (b) how many audits have been conducted; (c) how many notices of assessment have been sent; (d) what was the amount recovered; (e) how many cases were referred to the Public Prosecution Service of Canada; and (f) how many criminal charges have been laid?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 297—Mr. Alexandre Boulterice:

With regard to the design and implementation of programs and spending measures relating to COVID-19, broken down by program and spending measure: (a) have contracts been awarded to private-sector suppliers and, if so, how many; and (b) what are the details for each contract in (a), including the (i) date the contract was awarded, (ii) description of goods or services, (iii) volume, (iv) final contract amount, (v) supplier, (vi) country of the supplier?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 300—Mr. Peter Julian:

With regard to the temporary suspension of some programs and services of the Canada Revenue Agency, since the month of March 2020: (a) what is the name of each suspended program and service; and (b) for each program and service in (a), what is the (i) suspension date and resumption date, (ii) what are the reasons for the suspension?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 301—Mrs. Alice Wong:

With regard to the decision of Transport Canada not to allow passengers to remain in their vehicles on certain decks of BC Ferries throughout the COVID-19 pandemic: (a) did Transport Canada conduct any analysis relating to exempting passengers from this restriction throughout the pandemic in order to prevent possible exposure to COVID-19, and, if so, what were the findings of the analysis; (b) why did Transport Canada require those passengers to venture out of their vehicles into the communal areas of BC Ferries; (c) did Transport Canada consult Health Canada or the Public Health Agency of Canada prior to enforcing this restriction during the pandemic, and, if not, why; (d) why did Transport Canada refuse to exempt high risk and elderly travelers from this requirement, thus causing such individuals to be unnecessarily exposed to others; (e) what are the details of any communication received by either Health Canada or the Public Health Agency of Canada regarding this decision from Transport Canada, including the (i) date, (ii) sender, (iii) recipient, (iv) title, (v) subject matter, (vi) summary of contents; and (f) what was the response of Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada to any communication received in (e)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 302—Mr. Dave Epp:

With regard to the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB): (a) how many self-employed Canadians earning more than \$5,000 in gross income, but less than \$5,000 in net income, have applied for the benefit during the qualification period; (b) how many individuals in (a) have been asked by the Canada Revenue Agency to repay the amount they received under the CERB; (c) what is the (i) average, (ii) median, (iii) total amount that the individuals in (a) were asked to repay; and (d) why did the government not specify that the \$5,000 requirement was for net income rather than gross income on the original application form?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 303—Mr. Dave Epp:

With regard to the COVID Alert app and the November 23, 2020, update to fix a bug causing gaps in exposure checks for some users: (a) on what date did the government first become aware of the gaps or other issues; (b) how many potential exposures were missed because of the gaps; (c) how many app users encountered gaps in exposure checks; (d) on what date did the gaps first begin; (e) on what date were the gaps fully resolved; (f) what is the average number of days that the gaps lasted for those impacted; (g) were certain types of mobile devices more prone to encounter the gaps, and, if so, which ones; and (h) on what date did the government notify provincial health officials about the gaps?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 304—Mr. Tako Van Popta:

With regard to medical equipment, excluding personal protective equipment, purchased by the government related to the government's COVID-19 response: (a) what is the total amount spent, broken down by type of equipment (ventilators, syringes, etc.); (b) what is the total number of contracts signed for medical equipment; (c) what is the breakdown of the amount spent by (i) province or territory, (ii) country where the vendor is located; and (d) what is the total number of contracts signed broken down by (i) province or territory, (ii) country where the vendor is located?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 305—Mr. Tako Van Popta:

With regard to personal protective equipment (PPE) purchased by the government since the COVID-19 pandemic began: (a) what is the total amount spent on PPE; (b) what is the total number of contracts signed for PPE; (c) what is the breakdown of the amount spent by (i) province or territory, (ii) country where the vendor is located; and (d) what is the total number of contracts signed broken down by (i) province or territory, (ii) country where the vendor is located?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 306—Mr. Taylor Bachrach:**

With regard to the Canadian Transportation Agency (CTA), since March 2020: (a) how many air passenger complaints have been received, broken down by the subject matter of the complaint; (b) of the complaints received in (a), how many have been resolved, broken down by (i) facilitation process, (ii) mediation process, (iii) adjudication; (c) how many air passenger complaints were dismissed, withdrawn or declined, broken down by (i) subject matter of the complaint, (ii) mediation process, (iii) adjudication; (d) for each complaint in (a), how many cases were resolved through a settlement; (e) how many full-time equivalent agency case officers are assigned to deal with air travel complaints, broken down by agency case officers dealing with the (i) facilitation process, (ii) mediation process, (iii) adjudication; (f) what is the average number of air travel complaints handled by an agency case officer, broken down by agency case officers dealing with the (i) facilitation process, (ii) mediation process, (iii) adjudication; (g) what is the number of air travel complaints received but not yet handled by an agency case officer, broken down by agency case officers dealing with the (i) facilitation process, (ii) mediation process, (iii) adjudication; (h) in how many cases were passengers told by CTA facilitators that they were not entitled to compensation, broken down by rejection category; (i) among the cases in (h), what was the reason for the CTA facilitators not to refer the passengers and the airlines to the Montréal Convention that is incorporated in the international tariff (terms and conditions) of the airlines; (j) how does the CTA define a "resolved" complaint for the purposes of reporting it in its statistics; (k) when a complainant chooses not to pursue a complaint, does it count as "resolved"; (l) how many business days on average does it effectively take from the filing of a complaint to an officer to be assigned to the case, broken down by the (i) facilitation process, (ii) mediation process, (iii) adjudication; (m) how many business days on average does it effectively take from the filing of a complaint to reaching a settlement, broken down by the (i) facilitation process, (ii) mediation process, (iii) adjudication; and (n) for complaints in (a), what is the percentage of complaints that were not resolved in accordance with the service standards?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 307—Mr. Taylor Bachrach:

With regard to GST/HST tax revenues, beginning in fiscal year 2016-17, and broken down by fiscal year: what was the revenue shortfall for (i) suppliers of digital goods and services that are not physically located in Canada, (ii) goods supplied through fulfillment warehouses with online suppliers and digital platforms located outside of Canada?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 308—Mr. Kevin Waugh:

With regard to government advertising campaigns launched since January 1, 2020: (a) what are the details of all campaigns, including the (i) title and description, (ii) total budget, (iii) start and end date; and (b) for each campaign, what is the breakdown of the total amount spent on advertising by each type of media (radio, television, social media, etc.)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 310—Mr. John Nater:

With regard to expenditures on communications professional services (codes 035, 0351, and 0352) since January 1, 2020, broken down by department, agency, Crown corporation, or other government entity: what are the details of each expenditure, including the (i) date, (ii) amount, (iii) vendor, (iv) description of goods or services, (v) whether the contract was sole-sourced or competitively bid?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 312—Mr. John Nater:

With regard to funding provided through the Regional Relief and Recovery Fund, since March 1, 2020: (a) what is the total amount of funding provided to date; (b) what is the number of recipients; and (c) what are the details of each funding recipient, including the (i) date, (ii) amount, (iii) recipient, (iv) location of the recipient, (v) type of funding (loan, grant, etc.)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 313—Mr. Taylor Bachrach:

With regard to SNC-Lavalin and the design and implementation of COVID-19 programs and spending measures, broken down by program and spending measures: (a) have any contracts been awarded to SNC-Lavalin, and, if so, how many; and (b) what are the details of each of the contracts in (a), including the (i) date the

contract was awarded, (ii) description of the goods or services, (iii) volume, (iv) final contract amount?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 314—Mr. Matthew Green:

With regard to government business finance programs and government contracts, broken down by funding program, contracts and fiscal year, since 2011: (a) what is the total funding for (i) Facebook, (ii) Google, (iii) Amazon, (iv) Apple, (v) Netflix?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 315—Mr. Matthew Green:

With regard to funding to support food banks and local food organizations, since March 2020, broken down by province and territory and by program: (a) what is the total spent to date as a proportion of available funds; (b) what is the total number of applications; (c) of the applications in (b), how many were approved and how many were denied; and (d) of the applications denied in (c), what is the rationale for each denied application?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 316—Mr. Eric Melillo:

With regard to the COVID-19 Economic Response Plan and the section outlining support for Indigenous people: what is the total amount dispersed and the total number of recipients to date for each of the following listed programs and initiatives, (i) supporting Indigenous communities, (ii) boosting the OnReserve Income Assistance Program, (iii) funding for additional health care resources for Indigenous communities, (iv) expanding and improving access to mental wellness services, (v) making personal hygiene products and nutritious food more affordable, (vi) providing support to Indigenous postsecondary students, (vii) ensuring a safe return to school for First Nations, (viii) new shelters to protect and support Indigenous women and children fleeing violence?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 317—Mr. Pierre Poilievre:

With regard to information held by the Bank of Canada: (a) what was the total combined purchase price of all the Government of Canada bonds that the Bank of Canada purchased on the secondary market since March 1, 2020; (b) what was the total combined purchase price of the bonds listed in (a) when originally auctioned on the primary market; (c) what was the average sale price of (i) 90-day treasuries, (ii) one-year bonds, (iii) two-year bonds, (iv) three-year bonds, (v) five-year bonds, (vi) 10-year bonds, (vii) 30-year bonds, since March 1, 2020, to the primary market; (d) what is the average sale price of (i) 90-day treasuries, (ii) one-year bonds, (iii) two-year bonds, (iv) three-year bonds, (v) five-year bonds, (vi) 10-year bonds, (vii) 30-year bonds at the time of issuance paid by all purchasers, other than the Bank of Canada; (e) what was the average purchase price paid by the Bank of Canada for (i) 90-day treasuries, (ii) one-year bonds, (iii) two-year bonds, (iv) three-year bonds, (v) five-year bonds, (vi) 10-year bonds, (vii) 30-year bonds; (f) what is the actual answer or information contained in any URL links provided in the response in (a) through (e), if applicable; and (g) what are the details of all corporate bonds that the Bank of Canada has purchased since March 1, 2020, including the (i) name of the company, (ii) purchase and price per unit, (iii) date of the purchase, (iv) total amount of the purchase?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 318—Mr. Taylor Bachrach:**

With regard to the Boeing 737 MAX 8: (a) during communication with the Federal Aviation Authority (FAA) on or after October 29, 2018, including in the emergency Airworthiness Directive issued by the FAA, what information was received by Transport Canada, including (i) the findings of any FAA risk analysis into the airworthiness of the 737 MAX 8 and likelihood of fatal crashes during its service, (ii) any information concerning the Maneuvering Characteristics Augmentation System (MCAS) software and its role in the crash of Lion Air flight 610, (iii) any information about the risks of an angle-of-attack sensor failure, (iv) data indicating the cause of the crash of Lion Air flight 610, including black box recordings, (v) any explanation of the cause of the crash of Lion Air flight 610, including any description of the runaway stabilizer trim; (b) was this information communicated to the Minister of Transport or the Director General of Civil Administration, and, if so, when; (c) were any concerns with the absence of information regarding the crash of Lion Air flight 610 conveyed to the FAA, and, if so, what was the substance of these concerns; (d) did Transport Canada consider any order grounding the 737 MAX 8 between October 29, 2018, and March 10, 2019, and, if so, why was this option rejected; (e) at any time before March 10, 2019, did Transport Canada receive any concerns about the 737 MAX 8 from airlines or pilot associations and, if so, what were these concerns and who issued them; (f) after October 29, 2018, did Transport Canada consider undertaking its own risk analysis of the 737 MAX 8, and, if so, why was this option rejected; and (g) prior to March 10, 2019, did Transport Canada communicate the causes of the Lion Air crash, including an explanation of the runaway stabilizer trim, with any airlines or pilot associations?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 319—Mr. Steven Blaney:

With regard to the National Shipbuilding Strategy since 2011: how much money has been invested by the federal government per year and per project at (i) Seaspan, (ii) Davie, (iii) Irving?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 320—Mr. Terry Dowdall:

With regard to projects funded through the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI) since January 1, 2020: (a) what is the total amount of funding provided through the CFLI; and (b) what are the details of each project including the (i) amount, (ii) date project was funded, (iii) recipient, (iv) project description, (v) location of the project, (vi) relevant Canadian Embassy or High Commission that approved the project?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 321—Mr. Terry Dowdall:

With regard to the government's decision not to use PnuVax for domestic vaccine production: (a) why did the government decide not to invest in the PnuVax facility so that it could produce vaccines; (b) did the government have any communication with PnuVax about the possibility of vaccine production since March 13, 2020, and, if so, what are the details of each communication; (c) did the government discuss the possibility of a Strategic Innovation Fund investment with PnuVax, and, if not, why not; and (d) has the government received any applications for funding or financial assistance from PnuVax since March 13, 2020, and, if so, what are the details, including the (i) date of application, (ii) government program, (iii) amount applied for, (iv) reason application was denied, if applicable?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 322—Mr. Warren Steinley:

With regard to information held by Health Canada, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the Public Health Agency of Canada, or Statistics Canada: (a) what is the number of surgeries that have been postponed since March 1, 2020, broken down by (i) month, (ii) province or territory; (b) what is the number of hospitalizations resulting from substance abuse or overdose since March 1, 2020; (c) what is the number of fatalities resulting from substance abuse or overdose; and (d) what is the number of suicides since March 1, 2020, broken down by (i) month, (ii) province or territory?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 323—Mrs. Karen Vecchio:

With regard to the government's responses to Order Paper questions Q-1 to Q-169, and broken down by each response: what is the title of the government official that signed the required Statement of Completeness for each response?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 324—Mr. Gord Johns:

With regard to the communities that comprise the federal electoral district of Courtenay—Alberni, between the 1993-94 and current year fiscal year: (a) what are the federal infrastructure investments, including direct transfers to the municipalities and First Nations, for the communities of (i) Tofino, (ii) Ucluelet, (iii) Port Alberni, (iv) Parksville, (v) Qualicum Beach, (vi) Cumberland, (vii) Courtenay, (viii) Deep Bay, (ix) Dashwood, (x) Royston, (xi) French Creek, (xii) Errington, (xiii) Coombs, (xiv) Nanoose Bay, (xv) Cherry Creek, (xvi) China Creek, (xvii) Bamfield, (xviii) Beaver Creek, (xix) Beaufort Range, (xx) Millstream, (xxi) Mt. Washington Ski Resort, broken down by (i) fiscal year, (ii) total expenditure, (iii) project, (iv) total expenditure by fiscal year; (b) what are the federal infrastructure investments transferred to the (i) Comox Valley Regional District, (ii) Regional District of Nanaimo, (iii) Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District, (iv) Powell River Regional District, broken down by (i) fiscal year, (ii) total expenditure, (iii) project, (iv) total expenditure by fiscal year; (c) what are the federal infrastructure investments transferred to the Island Trusts of (i) Hornby Island, (ii) Denman Island, (iii) Lasqueti Island, broken down by (i) fiscal year, (ii) total expenditure, (iii) project, (iv) total expenditure by fiscal year; (d) what are the federal infrastructure investments transferred to the (i) Ahousaht First Nation, (ii) Hesquiaht First Nation, (iii) Huu-ay-aht First Nations, (iv) Hupacasath First Nation, (v) Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation, (vi) Toquaht First Nation, (vii) Tseshaht First Nation, (viii) Uchucklesaht First Nation, (ix) Ucluelet First Nation, (x) K'omoks First Nation, broken down by (i) fiscal year, (ii) total expenditure, (iii) projects, (iv) total expenditure by fiscal year; (e) what are the federal infrastructure investments directed towards the Pacific Rim National Park, broken down by (i) fiscal year, (ii) total expenditure, (iii) project, (iv) total expenditure by year; and (f) what are the federal infrastructure contributions to highways, including but not limited to (i) Highway 4, (ii) Highway 19, (iii) Highway 19a, (iv) Bamfield Road, broken down by (i) fiscal year, (ii) total expenditure, (iii) total expenditure by fiscal year?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 325—Mr. Eric Duncan:

With regard to the promises made in the 2015 and 2019 Liberal Party of Canada election platforms to end the discriminatory blood donation ban for gay and bisexual men: (a) on what exact date will the ban end; and (b) why did the government not end the ban during its first five years in power?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 326—Mr. Gord Johns:

With regard to the Oceans Protection Plan (OPP) announced by the government in 2016: (a) how much money has been allocated to Transport Canada under the OPP, since 2016, broken down by year; (b) how much money has been spent under the OPP by Transport Canada, since 2016, broken down by year and program; (c) how much money has been allocated to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans under the OPP, since 2016, broken down by year; (d) how much money has been spent under the OPP by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, since 2016, broken down by year and by program; (e) how much money has been allocated to Environment and Climate Change Canada under the OPP, since 2016, broken down by year; (f) how much money has been spent under the OPP by Environment and Climate Change Canada, since 2016, broken down by year and by program; (g) how much money has been spent under the OPP on efforts to mitigate the potential impacts of oil spills, since 2016, broken down by year and by program; (h) how much money from the OPP has been allocated to the Whales Initiative, since 2016, broken down by year; (i) how much money has been spent under the OPP on the Whales Initiative since 2016; and (j) what policies does the government have in place to ensure that the funding allocated under the OPP is spent on its stated goals in a timely manner?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 327—Ms. Heather McPherson:

With regard to the \$3 billion transfer to the provinces and territories for support to increase the wages of low-income essential workers: (a) what is the total amount transferred broken down by province and territory; and (b) what are the details on the use of the funds transferred, broken down by province and territory?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 328—Ms. Heather McPherson:**

With regard to funding for the initiative to support women's shelters and sexual assault centres, including facilities in Indigenous communities, since May 2020, broken down by province and territory, and by program: (a) what is the total spent to date as a proportion of available funds; (b) what is the total number of applications; (c) of the applications in (b), how many were approved and how many were refused; and (d) of the applications refused in (c), what is the rationale for each refused application?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 329—Ms. Heather McPherson:

With regard to funding for homelessness support through Reaching Home, since March 2020, broken down by province and territory, and by program: (a) what is the total spent to date as a proportion of available funds; (b) what is the total number of applications; (c) of the applications in (b), how many were approved and how many were denied; and (d) of the applications denied in (c), what is the rationale for each denied application?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 330—Mr. Gord Johns:

With regard to support for charitable and not-for-profit organizations serving vulnerable populations through the Emergency Community Support Fund, since March 2020, broken down by province and territory: (a) what is the total spent to date as a proportion of available funds; (b) what is the total number of applications; (c) of the applications in (b), how many were approved and how many were declined; and (d) of the applications declined in (c), what is the rationale for each declined application?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 331—Mr. Gord Johns:

With regard to funding for youth employment and skills development programs, since March 2020, broken down by province and territory, by program: (a) what is the total spent to date as a proportion of available funds; (b) what is the total number of applications; (c) of the applications in (b), how many were approved and how many were declined; and (d) of the declined applications in (c), what is the rationale for each declined application?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 333—Mr. Blaine Calkins:

With regards to Lobster Fishing Area 34 between 2016 and 2019, broken down by year: (a) how many kilograms of lobster are confirmed to have landed outside of the commercial season; (b) how many kilograms are estimated to have landed outside of the commercial season; (c) under what legal or regulatory authority, if any, was the lobster in (a) and (b) harvested; and (d) if there was no legal or regulatory authority, how many charges were laid under the Fisheries Act in relation to the fishing in (a) and (b)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 334—Mr. Blaine Calkins:

With regards to the Transport of Munitions of War (MoW) by Foreign Air Operators between 2015 and 2019, broken down by year: (a) how many foreign air operators have applied for a Ministerial Authorization to carry MoW when operating in Canada; (b) how many foreign air operators have applied for a blanket Ministerial Authorization to carry MoW; (c) of the applications in (a) and (b), how many were (i) issued, (ii) rejected; (d) what are the details of each flight authorized to carry MoW, including (i) origin, (ii) destination, (iii) date, (iv) country of aircraft registration, (v) details of cargo that necessitated the MoW authorization; and (e) how many times have foreign air operators been found to be in breach of condition or non-compliant in respect to carrying MoW?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 335—Mr. Brad Redekopp:

With regard to consultations on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions since October 20, 2019, at Environment and Climate Change Canada, Transport Canada, Natural Resources Canada, Department of Finance Canada, and the Privy Council Office: (a) what, if any, consultations have occurred with the heavy trucking sector (specifically operators and manufacturers of class 8 vehicles) with regard to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions since October 20, 2019; (b) did the consultations take place in person, via telephone or virtually due to COVID-19 restrictions;

(c) what are the dates of those consultations; (d) who was in attendance for those consultations, including the (i) name of each individual from any department or agency in attendance, (ii) position and title of each individual department or agency, (iii) name of each company or organization represented, (iv) position and title of each individual from those respective companies or organizations represented; (e) were any briefing notes prepared in advance of each consultation, and, if so, what are the titles of those briefing notes; (f) were any briefing notes prepared following each consultation, and, if so, what are the titles of those briefing notes; and (g) were there any notes taken during those consultations?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 336—Mr. Brad Redekopp:

With regard to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions at Environment and Climate Change Canada, Transport Canada, Natural Resources Canada, Department of Finance Canada, and the Privy Council Office: what is the government's plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the heavy trucking sector (specifically operators and manufacturers of class 8 vehicles) at Environment and Climate Change Canada, Transport Canada, Natural Resources Canada, the Department of Finance Canada, and the Privy Council Office?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 337—Mr. Scot Davidson:

With regard to the agreements between the Government of Canada and the Government of the United States signed on October 26, 2020: what are the details of such agreements, including the (i) title, (ii) summary of the terms?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 338—Mr. Terry Dowdall:

With regard to the Minister of National Defence's use of Canadian Armed Forces aircraft from November 4, 2015, to December 9, 2020: what are the details of each flight, including the (i) date, (ii) point of departure, (iii) destination, (iv) purpose of the travel, (v) types of aircraft used?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 339—Mr. Terry Dowdall:

With regard to the participation of the Minister of National Defence in military exercises and SkyHawks training where parachute jumps were involved, from November 4, 2015, to December 9, 2020: (a) how many times did the minister take part in parachute jumps with the Canadian Armed Forces; and (b) what are the dates and locations of each parachute jump by the minister?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 340—Mr. Colin Carrie:

With regard to counterfeit goods discovered and seized by the Canada Border Services Agency, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, or other relevant government entities, since January 1, 2020: (a) what is the total value of the goods discovered, broken down by month; (b) for each seizure, what is the breakdown of goods by (i) type, (ii) brand, (iii) quantity, (iv) estimated value, (v) location or port of entry where the goods were discovered, (vi) product description, (vii) country of origin; and (c) for each seizure that included medical or personal protective equipment (PPE), what are the details, including (i) type of recipient (government agency, private citizen, corporation, etc.), (ii) name of the government entity that ordered the goods, if applicable, (iii) description of medical equipment or PPE, including quantity, (iv) estimated value, (v) location where goods were seized, (vi) whether any action taken against the counterfeit supplier, and, if so, what are the details?

(Return tabled)

S. O. 52

Question No. 341—Ms. Jenny Kwan:

With regard to the National Housing Strategy: (a) what is the breakdown of the over one million Canadians helped to find affordable housing mentioned in the Speech from the Throne, broken down by year and province or territory; (b) what is the breakdown for the number of Canadians helped to find affordable housing since January 1, 2010, broken down by year and province or territory; (c) what is the highest known cost of rent and median cost of rent that currently exists that meets the affordability criteria (i) used in the National Housing Co-investment Fund, (ii) used in the Rental Construction Financing initiative, (iii) and used among the Canadians helped to find affordable housing; (d) what percentage of the initial 50 per cent target of reducing chronic homelessness has been achieved so far; and (e) how much funding through the National Housing Strategy has gone to Indigenous housing providers since 2017, broken down by year, province or territory, and stream?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 342—Ms. Jenny Kwan:

With regard to Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) processing levels since January 1, 2020, broken down by month: (a) how many applications have been received, broken down by stream and country of origin; (b) how many applications have been fully approved, broken down by stream and country of origin; (c) how many applications are in backlog, broken down by stream and country of origin; (d) what is the breakdown between inland and outland applications for family class sponsorship applications in (a) and (b); (e) how many holders of Confirmation of Permanent Residence that have expired since IRCC shut down operations (i) are there in total, (ii) have been contacted to renew their intent to travel to Canada, (iii) have confirmed their intent to travel, (iv) have been approved to travel while meeting the travel exemption; and (f) what is the number of extended family reunification travel authorization requests that were (i) received, (ii) processed beyond the 14 business day standard processing time.

(Return tabled)

Question No. 343—Ms. Jenny Kwan:

With regard to asylum seekers: (a) since 2020, broken down by nationality (including passport holders for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region as its own category) and year, how many applications have been (i) received, (ii) referred to the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRB), (iii) approved by the IRB, (iv) refused by the IRB, (v) had a request for a pre-remove risk assessment (PRRA), and (vi) have had a PRRA decision made in their favour; (b) what is the average time from the receipt of an application until a decision was made in (a)(iii) and (a)(iv); (c) how many cessation applications have been made by the government since 2012, broken down by year, grounds for the application and country of origin; (d) is there an annual target to strip refugees of status; and (e) what are the total resources spent pursuing cessation cases, broken down by year.

(Return tabled)

Question No. 345—Mr. Alex Ruff:

With regard to administrative support provided to the Great Lakes Fishery Commission by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) between June 1, 2018, and December 1, 2020: (a) what is the total scope of the administrative, logistical and operational support provided to the Great Lakes Fishery Commission by departmental personnel regularly situated at DFO national headquarters in Ottawa, and what is the precise nature of that support, excluding all activities and expenditures for which the department is reimbursed in accordance with the annual memoranda of agreement between Fisheries and Oceans Canada and the Great Lakes Fishery Commission for delivery of sea lamprey control; and (b) how many departmental personnel regularly situated at DFO national headquarters in Ottawa regularly and substantially engage in activities on behalf of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, and what is the precise nature of that engagement, excluding all activities for which the department is reimbursed in accordance with the annual memoranda of agreement between Fisheries and Oceans Canada and the Great Lakes Fishery Commission for the delivery of sea lamprey control?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 346—Ms. Jenny Kwan:

With regard to immigration: (a) how many post-graduate work permits have lost status since Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) shut down operations in response to COVID-19, broken down by month; (b) what is the average time taken for the issuance of an acknowledgement of receipt for Quebec skilled workers after an application has been received by IRCC since 2015, broken down by month; and (c) since 2018, broken down by month and country of origin, how

many applications in the Student Direct Stream have been (i) received, (ii) approved, (iii) refused?

(Return tabled)

[English]

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

REQUESTS FOR EMERGENCY DEBATE

KEYSTONE XL PIPELINE

The Speaker: There are three requests for emergency debates, the first one being from the Leader of the Opposition regarding the Keystone XL pipeline.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on the first day of the return of Parliament, we should address two items that are in our national interest in the middle of a health care crisis and an economic crisis.

The first is Keystone XL. We are in a jobs crisis. Our economic recovery from COVID-19 depends on vaccines and a plan to get back to work. That requires investments and projects to create jobs in every sector of this country and in every region of this country.

In recent days, our country has been dealt a serious blow by the new Biden administration with its executive order cancelling the Keystone XL pipeline.

[Translation]

There were no consultations with our government, nor any special relations with our country.

[English]

Let me be clear: This executive order is a mistake. Keystone represents a major strategic energy corridor that will enhance North American energy independence away from authoritarian regimes. The project has the potential for tens of thousands of well-paying unionized jobs, in both Canada and the United States.

[Translation]

Shutting down Keystone XL would be a blow to our economic recovery, not just in the west, but across Canada.

[English]

The Prime Minister has spent the last five years attacking our energy industry. It is time for the government to defend our ethical oil that partners with indigenous communities to the tune of over a billion dollars per year. Keystone was designed with the highest environmental standards to achieve net-zero emissions by 2030. Its rejection would actually result in 28% to 42% higher CO2 emissions via rail shipments.

We must secure our future. We must secure jobs in every sector and in every region of the country. For the sake of Canada-U.S. relations, our economic recovery and our environment, we need to get Keystone built; we need to get Canadians back to work.

The Prime Minister must stand up for Canadian workers and ask the incoming administration to reverse its executive order. This project is in our national interest and would help tens of thousands of families struggling amid this health and economic crisis.

Therefore, we respectfully request an emergency debate to drive toward a plan to save this project.

• (1530)

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Durham for his intervention. I am prepared to grant an emergency debate concerning the Keystone XL pipeline. The debate will be held later this evening at the ordinary hour of daily adjournment.

COVID-19 VACCINE

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to thank you for your previous decision with respect to Keystone XL. Thousands of Canadian families appreciate your willingness to show the importance of this project.

Our country, as I said in my previous remarks, is facing a crisis of historic proportions. Nearly 20,000 Canadians have died of COVID-19 in the last 10 months.

[Translation]

What is more, 10% of Canadians have lost their jobs and thousands of businesses have closed.

[English]

If this were not difficult enough, Canadians are facing a range of pandemic side effects: Some two-fifths of Canadian workers are worried about their colleagues' mental health; thousands of cancer operations have been delayed; and in British Columbia, weak enforcement is leading to 60% more deaths from the opioid epidemic than from COVID-19.

[Translation]

The government has no clear plan, and that is having serious repercussions.

[English]

There is one key to protecting Canadians, and that is ensuring a smooth and reliable vaccine rollout. The ability of our country to rebuild our economy and get Canadians back to work in every sector and every region depends on a smooth vaccine rollout.

The Conservatives want the government to succeed, because our nation depends on it. Unfortunately, despite the Prime Minister's assurances, the Pfizer vaccine delivery is now in jeopardy. Premiers report they have run out or will soon run out of vaccines. What will happen if thousands of hospitals and health care administrators administer a first dose but procurement problems delay the second?

S. O. 52

There are so many questions outstanding, despite the government's claims to have a plan. We wish we could just trust the Prime Minister, but the situation demands Parliament's urgent attention.

[Translation]

We cannot allow our hospitals to reach a breaking point.

[English]

It is imperative that we work together to improve the government's approach to vaccines. The health and safety of all Canadians is at stake. Without our health and safety, we cannot secure our future, rebuild our economy and get Canadians back to work.

We need to round the corner in the COVID-19 crisis to get life back to normal. We only do that with vaccines. In a week when we are seeing new strains and the highest rates of infection ever, we are having zero vaccines delivered. This is a national crisis. It is a national failure. It deserves the urgent attention of Parliament through another emergency debate.

The Speaker: Before ruling on that intervention, I believe the hon. member for Vancouver Kingsway has an intervention on the same topic.

The hon. member for Vancouver Kingsway.

• (1535)

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my fellow New Democrats, I also rise to propose an emergency debate regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and vaccine distribution.

New Democrats and Conservatives do not often agree, but we agree fundamentally on this issue, and I think it is telling that when we have the official opposition and the New Democrats, who make up a very high percentage of members of this House, agreeing on the importance of this emergency debate, that should be highly persuasive to the Speaker.

I think I speak for all parliamentarians when I say that Canadians are extremely concerned about the impact that delayed shipments of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine will have on Canada's vaccination schedule. At a time when COVID-19 cases are surging, this interruption will further delay vaccination for Canada's highest-risk populations, because that is who we are starting our vaccination programs with.

In addition, highly contagious COVID-19 variants are spreading across Canada, some from Britain and some from South Africa. Indeed, every day the COVID-19 vaccine rollout is delayed will result in avoidable infections and deaths.

Government Orders

Last week, the United States administered an average of 1.16 million vaccine doses per day. As of yesterday, Canada had only administered an overall total of 816,557 vaccine doses. The Public Health Agency of Canada's latest modelling projects that Canada is on track to hit 10,000 new daily cases by February. That is in only a short week. Canada remains on a rapid-growth trajectory, with widespread community transmission and increased outbreaks in long-term care facilities across our country.

Canadian labs have now detected about two dozen cases of highly contagious COVID-19 variants in our country so far. Data from the U.K. suggests that its variant is 50% more transmissible person to person than the common strain. Last week, Major-General Dany Fortin, the military commander overseeing vaccine logistics for the Public Health Agency of Canada, confirmed that Canada will only receive about one-third of expected deliveries to February 7, 2021. That is two weeks from now. We know that Canada is set to receive no new deliveries of doses this week and only 79,000 doses in the first week of February.

The European Union will have a much shorter interruption in deliveries than Canada, despite assurances from the federal government that countries will be impacted equally by supply reductions. While Canada will receive zero doses this week, Pfizer has just confirmed that it will be back to the original schedule of deliveries to the European Union beginning the week of January 25, while we get none.

Finally, there was some alarming news out of the European Union just today. It may be seeking export restrictions on all vaccines produced in Europe because it is concerned that there may not be enough vaccines in Europe. While the government has assured us that the current vaccine interruption by Pfizer is temporary, we actually have evidence and signs that there may be further production disruptions or export disruptions in the future.

There is no more important issue to all parliamentarians and Canadians than their health. We are in the middle of a global pandemic, and vaccines, as the Leader of the Opposition just stated, are our way to get control of this problem. I cannot think of a more important issue for an emergency debate than vaccine distribution in Canada and I hope you will grant this very reasonable emergency request.

* * *

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Durham and the hon. member for Vancouver Kingsway for their interventions.

I am prepared to grant an emergency debate concerning vaccine supply. This debate will be held later tomorrow at the ordinary hour of daily adjournment.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

ECONOMIC STATEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2020

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-14, an act to implement certain provisions of the economic statement tabled in Parliament on November 30, 2020 and other measures, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: Resuming debate, the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby has seven minutes and two seconds remaining in his elocution.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I think the debate tomorrow on vaccine distribution will be extremely important. I know that many parliamentarians from across the country will want to participate.

Before we rose for question period, I had raised issues with Bill C-14, but not in terms of content. The content is, in a sense, a small step toward meeting the challenge of the pandemic, but what could have been in the bill and what could have been in the fall economic statement but was not is the real problem, I think, with Bill C-14. It is not the content, but what is not in there and what could have been presented. In the midst of the worst pandemic that Canada has experienced in a century and the worst economic crisis since the Second World War, one would think that in combining those two things, the fall economic statement and the bill that emerged from the fall economic statement would have met the challenges that Canadian families are facing.

Even coming into the pandemic, Canadian families were beset and burdened with the heaviest level of family debt that exists among industrialized countries. The average Canadian family has more family debt than a family in any other industrialized country. That is in part because of decisions made over the last couple of decades that have pushed Canadian families down, including the unravelling of the social safety net and the emphasis on providing perks and tax holidays to the very wealthy and the most profitable corporations, rather than making the public investments that would make such a difference in the lives of Canadians. Then the pandemic hit, and Canadians are experiencing incredible challenges.

In my riding of New Westminster—Burnaby and in every other corner of this country, Canadians are facing daily challenges to put food on the table and keep a roof over their heads, yet within Bill C-14 we do not see any bold attempt to meet those challenges. It is indicative, I think, that the new American president, Joe Biden, within the span of his first five hours and the executive mandates that he signed, has proven to be more proactive while using government machinery to work in the interests of the people than the current government has in five years. It is five hours versus five years. That is the real disappointment of the current Prime Minister and the current government.

What do we see in Bill C-14? Instead of investments in building a national child care program that we know Canadian families will need as a national network of universal child care as we emerge from this pandemic, hopefully in the next few months, we see scant support given to Canadian families in dealing with the crisis in long-term care. Instead of putting it under strict national standards and making sure that there is adequate funding for long-term care for our seniors, we see a small amount compared to what was given to the banking sector and no real attempt to address the crisis in long-term care.

We saw \$750 billion in liquidity supports given to the banking sector through a wide variety of federal institutions within days of the pandemic hitting. Government MPs might say that this was liquidity support to help the banking sector; the banking sector so far in this pandemic has received profits of \$30 billion. That should absolutely not have been the first objective of the government. There is a contrast between that \$750 billion and what people with disabilities, people who are struggling to keep a roof over their heads, have actually received in support. I and other members of the NDP caucus, including our leader, the member for Burnaby South, have raised this issue numerous times. It took not one or two, but half a dozen fights to get a \$600 one-time payment paid to a minority of people with disabilities across the country, yet we have seen \$750 billion going with alacrity to the banking sector.

• (1540)

We see an interest-rate holiday for students when they are struggling to pay for their student loans. During this pandemic, as I mentioned, the banking sector has had \$30 billion in profits. Canada's billionaires have had over \$50 billion added to their wealth in the pandemic.

However, we see a government that steadfastly refuses to put in place what the member for Burnaby South and the NDP caucus have called for. The vast majority of Canadians, when they are asked in public opinion, say the same thing: that we need to put in place a wealth tax. We need to put in place a pandemic profits tax. We had those measures in the Second World War. It meant that we were all in this together, and it also meant that the federal government had the wherewithal to ensure that Canadians had the investments they needed as we emerged out of the Second World War.

We brought this forward in the House along with provisions for a guaranteed livable basic income, a right to housing and universal pharmacare. Government members voted against those measures despite the fact that they were supported by the vast majority of Canadians.

Next month, parliamentarians will have a second chance on universal publicly administered pharmacare, because Bill C-213 will be voted on in less than a month. Across the country we have seen thousands of Canadians write to their members of Parliament to say, "Vote yes on Bill C-213," above all because in this pandemic a number of Canadians have lost their drug coverage. Ten million Canadians have no access to the medications that their doctors prescribe as necessary. There will be a second chance for that, and a second chance for the government to bring forward the bold ideas that the NDP has been proposing in a budget that should be tabled this spring.

Government Orders

I hope that the government will repair the mistake that it made in the fall and provide the supports that Canadians need.

• (1545)

[Translation]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-14 is designed to make Canada-wide standards for long-term care a precondition for funding. I believe that this is also an idea from the NDP.

However, the Canadian Armed Forces' report on its experience in Quebec long-term care homes last spring was clear. Many standards and rules on preventing and controlling contamination and on wearing PPE are already in place, but they failed to stop the virus.

The issue is the care homes' ability to comply with and enforce the standards and rules in place. Quite simply, these rules were more difficult to follow because there is a staff shortage. The report found that long-term care homes have a serious shortage of staff with medical training. We need money, not standards.

Does the member agree that it is up to provinces to deal with standards, but if the federal government wants to do its job, it should try giving the provinces money?

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, the member spoke of a situation that everyone has been watching for months. The number of deaths in long-term care facilities has been devastating for families across Quebec. The same conditions can be seen in many regions across Canada as well.

To resolve this chronic problem, we need standards as well as staff. We cannot play political games with this issue. The government obviously did not establish a system with the necessary standards, capacity and human resources to ensure that all seniors in Quebec and across Canada have a future that acknowledges their contributions to their communities and to the country.

[English]

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is clear to me that if we are going to get our economy moving again, a critical thing about that and getting resources to people who need them is creating jobs and opportunities to support workers and those who wish to become workers again. To that end, it was so disappointing for me to see the NDP basically cheerleading the cancellation of the Keystone XL pipeline and all the unionized jobs that were killed when that project was ended.

Government Orders

I wonder if the member from the NDP could explain this, for a political party that wants to be competitive supposedly in western Canada, and that claims to speak on behalf of workers. Why would it be cheerleading for the end of a project like Keystone XL, that would have helped so many people get back to work and would have been so good for the Canadian economy?

• (1550)

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, unlike the member, I actually come from the oil and gas industry. I worked at the Shellburn oil refinery in Burnaby, British Columbia, so I know the industry well and I know that it has had countless resources. In many cases, when one looks at subsidies, oil and gas is one of the most heavily subsidized industries in Canada.

I care about energy workers because I come from that environment. What we have seen under both Conservative and Liberal governments is an utter refusal to allow the resources to energy workers to transition to a clean energy future. That is where the jobs are. We have seen President Joe Biden take leadership in that regard and we know, as the building trades and unionized workers tell us, that the clean energy industry and imports from Canada of clean energy will quadruple over the next nine years.

With that massive increase in imports from Canada of clean energy, why would we not put in place the resources so that energy workers, who have made such an enormous contribution to the energy sector, can transition to clean energy? That is where the future is. That is where the jobs are, and that is what the NDP is cheerleading: clean energy resource investments, so that we can provide the jobs to energy workers in the emerging economy of the clean energy sector of tomorrow.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, the speech was for him a while ago because he began it before question period began.

I was taken by the hon. member's comments on the impacts of the Spanish flu and how long those impacts stayed with society. On a personal point, my namesake, Elizabeth Evans Stephens, was a victim of the Spanish flu. The intergenerational impacts of losing a young mother not only affected my grandmother, but my mother. This is a pandemic the likes of which we have not seen for generations, and its effects will be intergenerational.

My very strong support for the hon. member's speech goes to his points on the banking industry with its extraordinary levels of profits. It has had over \$30 billion in profits through the pandemic, yet this industry is leaning on small businesses. In my area, Wilson's bus line is at risk of going under because the government programs that are on offer do not really meet its needs. Bus companies and other companies across Canada are at risk because these banks, which have been raking in profits and have had government help, seem to think they are not Canadian. They do not think they are part of our national effort to save businesses and jobs.

I wonder if my hon. colleague has any comments on what the government should be doing to ensure that the banks do not push good, essential companies such as Wilson's bus line into bankruptcy.

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, this is what is inconceivable to me. There was \$750 billion given in liquidity support to the Canadian banking industry without any conditions whatsoever. We saw credit unions stepping up and lowering their interest rates to zero. We saw credit unions stepping up and providing in some cases what was required around suspending the payment of mortgages and not imposing penalties. The banking industry did not have any conditions at all imposed, and the result has been windfall profits of \$30 billion and real pressure on businesses like Wilson's and others across the country.

We need to take the best practices of other countries. Other countries said that if they were providing supports, there were going to be conditions. The Canadian government stepped up within days of the pandemic hitting, and its first thought was to help the banking industry. Three-quarters of \$1 trillion later, the banking industry is reaping massive profits and so many Canadians and small businesses are struggling.

Of course, with COVID, we know that the implications and the consequences will last for more than a decade. For lower-income families, the reality is the fall economic statement talks about cut-backs starting in the next fiscal year. There will be dramatic cut-backs over the next 13 months. We need the government to rethink its approach and we are willing to work with it—

• (1555)

The Deputy Speaker: We have time for one more question. The hon. member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from New Westminster—Burnaby, and also congratulate him on Bill C-213. It is a perfect example of us once again taking Liberal promises and putting them into NDP action.

I listened very attentively to his speech, and he is right. It is not so much what is in Bill C-14, but what is missing. For me, a particular issue affects the city of Langford in my riding. A start-up business, V2V Black Hops Brewing, did not have its payroll account in place before March 15. Here we are, 10 months into the pandemic, and it is still unable to qualify for the emergency wage subsidy.

Perhaps my colleague, in his role as critic for finance, and with the incredible work he has done with the member for Courtenay—Alberni, could answer the question why, after all this time, the Liberals are still excluding start-ups from accessing this important wage subsidy? So many of them are struggling. Indeed, I fear many are going to go out of business.

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, the member is an incredibly strong advocate for small businesses in his riding. I know this, and I have seen it first-hand.

This is just another example. V2V Black Hops Brewing is not getting the supports it needs. However, the federal government says the big banks that are awash in cash are the priority.

This is why the NDP caucus has been so persistent, as has the member for Courtenay—Alberni as our small business critic, and the member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, as well as all of the NDP caucus, in ensuring that small businesses get some support. We are not there yet, but we are going to continue to push, because the government needs to be thinking of regular families and small businesses across the country, and stop its obsession with the most profitable businesses and the largest banks.

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. members. Before we get to the next speaker, just a reminder, perhaps for those who are joining by video conference. Earlier in the day we had some difficulties with the raised hand function on Zoom. Administration tell us that at the moment that is working fine. Please use that same tool that we have used in the past. However, if any encounter difficulties or think they are being missed, please bring a point of order to me and we will make sure we get them recognized.

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, what a pleasure it is to address the House of Commons. Whether standing in the chamber or sitting at home, it is always such a privilege to share some thoughts and ideas and try as best as I can to provide a bit of constructive criticism here and there. I like to think part of my job is to ensure there is a higher sense of accountability even coming from opposition parties. I hope to address a number of points.

First, as we all know, life has really changed over the last 12 months for all of us in a very real and tangible way. For example, I never figured I would be addressing the House of Commons via the Internet and what I am saying being recorded as if I were standing on the floor of the House.

It does not matter what one's economic social stratification is. Lives have changed profoundly because of the pandemic. We have seen so many phenomenal efforts come forward from many different sectors of our economy and society.

I want to recognize that over the last number of weeks, our holidays, whether one celebrates Christmas, Hanukkah or one of the many other different types of celebrations that often take place during the Christmas period, were really different. In my province and many other places across this land, we were not able to have gatherings, people and families coming together. However, it did not stop people from communicating.

The pandemic means there has to be physical distancing. It does not mean we have to separate that communication link to those very important relationships in our lives, whether with family or friends or in my case and in the case of many of my colleagues with our constituents.

The constituents I represent in Winnipeg North have done a fantastic job in communicating with me, whether through telephone calls, at my constituency office, through emails, letters or Zoom discussions. There are all sorts of ways in which we have been able to communicate. I do not think time would allow me to share all the feedback, ideas, recommendations and concerns that people have raised with me over the last number of months. As much as possible, they would want me to share them on the floor of the House of

Government Orders

Commons so all parliamentarians would have a sense of what the residents of Winnipeg North are thinking. There is a higher sense of hope in the minds of my constituents today than there would have been months ago. The delivery of vaccines has been very important to them.

I listened intently to a number of comments coming from opposition members in particular. If we were to do a fair comparison, we would find Canada has done exceptionally well on that front. I say that without any reservations whatsoever. As a government, we have had numerous ministers on that particular file and they have worked exceptionally hard at ensuring Canada can be very proud of the vaccination agreements we have been able to achieve in order to protect the health and well-being of Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

There are some common threads from the constituents I represent. One of the them is the desire to see, and many members will know that at times I can be somewhat partisan, governments working together. They want to see a team Canada approach toward ensuring that the health and well-being of Canadians is being dealt with as a top priority.

● (1600)

I know that, from the Prime Minister's office to ministers to members of the House of Commons, we have all put in that extra effort to ensure there is a higher sense of co-operation among the many different stakeholders.

When I talk about stakeholders, it goes far beyond the Government of Canada. We have to look at our communities. I think of social enterprise groups, non-profits and the many fine works they have done to ensure they contribute in a positive way. In whatever ways they can, our individual constituents have contributed. We think of our first responders, in particular our health care workers, our bus drivers and those driving taxis. These people have made a difference and have ensured we have been able to get through in such a way that we can continue on and feel that sense of optimism today. I appreciate all those individuals.

The Government of Canada, under the leadership of our Prime Minister, has ensured there is a sense of commitment coming from not only the national government, but provincial and municipal governments and even our school boards. All elected officials, as leaders in our communities, have an important role to play on this issue, and it makes a difference.

When I was back in Ottawa in late November, Manitoba was not doing that well with respect to the coronavirus. On a per capita basis, the number of new cases being reported on a daily basis toward the end of November might have been the worst in the country. It shows that if Ottawa, in support of our provinces, and the provinces make good decisions, we can in fact bring those numbers down. Today we are under 100. In fact, just over this last weekend, we saw many of the restrictions being lifted.

Government Orders

For example, many of my constituents were limited to what they could buy at the local store. Many of those restrictions have been lifted now. Why? Because Manitobans have, as Canadians as a whole have, recognized that we all have a role to play with respect to us getting out of the current situation we are in.

That brings me back to some of the comments made by my colleagues.

The former speaker, an New Democrat, talked about the Liberals giving to the banks as if they were our first priority. That is not true. The Liberal Party does not put the banks ahead of Canadians. All one has to do is take a look at the types of actions the Government of Canada took back when action was needed.

I talk a great deal about the CERB program. The Canada emergency response benefit program embodies many of the things that a government can do to make a positive difference for Canadians from coast to coast to coast. Let us take a look at the details of that program.

There was virtually nothing, no CERB program, in existence prior to COVID-19. With the support of world-class civil servants, of whom we should be very proud, and the fine work they do, a program was put together that ultimately served just under nine million Canadians. All of us should be very proud of that and should not be shy to talk about it.

• (1605)

That was the priority. At the very beginning, this government was very focused on sending a message to Canadians that we had their backs, that we would be there for them no matter where they lived in the country.

The CERB program is one of those programs that clearly demonstrates that a government cannot only talk about caring for the citizens it represents, but it can demonstrate tangible action. Hundreds of millions to billions of dollars were put through a fantastic program that came from no where and ultimately that disposable income was put into the pockets of Canadians from coast to coast to coast. Members should think about that.

If the government had not done that back then, what would have been the outcome? We would have had more people borrowing money because of their loss of income. We would have had people not being able to pay for basic needs such as their groceries, their rent, their mortgages or buying the things essential to them, whether a single person or families. Hundreds of millions of dollars were put into the pockets of Canadians throughout our country so they would have the disposable income to continue on.

If members will recall, back then we were telling people that we had to stay under the curve. The world pandemic was not there two years ago. It is not like we had previous knowledge on it. What we had was a very sharp learning curve for Canadians, a learning curve, for example, that we had to wash our hands for 20 seconds. If people had to cough, they should cough into their sleeves.

As we got weeks into the pandemic, health care experts were saying we needed to wear masks. Canadians, through leaders in our communities, understood they had to listen to the health care officials and started to wear masks. When we go for walks today, we

see people wearing masks. Compare that to back in March, April or even May of last year. This also included the use of hand sanitizer.

These things have really made a huge difference even today. One of the reasons it has had that impact is because of actions by the national government and other levels of government working together to ensure people understood what the pandemic was all about and what we needed to do to minimize the negative impact of it.

At the end of the day, education, which was widespread on this issue, is one of the reasons why Canada is in a relatively good position today. Some provinces are affected more than other jurisdictions. There are many different factors at play. We cannot compare the Toronto international airport and the important role it plays in our society and the Brandon airport in my home province of Manitoba, even though the Brandon airport is so critically important to our local economy there, in our province and ultimately to our country.

Different provinces have different areas on which they have to focus their additional attention. There are areas on which we need to improve. The Prime Minister often talks about building back better and we have the opportunity to build back better. There are a number of good examples of that.

• (1610)

One of the biggest areas of concern we have today is long-term care. I believe Canadians have spoken. They recognize that the national government has a role to play in health care delivery. Many, including myself, particularly when I was a health care critic in the province of Manitoba many years ago, have advocated for this for many years. I know this might upset some of my Bloc colleagues, and possibly some of my Conservative colleagues, but I believe that the national government does have a role to play. This was demonstrated very clearly through the coronavirus.

We have a Minister of Finance who has incorporated the idea of the continuation, as the Prime Minister did back in September with the throne speech, of the importance of a national pharmacare program. That is something which Liberal members of Parliament under this Prime Minister have been proactive on since day one in 2015.

The NDP will cry that Liberals have been saying this for the last 20 or whatever number of years, but under this Prime Minister and with this group of Liberal MPs, we have seen significant action on that file. I am very proud of the efforts, whether they are those of the Prime Minister or my colleagues, in recognizing an issue that I know is so very important to my constituents. If we check Hansard, we will find that I have introduced many petitions on this issue. In fact, my daughter, who is an MLA in the Manitoba legislature, has talked about the importance of a national pharmacare program.

We need to identify the provinces that are prepared to go the extra mile and work with Ottawa. We cannot just bring it in. If we are going to have the type of national pharmacare program that Canadians deserve and want, we have to work with those jurisdictions. It is going to take a coalition of sorts to continue to push this through. I can say that we are committed to that.

When we think of what actions are in Bill C-14, I have a list some of the things that we are talking about. It includes the Canada child benefit increases, long-term care issues, student loans, access to virtual care, mental health tools, substance abuse and the emergency rent program. I will stop on that one.

I ask members to think of the emergency rent subsidy program and the tens of thousands going into hundreds of thousands of jobs being saved, the millions of small businesses that have taken advantage of things like the wage subsidy program and the thousands of businesses that are taking advantage of the rent subsidy program.

This is a government that understands the important role small businesses play in our society. They are the backbone to our country. We need to be there and we have been there for small businesses. We will continue to be there for small businesses as we have been there for all Canadians.

These are the types of issues that as a government we need to be engaged in. When I listened to the critic of finance, the member for Carleton, he talked about the deficit issue and the trade deficit. Let me remind my Conservative friends that when Conservatives took office after Paul Martin there was actually a trade surplus. It was the Conservatives that turned it into a trade deficit. We have been working on that. Look at the number of trade agreements we have signed off on as a government. No government in the history of Canada has signed off on as many agreements.

In terms of the deficit, I will save that for another speech, but Canadians will do well if Liberals do not listen to the Conservatives about deficits and deficits of financing, because the Conservatives have not demonstrated any competence in that area. When I get a better opportunity to be able to expand on that point, I will. I see my time is running out, and there is so much more that I would like to talk about.

• (1615)

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I enjoy listening to my friend from Winnipeg's comments. Just because they are not factual does not mean they are not true in his mind, so I will give him credit for that.

A couple of questions came to mind when I listened to the member from Winnipeg's speech. One thing I am wondering is what his plan going forward is. This is the economic statement, Bill C-14, where they are talking about what we can do. We can agree that we need to help Canadians as much as we can through the pandemic. However, I keep asking these questions: What are the Liberals going to do to secure the future for Canadians? How are they going to ensure there are good-paying jobs, going forward, after the programs run out?

It is time to stop looking to the past and start looking forward. The government needs to roll out a plan for Canadians to make sure there is a future for my children and for the children of members across the aisle. That is why we get into public service. We want to make sure that our children have opportunities that we did not have. I am not sure this is happening for the generation that is coming next.

What is the Liberal government's plan to secure our future and to have good-paying jobs? Can that start with the member's support of

Government Orders

the Keystone XL pipeline and making sure the government does everything it can to have good-paying jobs in western Canada?

• (1620)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I hope I might get a chance to talk about Keystone and how important our resource industries are, particularly in western Canada. I genuinely do believe in the future and how important it is that we do what we can on that particular file.

Having said that, the member talked about what we can do now. I want to point out one of the most encouraging things, and we heard it from the minister earlier during question period, which is that six million vaccines will arrive by the end of March for a population of just over 37 million people. It is really encouraging that we are getting these numbers of vaccines and that we have many other companies outside of Pfizer and Moderna to provide them. In fact, Canadians will be able to not only to get the vaccine, but it is also going to be free for Canadians. That is something which we have been pushing for from day one.

The other thing is, of course, continuing to support small businesses. Maybe in another question, I will pick up on that point.

[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on his speech. I have to admit that it feels a little strange to see him on a screen, when it seems like he never leaves the House.

Just now, I heard him speak about his constituents wanting the federal government to do more on health. I heard him say that that is what he wants as well, and that he would like the federal government to play a role in health. We have repeated ad nauseam that health is a provincial jurisdiction. Quebec and the provinces are all calling for larger health transfers. Quebec and the provinces do not want the Liberals to interfere in the health system.

I myself would like to have a say in the activities of the Montreal Canadiens. I would like to tell them what to do, but that is not my job. I would not be good at it. Given the Liberals' failures with regard to managing the border during the pandemic and what is happening with vaccines, I am a little concerned that they also want to interfere by imposing standards on long-term care facilities.

The question that I would like to ask my colleague from Winnipeg North is this: Is this desire to interfere in provincial jurisdictions not a way of telling Quebec and the provinces that they are too incompetent to manage their health care systems?

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I was in the Manitoba legislature prior to being a member of Parliament, and I had the opportunity to serve as a health critic there, so I have a fairly good insight in terms of the whole jurisdictional issue.

Government Orders

I have also been a parliamentarian for about 30 years now, and I can tell the member conclusively that the residents I represent believe the national government has a role to play in terms of health care that goes beyond just giving provinces cash. Again, some lessons that could be learned by the coronavirus or by the pandemic reinforce that fact. Whether it is looking at standards, or looking at ways in which we might be able to complement the services Canadians are getting from Ottawa, I believe that the desire is there to continue to work with provinces beyond just giving cash toward health care. I believe—

The Deputy Speaker: We just have a few more questions as part of this 10-minute period.

We will resume questions and comments with the hon. member for North Island—Powell River.

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I must admit that it is very odd to see this member, in particular, not in the House, as I do not even know if he usually leaves at night.

My question, based on what I heard today, concerns how many Canadians really appreciate, through this process, the public health care system that we have. However, it also identifies the very clear gap in our universal public drug plan, which we desperately need across this country. I think about how much we could save just by the collective buying. Then I look at how many years the Liberals have been promising this. It has been many, many years. This is something that comes up again and again, and there is a little step here and a little step back there.

I am wondering if this member could commit today to making sure that we see a public drug plan, as recommended by Dr. Hoskins and the advisory committee, based directly on the principles of the Canada Health Act. I think it is time, and I certainly hope this member does as well.

• (1625)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, maybe I could provide a greater sense of hope. At the end of the day, I believe that this particular Prime Minister and grouping of Liberal members of Parliament have been very diligent in pushing their desire to see some form of a national pharmacare program. We have seen that in budgets and throne speeches. We have seen that virtually back in 2015 with the support through standing committees and commissions, and I do believe that there is an opportunity there. It is real and tangible for the first time in my 30 years. It has been only in these last five years that I have seen a real desire and push to try to get us to that point.

The member should remember that it is absolutely critical that we work with the provinces in order to get the type of pharmacare program that Canadians want and deserve.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is great to see the parliamentary secretary, even if it is through video conference. I can assure him that his voice reverberates off the walls in here just as it would if he were present, and he definitely gets the same reaction from across the aisle that he does when he is here in person.

He touched on a very good point at the beginning of his speech, and that is about investing in Canadians. This government took a very strong approach that was unwavering in its commitment to giving Canadians the supports they need throughout this pandemic, not just because it was the right thing to do during the pandemic, but because we know that when we come out on the other end of this, the resources Canadians had during it are going to help us rebound from it more quickly.

Can the parliamentary secretary comment on how he sees that happening, given the work that has gone into this by this government, and indeed Parliament and all members of this party, in supporting the legislation that has come through this House over the last several months?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, as much as I love doing this virtually, I do especially enjoy being in the chamber itself.

Having said that, the member is right. It was so important that the government be there in a real and tangible way. I made reference to the CERB program, but we can talk about programs such as the increases for the OAS and the GIS for our seniors. We can talk about the expansion of the youth program to provide more jobs for young people during that summer period. We can talk about the one-time payment for disabilities. There is so much that the government did in order to ensure that people had the financial resources or the disposable income in order to meet their needs.

Pandemic or not, the bills do not stop coming in. The need for groceries is always going to be there, so it was important that the federal government, by working with provincial governments and municipalities, was able to make a difference by getting everyone involved, recognizing how important it was to support Canadians in Canada's middle class.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. There have been discussions among the parties, and if you seek it, I think you will find unanimous consent to adopt the following motion:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order, special order or usual practice of the House, during the debates tonight and on Tuesday, January 26, 2021, pursuant to Standing Order 52, no quorum calls, dilatory motions or requests for unanimous consent shall be received by the Chair.

[Translation]

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

Accordingly, all those opposed to the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands moving the motion will please say nay. 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)

The Deputy Speaker: Before we continue, I would like to remind all members of the House who are participating by video conference that, earlier today, we had a problem with the raised hand function on Zoom. The problem seems to be resolved for now.

If there is a problem and the function is not working, I invite members to rise on a point of order to inform the Chair and ensure that they have an opportunity to ask a question or make a comment.

● (1630)

[English]

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Saskatoon—University.

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ECONOMIC STATEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2020

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-14, An Act to implement certain provisions of the economic statement tabled in Parliament on November 30, 2020 and other measures, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Corey Tochor (Saskatoon—University, CPC): Mr. Speaker, to start off, I note that I am going to be splitting my time with the member for Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley.

It is an honour to enter the debate on Bill C-14. It is really a do-over bill, as most of the substance of it tries to fix errors the government made last summer.

When we think of do-overs and references to repeating the same actions over and over again, what comes to mind is the classic movie *Groundhog Day*, in which Bill Murray lives the same day over and over again trying to learn about the situation he is in. There are some similarities here. His character in the movie is a little arrogant, a bit vain and out of touch with common people, and I think this can be used to describe the government. In the movie, the main character is trying to learn and develop to be a better person. He is trying to learn from average, mainstream people, or the Tim Hortons crowd, we could say.

When I talk to the residents of Saskatoon—University, a lot of them are concerned about COVID. However, they are also concerned about what comes after it when their bills will come due.

I think the most important aspect of the bill for future generations, for my kids and their kids, is the part that mentions the debt cliff and the overall debt of our country. Right now it is being pushed to \$1.8 trillion. That is an outstanding sum of money and it is troubling. When I tried to figure out what \$1.8 trillion is, my calculator could not do the calculation. I did not know this until last weekend, but a standard calculator only goes up to eight digits, so I had to work it out on paper.

This do-over bill talks about increasing the debt ceiling or debt cliff, and I will again reference the classic movie *Groundhog Day* in a second. What is \$1.8 trillion? If someone were to start on the Atlantic coast of Canada and walk to the Pacific coast and then back again, dropping a loonie for every foot they walked, that would not be \$1.8 trillion. Someone would have to jump into the

Government Orders

Atlantic ocean and swim to Iceland, while dropping a loonie as they swam every foot. That is an outstanding amount of money that future generations are going to have to pay back.

We know the Liberals will increase taxes, and the racking up of credit card debt during the pandemic is going to haunt future generations to come. Referring back to *Groundhog Day*, this makes me remember one scene where a truck is going over a cliff, while Bill Murray is with the groundhog, and it lands. One bystander commented that he may be okay and then the truck explodes.

We knew before the pandemic that the Prime Minister likes to spend money. We talked about the \$20-billion deficit in the 2015 campaign, and what did we get? Before COVID hit Canada, we were in rough shape. Maybe some Canadians saw similarities to that movie. Maybe they were thankful we had a Conservative government before the Liberal government and were not in such bad shape because of that. Maybe people thought we would be okay because it was only \$20 billion. However, then COVID hit, and ka-boom.

We are talking about \$1.8 trillion, a reckless amount of money. Future generations are not going to have opportunities because of reckless spending. The bill is trying to fix the problems caused when the Liberals rushed through bills last summers for increased spending. There were obviously errors in how those bills were drafted because we have to do over a lot of those measures, which can be found in Bill C-14.

● (1635)

I believe Canadians are starting to realize that we are in uncharted territory with this amount of debt and the decisions that are going to come down the road. My colleagues spoke previously about how Canadians do not have to worry, because the government took on the debt so they would not have to, but we know it is a fallacy to think that this is going to help Canadians. I am very fearful of what will happen when interest rates start to creep up. We have been printing money to pay for the spending, and there will come a day, with inflationary pressures, when interest rates will have to be raised. To service the debt right now is going to be a burden for not just the next generation but the next and the following generation.

Government Orders

I have another quote that is a little telling from that movie when Bill Murray was complaining about things that people say not to do. “You make choices and live with them”, he says. “I’m not gonna live by their rules anymore.... Don’t drive on railroad tracks.” The passenger says, “That’s one I happen to agree with.” There are some similarities. Most Canadians are realizing that governments need to be there to help out Canadians when their jobs evaporate because of restrictions due to COVID. The government should be there to act, but with the shotgun approach and the fire hydrant approach of spreading taxpayers’ dollars across Canada, there is going to be a bill to be paid. I believe most Canadians realize that we cannot carry on at the clip that we have been without some serious consequences.

Some of the consequences we are seeing are on the cost of living. Canadians who have gone to the grocery store in the last couple of weeks have noticed, and when I went on the weekend, I was surprised that the cost of everything is up. This is going to disproportionately affect Canadians the most who cannot afford it. Vulnerable Canadians are going to see more and more of their dollars going to living expenses, and I am fearful of what that means. In past Liberal campaigns, they promised no new taxes, that taxes would not be increased, that the carbon tax would not be increased. Then we heard different plans they have for increasing taxes, which will have a multiplicative effect on groceries, because we know we have to transport groceries to all parts of Canada. As we increase those costs, what does it mean?

As for the carbon tax, today in Saskatoon it was -35°C, and there is no alternative to natural gas for heating my home. The Liberal government is going to crank up the carbon tax, which will take more money out of consumers’ pockets and will have a spiralling effect on our economy. Where does that leave us? Also, once we are through this pandemic and start paying back this massive amount of generational theft that has taken place, taxes are going to be increased, and the net result is going to be less opportunity for the next generation. It is a matter of time before the credit card bill is due and those dollars will have to be paid back.

I will end with a prediction of what is to come, quoting again from the movie, if we carry on with this reckless spending and not realize that our actions have consequences. I will give a winter prediction: “It’s gonna be cold...it’s gonna be gray...and it’s gonna last you for the rest of your life.”

● (1640)

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance and to the Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his remarks. I respect him as an individual, though I disagree wholeheartedly with the substance of his speech. He has criticized the government’s response on the basis that this legislation is a do-over, and I will let him know that I would do over the supports we have extended to families and businesses 100 times out of 100.

The member has complained about the debt. What he fails to realize is that leading economists would tell him that a virus created the cost to the economy. The government was left with the choice as to how we should respond to it. We chose to be there for Canadians so they could put food on the table and keep a roof over their heads. We chose to be there for businesses so they could keep their

doors open and workers on the payroll. When I talked to the Tim Hortons crowd that he referred to, they were worried about keeping their kids in school, whether they would have jobs to go to and whether they could feed their families. The measures we put in place served those ends and served them thoroughly. I would repeat these measures at every opportunity.

When the measures included in this legislation are designed to support families and businesses and protect the health and well-being of Canadians, is he going to vote for this legislation?

Mr. Corey Tochor: Mr. Speaker, the main difference between what he believes and what is reality is that there are families who are hurting because of the restrictions put on their abilities to provide for their families. I do not think there is a parliamentarian who would not agree with the statement that governments do have a role in helping those people.

I believe some of the measures the Liberals rushed out the door with very little protection against abuse were in fact abused. No one is disparaging any family that needed an extra hand to keep that roof over their head and a jug of milk in the fridge, but supports rolled out without any means to test if there was actual employment are just ripe for abuse. It is concerning.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments, the hon. member for La Pointe-de-l’Île.

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l’Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in the 1970s, the federal government used to cover about 50% of health care spending. Today, it covers about 22%. On the one hand, the federal government is stifling the health care system in Quebec and the provinces, and on the other, it is interfering in areas of provincial jurisdiction, such as long-term care and lots of other sectors.

What does the hon. member think? Does he agree that health transfers to Quebec and the provinces should be increased? This is a unanimous request from the premiers.

[English]

Mr. Corey Tochor: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is correct that the federal government has mismanaged the health file from day one. The major issue right now is the lack of vaccines across Canada, and that is squarely on the federal government, which has not done its work. It brags about how many vaccines it has secured, but it never released the time periods. We are talking two-plus years.

We have shortages across Canada. Right now in Saskatchewan, 102% of the vaccines delivered are in people’s arms. That is where the failure of the federal Liberal government is. It is in not securing enough vaccines for Canada.

● (1645)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I cannot understand where this member is coming from. Just about every measure he is talking about in criticizing the spending was done through unanimous consent of this House. The members on the other side, including all the Conservative members, voted in favour of all this spending.

Why did the member who is so critical of this spending vote in favour of it?

Mr. Corey Tochor: Mr. Speaker, if members remember back, last year we had the one bill. It was \$60 billion, and we had six hours of debate. This was before government prorogued Parliament. A lot of the problems with the Liberal government come from going back, and that is why the do-over bill of Bill C-14 is meant to fix some of the errors.

I wonder what the outcome would be if we actually had proper debate on these outstanding numbers we have been racking up.

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to speak today on Bill C-14, which, among other things, increases the ceiling for the government's borrowing authority from \$1.1 trillion to \$1.8 trillion. This would enable the government to drive the country an additional \$700 billion into debt.

Even prior to the pandemic, the government's finances were already like a ship lost at sea with no fiscal anchors. For context, between 1867 and 2020, the accumulated federal debt was just over \$700 billion. Over the past year, it has exceeded \$1.1 trillion, or 50% over our accumulated debt since Confederation. This is a staggering number never seen before.

Canadians desperately need the government to have a plan to get Canada's fiscal house back in order when the COVID crisis subsides. It goes without saying that the government would have been in a far stronger position to weather this storm if it simply had not broken its promise in 2015 to balance the budget by 2019.

With respect to interest rates, I recall vividly a time when interest rates were very high. In fact, my first home mortgage in 1989 had an interest rate of 12.75%. That was a good rate at the time. The former governor of the Bank Canada and the Parliamentary Budget Officer both confirmed in finance committee testimony that interest rates will inevitably go up. Interest rate increases are an existential threat to the federal government's ability to fund programs, like the COVID programs and others, into the future.

If interest rates go up by even one percentage point, that will cost \$11 billion; a 5% interest rate rise would cost \$55 billion. I say to the Minister of Finance, please heed these warnings. We must be ready. We do not want to be in the same position as Paul Martin and Jean Chrétien were in the mid-90s, when they had to slash health care transfers.

Our economy cannot recover without small businesses being successful, and right now across the country they are hurting, including in my home province of Manitoba. According to the CFIB, 2.4 million jobs are at risk nationally and 181,000 businesses are at risk of closing their doors forever. In Manitoba it estimates that there are an estimated 5,601 businesses at risk, which represents over 102,000 jobs in Manitoba out of a population of 1.3 million people, and 16% of Manitoba businesses are actively considering winding down or declaring bankruptcy. These job losses are from across all sectors.

While public health restrictions have been necessary to slow the spread of COVID-19, they came with a massive price. This recent data shows the devastating impacts they have had on small busi-

nesses and the families they support. If these businesses do not survive, Canada's economic recovery will be much more difficult.

Government Orders

In saying this, I am not arguing against the need for extraordinary measures, but rather to highlight the desperate need for a recovery plan as soon as possible. Not only have small businesses been devastated, but so have charities. Canadian charities need to be an effective partner in any recovery plan. My bill, the supporting Canadian charities act, would give the charitable sector the boost it needs by making the proceeds of sale of private shares and real estate exempt from the capital gains tax if donated to a qualified charity within 30 days.

This common sense measure could have been in place six years ago, but the Liberals tossed it aside from the 2015 budget when they formed government. If this measure had been in place, charities would have received hundreds of millions of dollars more and would have been better positioned to respond to the pandemic and be prepared for the recovery.

With regard to vaccines, they are critical to reopening the economy. Acquiring vaccines and getting them to provinces must be the federal government's top priority. Only 1.46% of Canadians have been vaccinated. In contrast, Israel has vaccinated 22.34% of its citizens; the UAE is at 14.1%; and the U.K. is at 4.19%. Canada ranks at least a distant number 11 in the world for per capita vaccinations. The government has put Canadians at the back of pack with their mismanagement of the rollout.

Canada will receive zero doses of the Pfizer vaccine this week. How can provinces come up with vaccination plans without certainty of delivery? Why did the Prime Minister wait until last week to even pick up the phone and speak to the CEO of Pfizer? We cannot secure jobs, our economy, and our future without vaccines. Where is the plan?

• (1650)

With respect to the aviation industry, it is critical national infrastructure. This debate is not just about regional routes; it is about all routes and all jobs. It is about positioning our economy for a full and robust recovery and securing our future.

Government Orders

On Saturday, I spoke with Joseph. Joseph is a 31-year-old pilot. He and his partner live in my riding and have a two-year-old son, who was playing with Lego when I called. After several years of flying, he got his dream job last February flying 737s for WestJet. On May 4, he was grounded because of the pandemic. He fears he may never get back to the work he loves and just cannot make ends meet on available government assistance.

Joseph and his family and thousands of aviation workers in his situation are counting on us to get this right. The government has said that the purpose of this bill is to “provide assistance to families with young children, support students, and invest in resources to protect the health and safety of Canadians.” I cannot think of a better way to do this than to provide aviation workers, many of whom have young families, just like Joseph, with a plan to protect their livelihoods.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, travel and aviation workers have been dramatically impacted in such a negative way. With international travel being shut down and domestic travel slowing to a snail's pace, aviation workers and their livelihoods have been grounded. They were assured for months by the government that help was coming. They were assured that talks with airlines and other industry stakeholders were ongoing to develop a plan. They were told to just wait and be patient. Even after hundreds of aviation workers demonstrated on the Hill in October, pleading for help, all they have heard are crickets from the government.

With the situation in the aviation industry getting worse by the day, aviation workers and their families cannot wait any longer. Where is the plan? Where are the assurances that these jobs will not be eliminated and that travel adviser commissions will be protected? Where are the assurances for travellers to get full refunds on tickets which were cancelled due to COVID-19? Why is rapid testing not in place at airports? Pilots, flight attendants, baggage personnel, mechanics, independent travel advisers and many others are still waiting for this long-promised plan. Let us not forget it is aviation workers who continue to play crucial roles in the distribution of vaccines and PPE across the country. They are there for us, but the government is simply not there for them.

While emergency measures in this bill are worthy of consideration, what I do not support is rubber-stamping continued runaway deficits. Combining a \$700 billion increase in borrowing authority with these measures into one bill is just simply bad governance. An increase of the debt limit sufficiently to allow for the government to fund the COVID emergency spending through to the end of the next fiscal year would make sense. However, anything further must be contingent on a fiscal anchor and must have parliamentary and committee scrutiny. Such a vast spending authority needs to be considered separate and apart from these important supports.

To put this in perspective, the \$700 billion increase in spending authority being requested over the next three years is equivalent to the total \$700 billion debt of Canada accumulated between 1867 and 2020. It is a staggering amount as I have said. The government's borrowing authority should be debated in a separate bill to ensure there is appropriate parliamentary oversight and scrutiny. We should not be providing the government carte blanche to spend as it sees fit, without end and in the absence of such oversight.

On this side of the House, the Conservatives are focused on taking actions to get as many people back to work in every part of Canada and every sector as quickly as possible. We are ready to do whatever it takes to get Canada working again, but we must ensure that taxpayer dollars are treated with respect.

As the official opposition, we are committed to ensuring the government's spending supports Canadians when they need it the most while being focused on responsible fiscal management for the years to come. We need to secure the future for all Canadians.

● (1655)

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at the start of my hon. colleague's speech, he mentioned the former Bank of Canada governor talking about interest rates. As I understand it, the former governor of the Bank of Canada was more concerned about deflation and the impact on jobs.

Certainly the member had talked a lot about the debt being at formerly \$700 billion and now \$1.1 trillion. However, in the same breath, he also talked about businesses and the need to protect workers and employees. Would he not agree that the \$400 billion that has been added to that debt has been focused on supporting Canadians to avoid the economic scarring of the economy? Will he admit that this is certainly what the government's focus has been since day one?

Mr. Marty Morantz: Mr. Speaker, first, I spoke to the former governor in the finance committee. I asked him if and when interest rates would go up. Although he did say that we were in a deep hole, he said that as we came out of the recovery, interest rates would certainly go up. It is in Hansard, it is on the record, and the member can read it for himself. They can go up. I have experienced it myself. The government will have huge difficulty managing when that happens.

In terms of protecting businesses, the Conservatives, by and large, have supported the emergency programs that have been rolled out, and certainly they have been very valuable. The sad part about the emergency programs is that they could have been far better, far more effective and, frankly, more timely if the Liberal government had simply let us examine them with proper scrutiny through committee meetings, but that was not the case. These bills were brought forward and basically rammed through Parliament, which is unfortunate. It led to many mistakes, one of which, by the way, Bill C-14 would correct by announcing that people do not have to pay their rent before they can claim the rent subsidy. That could have been fixed months ago if we had just had some reasonable opportunity for oversight.

Mr. Randeep Sarai (Surrey Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member of Parliament for Vaughan—Woodbridge.

It is a pleasure to be virtually in the House, from my home in Surrey, British Columbia, to speak to Bill C-14, an act to implement certain provisions of the fall economic statement. It contains so many incredible and important initiatives, everything from COVID recovery for Canadians and Canadian businesses to social equality to climate change. The thread that joins all these issues together is that we all make a positive impact in the lives of Canadians from coast to coast to coast now and into the future.

I would like to take this opportunity to talk about some of the many important aspects of the economic update that are of particular interest to my riding of Surrey Centre. I will address some of these areas where individuals and businesses continue to struggle: support for Canadians and businesses as we continue to face the pandemic; creating opportunities and support for youth; and economic development in British Columbia.

Continued support for individuals and businesses throughout the COVID-19 pandemic will be vital for Canadians as we face what will likely be some challenging months ahead. With cases continuing to rise across the country and provinces and territories taking steps to reduce the spread, we continue to see limits on gatherings and restrictions on some businesses in their operations. Support like the Canada recovery benefit and the Canada child benefit, the extension of the Canada emergency wage subsidy and emergency business accounts remain as important as ever.

I continue to hear from constituents in Surrey Centre who need these benefits. They support our government in whatever it takes to ensure that Canadians have the support they need to get through these challenging times. From Surrey Centre restaurants like Bozzini's to the AP Group sawmill that employ over 80 employees, these businesses were able to survive and continue to employ their workers despite the challenges faced by COVID-19, all due to the federal support measures like the Canada emergency wage subsidy and the Canada emergency rent subsidy, to name a few.

Creating opportunities for youth is a topic that is deeply important to the Surrey Centre Constituency Youth Council. The youth involved in my council and youth across the country are very concerned about the impact of COVID-19 and their futures. Many feel they have missed out on chances for learning in the classroom, connecting with peers and lost opportunities for employment. Those who have just entered the job market have had a particularly challenging time to find meaningful work.

While not part of the bill, I want to take the opportunity to highlight the Canada summer jobs program and the impact it has in our communities. The funding delivered by Canada summer jobs is highly desired by organizations and businesses in Surrey Centre to help them create positions for youth that they would otherwise not have the means to provide. Just as important, youth across Canada also rely on these positions each year, including some members of my office's youth council.

The proposed increase of 40,000 jobs for Canada summer jobs across the country for 2021-22 is very welcome news. This means

Government Orders

that 120,000 youth will have access to positions created just for them.

In addition to the Canada summer jobs, the fall economic statement also proposes 45,300 job placements for young people through the youth employment skills strategy. Together these initiatives will provide more than 160,000 employment opportunities for Canadian youth, positions that will help them gain valuable experience and develop their skills for future employment opportunities as they enter the job market.

However, while we wait for the additional Canada summer jobs and opportunities, the bill would bring some debt relief to millions of student loan borrowers who have struggled to pay their bills this year, some as a result of entering the job market during COVID, job loss or reduction in hours due to the pandemic. We will achieve this through eliminating the federal interest on Canada student loans and Canada apprentice loans for 2021-22. This will mean \$329 million of relief to Canadian student loan borrowers.

Finally, I would like to highlight the regional development agencies across the country. So far these agencies have made \$1.5 billion in support available to businesses through the regional relief and recovery fund. Introduced in April, the regional relief fund is providing significant support through Canada's regional development agencies to small businesses that are unable to access other pandemic support programs.

● (1700)

The regional relief and recovery fund has supported 14,700 businesses and protected more than 100,000 jobs so far.

The additional \$500 million proposed for the regional development agencies will bring the total support available to more than \$2 billion for businesses and entrepreneurs in need of assistance.

Western Economic Diversification Canada, which has served all of the western provinces from Manitoba to B.C. for the last 30 years, has been providing support for businesses, innovators and non-profits by promoting the development and diversification of western Canada's economy and advancing the interests of the west in national economic policy, programs and projects.

We know, however, that western Canada is not a homogeneous region. British Columbia and the Prairies have different economic needs. The proposed new regional development agency for British Columbia has caught the attention of small and medium-sized businesses in Surrey. They know the value of the regional development agencies, and specifically the important support provided by the regional relief and recovery fund. This new RDA would tailor support even further to the specific needs of British Columbia businesses, and allow Western Economic Diversification to do the same and focus on the specific needs of the Prairies. This would help programs like the regional relief and recovery fund create even more impact in the regions they serve.

Government Orders

A new B.C. development agency would help diversify businesses in Surrey that are in the clean tech, health science, forest product, agri-tech and logistics sectors that fuel the economy in B.C. This new RDA would be able to see what is imperative to our local economy and help increase productivity and create more jobs.

These, and many of the other proposed initiatives in the fall economic statement, would be of great help to the millions of Canadians who have been struggling. The quicker we get these programs in place, the quicker they will benefit the Canadians who need them most.

• (1705)

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened intently to the member's comments. A couple of Liberal colleagues have talked about how important small businesses are to the Canadian economy. However, I remember that in 2017, before the pandemic, there was a lot of talk about the Liberals bringing forward tax increases on small businesses across the country. I believe they were even called tax havens for some people.

I want to ask the member this. Going forward, can we ensure that we will make the economy stronger and that we will secure our future recovery by ensuring small businesses have every ability to succeed and hire more people after the recovery instead of labelling them as tax cheats and raising taxes on them?

Mr. Randeep Sarai: Mr. Speaker, the member has not read or seen the facts. Since the Liberal government came into power in 2015, we have lowered the small and medium-sized business tax rate by almost 3%. We probably have the lowest tax rate in North America, but definitely the lowest this country has ever seen. It went from almost 12% down to 9% during this time, all to support and help small businesses.

During this pandemic, small businesses were given \$40,000 interest free, then an additional \$20,000 interest free, of which \$20,000 is forgivable after two-plus years once it is paid back. I would say this has saved hundreds of thousands of businesses from some of the pains of the pandemic.

In addition, we have given them a wage subsidy so they can continue their support. I recall that, at the beginning of the pandemic, employers said they did not want to lay off their employees. Their business was down, but they had good employees they wanted to support themselves. We gave them that opportunity. This government will always be there for small businesses and the—

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments, the hon. member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague's speech. He praised the merits of some of these programs, which are not under federal jurisdiction, but we know the story well. I would like him to answer a simple question about a program he must be familiar with, because it was his government that decided to set it up. We are still waiting for that to happen. I am talking about the credit program for the hardest-hit sectors, which was announced in the economic update on November 30. There is

still nothing to this day. Normally, when an economic update is released, it is because there is a plan. There is currently no program.

When will there be a plan to support the industries that are currently being hit hard, particularly tourism, aerospace, arts and culture?

[*English*]

Mr. Randeep Sarai: Mr. Speaker, our government has been front and centre, and our ministers responsible for these areas have been taking a very active look and taking feedback from all sectors.

We completely recognize that the hospitality and tourism sectors have been probably hit the hardest in this country, and a lot needs to be done to help and support them during this time. Many of the businesses are taking advantage of the wage subsidy, the emergency rent subsidy and small business loan programs, but more needs to be done. Our government is committed to that. In the days and weeks ahead, our government will hopefully be announcing and enacting some of those relief methods so that we can support our tourism and hospitality sectors, and most of all support the workers and the people who are behind them.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the member about one thing that I was surprised to see missing from Bill C-14.

As the member knows, in order for a small business to qualify for the Canada emergency wage subsidy, it had to have a payroll account in place before March 15 of last year. More than 10 months later, many start-ups still cannot qualify for that important wage subsidy. I am sure he has small businesses in his riding that are going through similar problems.

Why have the Liberals so far neglected to pay attention to start-ups so that they can qualify for the wage subsidy, given that we are now 10 months into this pandemic with no end in sight in the immediate future?

• (1710)

Mr. Randeep Sarai: Mr. Speaker, as my colleague has stated, we have been helping small businesses. We have been giving them wage subsidies and support, but these are businesses that were already established and had people working for them. Therefore, the benchmark is from what they were earning before they took a reduction in revenue or sales. It is based on that.

I am well aware that some restaurants started operations post-pandemic, and they are facing challenging times. I will urge the Minister of Finance and other ministers to find ways to support them so that they can also survive this difficult time.

I thank the member for his question. I will take it to heart and make sure that we can do something about that.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I rise to speak on Bill C-14, which aims to ensure that Canadian families, workers and businesses that continue to be impacted by COVID-19 receive the assistance they need via some of the measures our government detailed in the 2020 fall economic statement.

I know all parliamentarians, my colleagues, will continue to ensure we have the backs of Canadian families by providing them with the support they need as we all deal with COVID-19.

I wish to take a moment to thank the residents of my riding of Vaughan—Woodbridge and the City of Vaughan, who have heeded the requests from public health officials over the past year to do what is right: wear a mask, socially distance and now stay home. Together we will get through the pandemic. On behalf of all citizens, I wish to express our gratitude to the essential and front-line workers who have our backs. I thank them for what they do day in and day out.

As an economist by profession and a participant in the global financial markets for over 20 years, and who worked through the tech bubble and the global financial crisis, I was frankly not surprised by the magnitude of the impact of COVID-19. It was an exogenous shock that, as referred to in economic terms, froze the Canadian and global economy for a period of time.

With that, since day one, our government has been laser focused and will continue to be there for Canadian workers, entrepreneurs, families and students. Measures such as the Canada emergency response benefit assisted nearly nine million Canadians who one day were gainfully employed, providing for their families and building their futures, and the next day had their workplaces shut down, or even worse, found their jobs gone.

Our focus remains to help and support these Canadians. The CEBA and the Canada emergency wage subsidy have helped hundreds of thousands of businesses, including hundreds of businesses in my riding of Vaughan—Woodbridge. The wage subsidy, in one month alone, supported nearly 4.5 million Canadian workers. It has been remarked upon as the key mechanism to maintain attachment between employers and their employees so we can ensure a faster recovery for our economy. We know for a fact that the Canadian labour market is recovering faster from COVID-19 than that of the United States. We do not want permanent scarring to occur in the Canadian labour market, and the CEWS is such an important program to ensure recovery in employment levels as we move into recovery from the pandemic.

In April 2020, according to Statistics Canada, the initial widespread COVID-19 economic shutdown directly affected 5.5 million Canadian workers, including three million who lost their jobs and 2.5 million who were employed but experienced COVID-related absences.

We are seeing a recovery. We know we have much work to do. December 2020's Labour Force Survey recorded 1.1 million Canadian workers who remain impacted by COVID, including 636,000 who lost their jobs due to the impact of COVID. This level of lost

jobs is much greater than what was experienced during the financial crisis. Again, we know much work must be done to get our economy back to full employment and all Canadians working again.

Government Orders

As stated in the Speech from the Throne, our government has committed to create over one million jobs, restoring employment to pre-COVID levels. As parliamentarians, in the interim we must again ensure that Canadian workers and families continue to have the support they need. The recovery benefits, including the Canada recovery benefit, the sickness benefit and the caregiving benefit, along with enhanced flexibility in the employment insurance system, are ensuring that Canadian families do not have to choose between putting food on their tables or paying rent. We will have their backs.

Bill C-14 will provide for the implementation of a number of measures from the fall economic statement that will assist Canadian families and students and ensure help for Canadian businesses through the Canada emergency rent subsidy. I know from my friends across the aisle in the official opposition that support for families with children is also a priority.

In 2015, our government promised we would strengthen the middle class and those working hard to join it. The Canada child benefit was at the centre of this promise. This measure has lifted hundreds of thousands of children and their families out of poverty and continues to provide tax-free monthly material assistance to those families in Canada who need it most. In my riding alone, over 15,000 children receive the CCB every month. Nearly \$60 million annually in tax-free assistance is being delivered to Vaughan—Woodbridge families.

Bill C-14 will provide for immediate and temporary relief for families we know are impacted by COVID-19, with up to \$1,200 in 2021 for each child under the age of six for low- and middle-income families entitled to the Canada child benefit. This would apply to families with net incomes below \$120,000. For those above, the payment would be \$600.

● (1715)

This measure is anticipated to benefit 1.6 million families and, with that, 2.1 million children. I ask my colleagues from all parties to join in ensuring that the assistance to these families and children occurs in a timely manner.

Bill C-14 also includes direct measures to ensure we assist small business owners impacted by COVID-19, with direct and timely payments to cover rent and associated expenses. The measures will ensure that small business owners are able to receive assistance on a timely basis *ex ante* to help them cover the rent payable.

Government Orders

We know that the Canada emergency rent subsidy is assisting hard-hit businesses to pay for rent and related expenses. The CERS provides direct and easy access to rent and mortgage support from September 27, 2020, until June 2021 for qualifying organizations. The program is revamped. We consulted and listened, and provide payments directly to renters rather than having them go through their landlords. For small businesses shut down by a public health order, the rent subsidy will cover up to 90% or up to \$75,000 in monthly expenses. Bill C-14 would formalize the current administration of the rent subsidy, which includes, again, rent payable. This is very important.

To date, total approved applications are nearly 240,000, with a value of funds distributed to hard-working entrepreneurs across this country of nearly \$1 billion.

We know that young people continue to suffer disproportionately from the economic impacts of COVID-19, particularly on the unemployment front. Bill C-14 would assist students by easing the financial burden of student debt during the recovery and, with that, eliminating the interest repayment on the federal portion of Canada's student loans and the Canada's apprenticeship loans for 2021-22. The measure would help 1.4 million Canadians, providing over \$300 million in savings to students.

We have students' backs, and I am glad to say that we are vastly expanding the Canada summer jobs program, with approximately 120,000 job opportunities this year versus 80,000 in a prior year. This is great news for youth in my riding of Vaughan—Woodbridge and across Canada as we continue to recover from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Before I finish up my remarks today on Bill C-14, which I hope moves through the House quickly to assist families and businesses throughout our country, I note that much has been written about where our economy and our future are going, not only in Canada but also around the world. I read something over the holidays and it continues to strike me as something very important. It is from an International Monetary Fund series written by very well-known economists, authors and thinkers. We want to rebuild. We want to build a more inclusive society and we want to strengthen our social fabric. I will read a quote from an article I read that struck me as being at the core of this. It is from Ian Goldin, entitled "Rethinking Global Resilience":

The devastation caused by COVID-19 compels us to redouble our efforts to create a fairer and more inclusive world. This requires that we address the threats that endanger our lives and exacerbate inequality, poverty, and climate change. Building a resilient and sustainable future requires action by all of us, from the individual level up to the global level. International cooperation is vital not only between governments, but through civil society, business, and professional collaboration. The networked problems of our time are amenable to networked solutions. We must use this crisis to build new and stronger bonds, in our communities, in our countries, and globally.

It is obviously great to be back here in Parliament, but we must continue to assist Canadians impacted by COVID-19. We must continue to have their backs.

The federal government is working with and listening to many stakeholders, some here in my riding. I have spoken to many small business owners, and I know how grateful they are for the Canada emergency business account. I know how much the Canada emer-

gency response benefit made a difference in the lives of many citizens, particularly the many people who lost their jobs for no other reason than COVID-19.

This was not an economic recession caused by the capitalist or market system. This was caused by an exogenous event, and our government reacted strongly and continues to provide the help that Canadians from coast to coast to coast need. We have sectors that are in rough shape, including hospitality and tourism. We need to assist those sectors. They will gradually be assisted as the economy opens up, with the rollout of the vaccine.

I am going to end there. Again, it is great to be back, and I look forward to answering questions from my hon. colleagues.

● (1720)

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately I think my colleague is missing a key point here. I agree that what was done needed to be done, and I am sending out a householder talking about all the ways that those on this side of the floor helped make those programs significantly better than they were and helped get them out the door much faster than they were coming out the door.

The unfortunate thing my colleagues does not seem to understand is that small businesses can only carry on under this kind of an environment for so long before they no longer exist. We are hitting a key point in time for our country when the government needs to be stimulating the economy, not just keeping people breathing in the midst of things. They want to go back to work.

Why are the Liberals choosing to ignore our biggest resource in this country at a time when even Jerry Dias says that we will need oil in this world for at least another 40 years? We are the ones with the best product and the best environmental standards in the world, so why are we choosing to sit down and give this opportunity to the rest of the world, killing the wealth and prosperity in this nation?

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Mr. Speaker, as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, I was very glad to see how quickly we were able to get funds to Canadians who had lost their jobs because of COVID-19. Within two to three business days, Canadians received the Canada emergency response benefit, and firms having business accounts received the CEWS.

In the city I live in and the riding I represent, we have over 13,000 SMEs. I work with and know so many of them, and I listen to their concerns. Believe me, their concerns are always brought to individuals I work with within our party and within the minister's offices to improve and strengthen programs. That is what Canadians expect. Canadians expect us to co-operate. They expect all levels of government to work together, because we know we are all in this together and we are only going to get out of this together.

I thank the hon. member for her comments, but I would say our government has acted swiftly and very prudently. We will continue to have the backs of Canadian workers and businesses as they continue to be impacted by COVID-19.

[Translation]

Mrs. Louise Charbonneau (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to my hon. colleague, the parliamentary secretary. I thank him for thinking of the health care providers who are taking care of people with COVID-19.

I want to talk about self-employed workers and small businesses in particular. There are programs out there right now. However, Karine Dufour, one of my constituents, told me today that it takes a very long time to get a response to a grant application and that the CRA's checks are onerous.

What does my colleague think about that?

[English]

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Mr. Speaker, it is always imperative to assist Canadians as quickly and as efficiently as possible via the Canada Revenue Agency. I know the public servants of the Canada Revenue Agency have been working day and night, since the pandemic began, to assist Canadians in this very unique and extraordinary period of time globally.

The call agents strive to do their best with the information they are provided. If there is a specific case the member wishes to bring up that needs assistance, she can please send it over to the minister's office and to my office. We will be more than happy to assist.

• (1725)

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we have heard the member in the past speak at length about the government's ability to put \$100 billion out the door for workers, but what he has not talked about is the \$750 billion in liquidity supports it gave to big banks and Bay Street.

When we proposed a wealth tax, why did the hon. member bend over backwards and contort himself to defend big corporations against having this debt placed on the backs and burdens of households here in Canada?

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Mr. Speaker, the city of Vaughan is home to over 13,000 businesses, and I know how hard these entrepreneurs work to create jobs, whether they employ a hundred people or thousands of people. I understand how important they are and how much risk-taking they do, day in and day out, to ensure we have a strong economy and remain competitive.

I will always stand on the side of job creators and will always stand on the side of workers. I am glad to see the investment that General Motors is making in our country in Oshawa and the recent

Government Orders

announcement with Unifor. In Ingersoll, we will always stand with job creators and will always stand with the workers developing great products and services.

Mrs. Tamara Jansen (Cloverdale—Langley City, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Edmonton Centre.

Canadians can be forgiven for thinking that this government has been developing a way of protecting Canadians from the virus from scratch. We are constantly being told that this is an unprecedented situation, a one-of-a-kind happening and no one could have planned for this. We are being told how hard this government has worked night and day to keep us safe during this never-before-seen viral contagion sweeping the globe.

Our Minister of Health has regularly changed recommendations and restrictions, causing confusion and frustration for Canadians everywhere. She said that it could not be helped, and that we learn something new every day. In actual fact, quoting King Solomon from the Book of Ecclesiastes, "there is nothing new under the sun."

I contest that farmers have been tackling the challenge of deadly viruses in their crops and herds for a millennia. I myself have dealt with viral outbreaks on the farm. As a matter of fact, one of the very first big challenges we faced in business was a viral infection in flowers. As with COVID-19, there was no cure, and we were forced to cull the crop and start over. This early tragedy informed my understanding and, quite frankly, the understanding of industry and government on how to best tackle and control viral outbreaks.

Let me give a concrete example, which has been happening in every province across our great country for years in response to what science has told us about viral outbreaks.

Every greenhouse vegetable grower has protocols in place to ensure that viruses are not transported into their facility. They know the danger they face once a virus gets inside. There are devastating economic consequences, so when one enters the facility, one is first asked to simply sign in, just like we are doing now in restaurants. It is an easy but effective way to quickly track a source of infection when it happens. One is then given a gown to wear over one's clothes so that a pathogen is not brought in that way. At every door, there are foot baths to ensure that a pathogen is not brought in on one's shoes. Hand sanitizer stations are everywhere.

After that, years ago, the federal government mandated floral growers to install complicated tracking and tracing systems for all plant cuttings. These cuttings originate from places around the globe and arrive in Canada on airplanes by the millions daily. The system enables a farmer to pinpoint where in the greenhouse a cutting came from, where it is at any given time during production and even tracks which customer it is eventually sold to.

Government Orders

Every step of the way is tracked so that, should a virus outbreak occur, farmers and government can go back and find the source, and work to isolate and eradicate the problem. These are tried, tested and effective methods that farmers have been using for years to ensure the safety of their own crops and those of neighbouring farmers.

This is the science that our government is well aware of. In fact, it has regulated farmers for many decades to ensure that they maintain a robust monitoring system that protects the crops of Canadian farmers day after day and year after year. However, with this enormous body of scientific knowledge at our fingertips, and systems and processes that have been functioning very well in the agriculture sector for years, we find ourselves watching our economy being burned to the ground because this government chose to politicize the entire pandemic response procedure rather than follow the science.

Where a farmer will lock his doors to uninvited visitors during an outbreak, our health officials said that it would be racist to restrict entry into the country. Where a farmer keeps gallons of hand sanitizer in stock at all times, our national emergency stockpile cupboards were bare. Where a farmer tracks and traces millions upon millions of plants arriving per year, our health officials have no live health data tracking system in place. Where a farmer tests water, tissue and soil samples on the spot, our finance minister declared rapid tests no better than snake oil.

It is clear that the real science was ignored and politics took priority when it came to our COVID response, which has cost regular, hard-working Canadians their jobs, their mental health, their businesses, their retirement savings and their lives.

Here we are today to debate the new measures for more COVID support. These measures were only necessary because this government dawdled on rapid tests and vaccines. Because of its failures, Canadians will be among the last on the globe to be able to return to normal. My question is this: Is it reasonable for us to believe that these new measures will do what they say they will?

• (1730)

We keep hearing that we are all in this together, which is clearly not the case. As a matter of fact, there are a lot of jobs that were not affected, such as those in the public sector, which represents a whopping 35% of Canadians.

Elite politicians are the ones who are least impacted financially, yet they continue to fail those who are most impacted. The bulk of the damage is being shouldered by small business entrepreneurs and those with the least amount of wealth in the community. This bill still does not begin to recognize that fact. These new spending authorities request \$700 billion in additional borrowing limits, as well as a \$100-billion slush fund. As opposed to helping those most impacted, these dollars appear to be earmarked for special pet projects of the ideologically obsessed Liberal government.

Thousands of women in the travel sales industry have been without an income since March. The highly affected sector support program, which the Liberals announced with great fanfare many months ago, is nowhere to be seen. Single mothers, many primary

breadwinners for the family, cannot buy groceries to put on the dinner table. They cannot wait any longer. Where is that support?

I am seeing small business owners in my riding hanging on by a thread. They did not qualify for the first disastrous rent relief program because, let us face it, it was fixed to help a Liberal insider get in on the action.

I am going to hazard a guess that the elite politicians who are crafting these policies have never started a small business. They have never had to borrow from family to make payroll. They have never worked a second job so they could afford the plexiglass dividers they need to be able to open or reopen their restaurant during a pandemic.

The Prime Minister and the finance minister are lessons in Canadian political elitism. They constantly assure us that transparency, and science-based and best-practice approaches are the only way they do business. Do they think we do not see that there has been no budget tabled and that they have cancelled audits for themselves, but are pushing hard for auditing the books of small businesses? What sort of due diligence was done in hiring the governor general? Did no one even make a call to check her references?

In this bill, the Liberals are proposing COVID supports that will give them further opportunity to spend without oversight, because they say that during a pandemic they need to have the ability to act fast and save our citizens. However, there is nothing in this bill to suggest they will do anything differently than they have done up to now.

Canadians are ready to be the solution. Many households have been saving up throughout this pandemic. They are excited to get back to travelling, working and doing business without government handouts.

Canada has been the best place in the world to live. It has always been a land of opportunity like no other. We will need to leverage our assets to the maximum and make sure our economy is firing on all cylinders if we are going to weather this storm. The government should have had all the tools and expertise it needed right from the beginning. What went wrong when, rather than those of flowers or animals, it was human lives at stake? The Liberal government is so ideologically possessed that science and common sense took and continue to take a back seat.

We have been plagued by this pandemic for a year. Clearly, what we are doing is not working. Our economy has ground to a halt and cases continue to rise. The government has failed to provide the provinces with viable alternatives to lockdowns. It has failed to create an effective national tracking and tracing program. It has failed to procure enough rapid tests to allow businesses to open confidently. It has gone all in on playing the waiting game until everyone is vaccinated, and it could not even get that right.

Now the government is using this opportunity to force its ideology down Canada's throat, requesting that Parliament allow it to borrow hundreds of billions of dollars to experiment with a reimagined economy. Canadians are tired of this credit card economy. They want a paycheck and the dignity that comes with providing for their own family. Canadians need leadership that is focused on Canadian resources, productivity and ingenuity, not a brave new world.

• (1735)

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague mentioned partisanship and ideology. Her speech was certainly filled with a lot of partisanship.

I have a couple of different questions for her. She can choose which one she would like to answer.

She mentioned some of the criticism of the government's response. I think this government has been mindful that of course there are areas where we could have done better. That is the nature of what has transpired. I would believe some of her assertions, if the rest of the world were not also going through the pandemic. What would she say about the rest of the world going through lockdowns, the other G7 countries around the world that are going through the same thing we are in this global fight?

She talked about elite politicians. Does she see herself in that, or is she labelling a few of our colleagues in the House?

Finally, with respect to government handouts, does she not believe we had a moral and ethical obligation to support Canadians through this pandemic?

Mrs. Tamara Jansen: Madam Speaker, I think we could have done so much better than we did if we had followed the kind of protocols that farmers follow. Had our emergency stockpile not been empty, we could have ensured that seniors care homes had exactly what they needed. We could have protected them with PPE. We did not have anything in the cupboard.

Honestly, regarding the tracking and tracing system, we are hearing from many different medical professionals that this is so, so late in coming. We do not need it just for a pandemic, we actually also need it for a better health care system.

These are things that, as I say, CFIA is used to doing. I do not know what happened at PHAC, but CFIA is very used to doing all of these things. I would love to see us make sure that protocols that work on the farm are also working for Canadians.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, one of the things to note is that the responsibility for the lockdown measures falls under provincial govern-

ments, and yes, I know we are all tired of that. We certainly want to come out of the lockdowns as quickly as possible.

When it comes to the cost of living that so many Canadian families are dealing with, and my colleague from British Columbia did mention how important our health care system is, one of the biggest costs comes with prescription medication and dental care.

I just wonder if the hon. member would lend her support to seeing the federal government play more of an active role in that, so that Canadian families are not hit by those extraordinary costs when it comes to looking after their oral health and their pharmaceutical needs. Will she join with the NDP in pushing for those initiatives so that we can give those struggling working families a break from those kinds of health care costs?

Mrs. Tamara Jansen: Madam Speaker, right now our top priority should be our senior care homes. We need to make sure that we have proper funds going to protect them, to create this iron band around our long-term care facilities. That is for me. That is why I am here. I am very passionate about seniors, and that is what I am going to be focusing on.

• (1740)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member used the term “reimagined economy”, and I could not help but think of the conspiracy theory about the global reset and everything that is going on with that.

Could the member just confirm for me and this House that she was not trying to create a link between a “reimagined economy” and the conspiracy theories surrounding the global reset that are out there?

Mrs. Tamara Jansen: Madam Speaker, I wonder if the member might be able to tell me if the \$700-billion credit increase that we are looking for is not actually for a plan to buy Facebook. That is the value of Facebook. I had to laugh when I saw that number. A \$700-billion increase to credit is just crazy. I am sorry.

An hon. member: Yes or no. You try answering that.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. The hon. member had an opportunity to ask the question. I would ask both sides not to go back and forth.

Resuming debate, we have the hon. member for Edmonton Centre.

Mr. James Cumming (Edmonton Centre, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise today virtually to speak to Bill C-14 on Robbie Burns Day, a second act respecting certain measures in response to COVID-19.

I really do not need to speak to the detriment COVID has placed not only on Canada but on the rest of the world. The ways in which we have had to change the way we eat, sleep, learn, work and visit have been turned upside down for nearly a year. At this point, it seems like there is no end in sight. It is frustrating beyond belief, and the damages are real and significant.

Government Orders

Bill C-14 would implement certain measures announced in the 2020 fall economic statement regarding the most pressing items. This would include increasing the Canada child benefit; eliminating interest on Canada student loans and Canada apprentice loans for at least one year; amending the Food and Drugs Act to authorize the Governor in Council to make regulations to seek additional information from companies about food, drug and medical devices to, for example, assess the safety of these products; as well as amending the Borrowing Authority Act.

I think we can all agree that government investment and spending has been absolutely necessary to help Canadians through this pandemic. Canadians largely continue to be left without a plan, a timeline or a guarantee of what the future might look like as we head out of this pandemic.

We first must recognize that there will be no economic recovery without a solution to this health crisis. As the rest of the world continues to receive vaccines and a return to a sense of normalcy in respective countries, Canada has fallen behind, not only in the past few weeks but since the inception of COVID-19. We continue to ask for rapid testing and whether it will become available for working in spaces for the vulnerable population like long-term seniors' homes and caregiver settings.

Today I have listened to the government say that it is all under control and that we have have minor setbacks. I have to emphasize that purchase orders are not a measure of performance; vaccines in arms are. As of Sunday, Canada has administered 816,557 vaccine doses. In comparison, the U.S. had administered over 20 million. On a per capita basis, the U.S. has so far inoculated 5.2% of its population. We stand at 1.1%.

Our country remains shut down, just like it was at the beginning of the pandemic. This is exclusively a responsibility of the federal government with vaccines and rapid testing. We were originally expected to receive vaccines in the next few weeks. Prime Minister Trudeau has said that Pfizer has promised to deliver four million doses by the end of March—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I remind the hon. member that he is not to mention parliamentarians by their last name.

The hon. member for Edmonton Centre.

Mr. James Cumming: My apologies, Madam Speaker.

It is clear that there is no plan for the vaccine rollout just as there is no plan to get the economy back on track.

Rapid testing has been available in Europe for months and the U.S. approved take-home tests back in 2020. We are not even running in the same race.

As we discuss the bill to implement certain provisions of the economic statement tabled in Parliament on November 30, 2020, I want to first focus on the amendment to the Borrowing Authority Act and the Financial Administration Act to increase the maximum borrowing authority of the government.

The \$1 trillion question is becoming a \$1.8 trillion question. How is the federal spending going to position our country for post-pandemic success? Amidst this never before seen federal stimulus

spending, where is our strategic economic vision for the future? How will this affect generations yet to come?

The debt-to-GDP ratio will rise from 31% last year to 56% next year. That is below the 66% ratio that led to a near default in 1996, but we are getting awfully close. The Bank of Canada projects that business investment will grow at .08% over the next two years, failing to recover to 2019 levels until at least 2023. Consumption will grow at 4.7%, five times faster than investment. Consumption and government spending will represent about 80% of the economic growth for the next two years, while investment and exports will be less than zero.

The government has announced \$100 billion infrastructure spend over the next 10 years. The problem continues to be, however, that no matter how much it announces or how amazing the results will be, Canadians continue to be left in the dark as to what is the plan for how their money is going to be spent. Spending that does not improve productivity, lower costs or create opportunities for additional revenue will just continue to put us on a debt spiral.

In the face of this insurmountable debt, Canada's finance minister spoke about unlocking preloaded stimulus, fuelled by Canada's savings to tackle this debt. The fact is that in a country of 37-odd million, with an average household savings of \$852 per year, this is not exactly what I would call a cure-all for the economic situation in which we have found ourselves.

On the other hand, we are a vast country, one of abundant resources, world-class institutions, providing cutting-edge research, and technology industries producing innovative solutions to everyday issues. If we are going to service this more than \$1 trillion debt, we are going to have to dig far deeper than our own pockets and work with all that we have and all that this country can offer.

Canada fell out of the top 10 ranking of the world's most competitive economies. We have fallen near the bottom of our peer group on innovation, ranking 17th. We have the highest unemployment rate in the G7.

With a country of our size and the sparsity of population we have, there is no way that we can rely on our internal economy to lead us to recovery. Canada will need massive growth and exports to fuel any kind of recovery. Spending in infrastructure should be predominantly focused on those things that improve productivity, competitiveness and access to markets. Private sector innovation is what is going to lead us into the future and provide us with the technology we need to shift to both global sustainability and reinstate us as one of the world's economic leaders.

In 2019, mineral fuels, including oil, accounted for 22% of our country's total exports, the number one exported product. We have the third-largest proven oil reserves in the world and the third-largest exported, primarily to the U.S., which now is of huge concern because of the Keystone decision.

Now is not the time to restrict export growth, but rather see an expansion of our capabilities in all sectors, including oil and gas. There is a market opportunity for resources, which are extracted both ethically and to an ever-improving environmental standard. The world wants more of what Canada produces. Canada is home to incredibly strong industries in minerals, agriculture, forestry, pulp, paper and all forms of energy production, such as tech, aerospace, fisheries, to name a few.

The world faces a confluence of changes and technology advantages that are fundamentally altering the relationship between individuals, economies and society.

• (1745)

Innovations in a diverse set of fields, including robotics, genetics, AI, sustainable energy and traditional sectors, are all individually imperative to economic recovery. These innovations, just as we have come to rely on in a pandemic, will be evermore important to lead us out of it. Prioritizing innovation today is a key to unlocking post-pandemic growth; the quality and the quantity of our research and development, ensuring that IP that is developed in Canada stays in Canada; policies that encourage new employees and employees to come to Canada to help support these industries; and, most important, tax policy that encourages entrepreneurial growth and expansion rather than penalizes it. If ever Canada were in a position that we needed to grow and grow our exports and support our entrepreneurs and businesses, this is now the time.

I look forward to the government putting forward a budget that will actually demonstrate how we are going to do this and how we can ensure future generations have the same opportunities that many of us have had today.

• (1750)

Mr. Kenny Chiu (Steveston—Richmond East, CPC): Madam Speaker, in closing, my colleague mentioned that we were here to seek a better future for generations. Bill C-14 would raise the debt ceiling. Therefore, I do not understand.

Could the hon. member enlighten me how raising that ceiling would impact future generations?

Mr. James Cumming: Madam Speaker, the reality here is that we are going into an enormous debt that future generations are going to be faced with paying it back. It will have a massive impact to

Government Orders

future generations. That is why I tried to outline in my intervention the importance of growing our economy.

For all the stories we have heard about creating programs that will create short-term stimulus inside of the country, we absolutely have to be focused on external exports. That is where the opportunities will come for future generations. That is where the opportunities will come for my kids and my grandkids. That is what we should be focusing on in the future.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, going back to that last question, if the hon. member really wants to answer, I do not think it as simple as saying that we are raising the debt ceiling and therefore it is a massive burden on future generations. What if we did not do anything? What if we did not support Canadians during the last 10 months? What would that do to future generations? I am sure the member can appreciate that argument.

Many times in the House today I have heard the Conservatives talk about the increasing amount of debt that Canada has had to take on over the last 10 months in order to support Canadians, but they voted for it every step of the way. They voted for it in quite often what was unanimous consent motions brought before the House. They had the opportunity to say no, but they kept saying yes.

Could the member explain to the House why he voted previously in favour of all of this spending if he did not think it was a good idea?

Mr. James Cumming: Madam Speaker, if the member had listened closely to what I said in my intervention, he would have heard that we were supportive, absolutely, because we had to do something. The greater question is where we go from here. The greater question on this bill with its debt ceiling is what the government will spend the money on going into the future.

We have supported the existing programs, but there is talk of phenomenal spending: \$100 billion into potential infrastructure spending with no clear plan on how it will be utilized. The programs, to a certain extent, were effective. However, we can only look at this one metric: We had the second-greatest spending of the G7 and we still have the highest unemployment rate. To me, that is not a judge of performance.

Government Orders

• (1755)

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Madam Speaker, I certainly agree with my hon. colleague's assertion that we need to be thinking about how we are going to stimulate our economy in the recovery from this pandemic. I am not sure that I agree with all of his prescriptions for doing that, and I wonder if my colleague is familiar with the recent study out of the London School of Economics that examined 50 years of corporate tax cuts in 18 different jurisdictions and found that they had very little impact on either employment or job growth. That is my first question.

My second question is that I did not hear him mention the need for us to fulfill our climate commitments. I wonder if my colleague would agree that that is going to be a very important component of the economic recovery from COVID-19.

Mr. James Cumming: Madam Speaker, I am not familiar with that exact report, and so I will take that under advisement and I will have to read through it. I do think that tax increases are not necessarily an impetus for economic growth. Of course, we are going to have to do whatever we do hand in hand with a solid climate strategy to make sure that we responsibly develop our resources and grow our economy at the same time.

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with my good friend, the member for Toronto—Danforth. It is an honour for me to join members in the House of Commons virtually today and speak on our government's commitments to support vulnerable Canadians. I want to specifically focus on long-term care.

Let me begin by acknowledging that I am speaking from the traditional lands of many indigenous peoples, most recently the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation.

The second wave of the pandemic has caused a surge in COVID-19 cases. Today, in Ontario there were a staggering 1,958 positive cases and 49 additional deaths, 29 of them in long-term care homes. While personal sacrifices have been made to help flatten the curve, including cancelling celebrations, postponing special milestones and staying physically distanced from our loved ones, we must continue to do our part to help each other every day.

Every action that reduces the burden on our front-line and essential workers keeps Canadians safe and brings us closer to the end of this difficult chapter. With the arrival of two safe and effective COVID vaccines, we have seen the first signs of light. To date, our government has distributed over 1.1 million vaccines to provinces and territories, with millions more on the way. Securing the world's most diverse vaccine portfolio has ensured that all Canadians who want a vaccine will get one.

I want to take a moment to reflect on the Canadians who are presently fighting this virus. We all know people who have been infected and have done everything in their power to bravely battle COVID-19. I think about my dear friend who is in the hospital right now and his family. Last night, we held a prayer service for his recovery and the recovery of all those struggling with this virus. He is a fighter. I know he will pull through these dark days and come home soon. I want to thank those who are caring for him at the Lakeridge Health in Ajax and all the front-line and essential work-

ers who are, at this moment, away from their families and helping us fight the pandemic, including those at the Tony Stacey Centre for Veterans Care, the Ehatore Retirement and Nursing Home, Altamont Care Community and Extendicare Rougevalley in Scarborough—Rouge Park.

We do not know when this crisis will be behind us, but we know that we will get through it the way Canadians always have: together. While Canada has done relatively well in handling the pandemic, our systemic failure within our long-term care homes is a national shame. I recognize and acknowledge that the long-term care homes are a provincial responsibility. In some respects, it is easy for us to say this and point fingers. Truth be told: no one cares about jurisdiction. Canadians want action and rightfully so. Decades of neglect have eroded the fragile foundations of these facilities. An absence of accountability and apathy toward oversight has shifted the culture from one of long-term care to one of long-term crisis.

The long-term care system was not broken by COVID-19; it was built this way. If we do not act, we will repeatedly fail Canadian after Canadian after Canadian. Since last March, 3,376 people have died in long-term care homes, including 11 staff in Ontario alone. This includes 80 residents and one staff member in my riding of Scarborough—Rouge Park. I suspect there may be more.

During the peak of the first wave, provincial governments requested logistical support from the Canadian Armed Forces. I would like to read some of the haunting findings of the Canadian Armed Forces personnel during their time in our long-term care facilities in Ontario.

Upon arrival at the Altamont care home in Scarborough Rouge Park, Canadian Armed Forces personnel identified that many of the residents had been "bed bound for several weeks", with no evidence of residents being moved to a wheelchair for parts of the day, repositioned in their beds or washed properly. Most residents were reported as not having three meals a day, with the facility itself described as having insufficient wound care supplies and often no PSWs on site for the evening shift.

Similarly deplorable living conditions were identified by the Canadian Armed Forces members stationed at Orchard Villa, Eatonville Care Centre, Hawthorne Place Care Centre and Holland Christian Homes Grace manor in Ontario.

• (1800)

We know that the crisis in homes is not limited to these five facilities. I would like to thank my fellow colleagues, the member for Pickering—Uxbridge, the member for Etobicoke Centre, the member for Brampton North, as well as the member for Humber River—Black Creek, for their continued advocacy to push the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario to do more to protect the most vulnerable.

COVID may be the primary cause of death, but irregularities in staffing levels, precarious rates of pay for primary care workers, insufficient hours of direct care for residents, the disaggregation of data, poor incident management planning, inconsistent financing and lack of modernization to reflect the changing needs of residents are equally egregious factors that have contributed to this senseless loss of life.

Therefore, how do we move forward? Erecting iron rings or permanently placing military personnel in these facilities is not a long-term solution to the crisis of care. For the short term, we must do everything in our power to protect Canada's most vulnerable. I call upon Premier Ford to call in the military. We are in this together and we have seen the effectiveness of our men and women in uniform at these facilities. We cannot allow the system to continue failing our seniors. We cannot stand by without exhausting all options. What we can do is send in the army, and we need the premier to make this request.

Our government will continue supporting provinces and territories in whatever capacity necessary to ensure that we overcome the crisis of care together. We should be ashamed of ourselves for normalizing substandard living conditions for any Canadian, but especially those incapable of caring for themselves. When we were too young to feed ourselves, it was these women and men who fed us. When we were not able to bathe ourselves, it was these women and men who bathed us. When we were too sick to care for ourselves, it was these men and women who watched over us. These are the men and women who fought for us and our freedom. We cannot repay them for their lifetime of service, but right now, when they need us most, we are failing them. We must do better.

In November, I joined advocates and Canadians for national long-term care standards on Parliament Hill for a special tribute to the thousands who have died due to COVID-19 outbreaks in long-term care. Families and friends laid thousands of pairs of shoes on the front lawn to honour the memories of their loved ones. As the shoes stood silently, the air was filled with an unmistakable sense of heartbreak, anger, grief and tremendous loss.

As legislators, it is our job to represent the voices and will of the public. The public has spoken loud and clear. People do not want jurisdictional squabbles to jeopardize the health and safety of their loved ones; they do not want to worry that those who neglect Canadians in need will not be held accountable; and, most importantly, they do not want these shameful standards of care to continue. The public demands action and our government will continue to act.

Our government has invested a \$3-billion wage top-up for essential front-line workers to help ensure that workers on the front lines are effectively compensated for their critical role in the fight against COVID-19. Our government's safe restart agreement in-

Government Orders

cluded a \$740-million investment in the provinces and territories for long-term care. By restructuring the investing in Canada infrastructure plan, our government allowed provinces to transfer 10% of their infrastructure investments to COVID-19 support projects, including long-term care projects. Our government's \$38.5-million commitment to support the training of up to 4,000 personal support workers will help address some labour shortages in long-term care. In addition, our government's new \$1-billion safe long-term care fund will help ensure that Canadians living in care homes will begin to live their lives in dignity.

If we do not significantly reform long-term care in Canada by addressing the systemic failures of these facilities and establishing national standards, we will not cure the crisis within the sector. First and foremost, provinces and territories need to work together with the federal government to establish national standards of care.

• (1805)

There is no acceptable reason why a long-term care resident in British Columbia is held to a different standard than one living in PEI or Ontario. National standards would enshrine the decency our most vulnerable senior population deserves.

Second, to protect—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Unfortunately, the hon. member's time is up, but I am sure he will be able to add during questions and comments.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Hamilton Centre.

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am very spirited to hear the member talk so passionately about long-term care. I wonder, in his calls to the premier, why his government did not perhaps consider the Emergencies Act or the Department of Health Act under section 11.1. More specifically, when he talked about the government's investments in long-term care, what does the member have to say when this government allowed two long-term care facilities in Ontario to receive \$157 million in wage subsidies while paying out \$74 million in dividends?

Does the member not agree that his government could have done better for Canadians by ensuring that every penny invested by his government would end up in front-line workers' care and invariably in the health of the seniors in those long-term care homes?

Government Orders

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Speaker, the issue with long-term care homes is one that I think all governments are equally responsible for. We cannot ignore what has happened over the past decades. We have had a very broken system in Ontario and in other places.

As a response to the pandemic, we made sure that all Canadians were protected, but we did not necessarily earmark funds specifically for long-term care. Our initial support was basically a blanket amount of money for the provinces so that they could spend it on their priorities. Obviously, as the pandemic developed, we did target long-term care homes with some of the programs that I mentioned in my speech.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I am very concerned, as is our Green Party leader, Annamie Paul. I look forward to the day when the Speaker will chastise me for using her name out loud, which would mean that she finally has a seat in Parliament. However, Annamie Paul has been very clear that this is a senicide: we are seeing the equivalent of a genocide among seniors, as 70% of all the deaths in Canada from COVID so far have been in long-term care homes.

I am horrified, as I think we all are, to hear over the national news that in Ontario in long-term care homes, people with COVID-positive tests were kept in the same bedrooms as residents who did not have COVID. These are basic public health rules that we have known for decades, yet in the second wave of this pandemic we are seeing mismanagement in these homes under provincial jurisdiction.

I know it is a sensitive matter, but I am going to raise again the question my hon. colleague just asked the parliamentary secretary. I am asking this because I am not sure, but is it not time that we used the Emergencies Act, which allows a coordinated approach and emergency help, and at least apply it to long-term care homes specifically? We do not have to extend it to all aspects of the COVID response or vaccinations. We could apply it specifically to long-term care homes so that we would not have to beg Premier Doug Ford to send in the military. The federal government could do it.

• (1810)

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Speaker, I think that there are additional measures that can be taken without imposing the Emergencies Act. I believe that the province can do more, and as a federal government we are ready to do more. We have the military on standby and we have the Red Cross already deployed in many of the homes.

We have expended a great deal of funds to the provinces themselves. It is essential that we do everything we can to support those in long-term care homes. However, I do not necessarily think that imposing the Emergencies Act will solve that. I think there are deeper-rooted issues that may not be resolved overnight. What we need to do is mitigate the losses we have had.

It is not too late. There are still outbreaks taking place that we can intervene in, and that is why I am asking Premier Ford to call in the military.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Canada has been fighting COVID-19 for almost a year now and here in Toronto, where I am talking to you from, we are in an aggressive second wave. We are in the midst of shutdowns and kids are home from school for another few weeks at least. As we negotiate this, I want to take a moment to give a shout-out to essential workers and front-line workers in the community who have been working relentlessly and tirelessly to support our community. I give a shout-out to, for example, Michael Garron Hospital, which has been doing assessment centres to support the community, and also vaccine rollout, which relates to talking about long-term care homes. The hospital managed to vaccinate the residents and people working in the 22 long-term care homes in its district well in advance of the scheduled times. It completed that a few weeks ago, in fact. It did a really great job. People at South Riverdale Community Health Centre, as well, have been running assessment centres and working tirelessly.

It bears taking a moment to thank them for everything that they have done, because this has been—

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The member for Salaberry—Suroît on a point of order.

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ): Madam Speaker, the interpreter is telling me that she cannot do her job because she cannot hear properly.

[English]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I will ask the hon. member to maybe unplug her microphone and plug it back in. I do not know if that is what the problem is. There is an echo coming back, and I am not sure if that is because of the room the hon. member is in, or if it is just not plugged in properly. There is a problem with the interpreters being able to hear properly to be able to interpret.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: I apologize. I am going to try it again here, and then, if not, if you are okay with running across, I can try to connect somewhere else.

Is it working now?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Yes.

The hon. parliamentary secretary is resuming debate.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Madam Speaker, I apologize for the complications with interpretation.

I was giving shout-outs because it has been a hard time for everyone. I also wanted to recognize the stress that a lot of people are under and highlight the Wellness Together website, wellnesstogether.ca, as well as Kids Help Phone. Those are amazing resources that people should know about.

As we are talking about the fall economic statement and supports, I want to talk a bit about some of the existing supports, including the Applegrove Community Complex in my community. It has received federal funding. The staff are making calls and checking in on seniors. It is a really important time to be checking in on one another.

Today I would also like to focus on our local businesses. I talked with hundreds of local business owners in the community. They have been resilient and tough, but they need our support. One example of resilience is a local business, Looking Glass Adventures, which is an escape room. Imagine an escape room in the time of COVID. It has pivoted to offering its service online. Someone is inside, and they use a camera to show people around the place. It is amazing.

The most amazing thing is that not only has it been innovative, but it has been supported through federal programs, such as the wage subsidy and other programs. I want to highlight the importance of government programs working with communities and local businesses and providing the support that they need.

Our government cares. Since the beginning of the pandemic, our government has invested \$322 billion in direct measures to fight the virus and to help people. That includes \$85 billion in tax and custom duty payment deferrals. Throughout this pandemic, I have seen government programs to support businesses that have been responsive. The programs have been evolving to respond to what local businesses have been highlighting as issues as we go along. That has been very important as we have been addressing it all.

Federal programs have stabilized the economy, provided direct income support and bridged businesses through this difficult time. This will continue deep into 2021.

One program that I do not think has had enough attention supports live music. I love live music and our live music venues. There was \$500 million in emergency support to the creative industries and sports. This included a live music support fund, which funded venues that would not normally receive funding, including here in my home community, the Dora: a bar that has great live music. In Toronto, there are Lee's Palace, the Horseshoe Tavern and all sorts of amazing venues.

There is more to do. That is where the fall economic statement comes in. Tourism, hospitality and entertainment are vital parts of our economy. Our main streets, with the restaurants and cafes, are hubs. They are the employers in our community. Our neighbours own these businesses. Many of them have faced regular and deep shutdowns, especially where I live in Toronto. These pandemic restrictions have taken a toll.

In addition to the existing wage subsidy, the Canada emergency business account, and the rent support program, the fall economic statement brings more to continue the response. One program that I would like to mention is the highly affected sectors credit availability program, or HASCAP fund.

This is really for the hardest-hit businesses: tourism, hospitality, arts and entertainment. It will provide 100% government-guaranteed financing for the hardest-hit businesses. There will be low-in-

terest loans of up to \$1 million with terms of up to 10 years. The interest rates will be below market rates.

This is in addition to the regional relief and recovery fund, which supported more than 2,800 tourism-related businesses, and the Canada emergency rent subsidy, which combined with lockdown support can provide up to 90% of rent and commercial mortgage interest when public health orders cause a lockdown, such as is happening in Toronto.

● (1815)

The fall economic statement will also do more to support our local businesses. For the Canada emergency business account, the deadline to apply is going to be extended to March 31. That is important. When I talk with businesses that are navigating their different needs, they say having that extra flexibility to be able to apply is important.

Another important piece, which I hear about all the time, is the wage subsidy. This will be extended to June 2021, and the fall economic statement will increase the amount paid for the period to 75% until March. That was the kind of predictability that local businesses were asking for when I was talking with them, and it helps support jobs. I can see the jobs that are supported right here in my community.

In addition to the wage subsidy and the other programs, I want to highlight the Canada summer jobs program. It provides employment to young people, who are among those who have been the hardest hit economically during the pandemic.

The Canada summer jobs program will be increased by up to 40,000 jobs, which will help local organizations, local businesses and young people who are looking for work. Also, there is going to be an increase in funding for skills and training and employment support across the board, and there is specific funding for the youth employment strategies. This will pay off not only for local businesses and different organizations but also for young people across our communities.

When talking about young people, I also like to mention the Canada child benefit. One piece I have heard from people in my community who are the hardest hit is that the Canada child benefit has a tremendous impact. In fact, it has had a huge impact on child poverty rates across the board. This year, there will be a temporary increase of up to \$1,200 for families with children under the age of six, which is going to be an important piece.

Government Orders

The final piece is interesting for me, as I am a woman who has spent a lot of time balancing work and children. I had a hard time finding child care and managing to work from home while my kids were running around. I would feed them cookies while on telephone calls just to keep things going. I was really happy to see, in the fall economic statement, that a framework is being put in place for a national child care system, something that truly will make such a huge difference to so many families right across our country. It is an important place to start with in our fall economic statement as we come out of this pandemic. I have talked with a lot of people who have felt the strain, and I have seen how hard it is. In Toronto, child care is still expensive and is often really unattainable.

While the federal early learning and child care funding to date has helped to provide 40,000 affordable child care spots across our country, I can see the need for more. The fact that we are supporting an increased program that will help to build on that and create a universal child care system across our country is something I am really excited to see.

I am running out of time, but I am happy to answer questions because I am really excited about how we will build back from this pandemic and how we will continue to support our businesses and individuals.

• (1820)

[Translation]

Mrs. Louise Charbonneau (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague the parliamentary secretary for listing all of the programs offered by the government. However, I would like to know whether I am mistaken about this update.

Does this array of programs include any assistance for seniors who are also facing financial hardship during the pandemic? Could my colleague tell me if I misread?

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: I am glad we talked a little bit about seniors, because it is important. At the beginning of my speech, I talked about the programs that exist in my riding where there is funding to support organizations like Applegrove, which helps seniors in our community. It is not the only such organization, but it is the first example that came to mind. In particular, funds have been distributed to seniors throughout the year and during the summer.

Should there be more? I think so. In fact, I spoke with my colleague from Scarborough-Rouge Park about what we should be doing to help seniors properly. A lot of work has already been done, and I am very happy to be able to contribute.

[English]

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Madam Speaker, one of the realities I have seen in my region is that small businesses have had to be extremely innovative to meet the specific challenges. Some businesses have been able to use innovation to find stability during this time, and other small businesses have really struggled because of the nature of their work.

My question is really about fairness. One thing I know, which I think we have seen very clearly throughout this period of time, is that our tax laws simply need to be reformed and changed to fit the realities we are seeing. Right now, companies and businesses that use tax havens are taking advantage of government subsidies

specifically for the COVID pandemic. They are getting an extra benefit, while small businesses are struggling every day just to make ends meet.

Is there a commitment from the government to really look at re-forming tax laws to make sure there is more fairness for all businesses so that big businesses do not take advantage when small businesses need supports desperately?

• (1825)

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Madam Speaker, one of the first pieces to note when we talk about fairness on the basis of income taxes is that back in 2015 and 2016, we raised taxes on the top 1% while reducing them for the middle class. Many in the member's party did not support this, but it does increase fairness.

One piece in the fall economic statement that adds to fairness is about web giants paying the GST again. Many people have said they are in favour of this and want to see that kind of fairness, and it has been committed to.

There are steps toward greater tax fairness, and that is definitely something we should all be working toward.

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Madam Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to rise virtually on Bill C-14, which would enact certain components of the fall fiscal update. At the outset, I would like to inform the Speaker that I will be sharing my time with a member to be disclosed the next time I get up to speak.

The legislation has a number of great steps that could help Canadians during these difficult times. Enhancing the child care benefit was a recommendation, an idea, by the leader of the official opposition. It will no doubt help parents and women as they struggle through the additional child care challenges created by the pandemic. Granting a one-year break in interest on student loans will help students as they struggle to obtain part-time or full-time jobs during the pandemic.

I support these measures and I want to make that clear on the record. However, as important as the relief is, these are band-aids. They are painkillers meant to ease the pain, as they do not address the underlying illness. Canadians need a plan that allows them to return to work and really addresses the underlying illness and cures it once and for all.

The pandemic has brought millions of proud Canadians to their knees. We have seen millions of Canadians lose their employment and millions of business owners lose their livelihoods and even their life savings. The pandemic has cost thousands of lives. It has created substance abuse problems. It has exacerbated our opioid crisis and has created an epidemic of suicides across this country.

We need a plan that will expertly eliminate COVID-19 from our shores forever and make us prosperous once again, which we have always enjoyed in the past.

What are the steps to this plan? It starts with testing. Our plan must include rapid testing. Rapid testing needs to be ubiquitous across this land, not just in every province and every town, but on every street in Canada. Canadians need to have easily accessible COVID testing in their local pharmacies, their workplaces and our schools so we can identify immediately or shortly thereafter who has COVID, treat the sick and isolate them so that others do not fall ill to COVID-19. This would allow healthy Canadians to return to school and work and get on with the work of making Canada a prosperous nation once again.

Unfortunately, Bill C-14 will not make rapid testing ubiquitous in our nation. It will be leaving Canadians behind.

This pandemic will ultimately end when every Canadian who wants a vaccination has a vaccination. As our entire economic outlook depends on when Canadians are vaccinated, the acquisition of vaccines should be an absolute obsession for the government. It should be the first thing we think about when we wake up in the morning and the last thing when we go to bed.

However, the Prime Minister is letting us down. He did not even bother to call Pfizer until he was shamed into making calls by the

Government Orders

Ontario premier and the media. The Liberals will no doubt regale us again and again with their stories of unlimited vaccines, the most vaccines per capita. However, in life, and even more so in a pandemic, timing is everything. We need 37 million-plus Canadians vaccinated now, not 100 million Canadians vaccinated 20 years from now. That will do us no good. We are currently below many countries in terms of vaccination rates. Israel, the United Kingdom, the United States, Bahrain and the United Emirates have at least double our vaccination rate, and now we are going an entire week without any vaccinations when many countries are continuing to receive their vaccines.

Canada's vaccine program needs to be expedited. Canadians are literally dying because the Prime Minister has failed to deliver the vaccinations Canadians need for staying healthy. We need to return Canada to the freedom and prosperity that we have previously taken for granted.

• (1830)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member will have five minutes and 37 seconds the next time this matter is before the House.

[For continuation of proceedings, see part B]

CONTENTS

Monday, January 25, 2021

Business of the House

Mrs. Fortier	3365
Mr. Deltell	3366
(Motion agreed to)	3366

Suspension of Sitting

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 11:19 a.m.) ..	3366
---	------

Sitting Resumed

(The House resumed at 11:28 a.m.)	3366
---	------

Message from the Senate

La vice-présidente adjointe (Mme Alexandra Mendès)...	3366
---	------

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Criminal Code

Bill C-238. Second reading	3367
Ms. Michaud	3367
Ms. Blaney (North Island—Powell River)	3368
Ms. Findlay	3369
Mr. Virani	3371
Mr. Saroya	3372

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Economic Statement Implementation Act, 2020

Mrs. Schulte (for the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance)	3373
Bill C-14. Second reading	3373
Ms. Dzerowicz	3373
Mr. Gerretsen	3375
Mr. Julian	3375
Mr. Gerretsen	3375
Mrs. Jansen	3377
Mrs. Vignola	3377
Mr. Julian	3377
Mr. Poilievre	3377
Mr. Lefebvre	3380
Ms. Chabot	3381
Ms. Gazan	3381
Mr. Steinley	3381
Ms. Chabot	3382
Mr. Lefebvre	3383
Mr. Kurek	3383
Mr. Boulerice	3383
Mr. Blanchette-Joncas	3384
Mr. Julian	3385
Mr. Kurek	3386
Mr. Julian	3386

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Natural Resources

Mr. Sloan	3387
-----------------	------

Tamil Heritage Month

Mr. Sidhu (Brampton East)	3388
---------------------------------	------

York—Simcoe

Mr. Davidson	3388
--------------------	------

Whitby Caremongers

Mr. Turnbull	3388
--------------------	------

2016 Attack in Ouagadougou

Mrs. Vignola	3388
--------------------	------

Marie-Paule Kirouac

Mrs. Brière	3389
-------------------	------

Team Murphy

Mr. Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	3389
--	------

Conversion Therapy

Mr. Gerretsen	3389
---------------------	------

Burns Night

Ms. Duncan (Etobicoke North)	3389
------------------------------------	------

Natural Resources

Mr. Diotte	3389
------------------	------

Order of Canada

Mr. Casey	3390
-----------------	------

Small and Medium-sized Businesses

Mr. Gourde	3390
------------------	------

Canada-U.S. Relations

Mr. Chong	3390
-----------------	------

COVID-19 Emergency Response

Mr. Boulerice	3390
---------------------	------

Health

Ms. Dancho	3390
------------------	------

Government Appointments

Mr. Fortin	3391
------------------	------

Sudbury Women's Centre

Mr. Lefebvre	3391
--------------------	------

ORAL QUESTIONS

Natural Resources

Mr. O'Toole	3391
Mr. Trudeau	3391
Mr. O'Toole	3391
Mr. Trudeau	3392

Health

Mr. O'Toole	3392
Mr. Trudeau	3392
Mr. O'Toole	3392
Mr. Trudeau	3392
Mr. O'Toole	3392
Mr. Trudeau	3392
Mr. Blanchet	3392
Mr. Trudeau	3392
Mr. Blanchet	3392
Mr. Trudeau	3393
Mr. Singh	3393
Mr. Trudeau	3393
Mr. Singh	3393
Mr. Trudeau	3393
Ms. Rempel Garner	3393
Ms. Anand	3393
Ms. Rempel Garner	3393
Ms. Anand	3393
Ms. Rempel Garner	3394
Ms. Anand	3394
Mr. Paul-Hus	3394
Ms. Anand	3394
Mr. Paul-Hus	3394
Ms. Anand	3394
Mr. Paul-Hus	3394
Ms. Anand	3394

Air Transportation

Mr. Blanchet	3394
Mr. Alghabra	3395

Health

Mr. Barsalou-Duval	3395
Mr. Alghabra	3395
Mr. Barsalou-Duval	3395
Ms. Hajdu	3395
Mrs. Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	3395
Ms. Anand	3395
Mr. Brassard	3395
Ms. Anand	3396
Mr. Davidson	3396
Ms. Anand	3396
Mr. Davies	3396
Ms. Hajdu	3396
Ms. Gazan	3396
Ms. Hajdu	3396
Ms. Yip	3396
Ms. Hajdu	3396

Foreign Affairs

Mr. Chong	3397
Mr. Garneau	3397
Mr. Genuis	3397
Mr. Garneau	3397

Government Appointments

Ms. Gladu	3397
Mr. LeBlanc	3397

Mr. Deltell	3397
Mr. LeBlanc	3397

Health

Mrs. Vignola	3398
Ms. Anand	3398
Mrs. Vignola	3398
Ms. Anand	3398

Natural Resources

Mr. Vidal	3398
Mr. O'Regan	3398
Mr. Kurek	3398
Mr. O'Regan	3398
Mr. Calkins	3398
Mr. O'Regan	3399

Human Rights

Ms. Saks	3399
Mr. Garneau	3399

Small Business

Mr. Hallan	3399
Ms. Anand	3399
Mrs. McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	3399
Ms. Freeland	3399
Mr. G��n��reux	3399
Ms. Freeland	3399

Canadian Heritage

Mrs. Bessette	3400
Mr. Guilbeault	3400

Air Transportation

Mr. Bachrach	3400
Mr. Alghabra	3400

Housing

Mr. Manly	3400
Ms. Freeland	3400

Terrorist Designation of Proud Boys

Mr. Singh	3401
Motion	3401
(Motion agreed to)	3401

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**Committees of the House**

Health	
Mr. McKinnon	3401

Procedure and House Affairs

Ms. Sahota (Brampton North)	3401
Motion for concurrence	3401
(Motion agreed to)	3401

Government Response to Petitions

Mr. Lefebvre	3401
--------------------	------

Petitions**Human Rights**

Mr. Williamson	3401
Mr. Waugh	3401
Mr. Genuis	3402
Mr. Kelly	3402

Questions on the Order Paper

Mr. Lamoureux	3402
---------------------	------

Questions Passed as Orders for Returns

Mr. Lamoureux	3416
---------------------	------

Requests for Emergency Debate**Keystone XL Pipeline**

Mr. O'Toole	3426
-------------------	------

Speaker's Ruling

The Speaker	3427
-------------------	------

COVID-19 Vaccine

Mr. O'Toole	3427
Mr. Davies	3427

Speaker's Ruling

The Speaker	3428
-------------------	------

GOVERNMENT ORDERS**Economic Statement Implementation Act, 2020**

Bill C-14. Second reading	3428
Mr. Julian	3428
Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe	3429
Mr. Genuis	3429
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	3430
Mr. MacGregor	3430
Mr. Lamoureux	3431
Mr. Steinley	3433
Mr. Champoux	3433

Ms. Blaney (North Island—Powell River)	3434
Mr. Gerretsen	3434
Mr. Gerretsen	3434
Motion	3434
(Motion agreed to)	3435

Economic Statement Implementation Act, 2020

Bill C-14. Second reading	3435
Mr. Tochor	3435
Mr. Fraser	3436
Mr. Beaulieu	3436
Mr. Gerretsen	3436
Mr. Morantz	3437
Mr. Blois	3438
Mr. Sarai	3439
Mr. Steinley	3440
Mr. Blanchette-Joncas	3440
Mr. MacGregor	3440
Mr. Sorbara	3441
Mrs. Wagantall	3442
Mrs. Charbonneau	3443
Mr. Green	3443
Mrs. Jansen	3443
Mr. Blois	3445
Mr. MacGregor	3445
Mr. Gerretsen	3445
Mr. Cumming	3445
Mr. Chiu	3447
Mr. Gerretsen	3447
Mr. Bachrach	3448
Mr. Anandasangaree	3448
Mr. Green	3449
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	3450
Ms. Dabrusin	3450
Mrs. Charbonneau	3452
Ms. Blaney (North Island—Powell River)	3452
Mr. Lawrence	3452

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HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
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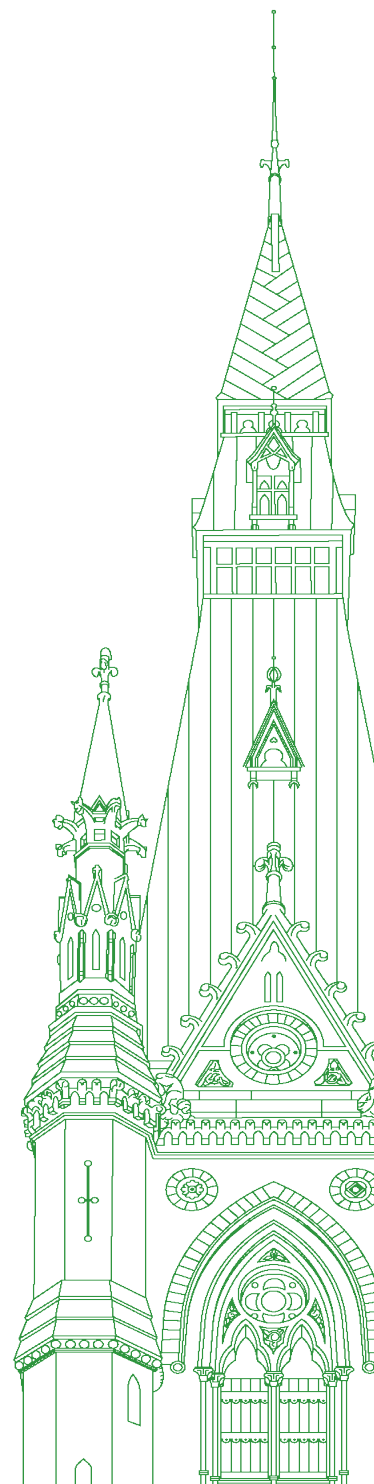
House of Commons Debates

Official Report
(Hansard)

Volume 150 No. 049
(Part B)

Monday, January 25, 2021

Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



CONTENTS

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

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, January 25, 2021

[Continuation of proceedings from part A]

EMERGENCY DEBATE

[English]

KEYSTONE XL PIPELINE

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The House will now proceed to the consideration of a motion to adjourn the House for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter requiring urgent consideration, namely the Keystone XL pipeline.

• (1830)

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC) moved:

That this House do now adjourn.

He said: Madam Speaker, I am privileged to be joined by my colleagues here tonight, those who we can have in the chamber. I will be dividing my time with the Conservative shadow minister for natural resources, the member of Parliament for Calgary Centre.

I am here today for thousands of Canadian oil and gas workers, thousands of Canadian families that are affected by the decision of the new U.S. administration, thousands of Canadians who work hard for their families. They are losing their jobs as a result of the first decision by the new U.S. President at a time when thousands have already lost their jobs in this pandemic.

I am here today for the five first nations in Alberta and Saskatchewan that are seeing their equity investment in the Keystone XL project evaporate because of the inaction of the government. These first nations are seeing their plans for their youth and citizens evaporate because of inaction by the government.

I am here for Canadians from coast to coast to coast who rely on our world-class energy sector to provide for their families, manufacturers, subcontractors, food providers, hard-working men and women who are being abandoned in the midst of a pandemic.

Canada has been dealt a serious blow with the cancellation of the Keystone XL pipeline extension. Thousands of Canadians have just been laid off. Thousands more are counting on even serious upset. Thousand of Canadians have just been laid off. They were counting on employment opportunities at a time when our country is already shaken to its foundations from an economic crisis related to COVID-19. They are now being laid off when Canada is already suffering from some of the highest rates of unemployment in the G20 as a result of the COVID-19 crisis. The province of Alberta is

already suffering from other misguided policies of the government, whether Bill C-69 or others, that have already had tens of thousands of people out of work, that have empty office towers in Calgary. These are Canadians, thousands of them, being totally forgotten and left behind by the government.

• (1835)

[Translation]

The cancellation of Keystone XL means that companies are going to leave Canada, but most of all it means the loss of thousands of jobs across the country. It means that families will have trouble making ends meet. They are the ones that I am talking to in this emergency debate.

[English]

We are in the middle of the greatest economic crisis we have faced in modern times as a nation. It is essential that we get every Canadian back to work in every sector, in every corner of the country and as quickly as we can.

The government is afraid to have a budget because it does not want to show Canadians the incredible economic challenges the country has. We need to pull together, the people in the west, in the east, in Quebec and Ontario. We must value the ability for us to work together to recover from this COVID-19 crisis and, therefore, we need our energy sector to be successful. That is why Conservatives have been pushing so hard for months for the government to develop a clear plan for our economic rebuilding and our vaccine rollout.

The government spent months on a CanSino Chinese vaccine debacle when it should have been preparing the regulatory process and negotiating with companies like Pfizer, Moderna and others to manufacture in Canada or to secure a stable supply. This week, with thousands of cases daily across the country, Canada is one of the few countries in the world to receive zero vaccines.

Points of Order

However, if there is one area that this decision leads to a catastrophic failure of confidence, it is the disdainful way that the Prime Minister has attacked our energy industry for the past five years, beginning with his first trip abroad when the Prime Minister of Canada mocked an entire sector of our economy, a sector that has provided so much to Canadians, to our way of life, to our prosperity. He said that the last prime minister talked about resources. He said that Canada was more than resources, that we were resourceful now, with one word, swiping away tens of thousands of jobs, thousands of examples of innovation, productivity and technology that is world-leading, a prime minister who is not proud of our industries because he does not understand them.

In fact, this is the second time the Prime Minister has failed to make the case for Keystone XL under two separate U.S. administrations. Every time the Liberal government has a chance to promote Canadian energy, it sides with activists over science. It sides with foreign protestors over first nations that are invested in the project. It sides with trendy slogans over smart policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Hard-working Canadians in all corners of the country deserve better than a prime minister who does not understand them let alone one who looks down on them, as the Prime Minister has on many occasions. We need the federal government, particularly now in a crisis, to stand up for workers in every corner of the country. Jobs for Canadians are the only way we will secure our future and rebuild our economy, which has been ravaged by this pandemic. The Liberal government should have done more for our world-class energy sector than its record of indifference and incompetence.

For Canadians who are watching this debate, particularly in Alberta and Saskatchewan, the Prime Minister has once again let them down.

[*Translation*]

When we have a government that attacks the natural resources industry, we have a government that is hurting all Canadians. Canadians across the country all benefit from spinoffs from the natural resources industry. Those spinoffs help us to pay for our hospitals, our universities and the protection of our environment.

The energy sector is also the biggest partner in the development of the regions of Canada when it works with first nations. Five first nations placed their hopes in the Keystone XL project. Canadians deserve better.

• (1840)

[*English*]

Canada needs a prime minister who will respect hard-working Canadian families and work hard to secure opportunities for all of them. We deserve a prime minister who understands hard work and what it means to get his or her hands dirty to provide for his or her family. We deserve a prime minister who will champion Canadian energy as the most ethical, environmentally conscious and most socially responsible in the world. The world is looking for investments with strong environmental and social governance, or ESG. Canadian resources offer ESGI, environmental and social governance with indigenous partnerships and participation. Canadians

should be immensely proud of that. The Liberals' failure on Keystone will be felt in our country for years to come.

Let us add to the list: job-killing policies like Bill C-69, the carbon tax, tanker bans, illegal rail blockades and endless regulations. That has led to \$160 billion of capital leaving Canada. Those investments mean jobs. How can we convince the world to invest in Canada when the government is not even proud of what we do in Canada?

Instead of reimagining the economy, as the Prime Minister wants to do in the middle of a pandemic, he should stop reimagining millions of Canadians without jobs, because that is what his policies are leading to. Indigenous communities on both sides of the border were planning their futures based on projects like this. Chief Alvin Francis said that this would "create intergenerational jobs and benefits."

I will end as I started. Tonight the Conservatives are here for working families from coast to coast to coast that need opportunities, inspiration and hope that we can have jobs and get our country moving.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

VISUAL DISPLAYS

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. It is disappointing that the Leader of the Opposition is not wearing a mask, but I have a concern about props being used.

Some hon. member: Debate.

Mr. Chris Bittle: Madam Speaker, if I can finish my point of order, we would not let members wear buttons emblazon with a political slogan, so the masks—

Some hon. members: Debate.

Mr. Chris Bittle: Madam Speaker, I am being heckled in the—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member has the floor. It is not a point of debate from what I can gather. I will let the member finish.

Mr. Chris Bittle: Madam Speaker, the political messages on the masks are a prop. We would not permit that in the House Commons if they were buttons or stickers, so we should not permit them on face masks.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. parliamentary secretary is correct that we do not allow for props in the House. If there are messages on the masks, they are considered a prop. I would ask members who are wearing masks that have sayings on them promoting a specific item that they not use those in the House.

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I challenge that view because members often wear buttons that send a certain message here in the House. Members on both sides of the House do it all the time, and to my knowledge, it has never been the subject of debate before.

I would like you to review your position.

[English]

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I am surprised that any member in this place would dispute your ruling. It is clear as a bell and it has been the honoured procedure of this place for a very long time. Buttons and slogans are not allowed on any part of our apparel or on any part of a prop during debate.

• (1845)

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I know some members have worn “I love oil sands” buttons. Some members have stuff on their laptops and material all over it. I would ask you to take a few minutes to see if this is an actual point of order. I have seen many colleagues wear buttons and pins to celebrate things in their ridings. Therefore, I would say that this would not be a point well taken.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I really appreciate the points of orders and comments that have been made. I want to indicate that in the past there have been issues raised with buttons. Whether they say “oil sands” or not, I can tell members that those buttons have been raised and the hon. members have been asked to remove those buttons. In other instances, there have been opportunities for ribbons or different things to be used to mark specific days and events.

I am going to review the comments that have been made again. In the meantime, I would ask that members not wear anything that can be seen as a prop, especially when we are debating that specific issue.

I will discuss this further with the Speaker as well and we will come back to the House on this matter.

KEYSTONE XL PIPELINE

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the intervention by the Leader of the Opposition today.

I want to address something. I realize this is on Keystone specifically, but the member was talking about unemployment rates at the beginning of his remarks and how Canada's unemployment rate is so high. It is true that we have the second highest unemployment rate in the G7. One thing the Conservatives do not talk about, and I have heard this said a number of times today, is where we are with respect to deaths per million people, namely that we are rated second best in the G7 countries. When we compare ourselves with a place like the U.S., just to the south of us, its unemployment rate is

S. O. 52

2 percentage points lower than ours, but its death rate per million people is 2.5 times ours. This government took strong, decisive action to keep and encourage people to stay at home to save lives.

Would the Leader of the Opposition not agree with me that a small temporary increase in unemployment is a good return on saving hundreds of thousands of lives.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Madam Speaker, I find it interesting that the Liberal government always compares itself with the worst student in the class rather than with countries that are doing far better. It is very easy for the member to compare us with the United States, which has had terrible results with the spread of COVID. I would rather that Canada strive to be the best. It is also why we are down in the twenties in terms of vaccinations per capita.

The government always seems to want to compare itself with the worst. The Conservatives will always strive to make sure that Canada is compared with and exceeding the best, because that should be the approach we take to everything.

While we have worked with the government to mitigate the unemployment caused by this crisis, the largest part of our high unemployment rate was caused by a slow and confused wage subsidy that we told the government was insufficient the moment it was announced.

On Keystone XL, the Prime Minister has mailed it in twice on this project and killing thousands of jobs in our country at a time when every job is critical to securing our future.

We need to stop dividing Canadians based on where they live or what industry they work in. We need to pull together, get this country back on its feet, dust it off, get pipelines built and get the country moving. It is about time the member started speaking up and telling his Prime Minister to stop dividing Canadians based on where they live or work.

• (1850)

[Translation]

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ): Madam Speaker, the Bloc Québécois stands in solidarity with Alberta's communities, workers and families who are now paying the price for the Alberta premier's decision to ignore the obvious risks of the Keystone XL project and invest \$1.5 billion of Albertan taxpayers' money in the project.

S. O. 52

Does the Leader of the Opposition not think it would be better, especially during a pandemic, to support Alberta in its economic recovery by providing resources and public investments? Would some more strategic, environmentally friendly, sustainable projects not help Alberta get back on its feet? Is this not a good opportunity to provide support and financial assistance to help Alberta, Albertan workers and Albertan families move towards an essential energy transition?

Hon. Erin O'Toole: Madam Speaker, the Bloc Québécois needs to respect the opportunities that the natural resources sector offers indigenous peoples across the country, including opportunities for economic reconciliation. Five first nations are partners in the Keystone XL project, which is an example of reconciliation for the first nations. I am proud of this fact, and it is very important in Quebec, in the north and in the west.

I am also proud of our natural resources, the mines in Abitibi, the energy sector in the west, as well as the softwood lumber industry in Quebec and in the west. We have the strictest environmental standards in the world, and we are committed to the first nations. We are the only party that supports an economic recovery that benefits all Canadians, and that is why we are the only party ready to govern.

[English]

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am thankful on behalf of all people in the western Canadian resource industry, my constituents and all Canadians of good faith who still believe that this House is a place where debates on this country's most important matters should be held openly. I am also honoured to be here speaking among a handful of my colleagues tonight while representing the deep desire of so many of our colleagues across Canada who wanted to speak this evening to this gut-wrenching decision. We need to address here the rationale, the repercussions and the remedial options as a country going forward.

Keystone XL, until last week, was a pipeline that has been in the works for over 12 years, a pipeline that would have connected one of Canada's great and valuable world-class resources directly with the market that needs this specific resource more than anything else, a pipeline that, like all infrastructure, got better in design with time. The version being built now is designed to be carbon neutral in its operation, a boon to the renewable energy industry. It is a pipeline that would have provided increased energy security to North America in the clouds of evermore uncertainty in the political landscape, a pipeline providing valuable jobs and benefits to thousands of workers, indigenous organizations and land owners in two countries, a pipeline built upon the goodwill developed between two of the world's advanced democracies in delivering sound outcomes for the health of both our nations' citizens for decades now.

Now Keystone XL is a symbol of the victory of loud, self-interested, regressive voices overruling sound regulation and environmental science, a symbol of empty political rhetoric and repetitive misinformation triumphing over an actually better environmental outcome, a symbol that beneficial work undertaken and billions of dollars in good faith can be overruled by fiat, without consequence. Most of all, for Canadians it is a symbol of what happens when our elected federal politicians sit on their hands and fail to advocate for

Canada's proactive solutions for environmental advancement, indigenous participation in our economies and building on our competitive strengths.

Let us assess the very real negative outcomes that are being felt today. Let us remember the workers and their families, the ones who trained and built careers focused on adding value and getting world-class resources to market. Let us remember that, in the end, the business we are in, as politicians, is about looking after people. In that respect, the current government needs to do better.

With this stroke of a pen, thousands of well-trained, middle-class Canadians will have worse outcomes in their lives. Let us think about those men and women for a moment now and how their lives have changed suddenly and, in their view, nonsensically. Do they think the current government is working for them? The failure here is the lack of concerted advocacy by the government on issues that matter to these workers and the technologically and environmentally advanced solutions they provide.

Where was the government while the option of cancelling this important project was advanced and discussed?

Nine months ago, the prospect of this cancellation became very real. Two months ago, the possibility was crystal clear. We have seen the current government act on files when it felt it should be active. We have seen a fulsome reaction to objectionable tariffs against our Canadian aluminum and steel industries. We have seen the leadership of the current government in taking actions above and beyond accepted democratic norms to save jobs in one engineering company. Last week, the workers and indigenous stakeholders in this project got the benefit of a line item in a phone call between our Prime Minister and a new American president. The dichotomy is quite clear.

In my previous work, decisions such as this presented an opportunity to assess winners and losers, usually presenting a path forward. Much has been lost here.

I have spoken about the workers. I have spoken about indigenous reconciliation. Keystone XL had equity representation from indigenous participants, who would have made great steps forward on a path to economic reconciliation. I have spoken about the energy security and the environmental advances that have been thwarted. I have spoken about the billions of dollars and years of planning and building that will leave a piece of world-class infrastructure half finished.

• (1855)

I have not spoken enough about the Canada-U.S. bilateral relationship, but that is a huge casualty in this decision. Last year, we watched this government accept that it had badly negotiated a renewed North American free trade agreement. Real negotiators saw through our team's virtue signalling and inability to solve difficult issues. I listened as our lead minister on the file stated that her greatest success was removing the energy-sharing agreement between the previous text of NAFTA. I knew then that this government did not understand the nature of the trade between our two countries.

The U.S. government's decision on Keystone XL shows that Canada's energy trade with our dominant energy trading partner is expendable. That is not comfort. That is real risk.

Canada-U.S. trade was solidified three decades ago by leaders on both sides who understood how strong we were together. This government alludes to a special relationship with the incoming U.S. administration. If so, it needs to be utilized. The initial results are discouraging. If they are not solving big issues together as two leading democracies that are also interdependent should be, clearly something has been lost.

The outcome here is severe for our country. We have an economy that will not grow as a result of what has happened here nearly as much as it should. Our balance of trade will suffer significantly. In 2019, the number was \$16 billion that we took because of the differential we received on our main resource that we export. Our balance of trade siphoning off Canadian value to other countries is huge and is going to continue to grow.

Jobs are being exported from Canada because of these decisions. Work here is being cancelled. Workers here are being laid off. All of this deserves so much more action than an indifferent shrug from this Prime Minister.

* * *

• (1900)

POINTS OF ORDER

VISUAL DISPLAYS—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Before I go to questions and comments, I want to come back to the point of order that was raised and my decision. I will refer members to chapter 13 of the *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, which, on page 617, says:

Speakers have consistently ruled that visual displays or demonstrations of any kind used by Members to illustrate their remarks or emphasize their positions are out of order. Similarly, props of any kind have always been found to be unacceptable in the Chamber.

I would ask members to please be very collaborative with the decision I have just indicated. I know that it is a time when we are wearing masks to protect ourselves and others, but members are to ensure that the messaging on them is not being used to put a point across.

S. O. 52

[Translation]

KEYSTONE XL PIPELINE

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague.

My colleague and I are on the Standing Committee on Natural Resources, which recently devoted six meetings to the forestry industry. I wonder if what is happening with Keystone XL is an opportunity to think about Alberta's transition away from fossil fuels.

Does my colleague agree with me that there should be a Canadian strategy to diversify Alberta's economy rather than sticking with fossil fuels, our old standards?

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from the Bloc Québécois for his question.

In my opinion, this is a provincial jurisdiction.

[English]

The issue with provincial jurisdiction in diversifying the economy is something that the Canadian government should probably not tread on in this case, and I am certain my colleague in the Bloc Québécois would respect that as well.

I think the other point we want to make here, when we talk about transitioning, is how diversified the actual Alberta economy is. Energy is going to continue to be a part of our world for decades to come, and a good part of that energy will continue to come, as it has continuously here, according to all international organizations, from fossil fuels. Every indication we have is that the Alberta oil output will continue to increase. Finding a market is going to be the main problem, otherwise we will be beholden in the future to foreign sources of oil in the world. This oil is better economically, and this oil is better environmentally. This is the transition we are moving toward with the technology.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, I remain consistently amazed at how Conservatives seem to be completely oblivious to where we are in the world at present, with regard to climate change and the looming climate disaster that is heading our way. We quite literally cannot continue to go the way we are going for decades and decades, but I want to concentrate my remarks on what the Conservatives are proposing to do. This was not exactly a secret. The Biden administration made clear what its decision would be with Keystone XL.

Are the Conservatives proposing to levy trade sanctions to sue the new administration? In my opinion, that would be just fantastic for Canada-U.S. relations with the new administration. I just want to get clear what the Conservatives are trying to do with the new U.S. administration.

S. O. 52

• (1905)

Mr. Greg McLean: Madam Speaker, yes, we are very focused on how we actually decarbonize the economy, including in Alberta in the energy sector. I think all efforts to advance that cause are being ignored by my colleague in the other party. I really would hope he pays attention to all the progress that is being made in industries across Canada in addressing decarbonization, and looking at how that actually affects the world.

In this project, members can take a look at the exactly 20% reduction in CO₂ emissions from the oil going toward the gulf refineries, as opposed to the other oil that would be refined in that location. We are actually much further ahead with a zero-CO₂-emission transportation network, taking it from one of the world's greatest resources, the Alberta oil sands, down to the market that processes it most efficiently, and displacing foreign oil that has a much heavier environmental footprint.

We are losing in this environmentally. Canada is losing economically, and North America is losing from an energy security perspective.

Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am speaking from the island of Newfoundland, the ancestral homeland of the Mi'kmaq and Beothuk, one of Canada's three oil-producing provinces. This is an important debate. It is as important as our oil and gas workers are to the Canadian economy. It is as important as the industry is to the Canadian economy.

I want to speak on the record and say that we are disappointed in this decision. We are not happy with this news. There are thousands of workers and their families who will be impacted by this.

This is our biggest industry. It is our number one export. We are the fourth-largest producers of oil and gas in the world, and we are good at it. This is not just an Alberta issue or a Saskatchewan issue. This is a Canadian issue.

The United States is the single largest customer of Canada's biggest export. We have over \$100 billion in cross-border energy trade with them. We are their biggest supplier, with 23% of crude consumed in the U.S. coming from Canada. We contribute to American energy security and economic competitiveness, and that supports thousands of jobs on both sides of the border.

The U.S. will still need Canadian heavy crude. That does not change with President Biden's decision. The U.S. Midwest and Rocky Mountain regions source crude nearly exclusively from Canada, and Canadian crude represents approximately 70% of the feed stock to refineries in those regions. In October 2020, Canada sent approximately 2.3 million barrels per day to the United States.

This relationship is vital to both countries. We made a strong argument for this project at every level and at every chance we could, from Ambassador Hillman to the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister advocated for this project long before he was Prime Minister. Four years ago, in Houston, the Prime Minister said that nothing is more essential to the U.S. economy than access to a secure, reliable source of energy, and Canada is that source. It was true then, and it remains true today.

The Prime Minister brought it up in his very first conversation with the president-elect in November and again just on Friday. He expressed our disappointment with the decision directly with the President. Every week in the fall of 2020, every single week, I was on the phone with Alberta's energy minister and the former member for Edmonton—Leduc James Rajotte to discuss how we could get this project done. We took a team Canada approach. We stood shoulder to shoulder with the Government of Alberta in making the case.

I ask members to not take it just from me, but to also listen to what Premier Kenney said. He said that he was very happy that the federal foreign affairs minister had said that Keystone XL was at the top of the U.S. agenda. He said that he was very happy with the strong advocacy by Canada's ambassador to the United States.

What now? Where do we go from here? Do we, like some are suggesting, start a trade war with our closest ally and largest trading partner, the single largest customer for Canadian crude?

I have not yet heard a single argument that would convince me that a trade war is in the best interests of our oil and gas workers. We have a responsibility to Albertans to safeguard our relationship with the single largest customer for Canadian crude. There is a difference between illegal tariffs on existing products and the cancellation of a permit for a project that is not yet operational. We will not jeopardize the more than \$100 billion in energy products that we export to the United States every year.

We got this relationship right with an unpredictable presidential administration for the past four years. We will get it right with the predictable one for the next four years, to the benefit of workers in Alberta, Saskatchewan and right across Canada. We will not take any lesson from the Conservatives on this, who can share nothing but a legacy of failure from 2006 until 2015. For nearly a decade there was a failure to safeguard our most important trading relationship, a failure to get major projects built, and a failure to even have a strategy. All the Conservatives did was throw public insults and negotiate in the media. They did nothing to support the thousands of energy workers in this country, except beat their chests.

Conservatives may not agree, but it is true. We could hear it from former Progressive Conservative prime minister of Canada Joe Clark, who said, "One of the real problems that I think lingers over [Keystone XL] is, before the pipeline question arose, the [Harper] Government...deliberately went out of his way to be seen as an adversary of environmentalists." The Conservative record of inaction, and their record of open hostility on the environment, helped doom this project.

There are also some in this House who think this decision is good news. In fact, there are some in this House who are jumping up and down with joy in this decision. That shocks me. They could not be more wrong. Their lack of concern for the thousands of workers and their families that this decision impacts is shocking.

● (1910)

Other parties in the House claim to be the parties of workers. Keystone XL would have created thousands of good-paying union jobs on both sides of the border. I invite my colleagues on the other side who claim to stand for workers to join me in expressing disappointment with the President's decision. Join me in lamenting the loss of good union jobs in Alberta and Saskatchewan. Join me in having the backs of oil and gas workers. I know where I stand on this side of the House.

What we will do is have our workers' backs. We will stand up and support our oil and gas workers, as I am doing today and just as we have done since 2015. Let us talk TMX. We approved it. We bought it. We are building it. It has already created over 7,000 jobs. We approved NOVA Gas and NGTL 2021. Thousands more jobs were created in Alberta. We approved the Line 3 pipeline. Another 7,000 jobs were created. There was also \$1.7 billion to Alberta, Saskatchewan and B.C. to clean up abandoned and inactive wells, reducing emissions and keeping oil and gas workers on the job. There was \$320 million to support workers and lower emissions in the Newfoundland offshore. Every step of the way, we are laser focused on jobs and on workers.

In the toughest of times when the sector was hit with a double whammy of a global price war and a global pandemic, we had its back with the wage subsidy. That single measure kept more than 500,000 workers in their jobs during the pandemic in Alberta alone. Saskatchewan kept 32,000 workers. These are men and women who found a way to get oil out of sand. That is a remarkable thing. We need the same ingenuity, hard work and determination that our oil and gas workers show every day in our mission to lower emissions and maintain a growing and prosperous economy in this country that leaves no one behind.

I am proud of those workers. We need them now more than ever. We have a tremendous opportunity to work with an administration that is not only aligned with our priorities on climate and clean growth at the federal level, but is also very much aligned with the priorities of the governments of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Newfoundland and Labrador, where I am proud to say net-zero legislation recently passed unanimously.

Lowering our emissions with an aim of getting to net zero by 2050 is not a barrier to investment in our energy sector. It is a competitive necessity because the markets are changing. We can see that investors are making clear choices. They are putting their money into countries that are taking action on climate change seriously, and they are divesting from those that in their view are not doing enough.

The reality is that the industry knows this. It understands the direction that the markets are moving. It is why the Keystone XL of 2021 is not the same as the Keystone XL of 2015. When a company like TC Energy has the courage to go back to the drawing board and find ways to make its project greener, to make it net zero, to

S. O. 52

power pump stations with renewable energy, that sends a clear message. It is about skating to where the puck is going.

Canadian oil and gas is already being produced under some of the most stringent environmental and climate policy frameworks in the world, and Canadian oil and gas companies are leading the way. Husky, Cenovus, CNRL, Suncor and Shell are just a few of the companies that see net zero as part of their future and a key part of their economic competitiveness.

The Canadian petroleum sector is by far our country's largest investor in clean tech, routinely accounting for more than 70% of all private-sector investment in clean tech: more than \$1 billion every year. BMO Capital Markets tells us that Canada's oil and gas sector is already leading the world in ESG performance. This is a finding that has been supported by studies at Yale and the World Bank. All of this matters because, by all accounts, Canadian oil and gas will continue to be a part of the world's energy mix for some time yet. None of that would have been possible without the hard work that we have done when it comes to reconciliation, diversity, inclusion and reaching our environmental targets.

● (1915)

[*Translation*]

We can be proud of Canadian energy. We are redoubling our efforts to achieve our common goal: a net-zero economy by 2050, a thriving Canada-wide economy and an inclusive, clean energy future. The world is watching, and Canada will keep its promises.

[*English*]

We can make a case for Canadian energy as we double down on our common mission of a net-zero economy by 2050, a national economy that continues to grow and a clean energy future that leaves no one behind.

The world is watching and Canada will lead. I believe that.

S. O. 52

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Madam Speaker, I listened to the minister's remarks and they bring me back to the day after President Biden appeared to have been elected. The Electoral College had not yet met, but it was evident that President Biden was going to be the next president of the United States. We clearly knew, from the platform he had put forward during the election campaign, that he would cancel Keystone XL on day one. Conservatives brought forward a request for an emergency debate at that time and it was rejected. Today, it was accepted. However, in the meantime, the Liberals had an opportunity, knowing what was probably about to happen, to do something about it and make some efforts. It really appears as though nothing happened in that whole period of time.

I would ask the minister what the government did in that period of time to try to avoid this happening, and to advocate for Keystone XL? The answer seems to be that it did nothing. If the answer is not that it did nothing, it surely failed at whatever it tried to do and then kept it secret from Canadians.

What did the government do to advocate on behalf of this project and the jobs it creates for Canadians? It seems like nothing, and if it is not nothing, then the government is certainly a failure.

Which one is it? Is it nothing, or did it fail?

Hon. Seamus O'Regan: Madam Speaker, I am not sure if the hon. member heard me. We worked hand in glove with the Government of Alberta. We worked with Minister Savage, the energy minister for Alberta, and the Alberta government's special representative in Washington, James Rajotte, who is a former member of this House. We worked hand in glove with our ambassador on the ground. We left no stone unturned. We did the best to make what we thought was an excellent argument. Keystone XL was a good project. We are proud to have represented it. TC Energy made every effort to change this project fundamentally.

As the Prime Minister said to us, the Keystone project of 2015 was very different from the Keystone project of 2020-21. To reach net-zero operations by making sure that pumping stations had solar or wind power, making sure that we worked with unions on both sides of the border, and making sure that we worked with indigenous communities on both sides of the border, improved that project demonstrably. We made a solid case. The President of the United States kept his commitment and made his decision in very short order after his inauguration, but we believe we have a powerful future together and for the sake of our workers, we will see it through.

• (1920)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank the minister for his speech, which reminded me of the time he appeared before the Standing Committee on Natural Resources and told us his top priority was Keystone XL. I have to admit that surprised me.

I sincerely believe that something has gone awry in Canada around fossil fuel funding, so I would like to ask the minister the same question I asked him then. Does he not think it would be better to look at transitioning away from fossil fuels and toward clean

energy than to dump way too much money into fossil fuels yet again?

[*English*]

Hon. Seamus O'Regan: Madam Speaker, I will answer in the same way that I answered in committee. We are singularly focused on lowering emissions wherever and whenever we find them. A predominant amount of our emissions does come from the energy sector, downstream and upstream, so that is where we are concentrating a significant amount of our effort. We will do whatever it takes to lower emissions wherever we find them.

Regarding the oil and gas industry and the oil sands, in particular, last Monday Minister Savage and I met with the CEOs of the majors in the oil sands on their commitment, in a very thorough plan that we are going through with them, to reach net zero by 2050. This is about lowering emissions.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, the minister spoke time and time again in his speech about getting to net zero. The Canada energy regulator under his ministry put out a report before Christmas that provided a projection of where Canadian oil production needed to go, and where pipeline capacity needed to go, under a scenario where we did something about climate action. It was not a scenario where we would meet net zero, but it was a scenario on climate action.

Under that scenario, which they called the evolving scenario, it was clear that we only needed one of the three big expansion pipelines that are on the books now: Line 3, Keystone and the Trans Mountain expansion. We only need one of those three to meet any possible capacity issues for the future. However, it seems that the sky is falling because Keystone XL would not be needed if Line 3 comes online at the end of this year. We would not need it. We would not need Trans Mountain. We would not need further oil-by-rail capacity.

Why are we getting so exercised about this project when his own department says we will not need it?

Hon. Seamus O'Regan: Madam Speaker, one of the reasons we are getting so exercised about this issue is because thousands of people are unemployed as a result of it, or could be. It affects thousands of workers in this country. A lot more of them, frankly, are worried. We have a duty in the House to speak to this.

I would also make the argument that while we may own the pipeline that is heading west in TMX, we do not own the pipeline that is heading south with KXL in this case. The market has an important role here. It is the leading role in determining how investment decisions should be made, but it is our government's duty to set the parameters on that and to incent what we believe to be extraordinarily important goals, namely net-zero emissions by 2050. That is the goal we have set for ourselves, and many of our friends, colleagues and competitors around the world have also set that goal for themselves. This is an existential crisis, there is no question. It is also an economic one for many people in this country who feel that they may be left behind. We cannot allow that to happen.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, with the minister's words, "This is an existential crisis" ringing in my ears, I will remind the minister that the only existential crisis being debated tonight is the threat of global warming becoming a runaway, self-accelerating and unstoppable threat to our children's future.

I would also remind him that it is extremely unfair to say to those who think this was a good and right decision that we are somehow joyous and not caring about workers losing their jobs. I would no more say that people who are supporting the oil sands are deliberately and consciously threatening my grandchildren's future than I would say it was right to be celebrating as though it does not matter when people suffer an immediate downturn in their economic prospects. We must bring in a just transition act. We must ensure that workers have transferable skills, which they do. They are very resourceful. They are very willing and able to move to other industries.

I think I may be the only member in this place who actually read the entire State Department environmental impact statement on the Keystone Pipeline when it was delivered to former secretary of state John Kerry. Nothing about the project has changed in the fundamentals of why the Obama administration turned it down. We know the Trump administration approved it against all the evidence, and I suggest to my Conservative friends if they really wanted our current Prime Minister to help protect Keystone, the only thing he could have done was go to the United States to campaign for Donald Trump, which is something I am sure—

• (1925)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I have to allow the minister to respond.

The hon. minister, please.

Hon. Seamus O'Regan: Madam Speaker, we are singularly focused on those workers because they are the ones who built this industry and the ones who will lower emissions. Ensuring they are part of the solution is extraordinarily important. In fact, we will not be able to reach net zero without these men and women.

Making sure they are okay is exactly what we attempted to do during the pandemic with the \$1.7 billion to look after orphaned and inactive wells. Not only is that the right thing to do environmentally, but it will also make sure that these talented and experienced men and women are kept in the industry and kept in play as we look to the next few months and years, and in fact right now as

we attempt to lower emissions in this country and achieve net zero by 2050. These are the men and women who will do it.

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would perhaps like to begin by saying that I really feel for Alberta's workers. I really feel for them because we went through basically the same thing in the forestry sector that they are going through right now.

The pulp and paper industry completely fell apart in the 1990s. In the forestry sector, trade wars wiped out nearly half the harvesting community's major players. The crisis caused a great deal of distress among the workers in Quebec.

When I was young, my father taught me that it is always best to tell the truth. However, since being elected to the House in October 2019, I have been under the impression, considering the Liberal and Conservative one-upmanship, that no one wants to tell Albertans the truth. It is a hard truth, but simple to understand. Because of climate change, most large investment funds are moving away from fossil fuels. Many countries are turning away from fossil fuels, seeking a more carbon-neutral economy and new green energy technologies. I think we need to be honest with Albertans and tell them frankly that this industry is, in the medium to short term, doomed to failure.

I have seen many such failures since coming to the House. I saw it with Teck Frontier, when the Liberals and Conservatives engaged in mutual finger-pointing. One blamed the other for not taking action. The Liberals said that the Conservatives had done no better when they were in power. Each blamed the other instead of accepting reality and responding in the best way possible: planning the transition for Albertans.

The same thing happened with Keystone XL. In 2015, the Obama administration said it would not go ahead with the project. Donald Trump, the epitome of the irrational political actor, came to power, and he wanted to see the project through. Albertans ignored signals from an irrational political leader and decided it was a good idea to go ahead. It was \$1.5 billion, and I think that decision was very—

• (1930)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Order.

The hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean on a point of order.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I believe that we did not clearly hear my colleague say that he would be sharing his time with the member for Repentigny. I believe that it was not clear.

Mr. Mario Simard: Madam Speaker, I thank my loyal listener, the member from Lac-Saint-Jean, for reminding me that I am sharing my time with the delightful member for Repentigny.

S. O. 52

I believe that the Alberta government was very misguided to invest \$1.5 billion in a project that may have been doomed to failure. In my opinion, it created a frenzy of support for the fossil fuel sector that many Canadian politicians joined because it seemed like a winning political move in the west. We may occasionally win by lying to people, but it never pays off in the end.

I want to point out that I really empathize with Alberta's workers. I also want to mention how shocked I was when I arrived in the House of Commons in October and heard many Conservative colleagues repeatedly shout, "Build the pipeline!" This call to build pipelines was being repeated constantly, and I want to remind members that this was at a time when Canada was divided. We were being told that there were deep divisions between the west and the east, and the east did not understand that the west wanted to sell its oil. Having followed what happened to the forestry industry very closely, I have to say that this bothered me, since I have extensively studied a phenomenon known as Dutch disease.

In the early 2000s, the Quebec economy was completely destabilized by the Canadian oil economy. The rising dollar meant that Quebec's manufacturing sector was no longer competitive. If I am not mistaken, 55,000 jobs were lost in Quebec from 2002 to 2007. The Quebec economy very much paid the price for the oil industry.

The story I keep hearing, that the generous equalization payments made possible by Alberta oil have helped fund social programs, would make the average Quebec nationalist's hair stand on end. In fact, the hon. member for Malpeque has told me a few times that Canadian taxpayers are not Quebecers' ATM card, which is along the same lines.

There are many things about the oil industry that might be irritating to the average Quebecer and cause grievances, but let us not focus on that too much. I believe we should instead put our heads together and find a solution for Alberta's economic transition.

There is a solution. The Standing Committee on Natural Resources held six meetings on the forestry industry, where we heard from many stakeholders who spoke about the bioeconomy. The bioeconomy involves recovering forestry and agricultural waste to replace almost all petrochemical products. Stéphanie Renou from FP Innovations spoke about a wonderful opportunity for Albertan expertise, since Alberta already has a workforce of chemical engineers. What a wonderful opportunity for these people to get involved in the energy transition, be part of a new niche and develop an economy that will no longer rely solely on fossil materials.

Unfortunately, Canada's strategy in that regard is non-existent. We all know, and many stakeholders confirmed, that the transition to the bioeconomy requires a lot of capital. Companies cannot make that transition alone. A national strategy is needed. Canada implemented this sort of national strategy in the late 1970s or early 1980s. As members may have guessed, the national strategy in question sought to make the oil sands profitable because we did not have the technology to do so at the start. In all, \$70 billion was collectively invested, 20% of which came from Quebec.

Why not make the decision to support Alberta's economy in a different way by promoting the bioeconomy and getting involved in

industries that are less harmful to the environment and have a smaller carbon footprint?

• (1935)

In closing, I have been having some fun with these numbers over the past few months. I did some research into what has been invested in the oil industry and the forestry industry over the past four years, and I came up with two numbers.

Over the past four years, the federal government has given the oil and gas industry \$24 billion, \$12 billion of which was used to buy the pipeline. The government invested \$950 million in the entire Canadian forestry industry over that same period.

Crunching those investment numbers, it turns out that 75% of that amount is loans. These two natural resource sectors prove that there really is a double standard.

I have just a minute left, so I will quickly close with a simple warning. If a member of the House suggests replacing Keystone XL with Energy East, I promise that member will run up against the Bloc Québécois.

[English]

Mr. Earl Dreesen (Red Deer—Mountain View, CPC): Madam Speaker, as I come from Alberta, there are a couple of things that perhaps the member should be aware of, namely that the environmental aspects of oil sands development there are the best in the world and should be respected.

Earlier on the member mentioned that Albertans always say that we need to build pipelines. It is true, because it is so important. However, one of the other things that was said is that we were there to protect Quebec as well. We stood up for the aluminum industry and talked about how it was important to be able to sell that product around the world. We did that because of the fact Quebec can do it in an environmentally friendly way, just as Alberta oil is done in an environmentally friendly way.

When we look at what else can happen when the U.S. starts replacing our oil with oil from other places around the world, how is that really going to help the planet? Maybe we should all be talking about the things that we do that make Canada great.

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Simard: Madam Speaker, I would simply like to point out to my colleague that one thing that is undeniable today is the climate crisis. Any reservations I have about the oil and gas sector are related to the climate crisis.

My colleague used aluminum as an example. It is important to note that aluminum produced in Quebec is the greenest aluminum in the world, the aluminum with the lowest carbon footprint in the world.

Even in the United States, which is a major oil producer, Mr. Biden has signed an executive order that will ban drilling on all public lands. Even the U.S., which is one of the biggest polluters, is decarbonizing its economy. That is what is happening. It is going to rejoin the Paris Agreement. I think Canada needs to do the same thing. Otherwise, we are putting off a major structural problem. Albertans will pay the price sooner or later. It is unfortunate, but that is the reality.

[English]

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech, as we sit on the natural resources committee together and I appreciate what he has to say.

My colleague mentioned the fact the Liberal government has purchased the Trans Mountain pipeline for \$4.5 billion. Apparently, we are going to have to spend another \$12.5 billion at least to build that. The Kenney government in Alberta has invested billions in the Keystone XL pipeline. Both of these issues came up when these pipeline companies indicated that they might walk away from these projects.

I wonder if my colleague would comment on this fact. If the government wants to have a credible energy transition plan, does he not agree that it has to end fossil fuel subsidies and instead invest those funds into that transition to a new low-carbon economy and create jobs for those workers in the oil patch?

• (1940)

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Simard: Madam Speaker, I completely agree with my colleague from the Standing Committee on Natural Resources.

There are many solutions. The forestry industry is probably the sector best placed to reduce greenhouse gases. As everyone knows, forests are carbon sinks. They can be used to sequester carbon. Forests can be used in new technologies that allow us to replace plastics and nearly all petrochemical products with a much smaller carbon footprint compared to the oil and gas industry.

Yes, I agree with my colleague.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, once again, I thank my colleague for the excellent work he does here in the House. His speech was extraordinary.

The Conservatives' position on the oil and gas industry is clear. However, things are a little less clear on the other side of the House. On November 6, 2015, the member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie, who happens to be the heritage minister, saluted the Obama administration's decision to say no to the Keystone XL project. That changed under the Trump administration, but the Biden administration has now taken over. It is not quite clear whether the Liberals are happy that Keystone XL will not happen.

I would like to know what my colleague thinks about the Liberals' flip-flopping on this issue.

Mr. Mario Simard: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean, who is always on point. I do not know him very well, but I would certainly like to get to know him better.

S. O. 52

This ties into what I was saying in my introduction. Unfortunately, I get the impression that the Liberal Party does not listen to dissenting voices. That voice could have come from the Minister of Canadian Heritage, since he was part of that green environmental movement. I get the impression that there is currently a dogma in the Canadian federation when it comes to the oil and gas industry, particularly within the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party.

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, I will start off by saying that I really did not think my first speech of 2021 would be given during an emergency debate about a decision our American neighbours made. I would have preferred an emergency debate about a green, fair recovery. I think that would be more apropos, and that is what we should be aiming for.

Of course, U.S. President Joe Biden's wise decision is not uncontroversial. Many people are unhappy about it, including the Premier of Alberta, and it has left many politicians feeling perplexed even though President Biden made promises about the project during his election campaign and kept them. For years, Joe Biden has made no bones about his position on the project and his commitment to protecting the environment.

His decision, the reason we are still here this evening, is a clear break with the administration of his predecessor, Donald Trump, on the issue of fighting climate change. It should come as no surprise to anyone. Our climate reality is nothing short of critical, and anyone who believes the experts, the science and the data collected around the world on this subject welcomes Joe Biden's decision as excellent news.

However, the problem—and I am not sure how to explain it anymore—is that while the Keystone XL project does create jobs, it is an extension of an existing pipeline. We do not need to expand pipeline networks, but rather transition away from fossil fuels as quickly as possible.

These past few months I have already talked about the impressive, even encouraging, number of central banks and private investors that have definitively shifted their funds towards other energy portfolios. Instead of starting over again, let us turn our attention to another subject, namely the uneasiness that some people feel about this courageous decision.

The Prime Minister is disappointed, but should he not be thrilled about such a decision being prioritized? After all, this makes the new President of the United States an unequivocal ally of the man who, here in Canada, presents himself as a champion for climate change. Instead, the Prime Minister has claimed that the last five years have shown that investing in oil and gas and fighting climate change can go hand in hand. It is incredible to me that anyone would put all of that in the same sentence.

S. O. 52

We think President Biden has guts because this decision comes with its share of controversy and sticking points. At least he has the courage to make fighting climate change a priority in his administration, right behind dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic.

As we know, the pandemic is worrisome in the United States. The lax attitude of the previous administration will have consequences, as will Trump's climate change denial. The U.S. economy will go through dark periods and U.S. and Canadian elected officials will have to devote a lot of attention to ensuring employment stability. We want jobs and we do not want to see Albertans or anyone else suffer as a result of this project ending, although that is inevitable I am afraid.

However, I wonder why Alberta Premier Jason Kenney sunk so much public money into this project. Why did he not instead invest that money in retraining workers in the oil and gas sector and developing geothermal energy? How could he not know the current extent of climate change and the scientific projections of what lies ahead for us? How could he not know that the good old days of developing crude bitumen, the most polluting fossil fuel there is, are over?

President Biden's decision is based on two things. First, he has real concerns about climate change. Second, domestic production in the United States makes them 95% independent so the existing pipelines are sufficient. As far as the well-paying, unionized jobs that the leader of the official opposition was talking about are concerned, that is on Mr. Kenney and TransCanada PipeLines. In the United States, the Biden administration has announced a \$2-trillion-U.S. climate plan.

• (1945)

The will to innovate and develop certain sectors of the economy will foster the creation of different jobs that will likely be compatible with the trades required for Keystone XL. I have already spoken about skills used in the fossil fuel sector that are transferable to renewable energies such as geothermal, solar and wind. I wager that American teams will quickly move to plan B, which will promote a greener economy.

I have trouble understanding what we are accomplishing by holding an emergency debate on a decision made by President Biden. To be honest, I want to ask my hon. colleagues to not just respect the new president's commendable decision, but to be inspired by it. Yes, we should be inspired. When a promise is made, it must be kept. Even if it is not popular, a promise must be kept if the person who made it is elected.

For more than 60 years, Alberta's economy has been used to turn profits for oil companies and create prosperity for Albertans. However, this prosperity is coming to an end. Successive governments all bet on a resource that they believed to be inexhaustible. Even the Heritage Savings Trust Fund did so, but I think we would feel discouraged if we were to talk about it. Did Mr. Kenney fail to carefully think through his commitments? When it comes to energy and natural resources, public money should only be used to accelerate the transition to renewable energy.

I have news for my colleagues who say that Biden's decision weakened our trade relations with our neighbours. Access to renew-

able energy resources and expertise will be a perfect fit for the Americans. The daily newspaper *Le Devoir* explored this at length in its "perspectives" column last Saturday. Although it is a daunting task, greening the U.S. economy is not impossible. A challenge of this magnitude ought not be politicized, and the same could be said for the Canadian economy. This welcome transformation of the world's largest economy could also stimulate the development of renewable energy in Canada. There you have it; that is all that needs to be said, at least for tonight.

Could we listen to reason and to science, research, international organizations, experts who protect our environment, as well as investors and banks? The oil sands are finished.

• (1950)

[English]

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, first, to my kids Matthew and Emerson, who are watching while eating supper at home, good night, guys.

To the substance of this debate, I find it astounding that the Bloc Québécois, a party that its members say respects provincial jurisdiction, would, in the last two speeches, outline such a number of unbelievable interventions into that provincial jurisdiction by saying things like the oil industry is doomed to fail and thanking us for equalization but then saying that our prosperity is coming to an end.

I find it interesting that they seem to want to delegitimize this debate by saying it is not important because they are keeping an election promise, but do members know another election promise, a promise that was kept by the former American administration? It was steel and aluminum tariffs. In this House, we fought for Quebec, so it is time for Quebec to figure out that we need to fight for Alberta's best interests.

I know that there are Conservative colleagues from Quebec who do that each and every day, because when an industry like oil and gas thrives in this country, the entire country thrives, just like the industries in Quebec that can also thrive, making a federation that is supposed to work. It is this targeting of various industries that we see today that is absolutely unbelievable.

How can the member justify this hypocrisy?

[Translation]

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his question.

I understand that he might be troubled by what we are saying. He said that we are a federation. I am tempted to respond to that by saying that we are a planet and that things are not going well at all on this planet. Climate change is the biggest challenge that humanity has faced in thousands of years. We cannot ignore it. Of the past 22 years, the last 20 were the hottest ever recorded by NASA, by the American organization responsible for climate, by meteorologists in Japan and by all scientists. That is what we are talking about, and that is why we are saying that we do not own this planet. We just live here and we need to leave something viable for future generations. The oil sands and fossil fuel industry is an industry of the past.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to share a different perspective with the member. One of the nice things about being in a federal system is that there is a high sense of co-operation and effort by different levels of government to try to advance economies throughout the country. The Bloc could be more sensitive to what is happening in the Prairies, as there is a Prairies reality, and recognize that at the end of the day, as parliamentarians we should be attempting to contribute to making all regions of our country healthier places.

I am passionate about the aerospace industry in the province of Quebec, for example, and will continue to advocate for a healthy aerospace industry. I am equally concerned with natural resources or commodity prices and will advocate for good, sound policy there.

I wonder if the member feels any obligation as a member of Parliament to recognize the contributions that all our different regions contribute to our society as a whole. If so, how does she feel her comments today—

• (1955)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I have to give the hon. member a chance to answer.

[Translation]

The hon. member for Repentigny.

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question, but he should not start on the aerospace industry again because debate will never end this evening.

We are very aware of the major problems facing Alberta's workers and families. For that reason, the Bloc Québécois is proposing to take the \$12 billion that would be invested in Trans Mountain and give them to Alberta, the province most dependent on fossil fuels and the province that emits the most greenhouse gases. That is what we call solidarity.

[English]

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to start by saying that I will be splitting my time with the member for Elmwood—Transcona.

We are meeting here this evening to debate the significance of the decision by President Biden to cancel the permits for the Key-

stone XL pipeline, which would have provided an increased capacity for shipments from Alberta to refineries on the U.S. Gulf coast.

The Liberals and the Conservatives both claim that this will be a serious blow to the Alberta economy. I think the minister, with maybe a bit of Newfoundland hyperbole, said it was going to be an existential blow. While it is certainly true that the oil sector in Alberta has suffered a number of blows that have impacted tens of thousands of workers over the past six or seven years, mainly involving the world oil price and global investments, it is clear that this is not one of them.

I think everyone in the debate today would agree that we must act quickly to ensure that workers in the oil sector can find jobs that they can count on over the coming years. The question, then, is this: What actions will produce those long-lasting jobs for the future? Will building more pipelines produce those jobs? Or should we be creating jobs to transition out of the fossil fuel industry into a future that tackles climate change with bold investments in energy efficiency, oil and gas well cleanup and clean energy technologies?

As members may guess, I think that doubling down on pipelines is a waste of time, a waste of money and, most of all, a huge disservice to the future of oil patch workers. I would like to take a bit of time to explain why.

In 2014, oil prices dropped from about \$100 a barrel to the \$40 or \$50 range. Those prices tumbled further last year as COVID hit, but have since recovered to around \$50. Over the past five years, I have heard at committee from many top oil executives about their needs in the sector. When I have asked them what prices we need to make new projects financially viable, the answers have always been around \$70 or \$80. I do not think there is a single analyst in the world who would predict that we will see prices in that range over the next 20 years.

When we had Irving Oil before the committee in the last Parliament, witnesses were asked whether they would build new refinery capacity for Alberta bitumen if the energy east pipeline was built to tidewater in New Brunswick. Their reply was basically they would have to look at the economic viability of that.

However, it is not just low prices that have affected the oil sector. Projections for future oil demand have fallen every year, and as those demand projections fall, investors have become very concerned about putting significant money into big new projects that cost billions of dollars and take decades to pay off. They are happy to put money into companies that are actively producing oil, but not into new projects.

S. O. 52

We have seen this in big companies, like Total, one of the biggest companies in France, which wrote down over \$9 billion of oil sands assets last year, stranded assets that it figures it will never be able to viably develop. This is not because of lack of pipelines, but because of lack of demand.

We will need oil over the next 30 years at least, but we will not need any more of it than we are already producing. All these big pipeline projects are expansion projects. Keystone XL, the Trans Mountain expansion and the Enbridge Line 3 expansion are based on the premise that oil sands production of expensive, difficult-to-refine oil will boom during a time when the world is awash in cheap oil.

More and more, we are seeing that this future is very unlikely. Just before Christmas, the Canada Energy Regulator put out its report on Canada's energy future. For the first time, it projected oil demand into the future based on the assumption that Canada and other countries will actually try to tackle climate change. This so-called evolving scenario was based on Canada's announced policies to fight climate change, not policies that will get us to net zero by 2050. The CER did not go that far, but these policies would at least recognize that we had to move in that direction.

Under those assumptions the report showed that oil sands production in Canada would plateau very quickly and that only one of those three pipelines would be needed to accommodate all further production increases. Since Line 3 is scheduled to be online later this year, it follows that Keystone XL will not be needed by Canada's oil producers. The Trans Mountain expansion will not be needed, nor will expanded rail transport.

• (2000)

When I last spoke with Canadian pipeline industry representatives, I asked them how much more capacity we needed to transport Canadian oil. They said that Line 3 would fix all our needs with respect to the capacity constraints we have been seeing.

The narrative we hear tonight is that if only we had Keystone XL, all would be well with the oil industry; if only we had the Trans Mountain expansion, all would be well. It is clear that this is simply not the case. Even industry analysts know this well. Rystad Energy, a respected Norwegian analyst of the global oil sector, notes that shutting down the Keystone project would have almost no effect on the Canadian oil production sector, as we simply have enough capacity lined up.

What should we be doing to help the tens of thousands of oil industry workers who have lost their jobs? We should be creating tens of thousands of jobs now, not next year and not in five years. If we respect the workers who have lost jobs, that is what we have to do, and we can do that with a major effort to clean up oil and gas wells.

The federal government made a start to that last year, but we really have to ramp that up. We could create good jobs across the country in energy-efficiency efforts. The government's plan in this regard is the \$2 billion that was announced in the economic statement before Christmas. However, Efficiency Canada has recommended spending 10 times that to ensure our buildings are energy efficient by 2050. These jobs would be the same jobs that are being

lost in the oil sector as new projects are scaled back, for welders, electricians, carpenters, plumbers and more.

Estimates show that even if we met the old goals of the pan-Canadian framework for energy efficiency, we would create over a million jobs. These are of course jobs in clean energy and clean technology, good jobs that closely match the jobs that have been lost.

This is what we should be talking about when talking to the United States government. This is where Canadian industries can cash in on the huge expenditures the U.S. and countries around the world are talking about. If we want to negotiate with the U.S. on future trade, let us talk about where the future is going as far as technology goes. Let us make sure that Canada has access to the ambitious programs that the Biden administration has planned in sectors where Canada is already experienced and is often leading the way, like hydrogen technology, electric vehicle manufacturing and clean energy.

This is where the puck is going and this is where we need to go with our investments and policies. This is where good jobs are going to be created. If we respect the workers who are looking desperately for those jobs, this is what we need to do. Another pipeline will not get us there.

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Madam Speaker, I really appreciate a lot of the things my colleague said when he talked about economic viability, because economic viability is what puts these projects on the page, first of all.

What makes things uneconomically viable in Canada is a lack of a regulatory outcome, which we have here, although it is a border issue. That is what is holding projects back in Canada more than anything else.

My colleague talked about the expensive, difficult oil in Canada in a world that is awash in cheap oil. Cheap oil from around the world is cheaper than Canadian oil because it does not adhere to the same environmental and ethical standards. Also, it often comes from regimes that we do not want to have more dominance on the world stage.

Has the member thought about, in a world context, where demand is going and where we will have to source non-environmentally friendly oil from for the next 30 to 40 years?

• (2005)

Mr. Richard Cannings: Madam Speaker, with regard to the economics of Canadian oil, most of it has to be burned out of the oil sands in Alberta, which automatically makes it more expensive. I know that cost has been coming down and the Alberta industry has been working hard to bring down greenhouse gas emissions from that process, but that is the big difference in bringing down the price of Canadian oil. That is why the Biden administration cancelled those permits. It was for no other reason than the fact that, on average, Canadian oil coming out of the oil sands produces about 73 kilograms of carbon dioxide per barrel compared with about 19 kilograms of carbon dioxide for U.S. shale oil. That is one of the differences.

Yes, those numbers have been coming down, both in price and greenhouse gas emissions, but they are still above the world level in many cases. When you are competing against—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Questions and comments, the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his intervention today. It was a very honest, sobering look at the reality and economics of what is going on.

Twenty years ago, there were virtually no electric cars. Now, 7% or 8% of the cars sold in the world run on electricity and do not require gasoline. I drove here today from my riding and I will drive home without using any gasoline. Despite the fact that we are going to rely on oil for a long time into the future, there is obviously going to be some adjustment to the market, which the member rightly pointed out.

The member touched on what to do to help those who are particularly affected by this by providing them with new job opportunities. Can he expand on that and comment on where he sees that going and perhaps in what sectors of the economy?

Mr. Richard Cannings: Madam Speaker, I could talk all day about this.

One of the things I mentioned was in the energy efficiency space, where we have not just for home retrofits. I am happy that the government basically brought back the Harper-era ecoenergy retrofit program with an investment of \$1 billion or so. That is great, but it is not where we need to go if we want to have all of our buildings energy efficient by 2050. If we want to meet that net-zero target by 2050, we have to invest \$20 billion and employ a lot of people, and we need to train those people.

There is a great program at the Okanagan College in my home town here in Penticton that trains people in sustainable building. That is one area that we could create, as I said, one million good jobs across this country, if we wanted to, that would closely match those lost in the oil industry as these projects have been scaled back.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, as the granddaughter of one of the notorious McCoy brothers who helped build the oil and gas sector in Alberta, as the daughter of a former trucker who worked in the oil patch mak-

S. O. 52

ing sure that my brothers and I had what we needed to thrive, as the sister of a heavy equipment cleaner and the wife of someone who is employed in the pipeline business, no one has to tell me how important oil and gas has been to Alberta.

I grew up with truckers and oil men sitting around my kitchen table, and I am so proud of these hard-working Albertans who helped build our province and our nation. Generations of Albertans have enjoyed the prosperity that has come from this natural resource and Alberta has thrived as a result. I am proud of the contributions Alberta has made to our country and the generations of Canadians who have also benefited from our oil and gas sector. However, the past is not the future and it is not even the present in Alberta right now. In Alberta, folks are losing their jobs and have been for years. It is devastating and I am completely gutted when I think of the Alberta families that are suffering.

Climate change is real. In fact, climate change is the most profound threat of our time and we cannot stick our head in the sand and pretend otherwise. As the world reckons with global climate change and turns away from fossil fuels to lower carbon forms of energy, Alberta is facing an economic calamity and instead of taking climate change seriously, instead of showing global investors that Alberta has a legitimate and robust climate strategy, a strategy that corporations like Cenovus, Shell and Total have called for, Jason Kenney and the Conservatives just keep yelling like spoiled children that it is not fair.

Alberta needs an economy that does not rely so heavily on one resource sector. Albertans have lived through boom and bust cycles for generations, and now we know once and for all that the next boom is not going to come. It is not going to come like it did the past. Even if oil and gas continue at 100% capacity, the jobs are not there. The sector is automating. When we hear catch phrases like “efficiencies”, it means there are fewer jobs for Alberta workers, fewer jobs for hard-working Albertans and their families, and everyone in this room knows that.

We have a choice to make. We can put on blinders and double down on the past, or we can work to ensure that Canadian workers have a future. Jason Kenney is doubling down on the past. He is betting on coal and putting the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains at risk. For a handful of short-term jobs, he is selling off our iconic Rocky Mountains to an Australian billionaire. He is risking the livelihoods of ranchers, farmers and tourism operators. He is risking the endangered species that people travel from around the world to see. He is risking the water, the very water that people in southern Alberta need to survive.

S. O. 52

He is taking a gamble with Alberta resources, and I have to say as an Albertan who deeply loves my province, Mr. Kenney has a gambling problem and I am tired of his using Alberta taxpayer dollars to pay his bad gambling debts. He gambled somewhere between \$1.5 billion and \$6 billion of Alberta's money on Donald Trump. We do not know yet because he will not tell us, but remember that when Jason Kenney gambled on Donald Trump, he did not gamble his own money, but ours, and when he lost that gamble, when he lost that money, he did not lose his money, but ours. Let that sink in. The premier of Alberta gambled our money on the hopes that a racist, misogynistic, horrible human being would win the election in the United States of America. That was his job plan for Alberta. That was his plan to get jobs for workers in my province. Now he wants to start a trade war with the U.S., the customer for 95% of our energy exports.

• (2010)

Enough is enough. Alberta does not need a trade war with the United States. Alberta needs jobs now and a path to the future.

No one was surprised when President Biden cancelled the Keystone XL pipeline expansion. In fact, anyone who thought differently was either lying to themselves or lying to Canadians. Biden told us he was going to cancel it. Biden was Obama's vice-president and Obama told us he was going to cancel it. Trump did not even get it built.

The reason Jason Kenney threw billions of taxpayer dollars at the project was that smart money, investor money, was not prepared to invest in it. Pumping more and more public money into dying projects that investors will no longer support is not the way to give Albertans a future. Helping Alberta to diversify our economy is the only way we can secure future prosperity, including refining and upgrading our products, investing in well reclamation, investing in hydrogen and other energy alternatives.

There are amazing opportunities available if we just have the imagination, intelligence and the courage to take advantage of them. Generations of Canadians have benefited from Albertans past, and it is time for Canadians to help Alberta create a new future. It is time for Trudeau and the Liberals to actually do something for Albertans. I have stood in this House—

• (2015)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I remind the hon. member not to use members' names, please.

Ms. Heather McPherson: My apologies, Madam Speaker.

I have stood in the House time and time again calling on the government to invest in Alberta, and I am sure that my Conservative colleagues in the House agree with me when I say that Albertans have been left out in the cold. Albertans have been abandoned by their federal government and are rightfully angry.

I know people are hurting all across Canada. COVID-19 has taken our loved ones and wreaked havoc with our economy. In Alberta, the damage that COVID-19 has caused is just the tip of the iceberg. Prior to COVID-19, Alberta was headed for an economic crisis, with the highest unemployment rates in the country and an economy built on a plummeting price of oil. None of that has changed.

Albertans were hurting before the pandemic and Albertans will still be hurting long after this pandemic is over. Last week, I met with workers from the building trades who told me that 50% of them are out of work. Imagine knowing that when this horrible nightmare of COVID-19 is over, people will still have nothing to go back to, that their future will be just as bleak.

Instead of fighting with our most important customer over a pipeline that stands to create fewer than 2,000 Albertan jobs, I am asking the government to help Alberta diversify. I am asking the government to partner with Albertans to rebuild and diversify our economy. I am asking the government to create jobs in Alberta in more sustainable sectors of our economy like agriculture, food products and tourism.

We are at a critical point in our history. Will we help Alberta transition? Will we create a future for my province or will we just abandon it to the likes of Jason Kenney? Alberta workers are waiting for the government's answer.

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will remind the member for Edmonton Strathcona that the eastern slopes application was made under her junior party's government of the former premier, Rachel Notley, who was not re-elected in the last Alberta provincial election.

I find it very interesting and I will point out a great ideological divide that seems to exist between the NDP provincially in Alberta and the NDP that sits in the House of which the member is a part. To clarify one piece of evidence here, in the NDP convention, which I will paraphrase, it says that where there be a conflict of policy, the ones here get to supersede Alberta or provincial jurisdiction.

Is the member saying to Rachel Notley and the opposition in Alberta that they do not support the pipeline either? They have been saying something very different in the news over the last week.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Madam Speaker, the question we need to be asking is not whether we support a pipeline. The question has to be whether we support Alberta workers. We need to ensure we are getting jobs for Alberta workers. What drives me absolutely bonkers is the fact that Jason Kenney had the nerve to lay off over 20,000 education sector workers mere days before he invested billions of dollars in a pipeline that we knew would not go forward because Biden told us it would not. The fact is that we are not fighting for the pipeline. None of the people in the House are fighting for this pipeline. We are fighting for Albertans. We are fighting for Alberta jobs.

• (2020)

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 makes reference to Alberta being abandoned by Ottawa. It concerns me when we have members of Parliament from the Prairies giving false information, because it is false. To try to give Canadians the impression that they have been abandoned is irresponsible. Quite frankly, one of the reasons we see some of the issues in Alberta today is because of these extreme positions taken by members.

Could the member indicate what any other province has been receiving that demonstrates that Alberta has been abandoned by the federal government? Nothing could be further from the truth.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Madam Speaker, that was an interesting question. When my hon. colleague speaks of the rhetoric coming from Alberta, I guess that if the NDP and the Conservative Party can agree that the Liberal government has not done enough for Alberta, that does cover quite a large part of the political spectrum. In the last election we asked Albertans and they also did not think that the Liberal Party was doing enough for them.

Is there more the government needs to do? One hundred per cent. Does it need suggestions on how to do that? I am here for it. I am here to help. Anything I can do to help the government support Albertans, I am here. I have great ideas and suggestions.

[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleague on her speech about a matter that understandably evokes strong emotions. We are talking about the jobs of thousands of people and a sector that has been weakened by these times.

A little earlier, I heard our colleague from Winnipeg North call on us to be open-minded. I would like to point out to our colleague that only the Bloc Québécois has been insisting for months that we should diversify and invest in different expertise, which would make it possible for Alberta's workers to develop other skills and be able to survive without being dependent on oil. I would like my colleague from Edmonton Strathcona to comment on that. She mentioned it in her speech.

What avenues should we explore to develop new expertise that will allow Alberta to transition to other activities?

As my colleague mentioned a little earlier, the oil industry is almost finished.

[English]

Ms. Heather McPherson: Madam Speaker, the NDP has been calling for a diversified economy in Alberta for a very long time. In fact, the Alberta NDP, under our past premier, Rachel Notley, was diversifying our economy and investing in a number of different areas like agriculture and food products, like tourism, like artificial intelligence. It recognized the importance of post-secondary institutions and that they be adequately funded so we could be those centres of excellence and—

S. O. 52

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We have to resume debate.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the Minister of National Revenue.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with my hon. friend and colleague, the member of Parliament for Nickel Belt.

I will focus my remarks tonight on the importance of our Canada-U.S. bilateral relations, our largest trading partner and neighbour to the south. Tonight's debate is very important for Canadians across Canada because of the nature of our relationship.

On a personal level, I had the fortune to live and work in the United States for a number of years, and I learned a lot. Obviously, I came back to live in the country I was born in and have continued as such, but it was an experience I am richer for. It improved my development in terms of my career and gave me so many opportunities, and I am blessed for that. I made many friends and I have many relatives in the United States. I know how important our relationship is.

Canada and the United States have long enjoyed one of the most productive, collaborative, mutually beneficial bilateral relationships in the world. It is a partnership of neighbours forged by shared geography, similar values, common interests, deep people-to-people connections and powerful, multi-layered economic and security ties. Our two countries enjoy the largest trading relationship in the world. We defend and protect North America together. We are stewards of our shared environment. We stand on the world stage to respond to pressing global challenges together, which is especially true in times of crisis.

We know that the spread of COVID-19 has caused upheaval in both Canada and the United States, and we have taken unprecedented action to combat the pandemic, support our citizens and stabilize both economies. Last March, Canada and the United States arrived at a far-reaching agreement to limit discretionary and recreational travel across the border, an understanding that has been extended by mutual agreement.

The magnitude of this decision cannot be overstated. Ours is one of the busiest land borders in the world, with approximately 400,000 people crossing it on any given day and over \$2 billion of goods and services flow between our two countries. The smooth flow of people and goods across this border is vitally important to both economies and communities on both sides.

In the face of such high stakes, our two countries collaborated in an orderly fashion and quickly arrived at an agreement aimed at limiting the spread of the virus. The agreement has resulted in a 90% reduction in the number of travellers crossing the border while maintaining the flow of essential goods. This collaboration set the tone for subsequent co-operation in getting our citizens home, ensuring the continued operation of our supply chains or assisting each other in the production and procurement of medical supplies and other essential goods.

S. O. 52

A striking example has been our co-operation to procure personal protective equipment. As in so many other countries, Canada-U.S. trade in PPE is bilateral and reciprocal. Our collaboration allowed for the smooth flow of PPE across the border and into the hands of health care workers in both countries. Canadian and American partners are also working together and investing in research to combat the virus with collaboration on 15 different diagnostic and vaccine projects. Hundreds of Canadian manufacturers have retooled and reshifted their production and provided innovative solutions to address shortages in medical equipment and protective personal equipment. This is critical for the health of both our populations.

Canadians and Americans have depended on each other for decades, from the Halifax explosion to the beaches of northern France in World War II, from the hours and days following September 11, 2001, attacks to the wildfires that devastated California and Oregon this fall. Canadians and Americans have faced the great challenges of the continent and the world side by side.

Today, hundreds of members of the Canadian Armed Forces continue to serve alongside their U.S. allies from across America. The job of protecting the North American homeland continues under the watchful eye of Canadian and American aviators, sailors, soldiers, police officers and firefighters.

Another element of our close collaboration is the intervening nature of our energy systems. We know that the United States is Canada's most important market for energy. In turn, Canada is the largest and most secure foreign source of energy for the United States, including crude oil, natural gas, hydroelectricity and uranium. This means that it is mutually beneficial to ensure this supply is secure, reliable and sustainable.

The government recognizes the critical role energy plays in our trade relationship. Jobs, economic security and competitiveness on both sides of the border depend on our bilateral energy trade. The Prime Minister raised Canada's disappointment on the decision of the United States on the Keystone XL pipeline in his telephone conversation with President Biden on Friday. The Prime Minister underscored the important economic and security benefits of our bilateral energy relationship as well as his support for energy workers.

● (2025)

A further element that unites us is our shared natural environment. For example, Canada and the U.S. share many waterways that mark or cross our shared border, from the Great Lakes to rivers such as the mighty St. Lawrence. The shores of these lakes and rivers are home to tens of millions of Americans and Canadians, and decisions made within the basins of one country have consequences for the other.

Hence, their joint stewardship is a cornerstone of Canada-U.S. relations. This stretches back to the Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909, the world's first environmental agreement, to the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, which continues to address the environmental challenges of the 21st century.

Of course, we cannot forget the essential economic collaboration that brings us together. While many of my esteemed colleagues will

go into more detail on the importance of this co-operation, suffice it to say that our deeply integrated supply chains contribute to a distinct North American advantage and foster millions of jobs on both sides of the border. Cementing this advantage is the new North American Free Trade Agreement, which we were able to renew, update and modernize, even with an American president who could be a bit unpredictable and, shall I say, protectionist. That is the strength of the Canada-U.S. trade bond.

Finally, we also acknowledge that our societies face similar difficulties and shameful legacies. Canadians grieve alongside our American friends at the tragic loss of George Floyd and the countless others impacted by police violence around the world. These are not isolated incidents or elsewhere problems. Prejudice, discrimination and violence are a lived reality for too many people in Canada as well.

In the face of these injustices, we must be clear. We condemn anti-Black racism and systemic discrimination. That is what thousands of principled Americans and Canadians have been doing throughout our two centuries, and this is a moment to admire and honour their work. We hear the same calls for a more inclusive and just society here in Canada, where systemic racism is a problem every single day. Canada is not a bystander. As neighbours, this is a burden that our two societies share, and we must do better together.

In closing, our government will work with the new Biden administration to advance our shared objectives and protect, yes protect, Canadian interests as we have done for the past four years. We look forward to being able to talk with the new President more about climate change, trade, the COVID response and other shared priorities for our two nations.

In their conversation last week, our Prime Minister and President Biden recognized that both countries' fundamental priority is to end the global COVID-19 pandemic. They discussed collaboration on vaccines and acknowledged that the two countries' efforts are strengthened by existing exchanges of medical personnel and the flow of critical medical supplies. The two leaders discussed working closely together to defeat COVID-19 by responding to new variants and following expert advice.

The Prime Minister and President discussed their shared vision for sustainable economic recovery, creating jobs, and growing the middle class. To that end, they discussed strengthening Canada-U.S. supply-chain security and resilience.

It is clear the Canada-U.S. relationship can withstand and even grow in the context of extraordinary challenges. Moving forward, we must safeguard this heightened awareness of our interdependence and look for ways to reinforce our shared North American neighbourhood. The COVID-19 pandemic has further underscored the need to build on existing co-operation in the area of food security, for example, allowing the vital work of food production, processing, distribution and sales to continue, even in the face of enormous challenges.

The Canada-U.S. relationship is a model for the world. Let us pursue this great relationship with the U.S. as partners, friends, allies and neighbours. While it may be natural to focus on self-reliance, there is no way that Canada, the U.S. or any country can go it alone. It is too crucial to find partners whom countries can trust and who will be there for them when the chips are down. For Canada and the U.S., those partners are each other. That is how we build resilience.

• (2030)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I certainly share the conviction of the member that the Canada-U.S. relationship is very important. However, looking at the record of the government, the Prime Minister has sat across the table now from three different U.S. presidents.

Under Obama, we heard that there was a bromance. It appears that it was a one-sided bromance because we were not able to get any concessions in important areas. We failed to resolve issues around softwood lumber and other issues. When Donald Trump took office, the Prime Minister right away said that we would love to renegotiate NAFTA, and made further concessions. Now we have a new President. He did not run on a “make Canada happy again” slogan, and he cancelled Keystone right away.

We have had three presidents sitting across the table from the Prime Minister, and we have had dramatic failures when it comes to energy, agricultural producers, softwood lumber and getting any kind of commitments around “buy America”, so the problem seems to be on this side of the border in terms of our ability to stand up for our own interests. When is the Prime Minister going to acknowledge these failures and start getting serious about standing up for Canada?

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Madam Speaker, for the renegotiated NAFTA agreement, CUSMA, I have to give credit to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and the entire Canadian trade negotiation team, because we went into that negotiation, and it was very tough. It was a very long period of time. We stood our ground, and we came out with a great agreement.

I know here the recent announcements by General Motors of over \$2 billion of investments in the auto sector, which benefits all of Canada, and a total of \$7 billion of investments in the auto sector for green, electric vehicle production, is something that we need to stand up and cheer about.

Our agricultural sector is second to none with exports and continues to lead the way in creating jobs. Here in Ontario, specifically, the agri-food industry is actually the largest industry in the province, in terms of employment. I am proud—

S. O. 52

• (2035)

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the parliamentary secretary for his speech, which I listened to intently.

He said he was disappointed by the Biden administration's decision to cancel the Keystone XL project. I understand his position, but in 2014 and 2015, the current Minister of Canadian Heritage of this same government sent a series of tweets—which are very easy to find and which I could send to the parliamentary secretary if he would like—applauding the obstacles the Keystone XL project was facing under the Obama administration.

Are Liberal cabinet ministers and government members disappointed or happy that the Keystone XL project was cancelled? I would like the parliamentary secretary to comment on that.

[English]

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Madam Speaker, I want to ensure we can get Canadian products and resources to market, and achieve the price that is deserved on those products. The TMX pipeline that is going to be built will be able to do that. The Line 3 replacement is also going to do that.

I do wish to say, for my Alberta colleagues, that I was proud when the federal government gave approval to the \$2.3 billion expansion on the NOVA Gas Transmission Ltd. line. That is something that is going to assist Alberta. I am also proud of the investment taking place in the Alberta heartland, which is going to employ thousands of union workers in the petrochemical industry in the Chemical Industry Association of Canada.

We need to work with all stakeholders and all communities so we ensure that the transition that is taking place, in terms of transformation on climate change to electric vehicles and electrification, happens in a way that we can still utilize resources that Canadians—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Continuing with questions and comments, the hon. member for Victoria.

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Madam Speaker, Keystone XL getting cancelled was not a surprise. President Biden made a very clear campaign promise, and our own Energy Regulator says it will not be needed if we take climate action. It is past time that we invest in climate action and sustainable jobs in a just transition, and because of the Prime Minister's inaction, Canada is being left behind.

S. O. 52

This cancellation highlights the Prime Minister's broken promise on a just transition. It is disappointing but not surprising to see the Prime Minister, who has broken so many promises, urge President Biden to break a presidential campaign promise on Keystone.

We need climate action. Workers are being left behind. When will the government stop gambling billions on pipelines that are at odds with our climate goals and move forward—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The parliamentary secretary has the opportunity for a very short answer.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Madam Speaker, I believe in late fall we introduced a transformational climate change package to continue the transformation of the Canadian economy. We put a price on pollution, which we are going to raise and rebate back to Canadians.

The change is happening now. The innovation is happening now. Canada is at the forefront of that innovation. We will continue to be at the forefront of innovation. We just had a \$7-billion investment in the auto sector in Ontario in the last couple of months and—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Resuming debate, the hon. member for Nickel Belt.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marc Serré (Nickel Belt, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue for his remarks.

[*English*]

I would like to start by acknowledging that we are gathering on the traditional and unceded territory of the Algonquin people.

Canada and the U.S. has one of the most productive, collaborative, mutually beneficial, bilateral relationships in the world. An essential element of this relationship is energy. I was a member of the natural resources committee from 2015-18, and we heard clearly from witnesses all across the country of the importance of our natural resources in Canada. We know the United States is Canada's most important market for energy. In return, Canada is the largest and most secure foreign source of energy for the United States, including crude oil, natural gas, hydroelectricity and uranium.

In 2019, 91% of Canada's energy exports were destined for the U.S., totalling nearly \$125 billion in value. The reverse was also true. Canada is the second-largest market for U.S. energy exports, and these exports play an important role in ensuring Canada has a reliable and secure energy supply. The truth is that Canada and the U.S. have a highly integrated energy infrastructure system, which allows for the optimization of current global competitiveness, benefiting both Canada and the U.S. We know that the energy sector provides thousands of well-paying, middle-class jobs on both sides of the border.

● (2040)

[*Translation*]

Canada is the United States' largest, safest, most reliable and most competitive supplier of oil and gas, including crude oil, refined oil products and natural gas. Here are some enlightening

facts. In 2019, Canada supplied 56% of the United States' crude oil imports, accounting for 23% of U.S. consumption. Canada also supplied 9% of the natural gas used in the U.S. One in five barrels of oil consumed in the United States comes from Canada. The United States imports more oil from Canada than from all OPEC countries combined.

Canadian crude oil accounts for the majority of the oil refined in the U.S., and those products drive the American manufacturing sector and are exported around the world. Canada is one of the only major suppliers of oil to the United States that has a price on carbon and a 2050 net-zero target.

An essential element of this energy system is the energy infrastructure, including pipelines. As the Prime Minister said directly to President Biden during their meeting last week, we are disappointed, but we acknowledge the President's decision to keep his election promise and revoke the presidential permits for the Keystone XL project. We have raised the importance of this project several times. We discussed it directly with President Biden recently and in November, as well as several times with senior officials in the incoming administration, including in the days leading up to his inauguration.

That being said, Canadian oil already flows through more than 70 pipelines, creating one of the most integrated energy systems in the world between two countries. We maintain that to continue providing and improving the benefits of Canadian oil and gas to the United States, we must build and maintain the necessary infrastructure to get the products to where they are needed. As far as electricity is concerned, Canadian hydroelectricity exports provide many U.S. states with a clean, renewable, solid base load 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

[*English*]

Electricity crosses the U.S.-Canada border along more than 30 major transmission lines unrestricted by physical or tariff barriers as part of an effective, efficient, highly integrated North American energy grid. This highly integrated system benefits both Canada and the United States. Operators consistently take advantage of spare energy capacity in neighbouring jurisdictions to optimize their systems. Ratepayers benefit from a more reliable and resilient electrical system that expands the international border.

In 2019, Canada exported over 60 teratonnes of hours of electricity to the U.S., the equivalent of powering almost six million U.S. homes. Those exports save American households, consumers and companies hundreds of millions of dollars each year on their electricity bills. Canadian hydro also contributes to U.S. energy security and helps states meet critical GHG emission reduction targets and to move to a low-carbon economy. With regard to uranium, Canada supplies the U.S. with 33% of the fuel used for its reactors, which in turn generate 20% of U.S. electricity. Industry and government in both countries are also collaborating on developing advanced nuclear technology, including the next small modular reactors that the natural resources committee studied at great length a few years ago.

In the current context of a global pandemic, it is more important than ever that we work closely to ensure a secure, reliable, sustainable supply of energy sources for North America and the world.

• (2045)

[Translation]

We know that Canada and the United States share a common vision to build back better, together, a vision that will ensure a clean, inclusive and equitable energy future. Canada is committed to securing an ever-growing variety of energy sources, whether it is about reducing the environmental footprint of conventional energy, developing or deploying clean energy or increasing energy efficiency. It is clear that the Canada-U.S. relationship can withstand, and even thrive, despite the extraordinary challenges we currently face. To move forward, we must build on our interdependence and seek ways to strengthen our North American locality.

The energy relationship between Canada and the United States is a model for the rest of the world. Let us continue this great relationship with the United States as a partner, friend, ally and neighbour. While it is natural to emphasize self-sufficiency, Canada, the United States and other countries cannot go it alone.

Canada and the United States are partners. This is how we will build alliances between the two countries.

[English]

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the speech by the member opposite. I find it interesting that in the midst of the news that is dominating today, and rightfully so, the Keystone XL pipeline and the various other concerns that we have before us, the Biden administration has signed and intends to introduce more buy American provisions.

It is interesting because the Prime Minister supposedly discussed this on Friday in his call with the new U.S. president. Certainly, if I were a Canadian business owner who does business in the United States, I would be terrified of the Prime Minister's approaching the subject of buy American with the same level of apathy and inaction he had with the Keystone XL pipeline.

We have seen an abysmal response from the Prime Minister and the government when it comes to Keystone XL. Is that what Canadians can expect when it comes to the buy American provisions the U.S. administration announced today?

S. O. 52

[Translation]

Mr. Marc Serré: Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his question, but I disagree with him.

When he was the leader of the third party in the House of Commons, the Prime Minister supported the Keystone project. When he became Prime Minister, he continued to support the Keystone project. There have been discussions between the U.S. administration and the Prime Minister to determine how to continue with Keystone. Unfortunately for us, President Biden decided to cancel the project after he was elected.

With regard to the Buy American provisions, our two countries engage in 2.2 billion transactions. We have an integrated economy. We will find ways to work constructively with the new U.S. administration, with the goal of ensuring that our two economies can grow together.

• (2050)

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

He started his speech by talking about—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We can barely hear you.

Can you adjust your microphone?

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Okay. I apologize, Madam Speaker.

The member started his speech by talking about various energy sources. He mentioned oil, gas, uranium and hydroelectricity. My question for him is the following.

How does he plan to meet the Paris objectives? How does he plan to tackle climate change if he considers oil, gas, uranium and a little hydroelectricity to be the primary sources of energy?

Mr. Marc Serré: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question.

With respect to the Paris targets for 2050, it is important to consider not only the energy sources we use now, as I mentioned in my speech, but also renewable energy sources.

We need to look at the investments the government has already made and see how we can build a better green economy. Balance is important. Right now, 6.7% of vehicles worldwide are electric. Change is happening. Investors around the world are focusing on green energies. We need to plan and strike a balance.

Some investments will affect workers, for example, the miners in Ontario. When my father was a member of Parliament in the 1970s, there were 25,000 miners in Sudbury. Now, there are 5,000.

S. O. 52

We need to take investments in innovation into account. We need to look to the future and look at how to build the economy.

[English]

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, this is a decision that has been made. The President has made this decision, and yet here we are today debating that decision.

What we want and I think what workers want, what people in Alberta and across Canada want, is for the government to come back with opportunities to invest in clean energy, with things that will ensure that these workers, families and communities can move forward.

What I want to hear and I hope that my colleague will talk about is a plan by the government to invest in those communities and workers, making sure that they have a prosperous economy that is going to work for the future. Instead, here we are debating a decision that has already been made. It is not going to change anything here. We need the government to take action. The government has an opportunity to stop the division right here in the House and help Albertans and get people back to work and move us forward—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Nickel Belt has a very short opportunity to answer.

Mr. Marc Serré: Madam Speaker, yes, the first thing we are doing today in the Keystone debate is looking at moving forward. Therefore, I appreciate the question the member is asking. It is why we need to invest in workers and renewables. The economy is moving toward that and we have to find ways to balance that out.

Hopefully we can move forward and look at more investments, but we have made investments in renewable energy and workers and in economic development agencies to make sure that we look at the jobs moving forward.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will split my time with my colleague from Regina—Lewvan.

I am grateful to participate in this emergency debate, which is of course of great national importance in general but also to the people I represent in particular.

The new U.S. president's decision to cancel the permit for the Keystone XL pipeline is not remotely surprising, but it is a short-sighted political move that ignores evidence, economics and common sense, as was the case the first time around when he was vice-president. With the stroke of a pen, thousands of people are out of work in the middle of a global crisis, and the transportation opportunities for world-class Canadian oil are set back yet again.

I am speaking as I always do: for the people who have been out of work or who are scraping by with inconsistent work, who are suddenly out of a job with few places to turn, for families and communities whose futures are precarious, all through no fault of their own.

Canadians whose livelihoods depend on the oil and gas sector are rightly anxious about their futures and are struggling with complete and utter financial despair. Entire communities are in fact at risk because of the policy- and legislative-driven historic levels of bankruptcies and the decline in investment in Canadian oil and gas.

That damage ripples through other sectors, risks jobs and harms businesses right across the country.

Since 2015, more than 200,000 jobs have been lost in Canada's energy sector. The devastation is real in more ways than one. In Alberta alone, a recent University of Calgary study said that for every 1% increase in unemployment, 16 Albertans will die by suicide. Never has a Canadian industry faced such a severe triple threat: global oversupply and demand drops, a collapse of global prices and a self-imposed lack of market access, domestic policies designed to drive investment away, killing businesses and jobs.

It is bad enough when the U.S. president and other American legislators block Canadian energy infrastructure despite the economic security, political and continental ties between our countries, and that the reality is that the U.S. sits on tens of thousands of kilometres of pipeline networks and is a major oil importer from Canada.

The decision is not a surprise to anyone when we consider the domestic political considerations of the new president. Also, this decision is perfectly aligned with the best interests of the United States. The U.S. is currently a world-leading energy exporter and producer and put the policy framework in place for the private sector to enable the U.S. to become rapidly energy independent and self-sufficient, an objective that actually started under the previous Democrat administration when the current president was vice-president and was expedited and secured under the most recent administration.

What is most galling of all is how the Prime Minister of Canada and the Liberal government have done virtually nothing to fight for KXL and have put Canada in such a vulnerable and powerless position. Certainly the Liberals have turned their backs on Canadian energy workers and their families and are ignoring the disproportionate pain and damage they have caused to Albertans, but that is not new.

The reality is that the Prime Minister has never actually championed the KXL pipeline. It should chill everyone that despite close ideological ties between the Prime Minister and the U.S. president, and despite a number of aggressive measures in the pursuit of the sham of social licence that the Prime Minister has imposed on Canada, including currently pushing a legislative framework that is almost unparalleled around the world and KXL's proponent saying the pipeline will be at net zero, it was killed on arrival.

The Prime Minister's weak response to former president Obama's Keystone veto in 2015 was to simply say that he was "disappointed". He failed to correct the repeated myth that Canadian oil is "dirty", especially at a time when the U.S. imported record levels of Canadian oil, more than it ever had before in the history of its country at that same time. The Prime Minister did not bother to point that out either. He failed to correct the record on Canada's stronger environmental standards for oil and gas and that Canada is a long-time environmental leader in responsible energy development.

The Prime Minister failed to make the case for KXL to American decision-makers then and now, and he failed to support TransCanada in the courts, in the States or through the NAFTA dispute resolution mechanism at all times in between. Of course this is all easy and obvious to understand. The Prime Minister just does not actually want this pipeline to be built. He said himself that he wants to phase out the oil sands. He has blocked pipelines and targeted Canadian oil and gas with harmful policies repeatedly. His inaction on KXL in 2015 and now in 2021 just proves the point.

What is blindingly clear, and Conservatives have been warning about this for some time, is that Canada must urgently get new export pipelines to new markets beyond the United States.

• (2055)

The brutal reality is that if the Liberals had not vetoed the northern gateway pipeline, deliberately killing thousands of jobs, dozens of benefit agreements with indigenous communities and the only stand-alone option for export to the Asia-Pacific for Canada, and if the Liberals had not intervened politically to kill the only private sector west-to-east pipeline proposal that could have secured Canadian energy independence while reaching European markets with double standards, last-minute regulatory changes and hurdles, Canada would actually have two new export pipelines to markets other than the U.S. right now. However, the Liberals killed both of them, so now the Canadian Minister of Natural Resources, the very minister who should be pushing for this project the most, said that we must simply “respect the decision”, and Canada's ambassador to the U.S. says everyone should move on.

Conservatives have backed Keystone XL every single step of the way. The independent National Energy Board and the Conservative government approved Keystone XL in 2010, and in 2012 the former Conservative government launched a major multi-year lobbying effort that successfully secured the support of the majority of U.S. lawmakers. After the Liberals were in government in 2016, the Conservatives called on them to support TransCanada's NAFTA appeal of a Keystone XL veto, but the Liberals were MIA. The previous administration made a common sense, fact-based decision, put economic best interests, the Canada-U.S. partnership and the standard of living and energy security of North Americans ahead of anti-energy ideology and short-sighted activism by reversing the previous veto.

Now here we are, back where we were in 2016 because the Liberal government will not actually fight for pipelines. That should be an important point to the whole country, because the lack of capacity to bring Canadian oil and gas to more international markets is a national economic crisis. The discount on Canadian oil cost Canada hundreds of thousands of jobs in the energy and manufacturing sectors. It is decreasing the value of Canada's financial markets and depriving federal, provincial, territorial and indigenous governments of billions of dollars in lost revenue long into the future, but that is the consequence of the Liberals' decision to kill new Canadian pipelines to export markets, and the real travesty is that they did it while the U.S. ramped up its own domestic production and removed its own ban on exporting American crude oil in its own interests. The Liberals have failed completely to secure Canada's own interests. The U.S. is both Canada's biggest oil and gas competitor as an exporter and Canada's biggest customer for oil and gas, and

S. O. 52

Canada's energy remains landlocked and captive to U.S. purchasers.

The government also stalled the Trans Mountain expansion by extending the regulatory process and by failing in its own process of indigenous consultation. TMX was supposed to be operational by December 2019. Now TMX is not estimated for completion until December 2022, and at least \$12.6 billion in Canadian tax dollars have been spent when the private sector proponent only really needed legal and political certainty to proceed. Unfortunately, the reality is that TMX will not even address Canada's market diversification issues, because while the marginal part of its shipments will go to the Asia-Pacific, the vast majority will go to the existing American refinery network.

The tanker ban, Bill C-48, now law, prevents the potential of pipeline infrastructure for export to the Asia-Pacific as the Liberals designed it to do, and as the private sector economist policy experts and Conservatives warned, the Liberals' no-more-pipelines bill, Bill C-69, which is now law, will guarantee that no new pipelines will get proposed or manage to get approved in Canada in the future.

Of course, another urgent concern is that Michigan's governor is considering shutting down Line 5. Since the Prime Minister does not care about what happens to Alberta, let us hope that he figures out the risk in a hurry and cares about what it would mean for Ontario, because Sarnia's mayor said the city is set to lose 5,000 jobs and cannot risk losing one single job. Six refineries in Ontario and the U.S. Midwest rely on Line 5, and it also supplies all of the fuel to the Pearson airport.

Scott Archer, the president of UA local 663 in Sarnia, said shutting down Line 5 “would entirely cripple the economy of this region.” While anti-energy activists celebrate the shutdown of these pipelines, the Americans are laughing all the way to the bank, because while our Prime Minister and the Liberals were busy blocking energy infrastructure in Canada, the U.S. was on track to become energy independent.

S. O. 52

The U.S., of course, has rapidly become self-sufficient while also leading the world as the largest oil exporter, but that is because these decisions are not about the environment; they are based on competition and business interests. The Liberals fell for it, and all Canadians have lost as a result. Make no mistake: I do not begrudge the Americans for securing their own energy supply. I am just profoundly angry and mind-boggled that the Canadian government did not do the same in Canada's best interest.

• (2100)

Meanwhile, major parts of Canada remain dependent on foreign oil from countries with nowhere near the environmental social governance, regulatory or labour standards, or performance of Canada. As a result of our Prime Minister's actions and inaction, in turn Canadians everywhere lose.

If the Prime Minister cares about national unity and about securing Canada's own economic best interests in every region and every province of the country, he will reverse his destructive direction over the last five years and stand up for Canada for once.

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member for Lakeland's advocacy and understanding of this very important issue. We share a constituency border, so we both understand the implications of this decision. There is significant economic loss, significant loss of jobs and massive implications to the economy, but there is also an environmental cost. There is a significant environmental cost for this.

I would ask the member to comment on the significant environmental cost that is related to the cancellation of the Keystone XL project.

• (2105)

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Mr. Speaker, my colleague makes a really good point, especially when we consider that the environment knows no boundaries and that it is a global concern on which there should be local action. Canada, with the most responsible energy sector in the world, which is Canadian oil and gas, could continue to thrive long into the future by ensuring that there was enough capacity to transport Canadian energy products around the world, energy products that the world will continue to need long into the future. As a result of the Liberals' blocking Canada from being able to do that, both here at home and now also failing to make the case to ensure that the Keystone XL pipeline could be built, the reality is that in the long run, the environment is worse off, and that is a real tragedy.

I have also listened closely to my colleagues talking about the necessity for investments in clean energy and alternative energy innovation and technology. I would say that I would be surprised if there was a member here who was against those investments, but members should also remember that the largest private sector investors in the innovation and technology that members are calling for is the Canadian oil and gas sector. It is the multi-energy companies that are active in the Canadian energy sector.

In fact, Alberta alone is one of the provinces that boasts the oldest and largest different kinds of investment in alternative renewable energy. This is where the decision that is being made and the policies being advanced by anti-energy activists really make no

sense. In fact, by blocking Canadian oil and gas and blocking Canadian energy infrastructure, they—

The Speaker: Questions and comments, the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member is very well versed on this file. She talks about it a lot in this House. Clearly, she understands the political dynamics of what is going on with pipelines in general, and in particular with this pipeline. Surely she is aware of the position that the former Obama administration had and that President Biden was part of that administration. Surely she knew that President Biden, during the campaign, had committed to this.

Given the outcome of the election, is the member surprised that this occurred, or was she expecting it to happen?

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Mr. Speaker, I think that I took pains throughout my speech to say that this was not remotely a surprise.

Certainly, taking at once the decision that was made by the former administration, when the current President was vice-president, and then listening to the arguments that the current President made when he was a candidate, it should not remotely be a surprise that this was his decision on day one.

However, what I would say is so galling is that, even though he campaigned this way and that was the decision that was made originally, the United States took the opportunity to remove its ban on oil exports and ramp up its own oil and gas production to become the world's leading oil producer and exporter.

I think what is quite clear is that the Liberals have failed at a variety of opportunities to fight to ensure that KXL could go ahead, but then on the flip side have been busy imposing a series of policies and legislation domestically that has put Canada in this landlocked and extremely vulnerable position, which has spinoff ramifications for the entire economy and certainly for every community in every province across the country.

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that it is a pleasure to rise in the House today, but once again we're going to be debating a cancelled project that has effects on people across Saskatchewan, in my riding of Regina—Lewvan, and across western Canada.

I have tried to figure out how I am going to speak about the cancellation of the Keystone XL today, and whether I will be very passionate, like the previous speaker from Lakeland. I want to congratulate her for being chosen as the best representative of her constituents, because I think that is true. She does an amazing job representing the people of Lakeland, and it is a pleasure to follow her. She is an honoured friend and colleague. I thank her very much for the passion she brings to this file.

S. O. 52

Exactly 11 months ago to the day, we were sitting in this chamber having an emergency debate on a similar topic: Teck Frontier. Within a year, we are in an emergency debate on the cancellation of the Keystone XL expansion pipeline. That speaks volumes on how the current government has pursued an energy policy. It speaks about the lack of respect the Liberals have shown to western Canadians, and it speaks about a lack of listening to what the ongoing economic situation is in our country.

The energy sector does not just provide good-paying jobs in western Canada. It provides jobs and income throughout this country. My colleague from Battle River—Crowfoot said it very well: When the energy and oil and gas sector does well, Canadians and all of Canada do well. This is a debate that should not be divisive, but should bring parliamentarians and Canadians together when we are speaking about how to ensure there are good-paying jobs going into the future.

I am going to take a different stance on how we are going to do this debate tonight, and talk about some of the innovations companies are doing to ensure the environmental sustainability and world-class environmental innovation that has gone on already without government intervention. If one can imagine it, energy companies in western Canada are already trying to do what we are trying to legislate. They are already trying to ensure they have minimal emissions. They are already trying to capture carbon.

An example was given on the CBC. I am pretty sure we know the CBC is not a big supporter of the Conservative movement across the country, but a CBC story talked about two companies that are already storing more carbon in the ground than they are emitting. The companies are Whitecap Resources and Enhance Energy.

Through carbon capture and storage and enhanced oil recovery, by burying CO₂ and using it to enhance their oil recovery, reactivating wells that have not produced as much, and producing more barrels using their stored carbon, they have stored 4,000 tonnes of carbon underground, which is the equivalent of taking 350,000 cars off the roads in our country.

Leave it to western Canadian entrepreneurship and innovation to already be ahead of government. I know that might come as a surprise to many members in this chamber, but many times the private sector is ahead of what the government has already tried to do. When we look at a Liberal government that continues to try to put roadblocks in front of our energy sector, whether it be Bill C-48, Bill C-69 or the ever-increasing, burdensome, job-killing carbon tax, our people in western Canada, our energy sector and our men and women are working hard to continue to overcome these hurdles and be world leaders.

Today in this chamber I have heard people talking about the decline in oil demand. I did a quick search online, and oil demand is going to increase this year by 6% and next year by 3%. A global supply document said there will be an increase in demand until 2030 by a million barrels of oil a day. We are going to have to choose, not only in this chamber but as a country, whether we are going to be the ones who supply that oil.

Are we going to champion our oil sector around the world, and say that Canadian oil should be the increase in those supplies? Eighty-one per cent of oil is going to be shipped into Asian countries by 2050.

• (2110)

I am here to say that should be Canadian oil. It should not be Venezuelan oil or Saudi Arabian oil. It should be Canadian oil, which is produced by the world's best innovative entrepreneurs, with the best environmental standards in the country and in the world.

I would also like to say that the way workers are treated plays an important role in how we look at our future. Workers are treated better in Canada than in other oil-producing jurisdictions. I and the MPs for Regina—Qu'Appelle and Regina—Wascana had the opportunity to sit down and talk to USW 5890 workers over Christmas. It was a pretty tough time in Regina over the Christmas holidays. Almost 600 people were given layoff notices a week before Christmas. When we sat down and met with president Mike Day, one of the first things he told us was that everyone thinks Evraz is a steel company. He said it is not. It is an oil and gas company, because if there is no oil and gas sector there is no steel plant in Regina. There is no co-op in Regina that has 2,300 Unifor employees making good wages. These are important things to talk about in these emergency debates, such as the one 11 months ago on Teck Frontier. We can use the numbers and talk about a billion dollars and a hundred billion litres of oil a year, but we are talking about people, their livelihoods and how they support their families.

I do not want to repeat myself, and I am sure everyone does not remember what I said 11 months ago, but it comes down to the fact that times are getting tougher for the hard-working men and women in our energy sector and they are looking for someone to support them. They have been abandoned by the member for Burnaby South, the leader of the NDP. The hard-working energy workers have been abandoned by the federal NDP. It does not support building pipelines. Continuously, they have been tossed by the wayside by the Liberal government to fulfill an agenda that has “anti-oil” written all over it. We can see it in the legislation time and again, and in the fact that we are going to have to have another of these debates, at some point in time I am sure, on another cancellation of an energy project.

• (2115)

The cancellations are mounting up, whether Northern Gateway, Grassy Point LNG, Saguenay or Energy East. The list goes on. When it says “cancelled”, it is the cancellation of jobs that we find the most frustrating. We slam our fists on the desks and talk about the frustration, like my colleague from Lakeland did, but as frustrated as we are, imagine the families that are trying to figure out how they are going to pay their bills in the coming weeks and months, with job after job, trying to support their kids who are going to school or going to a couple of extra events when the time comes.

S. O. 52

We have to keep in mind that our job here, as parliamentarians, is to try and ensure we are securing the future for the next generation. That means we do not pick and choose which sectors we are going to support because we have a fundamental ideological bent one way or the other. We cannot pick and choose and get people away from a paycheque economy. It is time to put some differences aside and work together.

The Prime Minister talked about a team Canada approach. I have not seen that from the man in five years. I remember on election night not one Liberal or NDP member stood up in Saskatchewan to give a speech, because there were not any.

The Prime Minister said that he heard us, that he was listening and that we would to work together. It has been two years, and we have not been able to find any common ground between us and the government. Once again, in this debate this evening, 11 months from when we held the emergency debate on Teck Frontier, we are talking about tens of thousands of good-paying jobs that disappeared in the blink of an eye.

• (2120)

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I was looking at the price for Western Canadian Select, and it is currently at \$38.52 a barrel. I am amazed at how—

The Speaker: I will interrupt for a moment. We are having a hard time hearing. Maybe there is a technical issue. The member seems to have his microphone in place. We will turn the volume up here and leave this to our technical folks.

We will keep going.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, Western Canadian Select is currently at \$38 a barrel. For so long, the Conservatives have been using the pipeline to argue that it will get us a better price. When it comes to Trans Mountain, for example, they ignore the fact that 99% of that pipeline's current exports are going to California, so they assume that increased capacity will automatically mean that our American neighbours will pay a higher price.

What are the Conservatives proposing to do with President Biden's decision? The writing was on the wall. Is the member in favour of levelling trade sanctions against the new administration or taking some kind of action against the new president? I just want to hear a firm answer of what the Conservatives are prepared to do over this decision when the writing was so clearly on the wall.

Mr. Warren Steinley: Mr. Speaker, the writing may have been on the wall, but to the member's question, we should have been supporting our oil and gas workers for the last five years, not the last five days.

It is a shame that a member from the NDP, who says the NDP is the party of working people, has not supported energy workers for five years. For him to stand here and ask that question and talk about the price point of oil right now is very interesting, as there are tens of thousands of people in my riding who do not have a job because of this cancellation and hundreds of people are now trying to figure out how they are going to pay their rent.

What we would have done as a government is supported our energy workers. We would not have embarrassed them for the last five years, nor added an ever-increasing carbon tax, passed Bill C-48, the tanker ban, and passed Bill C-69. We would have ensured that all of our allies knew that world-class energy is developed right here in Canada and would have been a promoter of that across the world.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, first I want to say that I listened carefully to the speech given by my colleague, who said that Canada has the best environmental standards for oil and gas extraction in the oil sands.

However, after doing some reading, I learned that, last May, the Alberta Energy Regulator suspended a number of environmental monitoring requirements for oil sands companies. Of course, it is saying that it did that because of COVID-19, but one has to wonder.

The companies are no longer required to test groundwater and surface water unless contamination occurs that could spread to the environment. What is more, these companies no longer have to look for methane leaks, even though it is a major greenhouse gas, nor do they even have to monitor birds and wildlife. They are no longer obligated to monitor or conduct research on wetlands, since such activities have been suspended until further notice. Water escaping from storm ponds no longer needs to be tested, and major cuts have also been made to air quality programs. Are those really the best standards in the world?

We also see that oil sands emissions have more than doubled since 2005 and more than quintupled since 1990, so there are four times more emissions. The Leader of the Opposition said that he wanted to comply with the Paris Agreement.

How is it logically possible to remove a carbon tax and continue to emit greenhouse gases from oil sands development—emissions that are rising dramatically, according to the data—and still respect the leader of the official opposition's commitment to the Paris Agreement?

[*English*]

Mr. Warren Steinley: Mr. Speaker, if the member wants to explain to his constituents why he believes we should continue to use Algerian and Venezuelan oil, he can. The tankers are coming up the St. Lawrence Seaway to drop that oil off. He may think that is more environmentally friendly than using the oil developed right here in Canada, refined in Canada, and building pipelines, which is the safest way to transport oil so we get it off our railways. If he wants to say to his constituents that he would rather use foreign oil than the oil developed here in Canada, that is his choice. I will never say that. I will stand up for our oil producers every day of the week in this chamber.

• (2125)

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, as I indicated earlier today, it is always a privilege to address the House of Commons, whether we are doing it virtually from our homes or on the floor of the House of Commons.

It has been interesting to listen to the debate thus far. I must admit that when this issue came up this afternoon in the form of a request for an emergency debate, I thought it would be a very healthy debate, given the importance of the issue. I applaud your decision, Mr. Speaker, to allow this emergency debate to take place.

I have a few thoughts that I would like to share with members. Being from the Prairies, I do have a lot of opinions on commodities and our natural resources. I have recognized for many years how important commodities are. In fact, in the province of Manitoba, I have always articulated how wonderful it is to be rich in natural resources, relatively speaking. However, it is also critically important that we diversify our economy.

All in all, Manitoba has done a relatively good job of diversifying its economy. Maybe it does not get the same booms that some provinces, such as Alberta, have had previously, but we do not get a really strong bust, if I could put it that way. Through that diversity, Manitoba has managed quite well.

I do not want people to think of western Canada, in particular the prairie provinces, as a hinterland full of resources and that those resources have to be tapped into in order for us to move forward. In fact, we have good reason to believe that our prairie provinces will continue to grow and be prosperous. The natural resources and our commodities will no doubt play a critical role in the future development of our economy and society.

I do not question that whatsoever, and it is because of the people who make up our provinces and the diversification that is there today. It has increased significantly over the years. I am very proud of that. That is one of the reasons I was glad to hear about the establishment of a prairie diversification unit that would look at ways for us to continue to build upon that diversification, which is so critically important.

We hear a lot about energy workers and how important the energy sector is to Canada and our economy. There is no doubt that when we think of energy workers, we are not just talking about people in the province of Alberta. We need to recognize that we are talking about Canadians in virtually all regions of our country who are impacted by the Keystone decision of the current President of the United States. There is no doubt about that.

Having said that, we also recognize that when the Alberta economy was doing well, the contributions to equalization over the years were immense, second to no other province on a per-capita basis and even far beyond it for a vast of the provinces. Alberta has been a major contributor to equalization, ensuring that in many ways we can provide the types of social programming we have.

When we talk about the importance of natural resources, in particular our energy, we should focus on the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan. We could also look out east to Newfoundland and

S. O. 52

Labrador, where we have high concentrations of the type of energy that I believe there is a world demand for. We need to recognize that fact. There is a need and that need is very real.

It is interesting to hear some members make comments in regard to the quality of products, our environmental standards and the manner in which companies in Canada treat our workers. I would argue they are far better and exceed many other oil-producing countries.

• (2130)

It is important to recognize that, from the beginning, the Prime Minister and the cabinet have supported a process that would ultimately see Keystone move forward. I know that the Conservatives do not necessarily like that, but at the end of the day the government has supported that project.

It is interesting that what I have found over the years is that it depends on which party might be speaking. If it is a party such as the Conservatives on the right, they will criticize us for not doing enough and not building more pipelines. They ask why we care about the environment and say that we should just build those pipelines. This is an attitude that stems from the Conservative right.

Then we have my New Democrat friends. I suspect, possibly because of pressure from the Green Party, they have now abandoned, at the national level, the need for pipelines. The Green Party has said that pipelines are a no-go, and I think, because the Green party has taken that position, a number of the New Democrat federal politicians feel somewhat uncomfortable. I say "federal" because it is important to realize that one of the staunchest advocates of additional pipelines was, in fact, the New Democratic Party in Alberta.

The New Democratic Party in Alberta played a critical role, not only in Keystone, but in other projects, and advocated for that development. The NDP at the national level has opposed Keystone and, no doubt, it has expressed, even in listening to the debate, some sort of victory. It is as if they are taking a victory lap because it appears that Keystone will not be moving forward because of the recent election south of the border.

I would say to both my colleagues on the right, the Conservatives, and my colleagues on the left that when we think of development of our natural resources we have to realize that we can, in fact, be sensitive to our environment and to our resource development at the same time. We can listen to the stakeholders and work with provincial premiers and indigenous leaders and ultimately develop plans of action that will, in fact, benefit Canada as a society. That has been clearly demonstrated.

S. O. 52

What I have found, when we enter into this type of debate, is that the Conservatives seem to want to stand on a pedestal, and that it does not matter what the reality is, but that they want to use it as some sort of a stand to be critical of the federal government and bash Ottawa. It does not matter what is actually taking place. All they care about is bashing Ottawa on this issue. They have consistently done that. It is one of the things where I would say there is some comparison between the Bloc and the Conservative party. Earlier today, for example, I asked a Bloc member about recognizing that Alberta and its wonderful natural resource has provided a great deal to Canadian society in all regions, including to the province of Quebec, but they tend to close their eyes and not recognize the importance of this particular issue.

I raised it by saying that it is much like we are concerned about our aerospace industry. Manitoba has a bit of an aerospace industry, and so does the province of Quebec, and other provinces do to a certain degree.

● (2135)

When our aerospace industry has been in troubled times, the government has been there in tangible ways to ensure that we can work with the local governments to try to protect the industry. Likewise in regard to our oil industry or the energy industry as a whole, we recognize that there is a need for the federal government to be involved. In fact, Trans Mountain was the first pipeline to actually bring some of our natural resources to the Pacific Ocean coastline and the province of British Columbia.

Compare what this government has done with the previous administration. I have no problem making that comparison at any time. I would suggest that we have done more for the province of Alberta than Stephen Harper did when he was prime minister and the Conservatives were in power for 10 years. That is the reality. Listening to Conservative member after Conservative member speak on this, someone would think that the reality is the opposite, which is just not the case. The numbers clearly show that.

Is there a Conservative speaker who could tell those following the debate how many miles of pipeline Stephen Harper built to the west coast? How many miles?

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Four pipelines.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Colleagues will find that the answer to that is zero. That is the answer. It is not even an inch.

Mr. John Barlow: Not true.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Contrary to what they might say about having gone over here, and then over there and getting some oil to the coast, they did not.

When it looked difficult for a pipeline to get to the Pacific, the federal government stepped up to the plate and acquired Trans Mountain, which the NDP premier supported, just like the NDP premier of British Columbia supported the LNG project. At the end of the day, when the NDP is in government, they tend to support Canadian interests. They tend to recognize the value of natural resources. It is only the federal NDP that seem to ignore that reality.

My Conservative friends, on the other hand, are in the field of saying that it does not matter what the Liberals do. They have 30-plus MPs in Alberta and a Conservative premier. All they are going to do is to slam Ottawa. In Manitoba when I was an MLA, we called it “fed bashing”. It is easy to blame Ottawa for problems.

There is a lot of irony, I must say, in this. Think about it. The federal government took the initiative on Trans Mountain and spent several hundred million dollars to ensure that it went through. The Conservative premier of Alberta has spent hundreds of millions, going into the billions of dollars, on Keystone. Let us wait and see what happens there, but it is interesting how members of the Conservative opposition will criticize our actions on the Trans Mountain and say how bad we were to Albertans for doing it, but to what degree do they criticize Jason Kenney for his behaviour on Keystone? Some might suggest there is a bit of hypocrisy there.

● (2140)

As a government, in a relatively short period of time we have established a tangible process that gives certainty to the industry, a process that ensures there is indigenous involvement and consultations, a process that respects the environment. As a direct result, we are in a far greater position today to be able to see pipelines built and constructed.

Because of the actions we took years ago, we see thousands of jobs in Alberta and other jurisdictions that were created because of our initiatives. That is far greater than whatever Stephen Harper and the Conservatives did in their 10 years.

We have to be very careful with criticisms. I spent 20 years in opposition and only a few years on the government benches, so I understand what members have to do in opposition to try to get attention. With the whole idea of national unity and saying the same thing whether in one region or another region, there is only one political entity in the House of Commons that is doing that and that is our Prime Minister and the Liberal Party. We recognize that as a federation, all of us benefit as a society when we support each other in the different regions. When the members try to bash Ottawa, such as the member for the New Democratic Party in saying that Ottawa has abandoned Alberta, I ask for an example. Tell me something that another provincial jurisdiction is getting that Alberta is not getting and show me it in a tangible way.

I always hear the member for Lakeland talking about how Ottawa has failed. I have a big problem with that because I am from the Prairies. I lived in Alberta. When I was in the military, I was in Alberta and spent years in Saskatchewan. I was born and raised in good part in Winnipeg. That is where I was for the last 30-plus years since I left the military. I am from the Prairies and will stand up for the Prairies, but I do not have to feed into the types of lines that separatists love to hear. I did not bash the feds when I was in opposition either.

If the member for Lakeland truly believes what she was saying, I would love to hear what she was saying when Stephen Harper was the prime minister. Do the comparisons. Look at the numbers. Try to tell me that the Conservative government in 10 years invested more in infrastructure than the current government and current Prime Minister. It would not be true. We have invested more in the province of Alberta when it comes to infrastructure. When it comes to helping those who are in need in Alberta, when it comes to economic difficulties, we have stepped up and provided billions of dollars in support to Albertans, as we have done for all of the different regions.

• (2145)

I believe that we have to be fair in our reflections of reality and history. If we were to do that, I suspect there would be a lot less fed-bashing and more talk about what we might be able to do.

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the parliamentary secretary and government House leader for talking about Alberta's contribution to federation through the billions of dollars that came from Alberta to feed the rest of Canada when Alberta was truly the economic engine over the past decades for the whole country.

The hon. member ended up listing evidence to explain to us how water was named water, which really does not do anything to help the people who lost their jobs, and there are thousands of them. I hope that the member understands, as I have been at the door talking to people in Alberta, what the suffering looks like and how pessimistic people are about the future because of the continuing war on the oil and gas sector that was started by the Liberal government for the last five years and is continuing now from south of the border, which is very devastating news.

As the member speaks on behalf of his government, my question is this: What is this government going to do to support these people who are now out of a job and looking for a way to find a proper lifestyle and continue it?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the government will continue with many of the actions it has taken over the years to date. We continue to see literally hundreds if not thousands of jobs being created with, for example, Trans Mountain, which is a very important pipeline that is being developed today. We continue to support Albertans and in particular small businesses as they diversify the economy, which is absolutely critical.

My friend talked about some of the comments I made at the very beginning of my speech. The health care system that we have in the province of Manitoba would not be as good as it is if it were not for those equalization payments. Many Manitobans and people from Saskatchewan moved to Alberta in order to better their lives and ultimately contribute to the development of our country. These are the types of things that we should be talking more about.

As a nation, we work together, which makes a better nation, and the federal government will continue to support Alberta, as it has been doing for the last five years.

• (2150)

[Translation]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons for his speech. It is a pleasure to see him again and to hear his eloquent words.

What I like about him is that he answers questions clearly, unlike his colleagues. I asked them a very simple question at the beginning of this debate, and now I would like to ask him that same question. I know he will give me an answer. I am sure he will not give us the runaround and try to distract us.

In 2014-15, the member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie, who is now the Minister of Canadian Heritage, sent out a number of jubilant tweets about all the obstacles Keystone XL would run into. Now government members are saying how disappointed they are in the Biden administration's decision. I would like my colleague to tell me whether the government and cabinet are happy or disappointed about this situation.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day, the Government of Canada supported Keystone. Obviously we recognized, as NDP premiers and Conservatives did, the value of Keystone moving forward. With the election south of us, President Biden made a commitment, and from his point of view, he is fulfilling that commitment. It does not mean that the Government of Canada has reversed its position. We still understand the importance of this pipeline for all of Canada, not just Alberta. To that end, nothing has changed, but we will continue to work with the president in dealing with a wide spectrum of issues, particularly the issue of trade. We should think of the impact that also has on Canadians in all regions of our country.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, energy workers sitting at home watching did not want to hear a partisan speech. I can tell the member directly that nobody is celebrating right now when workers are out of work in Alberta. What we are not talking enough about is the international embarrassment that is happening right now when other countries are making decisions to bring Canada in line because we are failing to do our part in tackling climate change, whether it be the U.S. on this decision or Norway with its sovereign wealth fund.

Right now, we need to clean up is Jason Kenney's failed gamble, and to fix things we need to take real action on climate change. There are opportunity costs for us in pointing fingers like this. We need to get people back to work and invest in clean energy. Workers in Alberta right now want to hear that the federal government is going to step in and put people back to work with clean energy, jobs that are going to bring them into the future, and not another failed plan or another argument over failed pipelines.

S. O. 52

I want to hear from the member if he is going to go back to his cabinet and his party and help rescue those workers in Alberta that really have been abandoned by a failed mistake by their premier. Are Liberals going to take real action on climate change so that more countries are not taking action on Canada, because that is what we should expect if we do not take real action on issues related to climate change?

• (2155)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, in one of the speeches earlier a Conservative member was very critical of our price on pollution. That was a very progressive policy measure by this government. It is ensuring that across all regions of Canada, there will be a price on pollution. One only needs to look at the throne speech that was presented by the Prime Minister back in September. If they want to get a good sense of the many green initiatives, the many ways in which we are going to be there for Albertans in terms of unemployed people becoming more employable through skill set enhancement via training programs, there are a litany of programs that are going to be there and are there today to support Albertans, as they are there for all Canadians.

We will continue to look at interesting initiatives that are going to continue to build upon a strong environmental plan. Unlike the NDP, we do recognize that we can work with the environment and the economy to ensure that as a society, we continue to move forward and meet the expectations and standards that Canadians have.

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (London North Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our colleague spoke very passionately and eloquently about national unity in the context of this debate. He talked about the fact, and it is a fact, that the west is tremendously important in Canada and remains tremendously important to this government.

The member is someone who grew up in the Prairies. He is someone who represents Manitobans in the House of Commons. Could he emphasize that or talk about it further? It was an issue that I thought really stood out, and it is something that needs to be underlined when we continue to hear colleagues in the opposition try to divide Canadians on this issue.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question. One of the most encouraging things for me when I went to Ottawa, when I was first elected in 2010 in a byelection, was the amount of support for western Canada coming from the national Liberal caucus. I was very impressed by it. Those were the days when we were in opposition.

When we became government, we did more than talk about it. There are so many policy initiatives that have been taken to enhance and to assist in diversifying and supporting the Prairies and British Columbia and northern Canada. We have invested more real dollars out west than the former Conservative government did in 10 years.

This is because we believe in our infrastructure—

The Speaker: Resuming debate, the hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot.

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with my hon. colleague, the member for Foothills.

This is an incredibly sombre debate to be entering into. It is one of those weeks that as an elected official we hope we never encounter. Let me describe that.

Last Tuesday it was revealed, through a leak from the White House, that Keystone XL would be axed with the stroke of a pen by the new U.S. President. I started to hear from constituents. Canadians need to understand that about 1,000 of those layoffs that took place last Wednesday took place in Battle River—Crowfoot.

As I talked to pipefitters, welders, heavy equipment operators and labourers who worked directly on that pipeline, uncertainty ruled the day. In many cases, it was not just uncertainty in terms of their immediate future. The Keystone project had been a godsend for them after half a decade of uncertainty. Talking to those directly affected was heartbreaking, to say the least.

Then I talked to a single mom who, because of an uptick in the economic fortunes of the region, saw the ability to send her kids to piano lessons for the first time in a long time. Once again, that was called into question.

I talked to seniors who, in some cases, for the first time in years did not have to worry about whether to pay the power bill or put groceries in the fridge, because a Keystone XL employee was boarding in their house.

Hotels that were empty, especially in an industry devastated by COVID, finally had people staying in them. Grocery stores, tire shops, small business owners saw there was once again a glimmer of hope in the midst of very challenging times.

On a number of occasions I have talked about the energy industry, and will continue to boast about our world-class energy industry. However, I want to start my speech that way because this is not simply an issue of a pipeline. This is a very human issue that has a particular impact in my constituency where there is now literally 200 kilometres of pipe. For some context, the Alberta side of this project is entirely located within my constituency. The genesis of the pipeline is at Hardisty. It is an incredible place. I would invite members, especially those critical of the industry we are talking about today, to come to Hardisty, Alberta to see the world-class industry in action. That is where the pipeline starts.

It makes its way southeast through my constituency, near my hometown, where my family still farms, all the way to the Saskatchewan border, where it was meant to continue to the United States. There are massive human costs to the cancellation of this project, and I have outlined a few of those today.

I listened carefully to the debate. The Liberal member and parliamentary secretary talked about how he thought somehow we were playing politics with this issue. I hope I have started to humanize this very real issue and show how it is not politics; it is about the livelihood of Canadians.

Starting last May, the Prime Minister and his Liberal government had the opportunity, knowing that there was an American election under way, to engage with American counterparts, putting politics aside, to stand up for what was in the best interests of Canada.

• (2200)

I find it interesting that the Minister of Natural Resources and other Liberals today have somehow been making the case that this is what they have been doing. A phone call to the President admitting defeat does not count as standing up for an industry or standing up for those thousands of jobs that were lost last week. It is incredibly troubling.

Over the last number of months, during an election in the United States, the transition that took place, leading up to the swearing in of the new administration this past week, the government should have been fighting for Canadians. I am not asking for anything special. I am acknowledging the fact that the Liberals failed to do just that.

The number of conversations I have had in this last week bring heartbreaking reality to light. The government has failed. I have heard a lot of discussion today about the oil industry and how it is time to move on. In fact, a member from the Bloc said that this project was doomed to fail. Eleven months ago when we were debating the Teck Frontier project, which was also cancelled, we heard similar language.

The environmental activists green left in the country, of which there are many in the Liberal Party unfortunately, are conflating the volatility of market investment with government policy that is systematically bent on destroying an industry, one of the legacy industries in my constituency. It is a national shame that this is the case.

I can assure members that there is a business case for these projects: Teck Frontier, hundreds of millions dollars spent in the application process; hundreds of millions of dollars spent by TC Energy in the Keystone XL. Time and time again, other projects have been cancelled. Hundreds of millions of dollars were written off for energy east. That is not because a business case did not exist. That is because the Liberal government has made it impossible for that investment to succeed. It is a national tragedy.

I want to talk about something that is very real. As I mentioned earlier, the previous Liberal speaker mentioned how somehow Conservatives from Alberta, from the west, were playing politics with the idea of separation. I am a proud Canadian through and through. What breaks my heart is that multi-generational Canadians come to me and they have given up on Canada. Many more say that they are ready to give up on Canada. That is the legacy of both the Prime Minister and his father. This should not be a political issue. It is the sad reality of the circumstances we face.

The actions of the government are sowing the seeds of division in the country, dividing different segments. It is not just east versus west although that is certainly one of the most flagrant examples. It is rural versus urban, north versus south, rich versus poor. The government has been incredibly effective at dividing Canadians, and that is a shame. It should be the first priority of any government to be a leader to unite for the best interests of all. Unfortunately, we have seen absolutely the opposite of that.

S. O. 52

For those people who are now facing uncertainty in their personal lives, not sure how to pay the next rent, the next grocery bill, those who will not be able to get their kids in piano lessons, for those who have given up on Canada as a federation, I implore members opposite to take note of the seeds of division that have been sowed.

When it comes to what needs to be done, we need a pipeline. I know my other colleagues have articulated very well the reasons for that, but we need a pipeline because it is what is best for Canada.

• (2205)

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the member said that there was a business case for this pipeline, but Canada's energy regulator, which is not among the environmental activists about whom the member was talking, has said that if we are serious about climate change, if we take climate action and if we are serious about net zero by 2050, there is no need for this pipeline.

Earlier today in his statement, the member for Hastings—Lennox and Addington, who recently got kicked out of the Conservative Party, said that net-zero legislation was not viable and urged Conservatives to vote against any net-zero legislation.

Does the member agree that net-zero legislation is unnecessary and against Alberta? Will the member be voting against Bill C-12?

• (2210)

Mr. Damien Kurek: Mr. Speaker, I find it interesting that the member from the NDP, ironically, is totally offside her provincial counterparts in Alberta. They should maybe have a conversation about the reality Alberta is facing. Even the Alberta NDP has figured out that this is an important project.

Here is the reality. There is a business case here because companies have spent hundreds of millions of dollars investing in it. Currently we have a price differential in our oil that has caused Canadians to lose out on tens of billions of dollars of revenue that goes to fund the social services, which I know that member specifically is very passionate about. They want to play politics on this, yet the NDP, the Bloc Québécois and many Liberals fail to acknowledge that this pipeline is the best thing that could happen to the environment in our country. It would cut emissions significantly. Currently that oil is being sold by rail and through older pipeline infrastructure that will eventually have to be retired. This is an efficient way to ensure that a world-class product produced in Alberta, in Canada, gets to market.

S. O. 52

While the NDP and other green activist left parties want to play politics on this issue, the Conservatives are standing up for Alberta and our world-class energy sector.

[Translation]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I must say that I agree with a great deal of my colleague's speech with respect to workers and their families. Many of us have risen this evening to say that there are solutions. For example, in Saskatchewan, workers and even tools from the oil sector are being used to develop geothermal energy. It is possible to retrain people in other sectors, including renewable energies.

My question is on another subject. President Biden made an election promise. I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on election promises. Will the Conservatives make promises during the election period? Does the member not agree that when someone makes a commitment, makes an election promise, they should do everything they can to follow through?

[English]

Mr. Damien Kurek: Mr. Speaker, I find it ironic. I have heard from the Bloc all night about how somehow the national Government of Canada should be intruding in provincial jurisdiction. I find that ironic, and further, I find it ironic that the Bloc would be talking about election promises. It is a separatist party that has been around for, what, 40 years and has accomplished nothing that it ever set out to accomplish. Certainly Bloc members need to think carefully before trying to lecture us.

I was incredibly surprised by the argument that the Prime Minister made, saying the government will respect the decision because it was the President's election promise. Quite frankly, the Liberals have done very little in terms of respecting their election promises and the laundry list of failures on that front, yet when it comes to standing up for a project, and against what is effectively an economic sanction against Canada on the first day of a new administration, the Liberals failed entirely to stand up for Canadian interests. That is a national shame.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is a very difficult day. It is a dark day, not only for Albertans, but also, I hope, for members of Parliament across this country. Many of my colleagues have said today that when the information came out last Tuesday about the impending cancellation of Keystone XL, even though there had been a lot of hints that this would happen, it brought reality home.

I had a call on Friday from one of my constituents who is among the thousand workers who were laid off. I had another constituent whose company lost a contract, and it is costing him \$100,000 a month. Do members know how many employees he is now having to lay off? I have had dozens of calls from constituents and their families about the devastating impact this decision is having on their families and communities.

This is happening in the middle of a pandemic, which has already devastated every corner of our economy, and to add this on to that has been particularly difficult. When I answer those phone calls, the response from my constituents is this: Why is no one fighting for us?

It is easy for colleagues from across the floor from other parties to say that, well, we are just going to transition to other jobs, and we are going to find them something else to do. What is that job? I have been hearing that from the Prime Minister for five years and we have 200,000 energy workers out of work in Alberta alone. None of them are coming to my office saying, "Thank goodness I have this job at a renewable resource industry", because it does not exist without massive government subsidies.

We have talked about those thousand workers that TC Energy had to lay off on that first day, but this goes way beyond those thousand workers. Jack Mintz from the University of Calgary is predicting that there will be 3,000 direct jobs lost, and 14,000 indirect jobs will be lost in Alberta alone. That is not counting jobs in Saskatchewan, service company jobs or jobs in other industries that would have benefited from this pipeline.

Again, this is another hit to Albertans at the worse possible time, and they are asking why no one is standing up and fighting for them in this government. That is what they want. That is what they deserve.

The impacts of losing this project are not just about Keystone XL. For many Albertans, and I would say, many Canadians, this is just the last straw of what has been a repeated attack on Alberta energy and Canada's economy. There is no question that when we come out of the COVID-19 pandemic, our country will already be on rocky financial footing. Much of that was because of out-of-control Liberal spending before the pandemic.

However, to come out of the pandemic and get Canada back on its financial feet, we are going to have to look at industries that we can rely on to be revenue generators. There are only a handful of those industries in Canada, and our energy sector is one of them. It is not just one of them, but the most important one, the one that creates the most jobs and the one that creates the most revenue for every level of government across this country.

Let us back up a little before we even talk about Keystone XL. Let us talk about the position that the Liberal government has put this country in when we talk about our energy industry.

The second the Liberals got into power, they cancelled northern gateway. They drowned energy east in a flood of red tape and new regulations that no other infrastructure project had ever had to face before. They purchased the TMX pipeline, and my colleague, the parliament secretary, likes to think that they have put more money into the energy industry than Harper ever did. Harper never had to pay \$4.5 billion for a pipeline that the private sector was going to build anyway. That \$4.5 billion is now likely more than \$12.5 billion, because every delay and every year that project does not continue with construction, it means product is not moving and it is not generating revenue. That \$4.5-billion investment that the Liberals like to talk about is now a \$12.5-billion white elephant on the backs of Canadians taxpayers.

We continue to cripple this industry with bad policy, such as Bill C-69, the no pipelines bill, the tanker ban and a carbon tax that will go to \$170 a tonne, which is far beyond what any other country is putting on their economy, putting us further and further behind in terms of not being competitive.

• (2215)

What has this virtue signalling gotten us? Has this earned us any social justice? Has this earned us any support from the activists? It has absolutely not. I wonder why are we trying, because they will never take yes for an answer.

We already have the most stringent environmental and human rights standards in the world in Canada's energy sector. That is what we should be talking about, not phasing out our energy sector and not crippling it with bad policy just to try to appease someone else, who we know will never be appeased. Those goal posts will always move, and President Biden has proven that.

Let us look at Keystone specifically. Keystone had put more than \$1 billion into renewable energy to power that pipeline, more than \$1 billion to ensure that it was emissions neutral. That still was not good enough, so it is impossible to go any further.

We have talked a lot about this being an Alberta issue, and there is no question that this has hit my Alberta and Saskatchewan colleagues hard. It is very frustrating to hear from colleagues from other parties that we should just get over it. However, this is not just an Alberta issue. This is a Canadian issue.

There are projects that have been decimated or cancelled, such as the Teck Frontier mine, which we have talked about. Warren Buffett has pulled \$4 billion out of a Quebec LNG project in Saguenay, Quebec. There is the cancellation of energy east. The GE factory in Peterborough, Ontario, was going to expand, and that expansion was cancelled. There were 350 workers laid off in Peterborough. That plant was making turbines for pipelines. Therefore, this is not just an Alberta issue. This is a Canadian issue. This is about our economic and energy sovereignty.

What is at stake next? This cancellation of Keystone and the lack of a fight from the Liberal government has emboldened these activists. Next in line is Line 5, which goes from Canada into Michigan. If that pipeline is cancelled by Enbridge, the Enbridge project, it could cost Sarnia 5,000 to 6,000 jobs and impact the jobs at Ontario oil refineries. Again, this is not just an Alberta problem. This is a Canadian problem, and I want my colleagues from other parties across Canada to understand that.

• (2220)

We are not speaking just for our constituents, which of course is our number one priority, but we are also speaking about what is best for Canada. That is what we are asking the Prime Minister and the government to do, to start standing up for what is best for Canada's energy workers and our country, not for what is best for the Liberals' global friends, but what is best for Canadian prosperity.

This is about prosperity. We are selling our oil at a massive discount to the United States, which sells it on the world market. That is schools, hospitals, bridges, roads and critical social infrastructure

that could be built here in Canada, but which are now going to be built in the United States, which is no longer our largest customer, but our largest competitor.

S. O. 52

There has been lots of discussion that this is about climate change and fighting emissions. Members can bet it is. Keystone pipeline would have been a very important tool to addressing climate change and reducing emissions. Do members know who benefits from the cancellation of Keystone? I am going to look at these statistics. How about Mexico with \$12.3 billion, Saudi Arabia with \$11.5 billion, Iraq with \$7 billion, Colombia with \$6.5 billion, and Russia and Venezuela. I could go on. All of these countries are now going to be filling the void that is left by Keystone. What do members think the human rights and environmental standards are of Russia, Venezuela and Saudi Arabia compared to those in Canada?

If the fight really is about climate change and emissions reductions, then these opponents of Canadian energy and Canadian pipelines would actually be speaking the truth in talking about exactly what we do here in Canada. We do it better than anybody else in the world. They should understand that and speak proudly about it.

• (2225)

Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's speech, but there is a lot of misinformation here. Forty-eight per cent of the total amount of crude that gets imported into the United States comes from Canada. We exported 3.7 million barrels per day, every day, in 2019. Ninety-eight per cent of Canada's crude exports go to the United States. There is no problem exporting crude to the United States: 79% of our imports are from the United States, so we are trading oil back and forth.

The problem with job losses is companies like Suncor that are automating the industry. Without building more infrastructure, there are no more jobs in the oil patch. This is a sunset industry, and when we see the big money, the smart money, not investing in oil and gas in Canada and the United States, we see governments, and provincial governments in the case of Alberta and British Columbia, throwing taxpayer dollars down a swirling drain to keep projects going.

We have international agreements. Stephen Harper signed an agreement in 2009 in Copenhagen to reduce emissions by 17% over 2005 levels. Eight provinces and three territories, representing 85% of the population, met that target. Two provinces increased their emissions so much that we levelled right out, and they were Alberta and Saskatchewan.

S. O. 52

What do we do about our international commitments? Out of the G7, we have the highest climb in greenhouse gas emissions. They have increased by 21%. All other G7 nations have lowered their greenhouse gas emissions, except for the United States, which has only increased its emissions by 3%, and that was under the Trump administration. Where does the member stand—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Foothills.

Mr. John Barlow: Mr. Speaker, the member should be ashamed of himself and his party for cheering the loss of 14,000 jobs in this country. I do not recall him ever standing up and cheering when we had an economic downturn and a loss of jobs in the auto sector or the aeronautics sector. Would he be standing up and cheering if we lost tens of thousands of jobs in the tourism sector in his riding? All of us should be—

Mr. Paul Manly: I am not cheering. This is a reality check.

Mr. John Barlow: You had your speech. This is—

The Speaker: Order. I want to remind hon. members that this is not a shouting match. We are speaking through the Speaker to everyone else in the chamber.

The hon. member for Foothills.

Mr. John Barlow: Mr. Speaker, my point is about the misinformation the member is putting out there. We have reduced the carbon footprint to produce a barrel of oil by 30%. The technology and innovation in Canada is second to none. When it comes to reducing emissions and addressing climate change, Canada is not the problem. Canadian energy is not the problem. Canadian energy is a vital part of the solution, and it is about time we started talking about that instead of attacking what we do best.

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we need a government that protects workers and invests in the jobs of the future, in low-carbon jobs. We also need real action on the climate crisis and need climate accountability.

I will ask the member the same question I asked his colleague, since his colleague would not answer. The member mentioned he is opposed to certain climate legislation that would impede pipeline construction. Canada's energy regulator put out a report that said Keystone XL is incompatible with net-zero legislation. Is the member across the way going to be voting against the net-zero legislation?

Mr. John Barlow: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member talked about the importance of fighting for jobs, and I want to answer that part of her question first. With Keystone specifically, TC Energy had promised that every single one of the jobs in the United States would be unionized labour, so the NDP should be supporting these types of things. If she indeed wants to fight for jobs, why is the NDP not supporting something like this?

I will reiterate what I said before. If the member's fight is to reduce emissions for climate change, Keystone was the epitome of what we should be doing. TC Energy invested more than a billion dollars in renewable energy to power this pipeline. It was going to be emissions-neutral.

Again, we are doing everything we possibly can to meet the NDP and Green activists' goalposts, but every time we get there, what happens? They move the goalpost a little further. We will never ap-

pease them. Let us start talking about what we can do to address these issues.

• (2230)

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to rise in this House, virtually of course, and talk on this important topic.

Before I start, there is about a half-hour left in the day here in Nova Scotia, and it is Robbie Burns day in Scotland. My family has deep Scottish ties, as I know the member for Foothills does, as well. This is the MacDonell ancient tartan, and certainly we are thinking of all those celebrating Robbie Burns today into the wee hours of the morning and want to highlight the important connection that Canada has with Scotland and its place in the world.

The member for Foothills and the member for Battle River—Crowfoot before him spoke quite passionately and quite intensely about the human impact of what this means to workers in Alberta and Saskatchewan. I have some statistics here, and I thought the Minister of Natural Resources spoke quite well earlier in this debate about what this sector means, particularly to the western economy but indeed to the Canadian economy also.

We as parliamentarians cannot get around the fact that this is our largest industry in the country. I do not have the statistics right in front of me, but it is about 10%—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands has a point of order.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I believe the member forgot to indicate that he will be sharing his time with the member for Don Valley West. I wanted to make sure he had the opportunity to put that on the record if that is the case.

The Deputy Speaker: I am sure the hon. member for Kings—Hants appreciates the brief interruption. I wonder if he might add whether that is, in fact, his intention.

Mr. Kody Blois: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague. It is 11:30 at night here, so he will have to excuse me. I will be splitting my time with my colleague, the member of Parliament for Don Valley West.

As I was mentioning, this is an important industry to our country. It is our largest industry. It is our number one export. As parliamentarians, we cannot get around the fact, and we should not be afraid of the fact, that Canada is the fourth-largest producer of oil and gas in the world. As a parliamentarian, I was disappointed in the decision the Biden government made, in part because of the impact it is going to have on the workers and their families. Members of Parliament in the House tonight have spoken about that, in part because this project was already started.

I would say that this was about creating regulatory certainty, whether it is in the United States, Canada or anywhere in the world. If companies are going through those processes, we need to be able to move those forward.

S. O. 52

As was already articulated by my colleagues, this is not just an issue for Alberta and Saskatchewan. This is an issue from every end of the country. As the member for Kings—Hants, I have many constituents who have had their start, built their livelihood and worked in these sectors. They either still transition between western Canada and the Maritime provinces or have made their start, come back home, and used their trade and the skill set they learned to contribute to our economy in Nova Scotia, pay their mortgage and make their living.

Sometimes I hear too much of the narrative from members of Parliament that this is a regional issue. No, this is important to workers and families across the country. Indeed, the impact of this industry has important benefits, paying for public services from Vancouver Island to Newfoundland. I want to make sure that is on the record.

It is important to note that despite the fact that this is a setback and the fact that the Biden administration has not approved Keystone, the relationship remains important. As I understand it, about \$100 billion of energy exports cross our national borders every year. This relationship that we have with the United States will remain important. Right now, 23% of the crude consumed in the United States comes from Canada. We certainly play an important role in energy security for North American markets.

I had the chance to tune in at different times tonight before I had the floor, and the narrative became that the government has “failed” to drive this project forward. Often it is members from the opposition ranks who like to suggest that government fails on issues that sometimes are completely outside the control of the Government of Canada. Of course, world oil prices are not dictated by the Government of Canada. I remember with Teck Frontier that some of the conversation there was around the future of the oil and gas industry. There was a lot of narrative that the government was not doing enough to support it, but of course we do not control world oil prices.

In terms of what we could do to work with the United States, our ambassador has been on this, as has the Prime Minister, from day one, in terms of engaging on this issue. If members do not want to believe me, the Premier of Alberta, Jason Kenney, as early as last week, talked about his support for the work that was going on behind the scenes to advance this project.

At the end of the day, the United States is a sovereign country. We have a strong relationship and the Government of Canada can do its utmost, as we have, but we do not control those decisions being made outside our national borders.

The suggestion that is being made is that we should retaliate, that we should create a trade war of sorts, not unlike what we saw from the last American administration, a trade war with what is both our closest economic partner, because of its proximity and its market to Canada, and also one of our most important partners from a security perspective. I do not think the suggestion that we should retaliate brings any benefit to oil and gas workers in Alberta, Saskatchewan, or anywhere in this country. That could only jeopardize the existing relationship of that \$100 billion that goes back and forth every year and is crucial to our supply chain in North America.

● (2235)

I want to touch on a point the member for Foothills made. I have to be fair and make sure I am balanced in my remarks tonight, because I thought the member for Foothills spoke quite eloquently. I thought he was convincing on many points, but he talked about appeasing social activists almost as though the government is moving in a direction just to appease a small group of individuals who might be very prominent on environmental issues. The member for Victoria, or perhaps it was someone else, might have spoken about the fact that global financial markets are focused on investing in industries and companies that are moving in this direction. In fact, Canadian energy companies understand this. They are moving in this direction.

On the suggestion that this is appeasing social activists, we have international agreements to be able to move on this. This is not about appeasing social activists; this is about recognizing we have work to do in the international community. Energy companies know that they have a social responsibility to get there. I think there is a way to balance both, and I will get to that in a moment, but I found that comment to be a bit unfortunate in what was otherwise a quite good speech.

There is a lot of finger pointing, but we also have to compare and contrast to the last government as well, a Conservative government under Stephen Harper, our former prime minister. In terms of the legacy the Conservatives left behind, they were not able to advance the projects we have been able to advance, and I will go through some of them in a moment, but there is a lot of blame being sent toward our current government that fails to recognize the existing record that they had.

One Progressive Conservative former prime minister, Mr. Joe Clark, who actually was briefly the member of Parliament in Kings—Hants in the early 2000s, said, “One of the real problems that I think lingers over [Keystone] is, before the pipeline question arose, the [Harper government] deliberately went out of its way to be seen as an adversary of environmentalists.” That is perhaps similar to the comment made by the member for Foothills today, and for Mr. Clark it was problematic. That is the type of Progressive Conservative thinking we need to see more of in our opposition party, which is about balancing environmental interests along with economic ones. That is certainly what our government is doing.

To talk about our record, we approved TMX and bought it when it was necessary, and we are building it. It has created over 7,000 jobs. We have approved NOVA Gas, and a thousand more jobs will be created in Alberta. Line 3 has been approved, which is another 7,000 jobs created. As well, \$1.7 billion has been provided to the western provinces to help with abandoned and inactive wells, which is helping reduce emissions and keep oil and gas workers on the job. Closer to my end of the country, in Atlantic Canada there has been \$320 million to support workers and lower emissions in Newfoundland's offshore.

S. O. 52

I wish I had more time to go on, but my point is that it is similar to when we talked about Teck Frontier. We have certain members of Parliament in this House who do not believe our oil and gas sector plays a prominent role in the days ahead and we have members of Parliament who fail to recognize that we also have to move on our environmental record. Those two can co-exist. Our government is the one to make that happen.

We will work in the days ahead with industry, as they are already doing, to make sure they are sustainable and that there is a future for this important sector in our country.

Mr. Gerald Soroka (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciated that the member said we worked together and that Canadians all across this country were supporting the oil and gas sector. I have a question when it comes to building pipelines. I know this one has an issue, in that until we get a new president in the United States, I do not see it proceeding.

However, the member for Winnipeg North said the Liberals have more pipelines built. My question to the member is whether he would support a pipeline going to eastern Canada so that we can support each other and get rid of tankers coming down the St. Lawrence Seaway.

• (2240)

Mr. Kody Blois: Mr. Speaker, if there was an application to come back on that process and it made sense from a financial and environmental perspective, absolutely. I have said that to members on my doorstep. We import a significant amount of our crude from other countries, yet we have the ability to do so right in Canada. I do not believe there is an application in process, but if that were to come and if it met the regulatory approval, of course.

I want to quickly talk about Goldboro LNG, a liquefied natural gas project being proposed in eastern Nova Scotia. It is important to getting Germany, one of our G7 partners, off coal. It is a project that supports Canadian energy workers, but also helps reduce our emissions in the global context.

These are things we have to work at, especially companies that are committed to getting to net zero.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this evening's debate is quite clear. Everyone knows the Bloc Québécois' position on Keystone XL, and the position of the Conservatives, the Green Party and the NDP. However, we are not so sure where the Liberals stand on this.

I have asked the same question four times. The first time, I thought that my question had been misunderstood, and that was fine. The second time, I still gave the government the benefit of the doubt. The third time, I felt like there might be some bad faith at work. This fourth time, however, I am sure that my colleague from Kings—Hants will answer me because he will have understood the question, especially if he has been following the debate since the beginning. What I want to know is not complicated, and I hope that the government, or at least one of its members, will answer me.

In 2014 and 2015, the hon. member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie, who is also the Minister of Canadian Heritage, tweeted his joy at

the obstacles that Keystone XL was encountering. I have dozens and dozens of tweets from that member. Now the Liberals are saying that they are disappointed, pained and sad to see Keystone XL cancelled. I would like to get the answer I am looking for, namely whether cabinet is happy or disappointed that Keystone XL is cancelled. It is quite simple.

[English]

Mr. Kody Blois: Mr. Speaker, let me say a couple of things to that long question the member asked.

First, I am the member of Parliament for Kings—Hants, not a member of the executive council, but I certainly have dialogue with my colleagues. I will leave speaking on behalf of cabinet to my cabinet colleagues.

I will say this. The Liberal Party, not unlike other parties, has a variety of opinions in its caucus. Some members have certain beliefs, others have different ones along the line. I made it very clear that I believe Canadian energy, our oil and gas sector and our environmental targets can co-exist and both are going to be important in the days ahead.

I will let other members speak for themselves, particularly with respect to our government. Our Minister of Natural Resources was clear about his position. As I understand it, the member from the Bloc basically is not in support of the Canadian oil and gas sector. That really flies in the face of the equalization payments Quebec receives every year. Year after year, the Canadian oil and gas sector helps support projects and residents across the country, including in his home province.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am glad the member mentioned Robbie Burns. It is a very important point to make today.

He also mentioned that this is not just a regional question. When I go knocking on doors in my riding in the interior of British Columbia, I meet families who have family members working in Fort Mac in the oil patch, so the downturn in the oil economy is something that affects all of our ridings across the country.

To pick up on one of the points that the member for Foothills made, that workers need to see these jobs and they are tired of these promises, we need to create those jobs now. We need to invest billions of dollars. We have invested billions in pipelines. Let us invest billions in work and jobs across this country. Energy-efficiency jobs spring to mind, where people could work in their riding, my riding, work at home, be at home with their families—

The Deputy Speaker: We are out of time.

I will let the hon. member for Kings—Hants give just a short response.

The hon. member.

Mr. Kody Blois: Mr. Speaker, I would agree with the member. There is a global transition that is happening toward a greener economy. As I mentioned in my remarks, energy companies are focused on that too. They are committed to being there. We can find a balance to be able to move forward. We have invested in green energy, \$15 billion and a climate accountability act before Christmas. We are focused on being able to support both in the days ahead, because it is not one or the other. We can make both work.

● (2245)

Mr. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, along with the member for Kings—Hants, I want to wish everybody a very happy Robbie Burns Day. In honour of that I am wearing my Oliphant tartan tie. It is a minor nod to the heritage that some of us share in this place.

It is a great privilege to participate in tonight's debate, which has been very wide-ranging. This debate is about a pipeline and the decision by a democratically elected President of the United States of America to cancel a long-hoped-for pipeline that was to take Canadian energy to our neighbours to the south. However, it is much more than that. It is about Canadians, mostly Albertans but not only Albertans, who are worried about their livelihoods with the cancellation of this pipeline.

It is about Canadians across the country who are worried about how they will fit in to an economy that is undergoing a fundamental transition regarding the way we live, the way we work and the way we engage together, and it is dramatically changing our economic and industrial landscape.

It is also about Canadians who are wrestling with the reality of climate change, of threats to air quality and the health impacts of environmental degradation. Mostly, it is about how we hold all three of these things together at the same time, protecting livelihoods in the short term, ensuring economic transitions in a fair and just way and ensuring that no one is left behind, and how we do these things while taking real and concrete steps to address climate change and improve the quality of life in Canada and around the world for the benefit of everyone.

As we wrestle with these three things simultaneously, we also recognize very clearly that Canada is not an island. We share this continent and, maybe more to the point, we share an economic, cultural and deeply important energy and environmental relationship with the United States. It is second to none in the way it impacts all of us. That relationship is something that all Canadians are now coming to grips with. We are each other's top energy supplier across virtually every source of energy: oil, gas and hydro-electricity.

We are also the United States' number one partner in energy security, ensuring our industries and consumers have a supply of power to sustain jobs and communities. That energy security also demands environmental sustainability as a key component. The Canadian government and Canadian industry are committed to the ongoing process of increasing the sustainability of our energy supply, and together we are taking action to drive down the environmental footprints of traditional energies, developing and deploying clean energies, and increasing energy efficiency.

S. O. 52

As we move into a clean-energy transition and toward a decarbonized economy that will address the challenges of the changing climate, our bilateral energy and climate change collaboration becomes even more important. That is because climate change is, at its core, an issue that requires collective action. We are committed to that work. This applies to the energy sources we use today, the ones we invent tomorrow, and our policies to fight climate change in the weeks, months and years to come. Every energy projection indicates that over the next few decades we will continue to need fossil fuels as that transition continues.

Today, I bought a new car. It is kind of fun to pick up a new vehicle. It is my second hybrid: a Toyota made in Woodstock, Ontario. It will use gasoline, but it will use less gasoline than a car with a conventional engine. It is a symbol of the transition that we are in, moving to new technologies while continuing to be dependent on fossil fuels. Many of us find ourselves in that same place. Canada and the United States are in that together. Today, Canada is by far the best source for the United States for that fuel because of many factors, including our geographic proximity and world-leading energy production practices. We are good producers of some of the world's best sources of energy, and I think we all share, in the House, the goal of producing the oil and gas we will continue to need for some time in as sustainable a way as possible.

Canada's environmental, social and governance record for oil production ranks third in the world, well ahead of any other supplier to the United States, which itself ranks sixth. Is this good enough? Not good enough for us, but it is an excellent record and can only get better.

● (2250)

Canada's Oil Sands Innovation Alliance, for example, which represents all the major oil sands companies, is developing new technologies and sharing best practices to enable a further reduction of the impact of their in situ operations on freshwater resources.

S. O. 52

Canada is also a leader in clean-tech and reducing the environmental footprint of fossil fuel production. Just today, two Calgary companies, Enhance Energy and Whitecap Resources, announced they had gone beyond net zero to achieve net negative production of oil. This remarkable accomplishment was achieved by capturing carbon which was then itself used to extract the oil. This means that the companies are storing more emissions underground than they are producing in their operations. This is the kind of innovation that will accelerate our transition towards a green future, which underpins our climate commitments as a country. The world is watching and taking note.

It is in that context that I, for one, very much welcome the renewed commitment to climate change that we saw in the election campaign of the Democratic candidate Joe Biden, and in the early signals coming from President Biden in his new administration, such as rejoining the Paris Agreement and implementing a build back better green recovery.

Canada is committed and determined to work closely with the United States as we move forward addressing climate change. There is no greater problem in our world than climate change. We will not always agree, and from time to time there will be bumps in the road with the United States, but our two countries will show the world that we are serious about the existential crisis that is climate change.

On December 11, our government announced an initial \$15 billion investment as part of its plan to accelerate the fight against climate change so that Canada can exceed its 2030 Paris Agreement targets and reach the government's additional commitment of net-zero emissions by 2050. The Prime Minister has already raised climate change with the president in both of his telephone calls.

We are all in this debate together and though we are not all in agreement, we do agree that climate change is an existential crisis that needs to be dealt with. At the same time, we also recognize that people continue to need jobs and that we need to continue to have fossil fuels for the way we live in this country as we transition to a new economy and a new way of life. Together we can ensure our economies so that our children and our grandchildren live in safety as we recover from COVID, and that we will benefit from a complete mix of energy sources that reduce emissions and enhance North American energy security, combatting climate change and making this climate livable for generations to come.

I am very pleased to engage in questions now as we continue in this very important debate.

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the issue here is accountability. We talk about the environment all the time. We talk about taking environmental steps, including getting more world-class environmental product to market, but we run into walls because we do not advocate effectively enough for that environmental solution.

Would the member take it upon himself as a member of the governing party caucus to make that point more well known in the decision-making in his party and to put this at the forefront of the agenda of getting something done for our economy, for our environment and for our future?

Mr. Robert Oliphant: Mr. Speaker, yes, I am committed to that. We have been saying as the government that the environment and the economy go hand in hand. We cannot have a clean environment and somehow sacrifice the economy to the point that it does not matter how we are living on this planet. We need both of these things together.

One of those realities is that having lived in western Canada, I have a different perspective than some people who have not lived there. I have a sister who is an Albertan and she reminds me regularly of the importance of this. I have heard about the commitment Alberta has to a cleaner environment.

We are trying to do this together. We want to ensure that we do not fracture our country, but recognize that together we have to battle both of these things. We have to ensure we have jobs and a clean environment. We combat climate change and we do it in a way that is positive, constructive and step by step.

Therefore, the answer is yes.

● (2255)

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Don Valley West for his role as a parliamentary secretary. He has just done exemplary work for probably every MP and thousands of Canadians across the country in the last year. He has worked so hard and I really thank him for that. However, I want to ask him a question on the foreign affairs part of his role.

When we are faced with a decision by the U.S. President to cancel the permissions for Keystone, I would hope that Canada's goal, in speaking with the President and members of the U.S. administration, would be to advance that climate action plan. He has laid out that trillions of dollars of work needs to be done. Canada should be a part of that and we have to negotiate with the United States to ensure we are not on the other side of that buy America plan, so Canadian companies and workers can benefit from coast to coast with the effort the United States will be undertaking.

Mr. Robert Oliphant: Mr. Speaker, in the last year I have learned about the commitment every member of Parliament has to work for their constituents. Through this year I have heard such tremendous passion from all my colleagues. Doing my consular affairs work has been mostly fun and enjoyable.

As I said earlier, we have a democratically elected President in the United States who clearly campaigned on the cancellation of this pipeline and is now taking action on that. Our job is to find a way for Canada to fit into that decision in the best possible way. This is not going to be an easy relationship. Many of us had our shoulders drop and were very happy with the results of that election, but it does not mean it will be easy. Whether it is the buy America program or whether it is other issues, the United States may differ very fundamentally from Canada. Our job as the government is to stand up for Canadians and Canadian values, while working with the realities that we are given on this continent.

We will attempt to show the United States the value of our energy, the importance of Canada being its best supplier of energy; the value of Canada as its leading customer for American-produced products. We will continue to be a valued partner economically. Sometimes we have to remind Americans of that. I think they sometimes forget that.

Our job, from both sides of the House, is to remind our American friends that we are a good friend, we are a good customer, we are a good supplier of energy and other resources as well as manufactured goods, technology and innovation, and we should do that together. Somehow we have to show them that it is a win-win.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Calgary Forest Lawn.

On this first day of the House sitting in the new year, I am proud to speak up for something that is important to all Canadians. The importance of Keystone XL is something I want us all to focus on right now. It is obviously why the official opposition has requested an emergency debate on it tonight.

The Liberals have officially acknowledged the benefits of this pipeline, but they really do not seem to understand or care much about the urgency of what is happening. I wish they did. I wish they would take seriously the needs and aspirations of Canadians all across our country. My riding, my province and my region want this pipeline for many good reasons and they are not alone.

It was great to hear the Minister of Natural Resources talk earlier in the evening about the couple of pipeline projects that have received approval during the Liberals' time in government. A more appropriate description of their approval, though, would be that they survived the Liberal gauntlet that was thrown down before them. Since the minister listed a couple of projects that received approval, I thought it would only be appropriate to list a few companies that did not survive the Liberal gauntlet.

I found some examples online. The first is Houston Oil & Gas, which ceased operations in November 2019. Calgary-based Houston Oil & Gas abandoned its operations due to financial difficulties. The company operated 1,264 wells, 251 pipelines and 41 processing facilities, mainly out of south-east Alberta. It could cost a total of \$80 million to clean up the remaining infrastructure.

The next is the move by Encana, the Canadian oil giant, of its headquarters to the U.S. In October 2019, when it announced its rebranding to Ovintiv Inc., it said it was moving its headquarters to the United States to attract more investment. CEO Doug Suttles

stated that “A domicile in the United States will expose our company to increasingly larger pools of investment in U.S. index funds and passively managed accounts, as well as better align us with our U.S. peers.”

Former CEO Gwyn Morgan also said that “The destructive policies of the Trudeau Liberals have left the company with no choice but to shift its asset base and capital program south of the border.” Kinder Morgan has—

• (2300)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands might recall that he used the family name of another hon. member here in the House. I remind him that now that we are back into regular sessions, he should use either the title of the member or the riding name, but not their family or given name.

The hon. member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: My apologies, Mr. Speaker. I was reading a quote, and I guess I got lost within it. Here is another quote, on Kinder Morgan exiting the Canadian market:

In August of 2019, the petroleum and natural gas company Kinder Morgan secured a \$2.5 billion deal to sell off its Canadian arm and leave the market.

In 2018, the Liberal government purchased the Trans Mountain pipeline from them for \$4.5 billion. According to estimates by the parliamentary budget office, [the Prime Minister] overpaid for the pipeline by up to \$1 billion in taxpayer funds.

There are several other companies that have either been absorbed by bigger companies or forced out of the market in the last five years due to the severely limiting policies and overall death-by-delay attitude of the government. The investment climate in Canada is driving investments in resource-based companies to countries with weaker environmental standards and poor human rights records, which should be motivation enough to see a project like this through to completion.

It is important at this time to consider what Canadians are saying about Canadian-sourced oil and gas. It might surprise some of my colleagues from different parties to learn that there are opinion polls consistently showing that even Quebecers have a strong preference for getting oil supplied from western Canada rather than other countries. In a poll done by the Montreal Economic Institute, it found that 71% of Quebecers would prefer to import oil from western Canada than from other countries. It also found that 50% of Quebecers believe the province should develop its own oil resources instead of continuing to import all the oil it consumes.

S. O. 52

Colleagues might also be surprised to find out that there is strong support from indigenous Canadians for the project. This pipeline represents an opportunity for reconciliation and prosperity. Chief Alvin Francis from the Nekanee first nation in my riding is the president and CEO of a first nations group called Natural Law Energy, which, as some probably know, had a significant investment in an equity agreement with Keystone XL. When I talked to Chief Francis about the news that the permit was being revoked for Keystone XL, he was quite saddened and disheartened about it because this project had meant funding and the opportunity to further education and housing, and advance the economic development that they have been working so hard to build for their people.

There is a 30-year commitment from TC Energy for this project, and he specifically spoke about the opportunities that people were excited for, such as training, employment and developing a career working on this pipeline that was owned by Natural Law Energy, but now it is all gone. When he was interviewed, Chief Francis spoke to Global News, saying:

I always try to tell people, the glass is always half full, never half empty.

I want my First Nation to be successful ... and there's many things out there that I'm going to have to pay more attention to ... I'm always trying to think of what is out there as being the next thing? Because if I don't do that as being the leader of my community, I'm not doing my job. I always have to lead. Every morning's a new day....

They have very knowledgeable people, TC Energy, and they will do it. They will put a plan in place and I'll be part of that plan to make sure that we have our view on it, First Nations view on it so that we can continue to be successful together.

The loss of Keystone XL will be devastating for that community as it is for many others. The mayor of Shaunavon, Kyle Bennett, sent me his thoughts on it as well. He said that they are extremely disappointed by the short-sightedness of this U.S. administration and that this should be treated as an attack on fair trade within our countries. He continued that, at a time when our economies are suffering, we should be supporting industries that will create thousands of jobs and millions in taxation revenue. He feels that this project not only represents our economic interests, in the short term and the long term, but is also a sign of the relationship with our largest trading partner.

What does the government have to say to the Nekanee first nation, to Shaunavon and to the countless communities and workers it is letting down? Before last week, the Prime Minister told us about one phone call, and at committee we heard from the natural resources minister and also from the parliamentary secretary that they had one phone call back in November with the incoming American administration. He said that the first phone call was "the very definition...of a priority".

If it is a priority, one half-hearted phone call does not add up to a priority. If it is a priority, the Prime Minister, the natural resources minister, the foreign affairs minister and the international trade minister would have all been at the table repeatedly asking the former and incoming administrations to ensure that this project is built. They would have been telling them that this is about Canadian and American jobs, that this is the most ethically sourced and environmentally friendly oil in the world, and that it also drives innovation.

There are oil and gas companies that have made the claim that they are net negative in their emissions because of the utilization of carbon capture and storage. In an article by CBC of all places, it was reported that Enhance Energy sourced 4,000 tonnes of CO₂ underground, which is the equivalent of removing 350,000 vehicles off the road every day.

• (2305)

When something is made a priority, we relentlessly go after it. Enhance Energy and Whitecap Resources have made it a priority and have objectively achieved it with carbon capture and storage. The government has only proven, once again, that it needs to get its priorities straightened out.

I hope we will see the natural resources minister at committee again next week or in the coming weeks to explain where the project is going with the new administration and what kind of work and efforts the government has put into advocating for Canadians, Canadian jobs and our industry.

The Liberals knew the position of the incoming administration. Did the Prime Minister think that one phone call back in November and then one phone call at the eleventh hour, politely expressing disappointment, was going to be enough? Obviously, we all knew what the goals of the Biden administration were. We knew what it was saying. It laid it on the line.

The point I am trying to make tonight, and that all my colleagues are trying to make, is that if the government truly does care about Canadian jobs, if it truly cares about Canadian resources, about our oil and gas sector, about the workers who it repeatedly talks about, it would have put in a wholehearted effort.

It was great to hear the government talk about consultations with the Alberta energy minister and even with the Saskatchewan energy minister. That is great, but honestly that is just preaching to the choir. That is not really the audience it needs to speak to. The government needed to be speaking, as I said earlier, with the incoming administration and the now new President of the United States and his people about the importance of this project, what it was going to bring to Canada and what it was going to mean to the energy security for North America.

Several great opportunities have been proposed and promoted over the last five years. The Liberal government effectively killed them with its death by delay tactics. Quite frankly, it has allowed it to blame everyone else for its dithering and delaying on all these kinds of projects. We saw that with the Teck Frontier mine and we see once again with Keystone XL. A lot more is at stake each and every time the government uses this tactic.

• (2310)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it has been a long night of debate. The Green Party members never got a speaking slot, so I will try to be brief but there is so much to say.

S. O. 52

My hon. colleague from Cypress Hills—Grasslands and we find ourselves at different ends of this discussion. The crisis that consumes my sleepless nights is the threat to my children and grandchildren of a galloping climate emergency. I do not think it is incompatible to protect workers in the fossil fuel sector, but it is incompatible to continue to press for growth in fossil fuel infrastructure and avoid the coming climate crisis.

My question for my hon. colleague is this. What would have made the Conservatives believe, and for that matter what made the Liberals believe, that the well-founded, evidence-based decision of former secretary of state, John Kerry, based on an extensive review, would be ignored when, for purely political reasons, former president Donald Trump overturned it? This was an evidence-based decision for which we ought to have some respect.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Mr. Speaker, one of the overall themes that we have routinely been hearing throughout the night here is this: If not Canadian oil and gas, where else is it going to come from? We know it is going to be replaced by Saudi Arabian and Venezuelan oil. The global demand is not going down; it is going up. That is a real fact, so we need it to be Canadian oil.

We can support Canadian jobs and it is being sourced in the most environmentally friendly way there is in the entire world. We have the highest standards here in Canada, so let us be proud of that and not vilify our industry.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, looking at the trajectory of the current government, it has sat across the table from three American presidents and really failed to advance Canadian strategic objectives in every case, but it is particularly obvious why in the case of the energy sector.

The Liberals profess to want Keystone XL pipeline to succeed, and yet they have killed pipelines in Canada. They killed the Northern Gateway pipeline right out of the gate. They passed Bill C-48, which prevents any kind of pipeline project, such as, perhaps, the Eagle Spirit pipeline, from moving forward through northern B.C. They killed energy east, indirectly, by piling all sorts of additional, unreasonable conditions on top of it.

We see them killing pipeline after pipeline here in Canada and then profess to wanting to get Keystone done. It is just not at all credible that we have somebody supposedly wanting to sell something to the United States and yet is not supporting the construction of that here in Canada. We should build pipelines in Canada and use that as a basis for promoting Canadian energy infrastructure in other countries.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Mr. Speaker, I could not agree more with my colleague. Further to that point, if we want to find common ground among the opposition parties here, I would point out that even the Green Party members said that the government should not invest in the Trans Mountain pipeline. We Conservatives had that same position, that the government should not invest in that pipeline, but let the private sector invest in it. We should let the private sector do what it does best: drive jobs and employment.

The government members like to claim they are taking action for energy workers because they chased out investment from the private sector and overpaid taxpayer dollars for it. The private sector had the ability to do that project on its own. We should have left

that alone and let private sector investors do it because they were doing a great job.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the member just said that the private sector should have stayed on with Trans Mountain. I just wonder whether he agrees with his premier, Jason Kenney, investing billions of Alberta tax dollars in Keystone XL, which have now basically gone down the toilet.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Mr. Speaker, I will just take the opportunity to state that Scott Mo is the premier of the province where I am from. I know Jason Kenney was trying to invest in jobs for Albertans and Canadians, and also trying to champion the energy sector as it is because, again, we have the highest environmental standards here in Canada. We should be proud of that, not embarrassed by it.

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on his first day in office, U.S. President Joe Biden cancelled the expansion of the Keystone XL pipeline, a project that is critical to Canada's economic interests, and pushed 1,000 people into unemployment immediately. The Prime Minister responded by waving a white flag. He got so tough that he declared how much he was looking forward to working with the new President on their mutual goals.

The government has told Canadians the President is keeping his campaign promise and that we ought to move on. It is easy to say if one is a Prime Minister who recently shut down Parliament and spent most of his time at his home and cottage while hard-working Canadians went to work and others were being put out of their jobs. What the Prime Minister is really telling hard-working Canadians in the oil and gas sector, and the industries that support it, is that they ought to move on from the much-needed jobs that support their livelihoods. They ought to move on from making sure they can put food on the table and provide for themselves and their children. That Albertans ought to move on from an industry that gets us to work, keeps our houses warm when it is -20°C outside, and supplies all of the plastics in the PPE that has been so valuable during this pandemic.

S. O. 52

Here are the facts. Canadians are being asked to move on from a thousand direct construction jobs, an anticipated 2,800 directly related projects with jobs that could be available in Alberta, a \$1 billion equity investment in Keystone XL by Natural Law Energy, which represents five first nations in Alberta and Saskatchewan, \$1.1 billion of Government of Alberta investment, and manufacturing jobs in Ontario and elsewhere that support oil and gas development, not to mention all of the potential jobs and internships for newly graduated students. Recently, when I was doing Zoom meetings with a lot of students, that was what they were worried about: that there would be no more jobs or internships. This is a direct attack on those students.

Must I remind the Prime Minister that Canada is in the middle of the greatest public health crisis and economic shock this country has seen in many decades? The government squandered an opportunity to bolster economic development during a time when Canadians most desperately need it and instead is looking for the great reset, none of which is appealing to Albertans or most Canadians. Many businesses in Alberta and throughout the country have closed because of the pandemic. The vacancies of office space in downtown Calgary are staggering. Families are struggling to scrape by and people's mental health has been greatly affected.

Through the Keystone XL expansion, we had an opportunity to encourage significant job growth and investment. However, the Prime Minister has abandoned Canadians. While he is more than willing to turn his back on hard-working Canadians and an industry that much of the world envies, the Conservatives will always put Canadians first.

Canadians are tired of a Liberal government that continues to pander to radicals while shaming our own oil and gas sector in the process. The Canadian oil and gas industry is a product of inspiring ingenuity and entrepreneurial spirit. It is an industry we have every right to be proud of, which is why I found the Prime Minister's response to the President's decision puzzling and weak. We heard about the Prime Minister calling the President and expressing disappointment.

Disappointment is an understatement. Was that really all the Prime Minister could say? Why have we not heard more from the Prime Minister and his government about how great Canadians are at producing our own resources?

Our people and companies are incredible innovators. I recently visited a company that has developed a system that monitors pipelines in real time and transmits information about events instantly. This shows the innovation we are seeing in this industry. While oil production has gone up, our emissions intensity has decreased in a very significant way. To a growing world that needs reliable energy, that is an important fact. Since 2000, Canada's oil sands emissions intensity is down by 20%. Emission levels from new projects are near or better than the average levels of emissions from American crude.

● (2315)

Sadly, the government seems very reluctant to cheer on the accomplishments of Canadians. All across the country, work continues on economic development and environmental protection, yet all

they hear from the leader are platitudes about balancing the economy and the environment while he kills their jobs.

Canadian workers are ahead of the government. They care about the environment and they care about their jobs. From a U.S. perspective, why would President Biden say to yes to Keystone XL? From his view in Washington, he has likely watched as the Prime Minister killed northern gateway and energy east. I have no doubt his response to the Prime Minister was "If you don't want your own oil, why would we want it?"

● (2320)

The Deputy Speaker: Order. We are getting back into our habits of being in the House again. I did not want to interrupt the hon. member, but it is a good time to make note of this.

The hon. member may go ahead.

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, this seems to be a final chapter of the long saga that is the Keystone XL pipeline. The Obama government punted the project around like a political football for years and years. Mr. Obama's state department approved it twice, but he waited until the Liberal government was sworn in and then rejected the application, with very little objection from the Prime Minister.

It has become clear to many of us that the Prime Minister and the government are looking to cover up their real agenda: the destruction of the Canadian resource economy. Nothing in the last five years of the government has Albertans convinced that the Liberals have our economic best interests at heart. They vetoed the northern gateway pipeline. Energy east was shot down by ever changing and burdensome regulations. They have stood idly by while Keystone XL was vetoed twice. Antienergy legislation like Bill C-48 banned exports off the northwest coast, and Bill C-69 altered the regulatory process to such a degree that it was labelled the "no more pipelines act". The government botched the Trans Mountain expansion to such a degree that it nationalized it.

Numerous other taxes and delays are just more pileup on the government's failed policies. Unfortunately, other parties represented in the House have cheered on every delay and veto, no matter how much it hurt their fellow Canadians. This is having a very negative effect on our Confederation.

Albertans are not willing to move on. That is why it has not been a surprise to westerners that all the Prime Minister could muster was an expression of disappointment over the phone, not much else. With the government's track record, the cancellation of a crucial pipeline seems par for the course. However, let me remind the Prime Minister that first and foremost, he is Canada's Prime Minister. He has a responsibility to stand up for Canadian workers and their families. We call on the Prime Minister to show that he has not turned his back on Canadians and assertively re-engage the president to make sure the Keystone XL expansion resumes.

I have heard many times from my constituents, many of whom are either close to retirement or about 10 years to retirement. These are hard-working Canadians, the men and women who drive the rigs on the oil fields. Where else do they have to go? If we are killing this industry, we are killing their livelihood and we are killing them.

I have heard over and over again that mental health issues are on the rise. Suicides are on the rise. If we are not standing up for the industry that is providing livelihoods and providing for these families, we are contributing to those mental health issues and the rise in suicides.

I hope the Prime Minister grows some fortitude, stands up for the industry, stands up for western Canada for once and stops all of the pandering. Let us get people to work.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am very honoured to participate again to ask a very clear and direct question.

We are still hearing that Canada's production of oil and gas is somehow green or environmental. It is not. It contributes more greenhouse gases than almost any other form of oil, except for heavy crude, which we know is produced elsewhere in the world.

In Canada, since we produce more oil than we use, we are exporting product. If we want to continue to use Canadian oil while we transition quite rapidly off of fossil fuels, we could do that and give ourselves a timeline so that oil workers and others in the industry have the time to transfer their excellent skills to a renewable sector, to clean tech and green tech.

The fallacy here, somehow, is that if we do not sell other people our oil, they will get oil from worse places. The world is transitioning off fossil fuels. We have to do our part, and pipelines are not part of the moral obligation to do our part.

Does the hon. member agree that we should begin to diversify our economy and move away fossil fuels as quickly as possible?

• (2325)

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan: Mr. Speaker, “Yahoo” is what the member tweeted when the cancellation happened. She was cheering about the fact that Canadians were being put out of work instantly. Their families were being devastated by this. The member, embarrassingly, was cheering it on by saying yahoo.

This is not the Calgary stampede. Yahoo is supposed to be a good term for us. However, the member celebrated the contribution of our students who were looking for good-paying jobs, internships, a livelihood, a future, by cheering about that. What is happening is

going to contribute to mental health issues and suicides, frankly, and she said yahoo to that. I am very embarrassed by that.

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris-Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member for Calgary Forest Lawn talked about a number of things that are quite important, particularly about jobs. I hear a lot of that from my constituents.

We have a prime minister who continually downplays the oil and gas industry, does not look to support it, but says that he has their backs. He continues to talk about jobs. The member for Saanich—Gulf Islands basically said that they would be able to get their jobs. However, a lot of these jobs are in rural Canada, where the pipelines and the oil fields are, not in urban Canada. They are not in big-city Toronto, big-city Calgary or Vancouver or whatever. This is rural Canada. If we do not have rural Canada, we do not have urban Canada.

My question for the member is along the lines of what sorts of things can help with these jobs. We see the benefit of carbon capture. We see the enhancements of Whitecap Resources in minimizing and reducing its emissions such that they are at net negative. These are beneficial jobs. What other jobs does the government need to step forward on?

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan: Mr. Speaker, when it comes to jobs, I heard a lot in today's debate, especially from NDP members, about the government needing to create these jobs. I do not fully agree with that. In a perfect socialist world, where they like to dwell, they want the government to control everything. We want to see less government regulation. We want government to get out of the way so jobs are created by job creators. We need to unleash them and their potential rather than putting burdens on them with regulations such as Bill C-69, Bill C-48 and the doubling up on carbon taxes, which are instant job killers. We have seen that over and over again. The Conservatives want people to carry on with that entrepreneurial spirit.

I came here with my family as an immigrant. We had something called the Alberta advantage when we moved here. That helped to enable me and my family to grow and for me to be blessed and be in the House today. I was a very successful, with God's grace, small business owner. We had less burden and less regulations. Today, I deal with many immigrants and they do not feel that the Alberta advantage is there. Nor do I nor any other Albertan.

S. O. 52

• (2330)

Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be here. I was actually in the House earlier today to open it with everyone and was very pleased to be there. Then I drove to Sudbury in the last six hours to make it back for the debate, and I listened to the debate all the way there. It was quite interesting to hear all of the very interesting debate going back and forth.

I want to first acknowledge that right now I am speaking from the Robinson-Huron Treaty territory of 1850 and from the traditional lands of the Atikamesksheng Anishnawbek and of the Wahnapi-tae First Nation. As we say here, *meegwetch*.

[Translation]

All members of the House share the same goals, namely to keep all Canadians safe and sound during the second wave of the pandemic and ensure a strong economic recovery that leaves no one behind. Our determination to encourage this recovery is what brings us together tonight. We recognize that—

The Deputy Speaker: I apologize for interrupting the hon. member. I am wondering whether he wishes to share his time with another member.

Mr. Paul Lefebvre: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be sharing my time with my hon. colleague from Glengarry—Prescott—Russell.

As I was saying, we recognize that Keystone XL would have played an important role in that recovery by creating thousands of direct and indirect jobs and ensuring North America's energy security.

[English]

As was said before by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Natural Resources, we are deeply disappointed by President Biden's decision to revoke the project's construction permit. We are also concerned about the thousand workers being laid off as a result of this decision and the communities that have been impacted, including indigenous communities.

The public record will plainly show that this government has supported Keystone XL since taking office in 2015, not just through public engagement but also through submissions in the regulatory process. It was one of the first issues that the Prime Minister raised during his congratulatory call to President Joe Biden in November. We have continued to press our case with the incoming administration's top officials since then. In fact, our government and Alberta have worked shoulder to shoulder in the U.S. capital to appeal to the incoming administration to change its mind.

This was always going to be President Biden's decision. This is, after all, a huge infrastructure project on U.S. sovereign territory and President Biden did make an election commitment.

[Translation]

Many things have been publicly said about democracy, in connection with the U.S. election. This is democracy in action and it leaves us with only one option, which is to respect the new president's decision to keep his top election promise.

[English]

While we accept this decision, we will not waver in our support for Canadian workers, especially those in our four petroleum-producing provinces: British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Newfoundland and Labrador. I think I need to remind members that Canada is still the single largest supplier of energy to the United States, contributing every single day to America's energy security and economic competitiveness.

[Translation]

At this time, we must look to the future and not to the past. We must stand tall, work with the new administration to fight against COVID-19, face the challenge of climate change and do everything we can to ensure a sustainable recovery for all.

[English]

I believe that the energy sector must and will play a vital role in this recovery. Despite the challenges of the past year, the sector remains a powerful national economic engine. Not to oversimplify it, but the late Jim Prentice, a good friend to many of us in the House, used to say that energy is our family business. It is something that we are really good at and because we are good at it and because our petroleum industry innovations have led to extraordinary wealth, we have been able as a nation to fund schools, hospitals and much more infrastructure, generating jobs in rural communities and advancing indigenous reconciliation.

Right now, this part of our economy is struggling. People and communities are hurting through no fault of their own. The oil sector has been particularly hard hit by the double shock of an oil price war and a pandemic that has strained global demand through most of 2020.

Our support has included an injection of billions of dollars in much-needed liquidity. We brought in a 75% wage subsidy that has helped support as many as 60,000 energy sector jobs in Alberta. We injected some \$2.8 billion directly into the oil and gas sector to create and protect jobs while also strengthening the industry's environmental performance.

I know that some of my colleagues have expanded on these programs this evening, but I want to focus on something else. One year ago, the Minister of Natural Resources delivered back-to-back speeches that highlighted Canada's changing economic reality. They were delivered a few weeks before the pandemic turned our world upside down.

In his first speech in Vancouver, he spoke at the Globe 2020 and CleanTech conference, the largest gathering of its kind in North America. He told the clean-tech enthusiasts something that maybe some of them were surprised to hear. He said there was no way we could get to net-zero emissions without our oil and gas industry, its ingenuity and resources and the wherewithal it provides to fund and support the necessary breakthrough solutions to get us to net zero.

The next day in Calgary, he delivered opening remarks while co-hosting an innovation summit with his Alberta counterpart, energy minister Sonya Savage. In the heart of Canada's oil patch, he told an audience of petroleum industry executives that there was no future for them that did not include getting to net zero.

These messages are two sides of the same coin. It is the same two-sided coin that applies to all of Canada's industries, not just energy, but mining and forestry, manufacturing, transportation and every other part of our economy. As Canada's executives, including those in the oil patch, recognize that, investors from around the world are making clearer choices.

• (2335)

[Translation]

They are investing their money in businesses, industries and jurisdictions that take climate change seriously, and they are withdrawing investment from those that, in their opinion, are not taking adequate action to address climate change.

[English]

This recognition crosses party and jurisdictional lines. It was just last October that Premier Jason Kenney told his party faithful that Alberta could no longer stick its head in the ground or pretend that the aspirations behind the Paris Agreement were not hugely influential in how capital is allocated and how market access decisions are made. There is a growing consensus that we have to follow this global trend.

Fortunately, Canada is ideally positioned to get there and to lead the way. Energy is one of our greatest strengths. We have been blessed with a diversity of energy assets that make us the envy of the world. We are world's fourth-largest producer of oil and sixth-largest producer of gas. These companies have, for years, been the largest source of green tech investment in Canada, pouring money into research to reduce their own emissions and emission intensity, while also diversifying into low- or non-carbon sectors.

Along with this asset, Canada is third in the world for hydroelectricity, a leader in everything from solar and wind power to biofuels, one of only five Tier 1 nations for nuclear energy, a front-runner in clean hydrogen and fuel cell technologies, a supplier of choice for minerals critical for powering a clean energy future, and a global powerhouse in smart grids storage technology and carbon capture.

All of these world-class energy assets combine to give us a natural advantage during this energy transition to power our cities, heat our homes, transport our citizens and produce tomorrow's goods and services.

The question is, how do we do all of these things and keep growing our economy while producing fewer greenhouse gas emissions?

S. O. 52

That is the challenge and the opportunity of our post-COVID recovery. First and foremost, it is the right thing to do in the face of an urgent climate crisis, but also it is the surest way to strengthen our economic competitiveness, attract new investments and create good, sustainable jobs for Canadians.

We recognize the frustration of the industry and the provincial government, and we are saddened by these job losses. We will do everything we can to support the workers and communities impacted by this. One of the ways we can help this industry is to work cooperatively with, rather than antagonize, our number one trading partner, our number one client and closest ally.

Together, our two great nations can help revive the global economy. We can confront and defeat this pandemic. We can build a clean energy future that leaves no one behind.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the frank reality is that the hon. members' rhetoric and the government's approach on this file are fundamentally dishonest.

They talk the language of wanting a strong energy sector and addressing environmental challenges at the same time. Conservatives also believe in a strong energy sector and in addressing environmental challenges at the same time. The problem is that the rhetoric just does not sync with the government's actions. The Liberals have killed multiple pipeline projects on Canadian soil. They passed Bill C-48 and they passed Bill C-69, which prevent projects from going forward. We had the Teck Frontier project, a project that would have been carbon neutral by 2050, yet was killed through active lobbying against it by various people in the Liberal caucus.

On the one hand, Liberals profess to understand the important role that the energy sector is going to play going forward, but if we look at the reality of their record on energy, on pipelines, on Bill C-48, on Bill C-69, on Teck Frontier and so many other projects, it is clear that they are talking out of both sides of their mouths on this.

After having killed so many energy projects here in Canada, it is no surprise that the Liberals seem indifferent to the fate of Keystone.

• (2340)

Mr. Paul Lefebvre: Mr. Speaker, let me remind the member, who has probably already forgotten, that in the fall we approved NOVA Gas, the NGTL.

The Conservatives never asked for an emergency debate to celebrate the Trans Mountain pipeline that was finally going forward. There was no emergency debate on that success.

As well, on the LNG pipeline—

Mr. Robert Kitchen: You said \$1.5 billion—

S. O. 52

The Deputy Speaker: Order. I would just remind hon. members that those who are tuning in by video conference cannot actually activate their microphones for those kinds of interruptions and heckles and so on—

Mr. Paul Lefebvre: But they do.

Mr. Robert Kitchen: Mr. Speaker, I have a point of order.

The Deputy Speaker: Order. There is only one member permitted to speak at a time. When the Speaker has arisen and is addressing the House, members have to stand down and wait until I finish what I have to say.

I remind hon. members that when they are participating online, they cannot activate their microphones for the purposes of so-called heckling because when they do so it essentially overrides the microphone and the audio from the member who has been recognized by the Chair and who has the floor.

I would ask hon. members not to do that. If they wish to make a point of order, that is something different and that is why they are able to activate their microphones. We leave that option open for them, but it is not there for heckling in the way that they would, for example, if they were participating in person, so I hope that is understood.

The hon. member for Souris—Moose Mountain was raising a point of order as well. I will let him go ahead at this time.

Mr. Robert Kitchen: Mr. Speaker, I am using a Surface Pro, and I apologize. I was not intentionally trying to interrupt and I do apologize for that.

The Deputy Speaker: I completely accept that, and I am sure the House does as well.

We have not taken time away from the hon. parliamentary secretary. We will let him go back and finish his comment, and then we will continue with questions and comments.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Paul Lefebvre: Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, we talked about the Trans Mountain pipeline and certainly the LNG pipeline going through British Columbia, as well as the investments that we made of \$1.7 billion, to clean up the abandoned oil and gas wells in Alberta throughout the pandemic. There are many, many projects that we have invested in to support jobs in Alberta and in Saskatchewan, and we will continue to do so.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary talked a lot about getting to net zero, which I applaud. I hope we all agree that is something that we really have to do, but I would like to remind him that the Canada energy regulator's report before Christmas pointed out that if we do even a moderate amount of work to meet our Paris targets to fight climate change, and this does not include getting to net zero as they did not go that far, we would only need one of these three big pipeline expansion projects.

Since Line 3 is scheduled to come on later this year, that means Keystone XL would not be needed. That means the Trans Mountain expansion would not be needed. We would not need any more oil-by-rail expansion. I am a bit confused as to why his minister said

this was an existential threat to the Canadian economy, or something along those lines.

This is an opportunity for us to go to the United States and, instead of pleading with Joe Biden to get permission for this pipeline, to negotiate with the United States about getting involved with their very bold plans to fight climate change and benefit Canadian industries across the country.

● (2345)

Mr. Paul Lefebvre: Mr. Speaker, let me remind the member that 80% of the projected flow of energy going through Trans Mountain has already been booked. It has already been reserved on the market, and the markets will obviously decide what the needs are.

Let me go back to what we announced in December for clean tech. I believe what we have already committed to as a government could certainly benefit Alberta and Saskatchewan. There are some synergies and opportunities on the U.S. side regarding hydrogen, geothermal and clean electricity. There are a lot of commonalities that could support great-paying jobs in Alberta and Saskatchewan, so we need to focus on the opportunities that exist. However, let me again remind the member of market forces: If there is a need for oil and gas, the markets will decide.

Mr. Francis Drouin (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government has focused night and day on the need for a vibrant economic recovery from the pandemic that leaves no one behind. That is why we were both disappointed and saddened with President Biden's decision to revoke the Keystone XL project's permit the day he was inaugurated: disappointed that our efforts in frequently working shoulder to shoulder with the Government of Alberta did not succeed, and saddened for the thousands of workers being laid off. This will hurt many Canadian communities, including indigenous communities. We will continue to work on their behalf to ensure they are part of Canada's recovery.

I must shift now to a key point in the debate. It needs to be said that the Keystone XL project has been a priority for our government since we took office five years ago. It was among the top issues the Prime Minister raised in his first conversation with then President-elect Biden right after the U.S. election. We kept pushing our position with high level officials in the new administration leading up to January 20.

That underscores this government's determination to support the people and communities in the sector as we strive toward our Paris climate targets. There is no contradiction in these dual goals, because we recognize the ingenuity of our petroleum sector and its status as Canada's largest green tech investor. Put simply, these companies are playing a vital role in helping us find the breakthroughs that will help us confront the climate crisis. That is why the industry and the individuals and communities depending on it figured so prominently in our government's unprecedented COVID-19 economic response plan, which included an injection of billions of dollars in much-needed liquidity for the industry and the introduction of a 75% wage subsidy that has helped to support as many as 60,000 oil and gas jobs in Alberta.

Canadians saw this support when we announced two key components of the COVID-19 package last April.

First, we earmarked more than \$1.7 billion to clean up orphan and inactive oil and gas wells in Alberta, Saskatchewan and British Columbia. It is not just an investment aimed at improving the environmental performance of the oil patch; it is also creating thousands of jobs when and where they are needed most.

Second, we created a new \$750-million fund to reduce the industry's greenhouse gases and in particular methane emissions, which can be over 80 times more potent than carbon dioxide. This new emissions reduction funding includes \$75 million specifically set aside for the Newfoundland and Labrador offshore industry, and we have already bolstered that investment with another \$320 million to support upgrades to existing offshore infrastructure, environmental services and clean technology.

This is how we build the most sustainable oil and gas sector in the world. It is by working with an industry that is, as I noted earlier, a leader in finding innovative ways to reduce its carbon footprint.

Petroleum companies routinely account for more than 70% of all private sector investments in R and D, or more than \$1 billion each and every year. The Government of Canada is certainly part of that push. It is why the Minister of Innovation, the Minister of Environment and the Minister of Natural Resources announced \$100 million in new federal funding to support the clean resource innovation network. This is an industry-led initiative of more than 1,300 members, all devoted to improving the oil and gas sector's environmental and economic performance by developing the breakthrough solutions that drive economic growth, create good well-paying jobs and lead to cleaner energy production. It is a classic win-win and one aimed at reducing the sector's greenhouse gas emissions by 100 megatonnes by 2033, or the equivalent of taking 1.5 million cars off the road.

This perspective has also informed and inspired our government's ongoing efforts to support a strong and sustainable petroleum industry and make it a supplier of choice not only in the United States, but around the world. Just last month, for example, we announced federal approval of the NOVA Gas system expansion project in Alberta. It is a \$2.3-billion initiative that will create close to 3,000 jobs, while advancing stronger indigenous engagement and oversight, accelerating the phase-out of coal-fired electricity and providing stronger protections for local caribou herds

S. O. 52

and their habitat. These are many of the same things that went into our extensive consultations for the Trans Mountain project and our eventual decision to purchase that project in 2018.

• (2350)

We did not just rescue a critical piece of energy infrastructure; we also helped put more than 5,000 Canadians to work in building vital access to tidewater, as well as opening new opportunities for our energy exports and advancing indigenous partnerships and reconciliation.

Another key pillar is the world-class environmental protections we have put in place alongside the TMX project. Those pillars include the \$1.5-billion oceans protection plan that stacks up well with what other leading marine nations are doing to preserve their coastlines, oceans and marine life. If I may add a quick aside, I would remind Canadians that we have committed to investing every dollar earned from the TMX project to accelerate Canada's clean energy transition. That is huge. We have estimated that once the TMX project is completed, it will generate an estimated \$500 million in additional corporate income tax revenues alone.

I also want to point out to members this government's support for the \$40-billion LNG Canada project in B.C. It happens to be the single largest private sector investment in Canadian history, and it is a project that will be one of the cleanest LNG facilities of its kind anywhere, emitting half the GHG emissions of similar facilities around the world—half.

That is why our government was on the ground with \$275 million in federal investments for critical local infrastructure technology to support the LNG Canada facility, ensuring that a generational project and up to 10,000 jobs become reality. These types of projects remind us that Canada is not only a place where good projects get built; we are also critical to securing North America's place as the most dynamic, influential and well-regulated energy region.

As important as all of these things are, I have to point out that the pandemic has exposed another pressing priority. COVID-19 has laid bare global vulnerabilities and inequalities. The job losses we have seen during this pandemic have been disproportionately borne by women, youth and indigenous people, as well as marginalized groups such as immigrants, racialized people and persons with disabilities, all of which has reinforced our belief that a clean energy future cannot and must not leave anyone behind.

S. O. 52

This brings me back to Keystone XL. This was an excellent project. We fought hard to make it happen. However, we have to respect the democratic institution of our number one ally and trading partner. President Biden made a promise, and he kept it. We must now look to the future and work closely with this new administration on our many shared objectives, from global health to climate change to job creation. We will work with that administration and all Canadians to deliver on our shared mission: net zero emissions by 2050, a global economy that continues to grow and an energy transition that leaves no one behind.

• (2355)

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I can hardly believe what is coming out of the hon. member's mouth. He says that the Liberals rescued TMX. What did they rescue TMX from, exactly? It was from their own government's abysmal policies. It was his government's imposition of the carbon tax, Bill C-69, Bill C-48 and all the regulatory uncertainty that scared away the investment. They act as if it is something to be proud of. For the first time in Canadian history, the government had to buy a pipeline in order to get it built. That is a damning indictment of the government's record when it comes to the energy sector.

Why are the Liberal Party and the Prime Minister so quick to make apologies for the U.S. president? We should not be surprised. They could not stand up to Donald Trump during NAFTA and now they cannot stand up to President Biden on Keystone. They are making apologies for the fact that on day one, the U.S. president signed the executive order to kill Keystone XL, which hurts employment in both Canada and the U.S. It hurts indigenous opportunities, as well as opportunities for everyone else.

They are so quick to apologize. Why is it that the government has such a hard time standing up to American presidents? It drove away investment; it drove jobs and opportunity to the United States; it backed down on NAFTA under President Trump, and now it caves like a bad hand in poker before even trying. Why is the government constantly backing down from American presidents?

Mr. Francis Drouin: Mr. Speaker, I have an 18-month old child at home and sometimes he kicks and screams because he is not happy with my decisions, but it is not a strategy to inform me or influence me on the decisions that are best for him. That particular member was kicking and screaming for the last three years when he was the leader of the opposition and now there is a new leader of the opposition, but he seems to be adopting the same strategy. I do not see how kicking and screaming is going to help us build more pipelines.

Perhaps the member should take note of section 35 and our duty to consult with indigenous peoples. It is something that he com-

pletely omitted in his platform in 2019. No pipelines are going to get built in Canada if we do not consult with our indigenous peoples.

My question for the member is this: Knowing that President Biden is going to be in power for the next four years, is kicking and screaming really a good strategy to adopt here?

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the member clearly articulated how the Liberals have been pushing for betting on these pipelines. He said there is no contradiction with climate action, but Canada's own independent energy regulator says that the oil sands will not need Keystone XL or the Trans Mountain expansion if the government passes the promised climate legislation. Oil and gas workers are struggling. Fifty thousand workers have lost their jobs since 2014, but instead of implementing the kind of just transition that would support workers, families and communities with training and low-carbon jobs for the future, the Liberals keep making empty promises on the climate and cheerleading, or buying risky pipeline projects.

If the Liberal Party or the Conservative Party truly cared about communities and workers across Canada, would they not be investing in a just transition, not sometime down the road, but now to diversify our economy and create low-carbon jobs?

• (2400)

Mr. Francis Drouin: Mr. Speaker, I would invite the hon. member to look at the plan that the minister of environment presented to Canadians just before the holiday season. We know that we will be putting a price on pollution of \$170 per tonne by 2030. We are already electrifying the roads of Canada to allow electric vehicles to go from one city to another, so I think we have a strong and robust plan.

At the same time, I do not think it is realistic to say that we can suddenly shut all of the oil pipelines everywhere in the world, thinking that the transition will happen tomorrow morning. I think we have to be more realistic in the approach that we propose to Canadians. I have full confidence in the Prime Minister and our Minister of Environment to propose that plan.

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: It being midnight, the motion that the House do now adjourn is deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly the House stands adjourned until later this day at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 12 a.m.)

CONTENTS

Monday, January 25, 2021

EMERGENCY DEBATE

Keystone XL Pipeline

Mr. O'Toole	3455
Motion	3455

Points of Order

Visual Displays

Mr. Bittle	3456
Mr. Deltell	3457
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	3457
Mr. Steinley	3457

Keystone XL Pipeline

Motion	3457
Mr. Gerretsen	3457
Mr. O'Toole	3457
Mrs. DeBellefeuille	3457
Mr. McLean	3458

Points of Order

Visual Displays—Speaker's Ruling

Mrs. Hughes	3459
-------------------	------

Keystone XL Pipeline

Mr. Simard	3459
Mr. McLean	3459
Mr. MacGregor	3459
Mr. O'Regan	3460
Mr. Richards	3462
Mr. Simard	3462
Mr. Cannings	3462
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	3463
Mr. Simard	3463
Mr. Dreesen	3464
Mr. Cannings	3465
Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe	3465
Ms. Pauzé	3465
Mr. Kurek	3466
Mr. Lamoureux	3467
Mr. Cannings	3467
Mr. McLean	3468
Mr. Gerretsen	3469
Ms. McPherson	3469
Mr. Kurek	3470
Mr. Lamoureux	3471

Mr. Champoux	3471
Mr. Sorbara	3471
Mr. Genuis	3473
Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe	3473
Ms. Collins	3473
Mr. Serré	3474
Mr. Kurek	3475
Ms. Pauzé	3475
Mr. Johns	3476
Mrs. Stubbs	3476
Mr. Kurek	3478
Mr. Gerretsen	3478
Mr. Steinley	3478
Mr. MacGregor	3480
Mr. Blanchette-Joncas	3480
Mr. Lamoureux	3481
Mr. Aboultaif	3483
Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe	3483
Mr. Johns	3483
Mr. Fragiskatos	3484
Mr. Kurek	3484
Ms. Collins	3485
Ms. Pauzé	3486
Mr. Barlow	3486
Mr. Manly	3487
Ms. Collins	3488
Mr. Blois	3488
Mr. Soroka	3490
Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe	3490
Mr. Cannings	3490
Mr. Oliphant	3491
Mr. McLean	3492
Mr. Cannings	3492
Mr. Patzer	3493
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	3494
Mr. Genuis	3495
Mr. Cannings	3495
Mr. Hallan	3495
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	3497
Mr. Kitchen	3497
Mr. Lefebvre	3498
Mr. Genuis	3499
Mr. Cannings	3500
Mr. Drouin	3500
Mr. Scheer	3502
Ms. Collins	3502

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