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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, June 11, 2021

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1005)

[*English*]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2021, NO. 1

The House resumed from June 10 consideration of Bill C-30, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 19, 2021 and other measures, as reported (with amendments) from the committee.

Mr. Kerry Diotte (Edmonton Griesbach, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as a bit of personal history, I was the son of parents who lived through the Great Depression. My dad Tony put food on the table by being a locomotive engineer. He worked at Algoma Steel in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario and he served as secretary-treasurer of his union. My mom Helen was a busy stay-at-home mother to five kids.

We were happy, but I do not remember our having a whole lot of money when we were growing up. As a kid in grade school, I can count on one hand the number of times that we actually went out to a real restaurant. My mom's attitude was "Why waste good money on a restaurant when we have food at home?" I remember that if there was a big sale at the grocery store, we would sometimes get steak at home, but it was a rare treat. The reason I remember that is when we would have it my mom always had the same thing to say. She would say, "That steak cost 99¢ a pound, so make sure you eat all of it, even the fat."

It was a good lesson in life, though. At an early age, kids in my family learned the value of money and we learned that one never wastes anything. My parents gave me a great life lesson and I was happy. Those lessons stuck with me and I think a lot of Canadians these days can relate to those lessons. They understand the value of hard work and money and they want value from governments for their tax dollars.

I know these have been challenging times with the COVID pandemic. Due to this terrible pandemic, governments were forced to shut down the normal economy. As such, people needed an income. Governments had a duty to come to the rescue, but they spent a lot

of money, especially the current Liberal government. I admit that a good chunk of it was needed. In fact, Conservatives pushed the Liberals to increase financial benefits to Canadians during this pandemic. Right at the beginning of the pandemic, we fought to get a big increase in the small-business wage subsidy.

However, as we enter the road to recovery we need a plan back to fiscal balance. It is a lesson my parents and many of our parents and grandparents learned the hard way. I know many of my constituents feel the same way. I regularly survey my constituents for their views on important issues of the day. One question I asked them recently was whether they are worried about the federal debt. The vast majority, more than 80%, said they are very worried; yet, the Liberals failed to take prudent measures in this budget. Despite record spending, there is no meaningful action to reduce our massive debt load, and "massive" is the key word here. The debt is more than a trillion dollars and climbing.

The Liberals do not even have a long-term plan to return to balance. This is a shocking failure by the government. It was only a year ago that the Prime Minister was boasting of Canada's fiscal capacity to offer supports during the pandemic. He said his government could spend lots of money because of the prudent decisions it made previously. Why, then, is he not making those prudent decisions for the future?

As COVID made clear, we cannot foresee these events. Just consider the government's failure, early on, to recognize how serious COVID itself was. Early on, we Conservatives gave this advice: Shut down flights from COVID hot spots. The government members said we were being alarmist, even racist. What is going to happen during the next crisis that we face, with our now limited fiscal capacity? We do not have the capacity to keep on spending.

The Prime Minister boasts of prudent decisions, but he fails to make them. Prior to COVID, the current government showed a complete lack of fiscal discipline. Instead of prudently managing taxpayer money, the Liberals ran deficit after deficit. During the good times, the Liberals added more than \$72 billion to the national debt. To put that into perspective, that is nearly \$2,000 of new debt for every man, woman and child in Canada. Continuous deficits and endless debt leave us vulnerable. It is not sustainable.

In a crisis, one needs a healthy balance sheet. Who said that? An expert did. That is the view of Philip Cross. He is the former economic analyst at Statistics Canada.

Government Orders

When Conservatives were in power, we were fiscally responsible. We came out of the 2008 financial crisis better than any country in the G7. Here is what Cross said about that: “strong balance sheets in Canada stood it in good stead to endure the recession and emerge into recovery. The recession was shorter and milder in Canada than in other G7 nations, partly because the flow of credit was not disrupted as it was in other nations and a large pool of savings was available to finance spending when income fell temporarily.”

What is going to happen in the next crisis, if the Liberal government gambles our safety net? Most Canadians know about the value of money. These Liberals have to learn that, too. Let us just go over some of the Liberals' useless spending. Earlier this year I asked an Order Paper question on the expenses related to having government employees work from home. Working from home was, of course, an important safety feature, and I think we can all accept reasonable expenses. However, can anyone really justify spending \$2,815 of taxpayers' money for a desk or \$1,160 for a work chair? Having gone through that document, those are hardly isolated incidents. That is only scratching the surface.

The government's contempt for transparency has been evident for years. However, it has doubled down during the COVID crisis. It is actually hiding crucial information on how taxpayers' money is being spent. Even a former parliamentary budget officer criticized the government for lack of transparency. For example, members from across the aisle on the transport committee recently talked out the clock to avoid accountability. Instead of being transparent about their mismanagement of the infrastructure bank, they tried to bury the details, but the details, of course, eventually come out. For example, how the infrastructure bank recently paid out nearly \$4 million for executive terminations, how the bank has completed zero projects in four years and how it is projected to lose billions of taxpayers' dollars.

Building needed projects in Canada seems to be too complicated for the Liberals' budget, but they do not seem to have any issue funding the China-controlled Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank to build projects outside of Canada. The Liberals have funnelled tens of millions of dollars to this Chinese state-run bank; this is despite the Chinese Communist regime holding two of our citizens against their will on trumped-up charges. How, exactly, is the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank good value for money?

As we are racking up more and more debt, I wonder just how much of it is being wasted. This is an important issue, especially for younger generations. We are passing this debt on to the next generation to pay off, and we owe it to them not to bury them in debt. Even worse, this spending is not even geared to growing the economy, but members should not take my word on it; that is the analysis of the independent Parliamentary Budget Officer. He said that “Budget 2021 estimates overstate the impact of stimulus spending over the next 3 years,” so despite massive unsustainable spending, we are not even going to see additional growth. One thing that is also readily available is that the government's strategy is not prepared for an increase of interest rates. Even a minor increase could have a devastating effect on our long-term national finances.

My constituents are demanding answers. Like my parents, they know the value of money. They work hard for their money. They

expect and demand that their money is not wasted. Canadians know that Liberal spending is out of control.

• (1010)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

I understand that it is important for the Conservatives to cut spending. However, some of that spending is still vital. I am thinking, for example, of the support offered to farmers. The \$1,500 they receive when foreign workers arrive will be reduced to \$750 in the coming days.

I would like to hear what my colleague thinks about this. Should we maintain this support a while longer, since the crisis is not yet over, quarantines are still in effect and farmers must still pay the costs for their workers to come in?

[*English*]

Mr. Kerry Diotte: Mr. Speaker, I am from Alberta in western Canada. Farmers built this country, and agriculture is absolutely vital, but let us look at the bigger picture instead of cherry-picking little items out of this budget. The bigger picture is that we need a sustainable future, and we cannot continue to spend as if there is no tomorrow, because if we continue to do that, there will be no tomorrow.

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and to the Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I find it interesting how the Conservative narrative on the fiscal capacity of Canada has been used as an excuse to oppose measures that are actually going to help vulnerable Canadians who have been impacted.

I would like to pass on to the hon. member that, whether he takes his pick between Moody's, S&P or DBRS, they have all reaffirmed Canada's AAA credit rating. We had the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7, and the IMF said that had we not launched record spending to support Canadian workers and businesses, we would have had a similar debt-to-GDP ratio with a much bigger negative impact on our economy.

Does the hon. member agree with his party leader who opposed the CERB, did he agree with his party who voted against the extension of the emergency measures, and why does he use the fiscal situation in Canada to oppose measures that are actually helping people in their time of need?

Government Orders

• (1015)

Mr. Kerry Diotte: Mr. Speaker, that is rather rich coming from the member across the way. We worked to improve many of these programs. I fully admit that there is a lot of spending that is absolutely vital. When governments shut down economies, of course, we cannot leave people in the lurch and we have to help them out. We were the party that improved these programs, and it is ridiculous to say that somehow we are opposed to them. We are opposed to runaway spending, and we know that the wolf is going to be at the door one day.

When we look back at what was done under the Harper government, we came out as a shining star of the G7 countries out of 2008. The member does not have to take my word for that. He can take the word of the financial experts. We were a star, and that is how, when we are in government, we will be in far better shape than what this government is going to leave Canadians next time we have a major crisis.

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my colleague spoke a lot about deficit, but here is the thing. While millions of people are worried about losing their jobs, Canada's 20 richest people have increased their wealth. Instead of making those richest people pay the cost of the economic recovery, the Conservatives, very much like the Liberals, want to protect their profits.

Can the member please explain why he refuses to make the richest in Canada pay their fair share?

Mr. Kerry Diotte: Mr. Speaker, everybody has to pay their fair share, obviously, but it is also people who create wealth in this country who are risking to create wealth. If we look at the young start-ups and entrepreneurs, they are starting from nothing. We can look at the history of growth in any developed nation and it starts with great ideas, and we have to cultivate these great ideas.

I know that certain members of the NDP adhere to the NDP philosophy to just take as much money as possible and redistribute that wealth, which is not a good philosophy. It has not worked in any country in the world, and there are many recent failures and long-time failures.

No, we Conservatives do not believe in punishing people for good ideas, growing economies and creating wealth.

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour today to give a speech in response to the government's budget. Many of my colleagues, whether on my side of the aisle or the other side, have already given speeches about this budget, but today I am not here to simply support the budget blindly or criticize it for ideological or political gain. I am here today to speak from the heart. I am here to speak on behalf of my constituents. I am here to make clear to the members of this House how most Canadians from Calgary Forest Lawn feel about this budget.

Let me start with the short hand dealt to my fellow Albertans. This budget fell short in helping Canada's oil and gas, energy, agriculture and forestry sectors to be global leaders in performance and innovation. While there is money going to some sectors in our economy, there is no plan, as usual. As Adam Legge wrote for the Calgary Herald about this very issue, "It is not rooted in the sound recommendations of the government's own Industry Strategy Council."

While the government may say that this money will create a fancy new future and make jobs, the truth is that it is more lip service to Albertans. To the single mother who is a field project manager, to the Muslim sister who just got her citizenship and a job in our energy industry as a chemical engineer, and to the eighth-generation roughneck worker in the oil fields, it is very clear that the government has forgotten about them. It has forgotten about the average working class that has made this country great.

While the government's new budget makes life harder for my constituents to earn money, it also makes daily living more expensive and creates great harm for our children and future generations. April's inflation rate was 3.4%. That means the cost of goods is now 3.4% higher, on average. Many of my constituents have been laid off or have taken a massive pay decrease due to this pandemic. Many Canadians are living paycheque to paycheque, and this was even before the pandemic. Many Canadians cannot afford to pay more for basic necessities due to the Prime Minister's reckless spending and budget.

In April, our economy saw 207,000 jobs lost, with an unemployment rate above 8%. What is the solution? It is spending more, says the finance minister. According to her, it is an ideal time to borrow because interest rates are low. That is interesting, because as the global economy recovers, the interest rates are actually rising, and that has been the trend for the last few months. The cost of debt repayment has now reached a skyrocketing \$22 billion per year. That means \$22 billion less for our seniors, veterans, the health care system and many other important systems and groups that need this money.

Of course, as Nobel Prize-winning economist Milton Friedman once said, "There is no such thing as a free lunch." Who will pay for this lunch, one may ask. It will be our children, their children and their children's children, and so on. I am already talking to many students who cannot find internships, who are in crippling debt, who struggle with many mental health issues due to this pandemic and even before. Now more over-stressed and with lack of employment due to our weak economy, what will they say when they find out a few years down the road that they will have to pay for all of this mess, a mess that the Liberal government has put us in?

Government Orders

The key word is “inflation”. For every dollar we print, the value of every dollar falls. It is basic economics. I wish we could print all the money in the world and help everyone, but there is such a thing as scarcity. The government does not understand that, and now our constituents have to suffer.

I also have the privilege of being the official opposition's shadow minister for immigration, refugees and citizenship. How does this budget affect immigration, one may ask. The immigration minister promised that Canada will welcome 401,000 immigrants this year, and still there are massive backlogs. We need immigration. Our working population is aging and, unfortunately, our immigration system is aging with it. This budget does nothing significant to address these backlogs. Families remain separated from their loved ones; parents are missing their children's first steps, birthdays and, in some cases, their births.

Just the other month, I received a call from a constituent saying they wanted to kill themselves because they cannot wait any longer to see their loved ones and cannot bear the isolation of this pandemic. My heart breaks for them.

● (1020)

The detail included in this budget is just a timeline or a promise to deliver a new program by 2023. Ignoring the government's track record with broken promises, pushing this problem down the road is not helping anyone. Families are separated for years. People are waiting for half a decade to have their applications processed, and yet the best the Liberals can do is promise an untested program being launched in the future.

There are also no details on whether the government will work with experts, national and cybersecurity professionals or even immigration experts to develop a platform that truly works for Canadians. There cannot be a strong recovery without a strong plan for immigration. What Canada needs now is a smarter immigration system that focuses on our resources and on making Canada a more welcoming place full of opportunity and potential.

A Conservative government will work to replace Liberal platitudes with a system that actually works again, one that does not leave families separated and desperate for hope but hopeful for a prosperous life in Canada.

Again, the government will point and blame when it hears these facts about its budget. Of course it will blame the pandemic and say it stalled efforts for economic recovery and the advancement of the immigration system, but the new question is, what is the government doing to reopen Canada safely? The government had a failed plan to procure vaccines, a failed plan to secure our borders to stop variants and a failed plan to support small business and our energy industry in withstanding the negative effects of this pandemic.

Just recently, a Calgary-based company that was making a vaccine for COVID-19 said it is leaving Canada, after the government ignored its calls for support. The goal is to retain Canadian talent, not drive it away. Before this pandemic, the government's policies against our world-class energy industry led to investment fleeing. I personally saw the tradespeople I dealt with having to lay off their workers and having to go back onto the field themselves. They

blame the Liberal government's policies and inaction to help support them.

I ask people, even in the toughest of times and with a bad budget, to stay strong. To the small business owners, the families living paycheck to paycheck and those trying to start a new life in our great country, I say not to give up, not to lose hope, for what makes our country great is the people, not its government or fancy budget plans that do very little to help the little guy.

We are stronger together, and I stand here on behalf of my constituents to speak up against this budget and expose whom it is hurting: the everyday Canadian. Inflation due to this out-of-control spending does not really hurt the rich and privileged that bad. Whom it does hurt is the single mother from Calgary who is struggling to pay for her kids' schooling and groceries, the bus driver from Toronto trying to afford his mortgage, and the family-run restaurant owner from P.E.I. who has to close up shop for good because the government could not secure the vaccines fast enough, unlike our counterparts.

I came to this country as an immigrant and I grew up as an at-risk youth. I still remember the raindrops hitting my face as my family and I waited in line for low-income bus passes. I still remember seeing my parents and myself working multiple jobs to make ends meet and to survive. I do not want to see that struggle for my children or anyone's children, or in fact any Canadian. We came to this country to enjoy prosperity, not government debt and a crippling economy.

A Conservative government will have a real plan, made by the experts and guided by the everyday Canadian. We will have a fresh new vision of hope, so that no matter where people came from, who they are or when they arrived here, they will have a chance to live the Canadian dream, just as I and many members of this House did.

As Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, “We must accept finite disappointment, but we must never lose infinite hope.” Together we will fix this mistake, together we will recover this economy and together we will all grow.

May God keep our land glorious and free.

● (1025)

Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when I hear a Conservative stand up and speak about spending and the deficit, I recall how the finance critic, the member for Carleton, would stand up day after day and say we are spending too much and helping too much. I wonder if the member could answer in a truthful way which program that we brought in during this pandemic the Conservatives would cut or give less money to.

Government Orders

It is fine to talk about what happened in 2008, but the world has never seen the likes of the pandemic that hit the globe the way it did a year and a half ago. Which program would he not support? Which program would he eliminate, and what class of people would be hurt the most by doing this?

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan: Mr. Speaker, I find it quite funny that the Liberals would accuse us of bringing up 2008, when it seems like former prime minister Stephen Harper lives rent-free in all of their minds all the time.

What the Conservatives were asking for in the beginning of this pandemic was actually more supports. When the Liberals came forward with their wage subsidy plan, it was not enough for business owners. The Liberals had already crippled most of our economy anyway by then, and then gave just little tidbits for small business owners, like restaurant owners. When it came to the wage subsidy, it was far too little. We all had to stand up and remind the government that it was the small business owners who were going to hurt the most, before that change was made.

When the business loan came out, again, it was not enough for business owners. We had to fight for that to be increased and the \$50,000 payroll to be taken away. As we know, most small business owners take out dividends and not payroll. It was we, Conservatives, who were always sticking up for the small business owners.

• (1030)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. The question has been asked before, but we did not get a clear answer.

Of course, some spending is hardly useful, but there is other spending that is fundamental and very important and that must be maintained, like the support for farmers who have to pay the quarantine costs of their temporary foreign workers.

Currently, Ontario's vegetable producers and the people of Quebec are asking the minister to maintain this support past June 16, without reducing the amount. Now is not the time to abandon producers, while the war on COVID-19 is not over and quarantines are still essential. Where do the Conservatives stand on this matter?

[*English*]

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan: Mr. Speaker, of course we want to support our hard-working farmers. I was in a meeting with a group from Quebec just yesterday, and we talked about how the backlogs are completely stopping business from happening in Quebec. They are in desperate need of temporary foreign workers. I fully agree with that.

My hon. colleague is on the immigration committee with me, and we are always talking about this at the committee. I talked about this in my speech. It is the backlogs that are causing a lot of harm, especially to our farmers. It is happening in Alberta. It is happening in Quebec and Ontario. Every single province is suffering due to the Liberal government's failure to address backlogs.

This budget did nothing to help that or at least develop a clear plan going forward that will help farmers. We all want better for our farmers, and that includes clearing up these backlogs.

Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the member mentioned a lot of people who are hurting, and I appreciate that, but he did not mention seniors. In this budget, the government has made a two-tier system of “junior seniors” and “senior seniors”, knowing that the need is out there, because it gave one-time cheques last year. Now the government is only giving one-time cheques and increases to a certain group of seniors, but not the people from 65 to 74.

Does he agree with this? Does he support this? What would his government do?

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan: Mr. Speaker, I will admit that I am not fully aware of all the details, but what I will say is that Conservatives will always support our seniors. I think that our seniors are the most precious people we have. In my personal life, the seniors are where I got all my blessings from. We have a plan that will come out and address a lot of the insecurities that our seniors have, to make sure that we are supporting them, because they deserve it the most. The Liberal government, over and over, has failed our seniors in many different ways, and this budget did not address their problems either.

Mr. Doug Shipley (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government finally tabled a budget for Parliament to debate and Canadians to review. This was a new record. It was kind of a dubious record, but it was a record nonetheless. This budget would send the national debt to a staggering \$1.4 trillion in five years. Almost as concerning is that the budget contains no measures to return to a balanced budget. This pattern of reckless spending has been a hallmark of the current Liberals since coming to office. They spend without a plan. They spend with lofty hopes and dreams that the budget will balance itself.

The people of Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte who call my office and email us are anxious and looking for a plan. Adding \$1.4 trillion to the national debt saddles our grandkids, their grandkids and their children with the burden of paying this back. That is unfair to them.

I understand these are unprecedented times, and we need to help Canadians survive as we navigate the global COVID pandemic. However, these measures should be temporary, and a plan should be in place to ensure we return to a balanced budget. The Liberals have no plan to balance the books, and there appears to be no end in sight for their reckless spending.

Government Orders

I want to shift gears for a bit. While we all understand the pressures that Canadians have been under for the last year and a half as we have dealt with the pandemic, the Prime Minister had the opportunity to invest historically in mental health, and to help build the infrastructure our mental health care system will need to support people as we come out of this pandemic. As with most things the current government attempts, it missed the mark.

Suicides among men are rising at staggering rates. A Leger poll commissioned by the Mental Health Commission of Canada noted a sharp increase in respondents reporting depression. The poll noted the number jumped from 2% to 14%. McMaster Children's Hospital found that youth suicide attempts have tripled because of COVID restrictions. The same study found there was a 90% increase in youth being referred to the hospital's eating disorder program. There is no doubt that people are struggling, and there is no doubt the Prime Minister failed to deliver investments in mental health.

This budget does absolutely nothing for growth and long-term prosperity for Canadians or the economy. David Dodge, the former Bank of Canada governor, was quoted in a National Post news article as saying:

My policy criticism of the budget is that it really does not focus on growth.... To me it wouldn't accord with something that was a reasonably prudent fiscal plan, let me put it that way.

Robert Asselin, a budget and policy adviser to former finance minister Bill Morneau, said this budget was “a political solution in search of an economic problem.” When the Liberals' friends are let down by their budget, how can they reasonably expect Canadians to get excited about it?

Seniors have been disproportionately impacted by COVID. They have been isolated from their children and grandchildren, and in some tragic cases have passed away with no one around them in their final moments. I do not bring this up lightly. Once again, the Liberals had an opportunity to make foundational investments and failed to deliver. The programs and supports that were announced in this budget offer up very little detail and will leave many seniors behind. The government needs to respect Canada's seniors, ensure it acts on its promises and move forward with funding to help provinces and territories address the acute challenges in long-term care.

Part of Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte is rural, and constituents constantly write to me and my staff about their poor broadband connectivity. The Prime Minister promised to invest in rural broadband and ensured the money rollout would come faster. This has not happened. We have seen announcements and re-announcements of the same funding, but the projects are not being built. These delays and inaction have had a real impact on rural areas in my riding, with so many people working from home. It is time for empty promises to end and for real action to kick in.

The Prime Minister promised an additional \$1 billion over six years, starting this year, for the universal broadband fund. With proposed budget 2021, \$2.75 billion would be available for projects across Canada, yet communities in my riding are suffering because the current Prime Minister and his cabinet prefer to make an-

nouncements rather than take concrete action to support rural Canadians.

• (1035)

The Prime Minister has created such uncertainty in the economy over the last year and a half that people are not sure when we will get back to something that resembles normal. The uncertainty of the pandemic and the lack of action from the Prime Minister to build a robust economy have created a shortage in many supply chains. This is having a dramatic impact on businesses in Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte.

One developing supply chain shortage is a shortage of semiconductors. I recently spoke with car dealership owners in my riding who told me they were having a difficult time getting inventory because of this shortage. Another stalwart business in my riding is Napoleon Home Comfort. It manufactures barbecues and fireplaces. It employs hundreds of people, and opened in 1980. It is days away from potentially having to close its doors and lay off hard-working Canadians because the shortage of semiconductors would prevent them from manufacturing their products. This semiconductor shortage has the potential to affect tens of thousands of supply chain manufacturing and distribution jobs across Canada.

Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte residents rely on transportation providers such as local motor coach operators Hammond Transportation and Greyhound. We all know that Greyhound has decided to pull all its Canadian operations, leaving people stranded across the country. In my riding, people used Greyhound to commute to work: People who work in Toronto found it more cost effective to commute daily via the bus to earn a living.

Hammond Transportation is a family-owned school bus, charter bus and motor coach company. I met with the owners recently to hear their issues first-hand. Like many motor coach companies across Ontario and Canada, Hammond has taken on new debt to continue to operate as revenues slide. The lack of a coordinated border reopening plan has impacted its quarterly planning and has reduced its recovery trajectory. One of the biggest concerns Kent Hammond, the owner of Hammond Transportation, brought to me was the impact of winding down Canada's emergency wage subsidy and the Canada emergency rent subsidy. With border openings uncertain and tours impossible, there is no way the company can plan for a firm start-back date.

With most of this budget, critical industries and sectors were overlooked. The impacts of changes were drastically underestimated for some sectors. Frankly, it is poor planning and management. To say that I was disappointed with the over 700 pages of the budget would be an understatement. The Prime Minister had an opportunity to deliver a budget that would carry, impact and help industries and businesses, particularly small and medium-sized ones, to come out of this pandemic on solid ground. Unfortunately, he failed.

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The Prime Minister failed to deliver investments in mental health supports for Canadians and our health care system as those who are struggling through the pandemic seek additional supports. The government failed to deliver impactful investments for seniors. Instead of rolling up their sleeves and getting to work, the Prime Minister and his finance minister repurposed funding announcements and issued more empty promises.

The Prime Minister failed to deliver proper investments for rural broadband as more people worked and studied from home. Having a strong and reliable Internet signal is critical. This disproportionately impacts rural Canadians, but the Prime Minister seems to be more worried about urban concerns.

It is truly unfortunate that the Prime Minister squandered this opportunity to deliver real and meaningful investments that would support Canadians. Furthermore, if he cannot even make his friends Mark Carney and Robert Asselin happy with this budget, how are Canadians expected to be excited about it?

Opening a business at any time is scary and stressful, but doing it in a pandemic is even more courageous. Stephanie Stoute, in Barrie, opened Curio Exploration Hub. It is a new, innovative child activity centre. She found herself struggling when she opened because she did not qualify for the existing COVID programs. Ms. Stoute is a hard-working entrepreneurial mother of two who is pushing forward. However, the government and the Prime Minister were not there for her when she needed them.

I asked a question in the House on December 8, 2020, about Ms. Stoute's concerns. While Ms. Stoute's business is still open, the Prime Minister has not made it easy for small businesses to access supports so they can survive and thrive on the other side of the pandemic.

The world is a dark place right now. We are a nation that is suffering, and we need, more than ever, to work across party lines to ensure we have the best interests of Canadians top of mind. Canadians are looking for real and authentic leadership. We have an opportunity to do this, but we need to work together to ensure we make investments in seniors, in rural broadband, in small and medium-sized businesses and in domestic vaccine protection so we can get Canadians back to work and get our economy growing.

We also need to make sure we have sufficient investments in mental health to support those who are struggling from the effects of the pandemic and lockdowns. We may be in a dark place right now, but there is light at the end of the tunnel. For us to get there, we need to all work together.

• (1040)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte for his speech, in which he talked about the reckless spending that could lead to uncertainty.

I would ask my colleague to think about this. Would it actually not be the lack of predictability for our businesses, particularly in terms of the income stabilization programs, that would lead to this uncertainty? Certain sectors are worried. Some sectors, like sugar

shacks, have been forgotten altogether and others, like tourism, will be affected for a longer period of time.

Would he have wanted the government to extend the Canada emergency wage subsidy or the Canada emergency rent subsidy for as long as necessary, or does he prefer austerity? He talked about health. Is he prepared to make cuts? Does he realize that what we really need is a 35% increase in health transfers, rather than a national framework for mental health?

I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on the importance of helping certain economic sectors for as long as possible and on the need to protect other sectors.

• (1045)

[*English*]

Mr. Doug Shipley: Mr. Speaker, there were a lot of great points in that question and I would like to try to address a few of those.

The biggest problem going forward is having a plan and knowing firm dates. As I mentioned in my speech, Hammond Transportation has been literally and figuratively shut down for 18 months. It has been struggling. The meeting I had with the company last week was about reopening. Officials mentioned that unless they had secure reopening dates and knew when they could bring business back online, they would not be able to plan. They have had many employees leave and they cannot bring them back until they know dates.

The tourism industry has been one of the hardest hit sectors. We need to make sure we are not just cutting off programs. We need to make sure we are giving them plans and dates to go with that.

I was also asked about mental health and where we go for that. I am proud to say that the Conservative Party has a five-point plan, and one of our top five points is to secure mental health. The last year has made clear the mental health crisis we face. It is time to make it clear that mental health is health, and it is time to treat it properly.

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in my riding I represent many coastal communities. We have a long history of tourism-based industry and it has really been struggling. A large number of people who come to visit us are international. I really admire the strength in our communities and how they are marketing to a more local group to try to get people to come out.

One of the things that concerns me in this document is the fact that the funding and resources for those small businesses, those tourism businesses, is not long enough. It is not stable enough and does not provide the supports that they need to still be here so we can rebuild the economy. Could the member speak to that?

Government Orders

Mr. Doug Shipley: Mr. Speaker, I live in central Ontario. We have a huge hub of tourism here. Just north of us is the gateway to northern Ontario and the Muskoka area, which has a tremendous amount of tourism.

As I mentioned in my previous answer, we need to make sure there is a planned date and a plan to go forward. How are we going to get there? We cannot just keep telling people that someday they will be able to open and someday they will be able to bring tourists back. We need to make sure they have a planned date.

The reason we are in this so late and so far behind is originally because of the late coming of vaccines. Now, especially in central Ontario, vaccines are starting to roll out. We can see that things are better and we will get there. We need firm planned dates. That is how we get around this.

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in a previous answer the member was speaking about our mental health plan. I would like to give him an opportunity to touch on some of the details in that plan, such as the 988 hotline, and how important it is to help Canadians.

Mr. Doug Shipley: Mr. Speaker, three-digit access to mental health is imperative to the Conservatives. It was brought forward by a good member of our party. We pushed for that. We are not getting that pushed through quickly enough, but it is greatly needed. I am hearing great things in the community about that system and we need to get that going.

I thank the hon. member for the question on mental health because, quite frankly, our three bases for going forward are to boost funding to the provinces for mental health care, to provide incentives to employers to give mental health coverage to employees, and to create a nationwide three-digit suicide prevention hotline. That is our plan going forward on mental health.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, before I begin my speech, I would like to publicly congratulate you. You have fulfilled the duties of your position with brilliance and dignity for 10 years, and you have done a wonderful job of promoting the language of Molière, which is dear to my heart. I therefore want to congratulate you, thank you for everything you have done and wish you all the best in the future.

I am very pleased that we are at report stage. We spent a lot of time on this bill in committee, and it is finally back in the House. Only two amendments were proposed at report stage, and they were proposed by the government.

The first amendment is ridiculous. It would make the wage subsidy off-limits for political parties but only as of this summer, well after all the parties would have happily put their hands in the cookie jar. I want to point out that all the parties have done that, except the Bloc Québécois.

As members know, all the political parties have raised record amounts during the pandemic, but that is not enough. The government twisted the spirit of the program, which was designed to help the workers and businesses affected by the pandemic. This program was paid for by our tax dollars and ran up the collective debt.

Political parties were never mentioned in the bill, but the agency nevertheless decided to include them. This made it possible for the Liberal Party to receive \$1 million, even though it raised \$15 million in 2020 alone. That is outrageous. What is worse is that after refusing to exclude political parties from receiving the subsidy, which allowed the Liberal Party to keep its \$1 million, the government is proposing to offer this subsidy in July even though no other party is using it. That is textbook Liberal hypocrisy.

If the first amendment is ridiculous, the second is downright dangerous. The government's second amendment is very serious and threatens the very lifeblood of Quebec's economy. It seeks to undo what was voted in committee, which will harm Quebec and the other provinces and make Bay Street even happier.

The government wants the House to restore funding for the Canadian Securities Transition Office in Toronto. The government is so fixated on dealing Quebec's economy a devastating blow that it is asking the House to backtrack on what was passed in committee. We know that Bay Street matters more to the government than all of Quebec. We know that centralizing securities regulation is an infringement on the jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces. Ottawa wants to wipe out Quebec's financial sector. This Liberal amendment would renew and considerably increase the budget of the Canadian Securities Transition Office to expedite its work. It would authorize the government to make payments of up to \$119.5 million or even more if Parliament voted to do so in an appropriation act.

The transition office was set up in July 2009 to create a single Canada-wide securities regulator in Toronto. Basically, securities are financial assets, such as stocks, bonds and other instruments. In Quebec, securities are overseen by the Autorité des marchés financiers, the AMF.

The Supreme Court of Canada has dealt Ottawa a number of setbacks, deeming that securities do not fall under federal jurisdiction. However, in 2018 Ottawa finally got the green light to intervene in this area, provided that it did not act unilaterally and agreed to cooperate with the provinces. That is the agreement on paper, but we all know that, ultimately, this will centralize everything and strip Quebec of its financial hub.

Again, Ottawa is trampling on provincial jurisdiction and wants to centralize everything. Paternalistic Ottawa no longer wants a federation, it wants everything. Everything needs Ottawa's blessing. It is the alpha and the omega. It is too bad for Quebec, its nation and the rights of the provinces.

This is a harmful plan. The federal government's plan to establish a Canada-wide securities regulator in Toronto would inevitably translate into a creep of regulatory activities outside Quebec. This plan is just bad and must never see the light of day.

This is more than just a dispute over jurisdictions or mere squabbling between the federal level and the provinces. This is a battle between Bay Street and Quebec. Without a complete financial ecosystem, it is unrealistic to think that we will be able to hang on to our head offices. In our eyes, economic nationalism would become just an empty slogan.

That is why everyone in Quebec is against it. Every political party, the business community, the financial sector and labour-sponsored funds oppose this plan. For example, the Quebec National Assembly has adopted four unanimous motions denouncing the plan. Seldom have we seen Quebec's business community come together as one to oppose a government initiative.

● (1050)

In addition to the Government of Quebec and the four unanimous motions from the National Assembly, this plan faces vehement opposition in economic circles, including from the Fédération des chambres de commerce du Québec, the Chamber of Commerce of Metropolitan Montreal, Finance Montréal, the International Financial Centre corporation, the Desjardins Group, and the Fonds de solidarité FTQ, as well as most Quebec businesses, like Air Transat, Transcontinental, Canam, Québecor, Metro, La Capitale, Cogeco, Molson, and the list goes on.

A strong Quebec AMF means a strong talent pool to regulate the finance sector, which is a prerequisite for the sector's development. When the Toronto Stock Exchange bought the Bourse de Montréal, the Commission des valeurs mobilières, a precursor to the AMF, made it a condition of the sale that Montreal retain a stock exchange. We know that it specializes in derivatives, including the carbon market.

In Quebec, the financial sector represents 150,000 jobs and contributes more than \$20 billion, or the equivalent of 6.3% of the GDP. That is what the government is going after with its extremely dangerous and harmful amendment.

Close to 100,000 of these jobs are in Montreal, which ranks 13th among the world's financial centres according to the Global Financial Centres Index.

This is an attack on our ability to keep our head offices and preserve our businesses. The Task Force on the Protection of Québec Businesses estimates that the 578 head offices in Quebec represent 50,000 jobs with a salary that is twice as high as the Quebec average, in addition to 20,000 other jobs at specialized service providers such as accounting, legal, financial or computer services.

Quebec companies tend to favour Quebec suppliers, while foreign companies in Quebec rely more on globalized supply chains, with all the impact that can have on our network of SMEs, in the regions in particular. We saw with the pandemic that globalized supply chains are fragile and make us entirely dependent on foreign supply.

The bottom line is that this amendment is an attack on Quebec's entire economy. It is a direct affront. This is important, and we must vote against this amendment.

Lastly, companies tend to concentrate their strategic planning, particularly their scientific research and development, where their head office is. A subsidiary economy is a less innovative one, and we do not want to lose our innovative economy in Quebec.

A strong financial hub is vital to the functioning of our head offices and the preservation of our businesses. Keeping the sector's regulator in Quebec ensures that decision-makers are nearby, which

in turn enables access to capital markets for businesses, which is essential to support business investment and growth across Quebec.

That is what the government's harmful amendment is all about. This amendment would not help interprovincial trade, contrary to what the government might say. The passport system, the fight against money laundering and fraud, and the collaboration and co-operation among the various securities regulators are working quite well. Centralization will not do anything to improve that, contrary to the fallacious arguments put forward by the government.

The Standing Committee on Finance chose to nip that idea in the bud by deleting that clause of Bill C-30. That basically cut the funding for the plan to centralize the financial sector in Toronto. I urge all my colleagues in the House to stand behind the committee's decision and to vote in favour of the economy of Quebec, vote against this gift to Bay Street and reject this amendment like we did in committee.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

● (1055)

[*Translation*]

VAUDREUIL—SOULANGES CONSTITUENCY TEAM

Mr. Peter Schiefke (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today because I want to thank my constituency team here in Vaudreuil—Soulanges. Over the past year, whenever seniors, parents, workers or students were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, my team got busy. They worked tirelessly for months, including on weekends. One of them even came out of retirement to lend a hand. They did everything they could to make sure that people in the community of Vaudreuil—Soulanges were informed about federal support programs and kept up to date about vaccine procurement and administration.

[*English*]

As we begin to come out of this pandemic, I am grateful to have the chance to record their names in Hansard: Jennifer Frezza, Ramy Khoriaty, Sarah Lezmy, Tamara Salembier, Emily Krispis, Veronika Brand, Patricia Dota, Malia Chenaoui, Michael Ruscitti and Nicholas Guilbeault. I want to thank them.

I could not ask for a better team to provide the level of support and service that all citizens of Vaudreuil—Soulanges depend on and deserve.

* * *

CHESTER A. REYNOLDS AWARD

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, he is a wrangler, a rancher, a businessman, but, most important, John Scott is a proud Albertan.

Statements by Members

Longview's John Scott will be the first Canadian ever to be awarded the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum's prestigious Chester A. Reynolds Award. This award recognizes individuals who demonstrate unwavering commitment to western values and ideals.

During a 45-year career, John has dedicated himself to preserving our western heritage and helping to build Alberta's proud and thriving television and film industry. No matter where he is filming in the world, his passion is always showcasing the landscape and the talent of southern Alberta. That talent includes silversmith Scott Hardy and saddle maker Chuck Stormes, members of the Traditional Cowboy Arts Association.

These renowned artists, whose work is coveted around the world, are dedicated to preserving traditional crafts of the cowboy culture. This association will also be honoured in Oklahoma City.

I thank the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum for celebrating Canadian culture and I congratulate its newest honourees. Southern Alberta is extremely proud.

* * *

• (1100)

WAR HISTORIAN

Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an exceptional constituent of mine.

[*Translation*]

Michel Gravel honoured our soldiers and our country with his historical research. He ensured that our soldiers were commemorated for their efforts in France during the First World War.

[*English*]

I first met Michel Gravel several years ago when he passionately told me about his project to get a commemorative plaque for General Arthur Currie in France.

[*Translation*]

Among his many achievements was getting the name of the highway from Arras to Cambrai in France changed to "Canada's Highway of Heroes" to raise awareness of the fact that more than 7,000 Canadians died and were buried along the highway.

[*English*]

Michel is the author of five books on Canada's war effort, one of which inspired a new Canadian World War I museum in France.

We thank him for his contributions in ensuring our brave soldiers and their accomplishments are remembered.

* * *

RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, I put forward a unanimous consent motion to recognize what happened in residential schools as an act of genocide. Certain parliamentarians chose to deny consent for this truth.

Today is the day we recognize the 2008 national residential school apology, which acknowledged the sexual, spiritual, cultural, emotional, physical and psychological abuses that children had to endure in residential schools, sometimes resulting in death. This was meaningful for many indigenous people.

However, if we are going to reconcile in this country, the truth must be told. What happened in residential schools was an act of genocide, according to article 2 of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

Therefore, today, I am asking parliamentarians in the House to have the courage, once again, to speak truth so that the experience of survivors is no longer up for debate. Survivors, impacted families and communities deserve that justice.

* * *

[*Translation*]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. Darrell Samson (Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as an Acadian and former educator in minority language communities, I am very proud of our government's efforts since 2015 in the area of official languages to advance linguistic duality.

We reinstated the court challenges program, re-established the Translation Bureau as a centre of excellence, signed the very first strategic education agreement, revised the federal government's regulations on bilingual services to the public, after which more than 600 additional offices were designated bilingual, and added questions to the 2021 census to reach all classes of rights holders.

This winter, our government unveiled its plan to modernize the Official Languages Act. It includes supporting the vitality of immigration and education institutions, ensuring that bilingual judges are appointed to the Supreme Court, promoting French in Quebec and across Canada, and establishing a central agency to strengthen the powers of the Commissioner of Official Languages.

We are working hard to deliver a bill for all Canadians.

* * *

[*English*]

RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last week I had several opportunities to meet with indigenous constituents directly impacted by Kamloops residential school and St. Mary's residential school. During the march on Saturday, I walked alongside dozens of survivors of the residential school system and their families. Shared with me were stories of horror, loss of language and a pain that still exists today. For some, it was too much to even talk about.

As the member of Parliament for a riding with a large indigenous population, I acknowledge that I have a lot to learn and a lot to do. Some of the immediate actions my constituents are calling for include funding the investigation of all former residential schools where unmarked graves may exist; ensuring that proper resources are allocated for communities to reinter, commemorate and honour any individuals discovered through the investigation; and developing a detailed and thorough set of resources to better educate Canadians on this tragedy.

Finally, I will be tabling a petition to that effect very shortly in the House today.

* * *

• (1105)

ATTACK IN LONDON, ONTARIO

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Milton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the horrific act of domestic terrorism on Sunday, June 6, was another tragic reminder of the evil and hateful prejudice and racism that continue to exist in our country. It was an attack on an innocent family, a religious community and our ideals as Canadians.

On Wednesday night, I attended a vigil in Oakville, and I saw the coming together of a Muslim community that was shaken, but not broken. I spoke with my neighbour Muhammad at the vigil. He lives in Milton and was family with the victims from London. He urged me to press for investments in education, mental health supports, and resources and services for those who are struggling. It is our responsibility as leaders and as citizens to stand up and speak out against hatred in all of its forms. Prejudice, bigotry and Islamophobia have no place in our country, and we must all be consistent in condemning hateful rhetoric in the strongest terms.

I would like my Muslim friends and neighbours here in Milton to know that we love them and we support them. They are an integral part of our community that helps make our town so great. I hope to see them out on an evening walk some time really soon.

* * *

[Translation]

LISETTE CORBEIL

Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Longueuil—Charles-LeMoine, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, I was deeply shaken and saddened to learn of the tragic death of Lisette Corbeil, the director of strategic projects at the south shore chamber of commerce and industry.

Just a month ago, Ms. Corbeil worked with my team to organize a special activity for the chamber. She was warm, competent and incredibly kind.

Ms. Corbeil was found dead in her home in Contrecoeur on Wednesday. Authorities believe she died at the hands of her estranged spouse.

This femicide is the 12th in Quebec since the beginning of the year, which is a tragic and heartbreaking statistic. We all need to denounce acts of violence like this one and come up with solutions to make sure it never happens again.

Statements by Members

I extend my deepest condolences to Ms. Corbeil's family and loved ones, as well as her colleagues at the south shore chamber of commerce and industry.

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[English]

RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

Mr. Len Webber (Calgary Confederation, CPC): Mr. Speaker, children's shoes and toys were placed in front of the former Kamloops Indian Residential School in British Columbia this past week, a memorial to 215 indigenous children who died at just one residential school. It has shocked our nation.

These children were taken from their families and never came home. Each one is a tragic story, and together they are a horrifying reminder of what our nation did to those poor kids, their families and their culture. Sadly, the more we learn, the more we weep. Just when we think we have heard the worst, another chapter in the shameful history of Canada is unearthed.

We all have a duty to learn more about this tragedy and this devastating part of Canada's history so we can heal and grow together as a nation. We cannot undo the past, but we can learn from it and commit to doing our part to support the healing and reconciliation.

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MIRACLE LEAGUE OF OTTAWA

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Orléans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on June 4, I had the pleasure of attending the virtual AGM of the Miracle League of Ottawa. Its leadership brought to Orléans a fully accessible baseball field and playground, which gives those with special needs the opportunity to play in a safe and enjoyable environment. I am so proud to have this organization in our community, and I would like to acknowledge the engagement of the volunteers and members of the board.

At every opportunity I had to attend a game, the joy and smiles I could see all around were just so fulfilling. I have the privilege to count among my friends a very special family. I thank Rolly and Michelle Desrochers, and their son, Bryce, for their passion. I thank Bryce, who had a dream of one day being able to play baseball in his wheelchair, for turning that dream into a reality.

* * *

BROOKSWOOD SECONDARY SCHOOL

Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a couple of weeks ago, I had the honour of visiting some schools in my riding of Langley—Aldergrove, all via video conference, of course, including Brookwood Secondary School. There, I met with Ms. Glover and her grade 11 and 12 political studies students, who challenged me with very thoughtful questions. Notable was a question from a young man who wanted to know what he could do to bring attention to shocking reports about sexual assault in the Canadian Armed Forces.

Statements by Members

This young man has had the advantage of strong female role models in his life, who have encouraged him not to remain silent. I assured him that he was doing the right thing by bringing this to the attention of his member of Parliament, and that I would be proud to stand with him and his classmates to bring their concerns to Canada's Parliament.

I send a big thank you to Ms. Glover and all her grade 11 and 12 political studies students for a job well done, and a special shout-out to a remarkable and courageous young man, River Peatman, who has the courage to stand up and not be silent.

* * *

• (1110)

BILL C-10

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this week the Liberals, with the help of the Bloc, pushed through their gag order to shut down debate on Bill C-10 at the heritage committee.

Several academic and legal experts have been clear. Bill C-10 leaves the door open to a massive abuse of power and the regulation of what Canadians can or cannot post online. Freedom of expression is a fundamental right in any democratic society, and it is shameful that the Liberals refuse to make the necessary amendments to protect it.

Conservatives cannot and will not vote for a bill that threatens the rights of all Canadians. Canada's Conservatives will always stand up for the free expression of Canadians, even if the NDP and Bloc will not.

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CLASS OF 2021

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, if members are looking for a gift idea for a 2021 grad in their life, consider buying them shades, because there is no question that Canada's future is very bright with the class of 2021 stepping up.

Have they let the pandemic stand in their way? No way. Now we need to do our part. We need to make post-secondary education free in Canada, just like it is in over 25 countries around the world. We also need to make it easier for students to repay student loans.

Students know that we have an NDP leader who is fighting for good jobs for them with meaningful climate change plans and a concrete action plan to address systemic racism. They know that they did not get here alone, but with support from family, friends and wonderful educators. They also know that it is now up to them to make their mark, whether in post-secondary institutions, the labour market or their communities. Like the class of 2020 before them, they are clearly #readyforanything.

To the class of 2021, I send love and courage to each and every one, and I encourage them to go for it.

[Translation]

TEMPORARY FOREIGN WORKERS

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the government's management of the temporary foreign workers file is a disaster, and the pandemic has just made things worse.

After making farmers responsible for ensuring that their workers quarantine, the government ended up offering them \$1,500 in compensation, but that amount will be slashed in half as of June 16.

Our farmers, who are still bringing in workers, will get half of the assistance they need. On top of that, the workers are coming in late after being stuck in quarantine because of the federal government and the incompetence of Switch Health.

The minister made a promise when she announced the program; she said, "This program will be available as long as the Quarantine Act is in force."

She gave her word and needs to get her act together. Farmers never asked to take over responsibility for quarantines from the federal government. The federal government needs to do its part and see this through.

* * *

[English]

RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today marks the 13th anniversary of then prime minister Stephen Harper's historic apology for Canada's role in the residential school system.

The legacy of residential schools is a national shame that has had a profoundly lasting and destructive impact on indigenous peoples and their culture, heritage and language. With the tragic discovery of 215 children in an unmarked grave at the site of a former Kamloops residential school, we are reminded of our indolence. All of us on all sides of the House must accept our role in that apathy.

More work needs to be done to address the devastating and harmful effects of residential schools, which continue for the many survivors and their families today. The government must stop off-loading its commitment to reconcile with indigenous peoples. Rather, the government must renew that commitment without delay with concrete plans to implement calls to action 71 through 76.

* * *

• (1115)

PHILIPPINES INDEPENDENCE DAY

Mr. Marcus Powlowski (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this will be a great weekend for many of us in Ontario because, for the first time in many months, we will be able to get together with up to 10 other people outside. However, this is going to be a really great weekend for members of the Filipino-Canadian population because tomorrow is Philippines Independence Day.

For the Filipino-Canadian community, this last year has been a particularly hard because many people from that community work in either chronic care homes or meat-packing plants, both of which were hit hard by COVID. However, this weekend, I, like Filipino Canadians and Filipinos around the world, will be partying.

No one parties better than the Filipinos. I, like many Filipinos, will spend the weekend eating pancit, lechon and bicol express, and drinking, of course, Tanduay and San Miguel.

Maligayang Araw ng Kalayaan.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[*Translation*]

JUSTICE

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government says that diversity is a driver in the judicial selection process.

Yesterday, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice provided statistics to prove that there is diversity among the appointed judges.

Diversity is important, but the “Liberalist” system does not help with political diversity. Why are the Liberals using diversity to hide their lies?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for the question, but the premise is all wrong.

When our government was elected in 2015, we created a more rigorous, open and accountable system that better reflects Canada's diversity when appointing top-notch judges to our institutions. Our appointments are always based on merit. They are also based on the needs of the various benches, the expertise of the various candidates and the recommendations of the independent judicial advisory committees. We are proud of what we have put in place. The candidates come from—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Chicoutimi—Le Fjord.

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government is constantly using words such as “inclusive” and “transparent” to describe its judicial selection process.

Those are nice words and all, but they in no way relate to this government. Judges are appointed solely on the basis of their contributions to the Liberal Party. Making changes to the selection process only after problems were brought to light is not transparency.

When will the government start deserving the words it uses to describe itself?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague's premise is false.

In 2015, we implemented an independent merit-based system. Advisory committees operate neutrally and in a non-partisan way. The committees work hard to select candidates who will advance through the process. Our appointments are merit-based.

Oral Questions

We have nothing to learn from the Conservative Party, which is actually the reason we had to make changes to the system starting in 2015—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Chicoutimi—Le Fjord.

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice and the Prime Minister have defended their judicial appointment process for quite some time.

However, the Minister of Justice himself said that the process did not take any partisan considerations into account. We now know that is not true. The “Liberalist” system added a filter that made the whole process biased and partisan.

How can Canadians be expected to place their trust in a justice minister who does not himself follow the rules?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we have just said many times, the advisory committees work independently. They base their decisions on merit. Merit and diversity are the two criteria we look at in choosing quality judges right across Canada.

Since 2015, we have appointed over 450 people to the bench. They are exceptional judges, from all walks of life and all political stripes. We will continue to do so.

• (1120)

[*English*]

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last fall, the justice minister told the House, “There is no partisanship in my decision-making process.” However, this week, senior government sources admitted that judicial appointments were checked against the Liberal supporter database, “Liberalist”. Canadians expect judges to be appointed on their merits, and those merits should not include how much money they donated to the Liberals or whether or not they took a lawn sign in the last election.

Was the minister trying to mislead the House or did he just forget the Liberalist has a veto on his appointments?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the assumptions made by the hon. member are completely false and I stand by what I said in previous responses. We have put into place a process that is independent, clear and transparent. The judicial appointment committees work in a way that is completely non-partisan. I make my appointments based only on merit and diversity, and not in a partisan fashion. We will continue with the high-quality appointments that we have made. We certainly will not take lessons from the Conservative Party. It is the reason we put this system into place in the—

Oral Questions

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. deputy leader of the opposition.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister should be hanging his head in shame and taking some lessons on how to make appointments that are not partisan.

The minister posted a tweet congratulating one of his buddies, one of his donors, on a recent appointment and then he had to take down the tweet because it turned out the approval was not official yet. Well, that is how Ottawa is run under these Liberals. If one donates enough to the justice minister or flies the Prime Minister's family around the world, one gets concierge service from the government.

Just how long have the Liberals been using their partisan supporter database to approve judges' appointments?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, the presumptions made by the hon. member are completely false and I disagree with them. There was a mistake made in a tweet. That was corrected by the department and persons were contacted with respect to the mistake that was made. Again, I apologize for that mistake being made on behalf of the Ministry of Justice.

We appoint quality candidates from all political backgrounds, all backgrounds, diverse backgrounds, through a process that is independent, through a process that focuses on quality, on talent and on diversity, and—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Saint-Jean.

* * *

[*Translation*]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Liberals rejected a Bloc Québécois motion condemning the conflation of the horrific attack in London with a Quebec law.

The member for Mississauga—Erin Mills defended the rejection of the motion by conflating yet another issue. She said that Canada is a multicultural society where everyone should feel welcome, and that laws like that of Quebec do not help to create this kind of climate.

Obviously, the member feels that there is a connection between the attack in London and the Quebec law. Is that the government's position or will the member be admonished for that?

[*English*]

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Quebecers are well aware, they are defending their rights through the Constitution and we are going to continue to follow that process from close. Obviously, I express my condolences to the Muslim community in London and across Canada for this tragic and horrific act, and we will continue to move forward in that direction.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the motion that the Liberals rejected had three objectives.

It reiterated our condolences to the victims' families and friends and to the entire community of London because they are the ones

we should be talking about today, not political parties and especially not Quebec.

The motion reiterated that everyone must denounce hatred and violence, and that misguided conflation must be avoided at all costs because this tragedy must not be used to play partisan or ideological politics.

How can the House possibly not be able to agree on that?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I cannot speak to why the House is not unanimous on this issue.

From the start, we have expressed our condolences to the victims' family and friends and to Muslim communities across Canada, particularly those in London, Ontario.

We are trying to combat Islamophobia. We will continue to do that because that is what we need to do to have an inclusive and, might I add, fair country.

* * *

● (1125)

[*English*]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government has provided \$750 billion in liquidity supports for Canada's big banks, it has provided billions to profitable companies that paid out dividends and executive bonuses and it has refused to put into place a wealth tax or a pandemic profit tax. For the government, the sky is the limit for the ultrarich.

With a potential fourth wave coming and families struggling, why is the Liberal government slashing supports Canadians desperately need to put food on the table? Why are Liberals slashing emergency benefits for Canadians nearly in half at this critical time?

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and to the Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with great respect for the hon. member, I take some umbrage at the question he has put. He knows fairly well that during this pandemic it was our government that was there for people in need. We advanced record supports to help families keep food on the table and help workers remain on the payroll.

Going forward, we have immense benefits we are rolling out to continue to support people and businesses through this pandemic. I will point out, before he continues to ride on his high horse, that when he had the opportunity to vote to cut taxes for the middle class and pay for them by raising them on the 1%, he voted against it. When he had the chance to stop sending child care cheques to millionaires to put more money in the pockets of nine out of 10 Canadian families, he voted against it too. Families should—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for North Island—Powell River.

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, let us be real. The Liberals offered \$1,000 for CERB and it was the NDP who moved them to increase it to \$2,000, so I would remind the minister of that.

In the next three weeks, the government is cutting the CERB support to Canadians across the country almost in half. I am asking the minister how he expects people to buy food, pay their rent and cover their bills on \$1,200. That does not pass the test in Canadian cities.

The government gives billions of dollars to oil and gas companies and refuses to tax the ultrarich, but is fine to nickel and dime everyday people. Instead of working for the ultrarich and huge corporations, when will the government step up and actually—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and to the Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would urge the NDP to tone down the rhetoric and stop trying to take credit for the measures that our government put in place to help Canadians in their time of need.

The very first thing we did when we came to office in 2015 was raise taxes on the wealthiest 1% so we could cut them for the middle class. The NDP voted against it. When we had a chance to stop sending child care cheques to millionaires to put more money in the pockets of nine out of 10 Canadians families, the NDP voted against it. When we took initial steps to eliminate measures that benefit wealthy executives just in 2019, the NDP voted against that too.

Canadians should know that, from the beginning of this pandemic until its end, we will be there for—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Carleton.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, not only are millionaire corporate Liberals like Mark Carney refusing to source raw materials from the Xinjiang region of China, which powers its production of those materials with slave labour and coal-fired manufacturing, here the government is refusing to rule out partnering with companies like iFlyTek, which does AI research to help identify the voice of Chinese political dissidents and carry out that very same genocide. Will the government reverse course and stop partnering with technology companies that enable genocide?

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and to the Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will partner with folks on the international scene, but it is rich for the member to suggest that he is somehow more morally astute than the government.

Our focus, when it comes to the relationship with China, is securing the release of the two Michaels, the well-being of 300,000 Canadians in Hong Kong and the treatment of the Uighur population in Xinjiang.

Oral Questions

We will continue to focus on Canada playing a leadership role on the world stage and defending the interests of Canadians abroad at every opportunity.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member said he is concerned about the Uighur Muslim minority in China. He refused to condemn the genocide being committed against that very population and then he wags his fingers at us.

The question was very specific. The federal government is funding research at universities that are now partnering with companies like iFlyTek, which is using voice recognition technology that helps the Chinese government intercept the phone calls of the Uighur population to identify what they are saying and help carry out the genocide. If he is as moral as he claims, why will he not rule out any of those types of partners?

• (1130)

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been very clear with respect to the treatment of the Uighurs in China and are gravely preoccupied with all of the very credible reports that have come out of China with respect to their treatment. That is why we have been calling for an open, unfettered, impartial investigation of the situation in Xinjiang and will continue to press for that with our international partners.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, speaking of our international partners, the U.S. State Department has black-listed iFlyTek because of its role in supporting the genocide in the Xinjiang region. The Australians have recognized the company likewise, and recently the Alberta government has called for a national policy that bans technological co-operation with companies like this one that aid in the commission of genocide. Will the government announce today that there will be no more funding of partnerships with technology companies that help commit genocide?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been clear in recent months that co-operation with other countries, including China, that may involve a risk with respect to intellectual property, are to be taken into consideration when funding partnerships are proposed in our universities and other institutions. That is something that we are very conscious of and the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry has spoken about recently.

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[Translation]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, every day for weeks now we have been asking the government about the unfortunate events at the National Microbiology Laboratory in Winnipeg.

Oral Questions

The government's response is always the same. Unfortunately, the Liberals call us racist, and yesterday they accused us of being conspiracy theorists. This only confirms that insult is the weapon of the weak.

On CBC yesterday, two experts acknowledged that some very relevant questions need to be asked about these events, even talking about espionage.

Why does the government refuse to get to the bottom of this deplorable situation?

[English]

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think the Conservative member opposite knows full well by now that we have provided NSICOP fully unredacted documents. This is the appropriate committee to investigate these documents. I urge him to stop accusing the government of not being transparent, because, in fact, by providing fully unredacted documents, that is exactly what we are being, transparent.

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the fact is that this Liberal government committee is a secret committee where no one can say anything. More than anyone, the Prime Minister seems to have the final say. It is not a parliamentary committee, it is a committee of parliamentarians created by the Liberal government. We actually voted against it when it was first created, precisely because it lacks transparency.

The best way to get to the bottom of things and respond to the concerns of the experts we heard on CBC yesterday would be to table those documents so they can be properly studied by a real parliamentary committee.

Why is the government getting in the way of that?

[English]

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the opposition party is playing dangerous games with national security. The member knows full well that, in fact, his party appoints candidates to the NSICOP. The documents are with the committee. They are fully unredacted. I encourage him to stop trying to mislead Canadians and play games with national security.

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, these are the facts. What happened in Winnipeg?

First, two researchers were removed and escorted by the RCMP. Security clearance was given to a researcher with direct ties to the Chinese military. Two senior laboratory managers suddenly quit their jobs. In addition, two viruses were shipped from Winnipeg to Wuhan.

These are important issues and we need to get the whole truth, not from a committee where the Prime Minister has the right to veto everything that will be released, but by a real committee of parliamentarians.

Why is the government hiding the truth from Canadians?

[English]

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a committee that is comprised of parliamentarians from both houses and across all parties is indeed a parliamentary committee. It is important that the member opposite not try to mislead Canadians and not try to play chicken with national security. This is not a game. Those documents have been provided to the committee, fully unredacted, in a place where it is safe to review them.

* * *

• (1135)

[Translation]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this involves Quebec's business community.

In Bill C-30, the Bloc Québécois cut funding to the office responsible for establishing a Canada-wide securities commission. It is a small victory, but a great relief for our economy as we have been fighting for 40 years to prevent the federal government from collapsing Montreal's financial sector for Toronto's benefit. We have not yet won. The Liberals are trying to reinstate funding for the office with an amendment to Bill C-30.

Will they withdraw this amendment, or do they intend to start another war with Quebec over securities?

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and to the Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Securities Transition Office has supported efforts to establish a co-operative capital markets regulatory system.

We are proposing providing the office \$12 million in funding over two years to continue supporting the government's efforts to establish a co-operative capital markets regulatory system. This is a good thing for the entire country.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the parliamentary secretary on his French. Hats off to him. I do not congratulate him on his comments, however, because what he said is not good for Quebec's economy, and everyone agrees on that.

Everyone knows that the Liberals are looking at their election timetable and getting as excited as a kid in a candy store. I do not understand why they are reopening the securities regulator fight in Bill C-30. I do not understand why they want to go to war with the Quebec business community at a time when our businesses want to focus on the economic recovery. I do not understand why they are prepared to fight for funding for an office that is pointless if the Liberals listen to what Quebec wants.

Are the Liberals that invested in wiping out Montreal's financial hub?

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and to the Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is no impact on Quebec's jurisdiction. We understand Quebec's position very well. The Deputy Prime Minister has had constructive discussions on this subject with Minister Eric Girard.

I think it is good for the entire country to be able to do things that help us have a common economy. For example, consider trade between the provinces and territories, where there is an opportunity to combat money laundering. It is a good idea for the entire country.

* * *

[English]

GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, across Canada, religious, ethnic and cultural communities are hurting. In recent weeks, we have seen toxic hate on social media and in our streets. We have seen hate-driven vandalism, violence and murder.

Canadians expect members of the House and the parties they represent to calm, not inflame, intercommunal discord and discrimination. Why, then, have the Liberals welcomed a floor-crossing MP, disciplined by her former party for inflammatory, misguided and in-temperate remarks against Israel?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Minister of Diversity and Inclusion and Youth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government will always work to ensure we work with all Canadians.

The member recognizes that Canadians are hurting right now. It has been a very challenging couple of weeks, actually months and years. We know there is quite the racist history within Canada, and right now is a time for us to work together.

That is why we have Canada's anti-racism strategy. That is why we are having conversations with all groups, because it will take every single Canadian from coast to coast to counter hate. Hate does not belong in Canada.

I hope the member will join us in this much-needed battle.

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, to that non-answer, let me offer the reaction of an hon. former colleague of the House, Michael Levitt, now CEO of the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies. He wrote:

As a former Liberal MP I'm disappointed and concerned by the news that [the] MP [for Fredericton] has crossed the floor to join the Liberal caucus, given her inflammatory one-sided and divisive rhetoric during the recent conflict between Israel and the terror group Hamas.

Is the Liberal government really so desperate in its rush to attempt re-election?

The Deputy Speaker: I am not sure the question is actually a matter for the operational elements of the government. I do see the minister is rising to respond, so we will go to him.

The hon. minister.

• (1140)

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the position of the Liberal government is extremely clear

Oral Questions

on the question of the apartheid label. We reject it categorically. It is not part of our approach with respect to Israel or the Jewish community. We, of course, are completely against any anti-Semitism that would be displayed by any Canadian citizen.

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HOUSING

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada has a national housing crisis, and it is getting worse.

With the lowest per capita housing supply in the G7, Canada simply does not have enough houses. In my GTA riding, housing prices have skyrocketed by over 25% in the last year, with the average price now over \$1 million. Canadians cannot find places to live and they are losing hope they will ever own a home.

When will the government take real action to help Canadians achieve a more secure housing future?

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will note that the Conservative member who asked that question has proposed taxing primary residences and changing the capital gains tax. That was alerted to the House in debate earlier this week. It is an astonishing reversal of position for the Conservatives.

We have done a number of different things, for example, the tax on vacant homes and offshore ownership, in terms of beneficial ownership and new rules around disclosure to help fight money laundering, as well as our \$72-billion national housing strategy. To put this in perspective, in the last six months, through the rapid housing initiative, we have secured and built more homes than the previous Conservative government did in its last two years—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill.

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the national housing crisis, it is about the facts.

Monthly mortgage prices have increased from an average of \$330 to \$2,500. For many in the GTA, the cost of housing exceeds 75% of their income and owning a home is out of reach as it takes over 277 months to save for a down payment. The Royal Bank says that calls for forceful action to cool the frenzied real estate market have been mostly ignored.

When will the government act to make housing a priority?

Oral Questions

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this government has been acting since the day we took office in 2015. A \$72-billion investment into the housing sector delivers market rental solutions to families so they can rent cheaper and therefore save to get into the housing market. Our first-time homebuyer program has helped more than 10,000 Canadians acquire their first property.

Our move to end chronic homelessness, as I said, has delivered 4,770 units of housing in the last six months, which is almost exactly what the Conservatives did over the last two years in office. We did it while also maintaining subsidies for co-ops, also building new housing, also repairing housing and also making sure that the Reaching Home dollars more than doubled and in fact are now at half a billion dollars a year for the next three years.

Our government's record on housing is clear. The Conservatives lack leadership—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona.

* * *

HEALTH

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last month, Edmontonians grieved the death of three men who died in a downtown park in broad daylight after a suspected overdose. In 2020, Alberta had record numbers of drug-related deaths. In 2021, this horrifying trend continues. EMS responded to 55 overdose calls in just 48 hours last week.

The UCP has cut safe injection sites and funding, and this week it announced a nasal naloxone pilot, a move experts say is a redundant distraction and not enough to respond to the crisis.

The federal government is piloting SUAP safe supply pilots in other provinces. Why not in Alberta?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first, I share the member opposite's dismay and attack on treating substance use as a health condition and not one of criminality. That is in fact what our government has done since we were elected in 2015.

We have restored harm reduction through the Canada drug strategy. We have ensured that communities across the country from coast to coast have access to funding for harm reduction and other treatment options. We will continue to provide funding, including through the money in budget 2021, to community-based programs that treat substance users with dignity and with hope.

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TOURISM INDUSTRY

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canada is the only country in the G7 without a restart plan for international travel. For some small tourism operations in north-west B.C., more than 90% of their clients come from the U.S.

They have already lost one tourism season and many have had to use their savings to keep their staff on. If there is a chance they can

salvage part of the coming tourism season, they need time to prepare. The government needs to explain its plan to begin lifting travel restrictions safely.

Could the minister tell Canadians what restrictions will apply to fully vaccinated travellers?

• (1145)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question. As he knows, protecting the health and safety of Canadians will always be a top priority in our efforts to get through this pandemic.

We have taken measures for travellers, including testing before and after arrival. We have taken a progressive approach that we adjust to follow the latest public health advice.

We are working in close collaboration with our international partners on a coordinated approach to safely reopening travel.

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[*English*]

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last Sunday, the community of London, Ontario was the site of an atrocious act of terrorism. Four lives were lost, taken, and a child was left in the hospital, all this loss because a visible Muslim family went for a walk and someone filled with hate killed them. Many Canadian Muslims are once again living with fear that they too could be targeted simply for being a Muslim. This is unacceptable.

Could the Minister of Diversity and Inclusion and Youth please tell the House how our government is tackling Islamophobia, to create a safer—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. minister.

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Minister of Diversity and Inclusion and Youth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our hearts go out to the loved ones of the Afzaal family and to Fayez who remains in hospital. Our government knows we need to act against Islamophobia. We are doing this through Canada's anti-racism strategy, adding white supremacist groups to Canada's terror listing and increased funding to protect places of worship and community spaces.

More is needed, which is why we will lead a national summit on combatting all forms of hate, including a national summit on combatting Islamophobia, also advocated for by the hard-working member for Scarborough Centre.

We will continue to work with partners to tackle all forms of hate in Canada and to create a safer and more inclusive Canada for all.

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COVID-19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Nav Canada handed out \$7 million in bonuses, this after laying off 700 workers and increasing airline fees by 30%. These emergency funds were meant to keep workers employed, not to hand out to executives.

Will the minister start standing up for Canada's aviation workers and demand that these bonuses are paid back?

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and to the Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is completely unacceptable for companies to be extending bonuses to wealthy executives when they are in receipt of public money designed for workers. I am pleased to share with the hon. member that we have designed the program in a way that is going to help combat this particular trend.

In particular, I would point out that companies need to prove, with the Canada emergency wage subsidy, that every penny they claim is actually going to their workers. In addition, we have adopted a new rule with respect to budget 2021 that will see any company that increases its executive compensation going forward beyond pre-pandemic levels being required to pay back monies received through the wage subsidy. These benefits are for workers, and that is where they should go.

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[Translation]

TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, regional airlines have been devastated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

As if that were not bad enough, to add insult to injury, Transport Canada has told Aviation MH, a company in Rivière-du-Loup, which is in my riding, to pay \$544 just to change its mailing address.

Is the Minister of Transport okay with his department exacting its pound of flesh from a hard-hit business just to reprint a certificate that probably costs next to nothing to produce?

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question, and I would like to reassure him that our government is committed to ensuring that all regions have sustainable, efficient and affordable air service. We want to make sure that everyone in every region is well served. I would be happy to work with my colleague to address the specific issue he raised today.

Oral Questions

[English]

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, now that provinces are reopening, our top priority must be an economic recovery in all sectors and all regions of the country, but the government has done nothing to help small businesses and tourist outfitters in northwestern Ontario who are struggling to maintain operations and have now lost the better part of two summers. They need hope that they will reopen to a thriving economy.

When will the government give them that hope and present a real plan for an economic recovery?

• (1150)

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, obviously I do not agree with my colleague, because we have been there since the beginning of the pandemic to help our different regions, and in particular northern Ontario, to make sure that businesses have access to different measures to survive the pandemic, particularly our tourism operators. They have had access to the wage subsidy, the CEBA account, and support through FedNor.

We have been there to make sure they can continue to operate in these very difficult times, and we will continue to support them in the future, as we will be investing more than \$1 billion to support them in the coming months.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as life returns to normal in countries such as the U.S. and the U.K., here in Canada the government has offered no plan to reopen the economy, no plan to end the disastrous hotel quarantines and no plan to see a return to normalcy. Enough is enough.

After 15 months of failed COVID policy after failed COVID policy, why is it that the government's only plan is to keep Canadians locked down forever?

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and to the Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I find it rich every time the Conservatives put on record their opposition to sensible public health measures that are designed not only to keep Canadians safe, but to protect the long-term interest of our economy as well.

Our plan from the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic was to do everything we can to protect Canadians from the public health emergency. I point the hon. member to the fact that Canada is now number one in the OECD of any country in terms of the number of citizens who have received their first dose.

Oral Questions

We are going to continue to support businesses so they can punch out of this pandemic recession by extending the emergency benefits and by putting in place new measures to encourage businesses to hire more Canadians, to make sure that all Canadians from different walks of life get to benefit from the profound economic growth that private sector economists are projecting for Canada this year. A year from now, his comments on the record—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Manicouagan.

* * *

[Translation]

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the fishing vessels in Grande-Rivière in the Gaspé have been abandoned by the federal government. The Government of Quebec asked Ottawa to provide funding for the winter storage facility for those fishing vessels, but Ottawa refuses to broaden the scope of the Quebec fisheries fund, despite the fact that only \$5 million of the \$42 million provided for the fund have been disbursed over the past two years.

Grande-Rivière and the RCM are taking action to help fishers. The Government of Quebec is taking action to help fishers. A total of 50% of landings occur in the Gaspé. The region's economic development is at stake. Where is the minister and member for Gaspésie-Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if we want to talk about leadership, I will certainly take no lessons from the Bloc Québécois, which completely drained the lifeblood of the Gaspé for 15 long years. What is the Bloc Québécois able to do in the region? It cannot do anything at all except complain. The Gaspé needs doers, not whiners.

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I hope the people of Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine will hear what the minister said.

Today, in Grande-Rivière, in the Gaspé, the federal government is abandoning fishers and hurting the economy. This spring—and we do not even know what will happen next year—port facilities are being abandoned in Cap-aux-Meules, in the Magdalen Islands, putting fishing seasons at risk.

The federal government is abdicating its responsibilities everywhere throughout the region, and that makes no sense whatsoever. If the federal government is not there to support fisheries in eastern Quebec, where is it? Is the member for Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine doing anything at all? How is it that she has been incapable of understanding and saying to her fellow ministers that the fisheries—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. minister.

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while the Bloc Québécois is playing armchair critic, on this side of the House we are producing tangible results for Quebecers. The Bloc Québécois prides itself on speaking on behalf of the people of Gaspé, but what have they accomplished for the economy? How many jobs have they created in the Gaspé? I can tell you that with friends like that, the people of Gaspé don't need enemies.

[English]

HEALTH

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last week, a family from Virden, Manitoba took their son to an eye specialist in North Dakota, due to his condition. Their son had a referral from a doctor in Canada, but when they returned across the border into Canada, they were slapped with a fine of \$10,000. This is absurd, given that the Prime Minister has just exempted NHL players but is willing to fine a mom and a dad \$10,000 for taking their son to a medical appointment.

Therefore, I am asking the Minister of Health or the minister of public safety to intervene and fix this injustice.

• (1155)

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I encourage the member opposite to contact my office with the specifics of this particular case, and I would be happy to look into it for him. In general, though, the measures at the border are there to protect Canadians from the importation of the virus, and we encourage all Canadians to follow the rules. I will look into this particular case for the member.

Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have heard from so many constituents who tell me that the mandatory hotel quarantine program of the government makes no sense. It is expensive and, given the lack of supporting data, people are not convinced that it is better than a stay-at-home order.

I recently heard from a constituent who is doing humanitarian work overseas as a volunteer. She has not been able to be fully vaccinated and cannot afford the government's inflated prices for a hotel on her return. When will the government scrap this botched program?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our measures of protection at the border have been guided through science and evidence, to ensure that we protect Canadians from the importation of the virus. We will continue to adjust border measures as the science and evidence and advisers recommend to do so.

Over the last year and a half, Canadians have made tremendous sacrifices in their lives. Small businesses have struggled. Individual families have sacrificed. We can see the finish line. It is important that we are careful and cautious in our next steps.

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the COVID-19 testing and screening expert advisory panel has officially recommended doing away with the failed Liberal hotel quarantine policy. Instead, the Liberals increased fines for non-compliance, and only the day before the Prime Minister left for the U.K. was it modified. When will the government immediately end, not simply modify, this non-science-based program? When will it be gone?

Oral Questions

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, before I answer that question, let me just say that any kind of allegation that the Prime Minister is not complying with the measures that are in place for all Canadians is untrue.

In terms of the progress on alleviation of border measures, we will be guided by science and evidence on this side of the House. As I said, Canadians have made extraordinary sacrifices to fight this virus. We see the finish line. Canadians are stepping up to get vaccinated. By the way, we are first in the G7, the G20 and the OECD for first shots. We are on our way. It is important that we protect our progress.

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[Translation]

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Ms. Emmanuela Lambropoulos (Saint-Laurent, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we said it a few months ago, and we keep saying it. There is a vaccination plan, and that plan is working.

We told Canadians that we would be there for them and that we would get through this pandemic together, and that is what we have done. Although some people chose to spread fear and uncertainty, there is no doubt that the plan is working. Quebeckers are already booking appointments for their second dose of the vaccine.

Can the minister give us more information on how the vaccine procurement is going and how it is shaping up for the future?

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Saint-Laurent for her question. She is right to say that we are getting results.

[English]

Canadians are rolling up their sleeves. Today, over 72% of eligible Canadians have received at least one dose, putting Canada first in the G7, the G20 and the OECD. Our announcement of over seven million Moderna doses next week brings next week's deliveries to a total of 9.5 million doses.

[Translation]

As we have been saying from the start, our plan is working.

* * *

[English]

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have been contacted by numerous municipalities in my riding regarding their applications to the investing in Canada infrastructure program. Unfortunately, many of them have been receiving the cold shoulder from the federal government and have not heard back on the status of their applications, as they watch other projects across this country being announced. As the minister knows, time is running out for municipalities to start construction.

When will the municipalities in my riding of Elgin-Middlesex-London be able to announce and begin construction on these projects?

• (1200)

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member can rest assured that we have been approving thousands of projects across the country. Since the pandemic, every day we are moving forward on projects. Projects have been delayed because we have not received them from the province, but we are turning them around as quickly as possible. I am certainly happy to follow up with the member and also remind her of all the investments that we have made in her community. It is critically important that shovels are in the ground. We also need to be creating jobs, tackling climate change and building more inclusive communities.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, media reports say that soldiers who raised concerns during Operation Impact have been interviewed by the military police. The defence minister and the parliamentary secretary said the allegations into Iraqi war crimes are troubling and an investigation must occur. We know the minister is allergic to conducting investigations. He even pushed back from the table to avoid seeing any evidence.

Will the minister confirm that an investigation is under way into the motive behind the cover-up of the allegations of war crimes that occurred under the Prime Minister's watch?

Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to respecting and upholding human rights, international and domestic law, and the dignity of all persons. These disturbing allegations, I can confirm, are under investigation by the Canadian Forces national investigation service. The Canadian Armed Forces is no longer operating with the elements of the Iraqi security forces involved in these allegations. We are taking this matter very seriously.

* * *

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Chris d'Entremont (West Nova, CPC): Mr. Speaker, talking about the weather is truly Nova Scotian, and the weather radar is an important tool for farmers and fishers alike, allowing them to plan and make sure they and their workers are safe. Currently, a big chunk of southwest Nova Scotia, the most lucrative fishing grounds in Canada, is not covered by weather radar. As of tomorrow, the existing radar in mainland Nova Scotia will be offline for months, creating more uncertainty in the forecast.

Can the minister commit to not only the quick replacement of the Gore facility, but an expansion that will finally cover all Nova Scotians to make sure that our citizens are safe on land and on sea?

Oral Questions

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard and to the Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages (B.C.), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is obviously important that fishers in all regions of this country have the tools they need not only to stay safe, but to protect their livelihoods. I am more than willing to talk to this particular member immediately after question period about this particular piece of equipment.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Wayne Long (Saint John—Rothesay, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians with a criminal record face barriers long after serving their sentence. For those just trying to get ahead, it became even more difficult when the Harper Conservative government created more barriers to accessing a pardon, such as by increasing the cost by 1,200%.

In 2018, this House agreed to adopt my motion for the public safety committee to study this problem, and the report found that having a pardon increases access to a job, education and stable housing, and makes communities safer by helping to end the cycle of crime.

Can the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety please give us an update on how the government is working—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would first like to thank the hon. member for Saint John—Rothesay for all he has done over the years in advocating for pardon reform. The presence of a criminal record has led to indigenous, Black and other racialized communities being disproportionately represented in our criminal justice system. These records create barriers to accessing a job, housing and education, which can, in turn, perpetuate the cycle of crime.

Yesterday we introduced legislation to reduce barriers in accessing a pardon and allow law-abiding citizens to safely reintegrate into their communities. This is a smart approach to crime, and we thank the public safety committee for its essential work in bringing this about.

* * *

[*Translation*]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Jatinder Singh is an Indian truck driver who lives in Park Extension. He is an essential worker who provided a valuable service during the pandemic. He is being deported on June 15, five days from now.

Because of his political activities, he fears for his safety if he is sent back to India, not to mention the fact that the COVID-19 outbreak raging in India right now would put his health at risk.

The Canada Border Services Agency promised that essential workers would not be deported. Where is the Liberals' compassion? Have they no heart?

Will the minister take action on this file, yes or no?

• (1205)

Mr. Peter Schiefke (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we realize that decisions on immigration cases can have a profound effect on the health, safety and lives of individuals.

Every case must be assessed on its merits, fairly and in accordance with Canada's laws. Every case is unique and is evaluated according to the individual circumstances. I cannot discuss the details of a specific case due to privacy laws.

* * *

[*English*]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, earlier this week the report on the killing of Chantel Moore was made public. It does not add up. There were no actual witnesses. There are no video recordings, and there are no audio recordings. The physical evidence does not really support the officer's story that he feared for his life as a petite 26-year-old indigenous woman came at him with a knife. The knife was not found near her body, had no fingerprints and was found under a box.

Can the Minister of Indigenous Services give the House some hope that we will get to the bottom of this and that wellness checks will stop resulting in the deaths of indigenous people?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first and foremost, our thoughts are with the family and friends of Chantel Moore through these difficult times.

Following the tragic passing of Ms. Moore after an interaction with the Edmundston Police Force, the minister has spoken with the New Brunswick regional chief and the president of the Nuu-Chah-Nulth Tribal Council to discuss wellness checks and the different roles of police in our communities.

In situations such as these, it is essential that there be a timely, transparent and independent investigation in order to provide answers to the many difficult, but important, questions people have. While questions about the investigation and the findings should be directed to the province, we continue to do our important work of modernizing police structures, updating standards regarding the use of force and establishing increased oversight of law enforcement.

* * *

ISLAMOPHOBIA

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties, and I believe if you seek it, you will find support for the following motion. I move:

That, given that,

- (i) Canada has been devastated over the last decade by repeated acts of violent Islamophobia, such as the Quebec City Mosque Attack, the International Muslims Organization Mosque Attack and the London Terror Attack,
- (ii) Canada has been deeply affected by Islamophobia at all federal, provincial, territorial and municipal levels,
- (iii) All political leaders at every level of government in Canada need to urgently change their policies to prevent another attack targeting Canadian Muslims,

the House call on the federal government to convene an Emergency National Action Summit on Islamophobia that should take place before the end of July 2021.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed to the hon. member moving the 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.

Accordingly, the motion is carried.

(Motion agreed to)

[Translation]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

During question period, the government misled the House by suggesting that Quebec's finance minister, Mr. Girard, supports the Minister of Finance's harmful plan to centralize securities regulation.

That is absolutely false. Quebec's finance minister has never supported this bill that would be devastating for Quebec. No minister, elected representative or government official from any party has supported it. I am asking the parliamentary secretary to withdraw his remarks.

The Deputy Speaker: I believe that this remark is really part of the debate.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1210)

[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

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

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable

Routine Proceedings

Development in relation to Bill C-12, an act respecting transparency and accountability in Canada's efforts to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by the year 2050. The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House with amendments.

LIAISON

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 107(3), I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fourth report of the Liaison Committee, entitled "Committee Activities and Expenditures April 1, 2020 - March 31, 2021". This report highlights the work and accomplishments of each committee and details the budgets that fund the activities approved by committee members.

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Ms. Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 16th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

The committee advises that, pursuant to Standing Order 91.1(2), the Subcommittee on Private Members' Business met on Monday, May 31, 2021, to consider orders for the second reading of private members' public bills originating in the Senate and the items added to the order of precedence. The subcommittee recommended that the items listed herein, which it has determined should not be designated non-votable, be considered by the House.

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 91.1(2), the report is deemed adopted.

(Motion agreed to)

Ms. Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 104 and 114, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 17th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding the membership of committees of the House.

If this House gives its consent, I move that the 17th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs be concurred in.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed to the hon. member moving the motion will please say nay.

Hearing none, the House has heard the terms of the motion. All those opposed to the motion being adopted will please say nay.

Hearing none, the motion is carried.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

PETITIONS

TRAVEL ADVISERS

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions to present to the House today. These petitions have been presented from travel agents across Canada, particularly from my riding.

Routine Proceedings

The petitioners bring to the attention of the House that more than 12,000 independent travel advisers of Canada have been without income for one year due to the government's COVID travel restrictions, and small business owners are the sole proprietors. However, federal assistance programs such as the CERB, CEWS and RRRF exclude the majority of these small business owners, leaving them to slip through the cracks and forcing them into bankruptcy.

HERBICIDES

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to table this petition.

The petitioners are asking the Minister of Health to ban the commercial use of herbicides in the forestry industry in Canada, with the exception of addressing invasive species that are well documented. They express their concern that herbicides are being used by the forestry industry to prevent the natural return of the forest by adversity, which increases the risk of forest fires and, in turn, accelerates climate change, which risks the loss of economic value, and threatens communities and the overall health of Canadians.

• (1215)

FORESTRY INDUSTRY

Mr. Patrick Weiler (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise virtually in the House today to present this petition. The petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to work with first nations to immediately protect endangered, old-growth ecosystems in British Columbia.

The petitioners, which include constituents of mine, know that less than 2.7% of old-growth forest remains in B.C. They also know that old-growth forests provide immeasurable benefits, including carbon sequestration, biodiversity, culture, recreation, education, food and more, and that most Canadians support the sustainable harvesting of forests, which does not include logging irreplaceable old-growth.

This call was echoed yesterday by the Squamish nation's call to halt all logging in the 78,000 hectares of their land, most of which is in my riding, so I also rise today to give them a voice and amplify their request in this chamber.

TRAVEL ADVISERS

Mr. Tony Baldinelli (Niagara Falls, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present two individually certified paper petitions.

The first petition is on behalf of the residents of Bowmanville, Oshawa and Durham. These residents petition the House to ensure that any financial assistance to airlines and their subsidiary travel companies will be conditional on the protection of travel adviser commissions, and to ensure that commissions already clawed back by the airlines and their subsidiary travel companies will be repaid to travel advisers in a timely manner.

The second petition is also on behalf of the residents of Bowmanville, Oshawa and Durham. These residents petition this House to provide sector-specific funding for independent travel advisers and to extend the qualification of the regional relief and recovery fund in urban areas to include sole proprietors.

COVID-19

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise and present two petitions.

The first is petition e-3288, which recognizes the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on Canada's indigenous, racialized, gendered and disabled populations, as well as on young people and people living on low incomes.

The petitioners call for a low-income CERB repayment amnesty and a reduced repayment plan for those whose annual income is less than 15% above the poverty line. They call on the government to cease treating CERB as taxable income for individuals if their 2020 income falls below the poverty line.

The second is petition e-3172, which recognizes the development of long COVID and the impact it is having on tens of thousands of Canadians.

The petitioners call on the government to immediately extend the employment insurance sickness benefit to 50 weeks; invest in research to help with the diagnosis and treatment of long COVID; expand the eligibility for the Canada recovery benefit to Canadians who are unable to seek employment because of long COVID; and to convene, across committees, a study of the nature and impacts of long COVID, including the parliamentary committee on health; the parliamentary committee on human resources, skills and social development and the status of persons with disabilities; and the parliamentary committee on indigenous and northern affairs.

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I present a petition on behalf of indigenous constituents in Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon.

Stories of the atrocities that occurred within the residential school system have been around for years. On May 27, the remains of 215 indigenous children were found on the grounds of the former Kamloops residential school. Various levels of government have been aware of these stories for a long time, and have done nothing to help find the children who never came home.

Families who have lost loved ones deserve to find closure to help their spirits rest. Therefore, these citizens are calling upon the Government of Canada to proceed with using technology, such as ground-penetrating radar, to search the grounds of all residential school sites and to provide a reasonable timeline for the conduct of these searches.

DEMOCRATIC REFORM

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to present e-petition 2690. Almost 7,000 signatures have been collected by a constituent of mine, Brian Kerr from Bobcaygeon, who created this petition to acknowledge that currently there is no federal law that allows elected politicians to be removed from Parliament by eligible voters before their four-year term.

The petitioners are calling on the House of Commons to create a bill of recall election.

• (1220)

MEDICAL MARIJUANA

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition on behalf of 200 Canadians from across the country who are concerned about the government's continued maintenance of an excise tax on medical cannabis.

The petitioners call on the government to reverse its decision to apply an excise duty on cannabis sold for medical purposes, and to recognize that medical cannabis should be exempt from the federal goods and services tax, to exempt medical cannabis from any taxes, including the excise tax, to zero-rate the medical cannabis tax, in line with all other prescription medicine, and to exempt medical cannabis products from any additional taxes in order to allow for reasonable access to medical cannabis for all Canadians authorized to use it by health care practitioners.

CONVERSION THERAPY

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am tabling four petitions in the House today. The first petition is with respect to Bill C-6.

The petitioners very much want what they are saying to be heard in this petition. They support efforts to ban conversion therapy. They want to see conversion therapy banned, and they are concerned about the definition as it is written. In particular, they are concerned that the definition does not ban conversion therapy, but bans many other things that are not actually conversion therapy.

The petitioners want to see the government support efforts to fix the definition, and then move forward with further actions to indeed ban conversion therapy.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition I am presenting is with regard to the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners.

The petitioners highlight this persecution, and want to see the government act to deploy sanctions against those involved in this persecution, in particular sanctions under the Magnitsky act.

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the third petition I am presenting is in support of Bill S-204, a bill that has passed the Senate unanimously, and has previously passed the House unanimously in the form of Bill S-240.

Routine Proceedings

The petitioners are hoping that this bill will be adopted and that this will indeed be the one that finally gets it done.

ETHIOPIA

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the fourth and final petition I am presenting today highlights the human rights situation in the Tigray region of Ethiopia.

The petitioners are concerned about that, and are calling on the Canadian government to exercise more leadership, to be more engaged with that situation, and indeed to engage directly with the Ethiopian and Eritrean governments around the advancement of human rights.

I commend these petitions to the consideration of members.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to table today.

In the first petition, the petitioners note that the climate crisis and destruction of ecosystems, or ecocide, is the result of many years of harmful industrial practices permitted by law with many risks having been known about for decades by the companies choosing to continue them and by the governments that subsidize those activities. Citizens and residents can and must take some responsibility for what is consumed, but it is industry, finance and government that make high-level investments and policy decisions.

As a member state of the United Nations, Canada shares a collective legal duty to promote social progress and better standards of life. Therefore, the petitioners call upon the House of Commons to declare its support for an ecocide law amendment to the Rome Statute and to advocate for its adoption internationally, in the knowledge that many countries must stand together for the long-term protection of life on Earth.

• (1225)

FORESTRY INDUSTRY

Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP): Speaking of ecocide, Mr. Speaker, the second petition is from citizens who are deeply concerned about the clear-cut logging of endangered old-growth ecosystems. They are calling upon the government to work with the province and first nations to immediately halt logging of endangered old-growth ecosystems, to fund the long-term protection of old-growth ecosystems as a priority of Canada's climate action plan and reconciliation with indigenous peoples, to support value-added forestry initiatives in partnership with first nations to ensure Canada's forestry industry is sustainable and based on the harvesting of second- and third-growth forests, to ban the export of raw logs and maximize resource use for local jobs, and to ban the use of whole trees for wood pellet biofuel production.

I will note that over 200 people in British Columbia, on Vancouver Island—

Routine Proceedings

The Deputy Speaker: I would remind all hon. members to keep petition presentations concise.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I hope all members are aware that when presenting petitions, we should not be bringing our own personal positions into the matter. At the conclusion of his petition, the member said that he would point out that a certain number of people, etc. He was going beyond presenting what the petition is about and trying to bring awareness to another issue that might be related.

Perhaps the Speaker would like to use the opportunity to remind members of that once again, though I know it was done just a couple of days ago.

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. member for his intervention on that.

Many members have been presenting petitions. This is a very important rubric and means by which constituents can bring to the attention of Parliament or the government important issues in their constituencies. The role of the member in this case is to say in concise terms what the essential elements of petitions are. It is really not to debate and certainly not to add members' own reflections on the topic as part of the presentation. We appreciate all hon. members' co-operation with that.

Presenting petitions, the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured today to present a petition from many of my constituents who are concerned about the fate of old-growth forests in this country. Old-growth forests are increasingly endangered, yet they are not protected from logging. Although logging is under provincial jurisdiction, the petitioners link to first nations' interests the importance of shared co-operative planning and value-added in our forestry, banning the export of raw logs and banning turning whole forests into pellets. They are claimed to be a renewable resource, but are not renewable because, as the petitioners point out, only 2.7% of old-growth forests remain in British Columbia.

These petitioners urge the federal government to work with provinces and first nations to halt old-growth logging.

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QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 641, 642, 646, 650, 653 to 655, 657 to 660 and 662.

[Text]

Question No. 641—**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:**

With regard to signed or amended contracts for COVID-19 vaccines entered into by the government with Pfizer-BioNTech, AstraZeneca, Sanofi and GlaxoSmithKline, Covavax, Medicago, Verity Pharmaceuticals Inc. & Serum Institute of India, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson: (a) broken down by manufacturer, what are the details of how each contract was negotiated and signed, including the (i) date signed, (ii) start and end date of the contract, (iii) name of the government's lead negotiator, (iv) name of the government's contracting officer, (v) name of the departments and agencies that took part in the negotiations, (vi) name of the specific divisions of each department or agency that took part in the negotiations, (vii) name

of ministers or exempt staff that took part in the negotiations; and (b) how many contracts were signed with each manufacturer?

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada's vaccine planning began in April 2020, when the government created the COVID-19 task force. These experts were asked to provide advice based on a review of the emerging science and technology from the companies developing vaccines to combat COVID-19.

The task force began identifying the most promising vaccine candidates in June 2020. It advised that the best approach was to diversify supply as much as possible with different types of vaccine platforms, based on the solutions that looked most likely to work and could be delivered the fastest.

Based on the task force's recommendations, the Public Health Agency of Canada, PHAC, decided which vaccines to buy. A vaccine procurement team, led by Public Services and Procurement Canada, PSPC, was assembled to undertake the negotiations.

As with all government contracting processes, the work was carried out by government officials. The procurement team reported directly to the PSPC deputy minister, Bill Matthews. As with all major procurement projects, a multi-disciplinary approach was taken with different resources and expertise brought in as needed. The team included, among others, the contracting authority, subject matter experts, including scientists, legal advisers and auditors as well as the client.

Canada built its vaccine portfolio through advance purchase agreements, APAs. APAs have the obligations of a contract, while being structured to allow flexibility given uncertainties around the development of new vaccines. The first two agreements, with Moderna and Pfizer, were announced in August 2020, followed by agreements over the next three months with Johnson & Johnson, Novavax, Sanofi and GlaxoSmithKline, AstraZeneca and Medicago. In February 2021, a contract with Verity Pharmaceuticals Canada Inc./Serum Institute of India was announced.

In most cases, initial agreements were signed through memorandums of understanding and term sheets to secure access to an early vaccine supply for Canada, while providing time for the regulatory process and to work through complex terms and conditions with the manufacturers. Given the unknowns regarding regulatory approvals, production capacity and supply chains, it was impossible to establish detailed delivery schedules at the time agreements were negotiated. Instead, the agreements include quarterly delivery targets that were determined based on anticipated supply.

Routine Proceedings

As each company has different negotiation strategies and corporate policies, securing every agreement required a unique and complex approach. As a common element, all agreements required initial investments with the vaccine manufacturers to support vaccine development, testing, and at-risk manufacturing.

Within the framework of the contracts, Canada has sought ways to secure quicker deliveries of vaccines. In December 2020, PSPC secured early doses from both Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech, with vaccines arriving in Canada weeks earlier than originally forecast. The government also negotiated an accelerated delivery schedule with Pfizer-BioNTech to deliver millions more doses than originally scheduled between April and September 2021.

Question No. 642—Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:

With regard to the government's response to Order Paper question Q-402, which stated that a negotiating team was assembled in June 2020 with regard to the procurement of COVID-19 vaccines: (a) who were the original members of the negotiating team; (b) what is the current configuration of the negotiating team; and (c) what are the details of any changes made to the membership of the negotiating team, including the names and dates when each member was added or taken off of the negotiation team?

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada's vaccine planning began in April 2020, when the government created the COVID-19 vaccine task force. This team of experts was asked to provide advice based on a review of the emerging science and technology from the companies racing to develop vaccines to combat COVID-19.

Based on the task force's recommendations, the Public Health Agency of Canada, PHAC, decided which vaccines to buy. A vaccine procurement team, led by Public Services and Procurement Canada, PSPC, was assembled to negotiate with vaccine suppliers.

The team included, among others, the contracting authority, subject matter experts, legal advisers and the client. A multi-disciplinary approach was deployed, with different resources and expertise brought in as needed as the discussions evolved.

Question No. 646—Mr. Tony Baldinelli:

With regard to the use of cryptocurrency or digital currency as a means of payment and the revenue generated from the government's requirement to collect sales taxes on those purchases, broken down by year, since 2016: (a) how much Goods and Services Tax (GST) and Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) revenue did the government receive from goods or services purchased using a digital currency such as Bitcoin; (b) what is the government's estimate of the total value of purchases made by Canadians using a digital currency; and (c) what percentage of the value of purchases in (b) does the government estimate it received GST/HST payments from?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Finance and Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), the goods and services tax, GST, and harmonized sales tax, HST, system does not track the amount of GST/HST collected by type of transaction, i.e., the GST/HST associated with the sale of any particular good or service, or whether that purchase was paid for with cash, credit card, debit card or other means of payment. Suppliers are generally required to remit to the Canada Revenue Agency the GST/HST collected on their total taxable sales for all types of transactions. As such, the government does not have information on the amount of GST/HST that would have been collected since 2016 on transactions using cryptocurrency or digital currency as a means of payment.

In response to (b), the GST/HST system does not track transactions. As noted in (a), suppliers are generally required to remit the GST/HST collected on their total taxable sales.

In response to (c), for the reasons noted in the responses to questions (a) and (b), the government does not have information available to respond to this question.

Question No. 650—Mr. Kelly McCauley:

With regard to contracts awarded to Indigenous businesses under the Procurement Strategy for Aboriginal Businesses, signed since January 1, 2016, and broken down by department, agency, Crown corporation or other government agency: (a) how many have been awarded by the mandatory set aside; (b) how many have been awarded under the voluntary set aside; (c) what is the total value of each contract; (d) what are the details of all such contracts, including the (i) vendor, (ii) amount, (iii) date, (iv) description of services; (e) what is the percentage of total contracts; and (f) what is the value of the total contracts awarded by department, agency, Crown corporation or other government agency?

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the data below includes the procurement strategy for aboriginal businesses, PSAB, contracts from Open Canada that have been validated against the vendors in the indigenous business directory by Public Services and Procurement Canada, PSPC. It also includes contracts under \$10,000 that were provided to PSPC by departments and agencies. For the years 2017 and 2018, the response also includes contracts from PSPC financial systems data not included in Open Canada. Please note that the data is a snapshot and may not accurately reflect the actuals.

ISC and Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat have worked together to update reporting guidelines for departments, which now include providing this information. Implementation of these guidelines will take effect on January 1, 2022.

ISC has not received the data for 2019 and 2020 and therefore producing and validating a comprehensive response to these questions for the years 2019 and 2020 is not possible in the time allotted, and could lead to the disclosure of incomplete and misleading information.

With regard to parts (a) and (b), PSAB contracts, mandatory and voluntary are as follows: 2016: \$99,013,923; 2017: \$128,613,588; and 2018: \$170,634,262.

ISC does not have the data that includes the breakdown between mandatory and voluntary set aside, we currently only have data on total value for set-asides.

With regard to parts (c) and (d), all departments and agencies subject to the contracting policy are required to publish reports on contracts issued or amended by or on behalf of the Government of Canada. They can be found at <https://search.open.canada.ca/en/ct/>.

Routine Proceedings

With regard to part (e), in 2018, the total value of government procurement was valued at approximately \$16 billion, with the majority of this captured through the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Department of National Defence and Public Services and Procurement spending. Our government will be implementing further changes in the near future to continue to update and modernize PSAB with the intent to increase procurement with indigenous businesses.

What follows is the total value to update and modernize PSAB with the intent to increase procurement with indigenous businesses and the total value of set-aside contracts versus total government procurement. For 2016, all contracts: \$18,817,269,703, PSAB: \$99,013,923, percentage of PSAB: 0.53%. For 2017, all contracts: \$15,222,262,586, PSAB: \$128,613,588, percentage of PSAB: 0.84%. For 2018, all contracts: \$16,424,403,459, PSAB: \$170,634,262, percentage of PSAB: 1.03%.

With regard to part (f), the value of the total contracts awarded by department, agency, Crown corporation or other government agency can be found at www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1618839672557/1618839696146.

Question No. 653—Mr. Eric Duncan:

With regard to the decision announced by the government on the evening of April 22, 2021, to ban direct flights from India and Pakistan: (a) when did the government make the decision; (b) did the government inform the member from Surrey—Newton about the decision or pending decision prior to making the announcement public, and, if so, when was the member from Surrey—Newton informed; (c) did the government advise the member from Surrey—Newton to issue the tweet on April 21, 2021, encouraging Canadians travelling in India to consider coming home immediately; and (d) if the answer to (c) is negative, did the government provide any information to the member from Surrey—Newton, prior to April 22, 2021, which would indicate that a flight ban was likely forthcoming, and, if so, what are the details of the interaction?

Hon. Omar Alghabra (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to part (a), due to the high number of COVID-19 cases observed among air passengers arriving from India and Pakistan, Transport Canada, on the advice of the Public Health Agency of Canada, PHAC, issued a NOTAM to suspend entry of flights, commercial and private passenger, from these countries, with the exception of cargo flights, effective April 22, 2021 for 30 days.

Canada has some of the strictest travel and border measures in the world. Canada's response to the COVID-19 pandemic is guided by the latest science. Over the past few months, the Government of Canada introduced enhanced testing and quarantine requirements for travellers arriving in Canada. These requirements include mandatory submission of contact, travel and quarantine information via ArriveCAN, pre-departure, for air, or pre-arrival, for land, testing, on-arrival testing and testing again later during the 14-day mandatory quarantine period.

The PHAC monitors case data, and through mandatory testing upon entry into Canada, detected a disproportionately higher number of cases among individuals travelling on flights originating from India. Pakistan was consistently the second-highest contributor of cases. Given the high number of cases, the Government of Canada took additional measures: Transport Canada issued a notice to air-men, NOTAM, to suspend all commercial and private passenger flights from India and Pakistan for 30 days, effective 23:30 EDT

April 22, 2021; the Minister of Transport amended the Interim Order Respecting Certain Requirements for Civil Aviation Due to COVID-19, which means that passengers who depart India or Pakistan to Canada after 23:30 EDT April 22, 2021, via an indirect route, need to obtain a negative COVID-19 pre-departure test from a third country before continuing their journey to Canada.

These measures help manage the elevated risk of imported cases of COVID-19 and variants of concern into Canada during a time of increasing pressure on Canada's health care system.

In response to parts (b) to (d), Transport Canada has had no contact on this subject with the member of Parliament for Surrey—Newton. As part of the department's usual process, we do not consult members of Parliament on safety or security decisions such as the issuance of a NOTAM.

Question No. 654—Mr. Chris d'Entremont:

With regard to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Small Craft Harbours program, broken down by harbour authority: (a) how much has been invested in the harbour authorities of Yarmouth and Digby Counties; and (b) how much will be invested over the next five years in the harbour authorities mentioned in (a)?

Hon. Bernadette Jordan (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans small craft harbours program, broken down by harbour authority, in response to (a) and (b), the program does not track harbours or harbours authorities by county.

Question No. 655—Mr. Brad Vis:

With regard to the Mandatory Isolation Support for Temporary Foreign Workers (MISTFWP) program administered by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada: (a) what is the rationale behind the eight month processing delay of the MISTFWP claim from Desert Hills Ranch in Ashcroft, British Columbia; (b) why is the Minister for Agriculture and Agri-Food actively withholding payment for the completed claim cited in (a); (c) why is the minister directing Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada staff to withhold payment, without providing any rationale to the applicant; and (d) on what date will Desert Hills Ranch be transferred the funds for their claim, completed July 2020, for 124 workers' isolation support payments?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a) Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, AAFC, is not in a position to share confidential third party information on specific files. However, a claim may be delayed for a variety of administrative reasons, including failure to comply with program parameters or incomplete claims documents. With respect to the mandatory isolation support for temporary foreign workers program, MISTFWP, in order to be eligible for funding, employers must comply with the mandatory 14-day isolation protocols, as well as any other public health order. They must also comply with all regulations of the temporary foreign worker program, TFWP, and/or the international mobility program for the duration of the mandatory 14-day isolation period. For example, employers must comply with regulations concerning wages and other employment conditions of the program or stream they used to hire their temporary foreign workers, such as the seasonal agricultural worker program and the TFWP.

Routine Proceedings

Should AAFC become aware of an employer failing to meet these requirements, the recipient will no longer be eligible for the funding under the MISTFWP. Any amount already paid to the recipient will become repayable debts to the Crown.

In response to (b), as noted in our response to (a), the AAFC may not share confidential third party information. However, in general, a program payment is only withheld in the event that claimants are not compliant with their obligations under the contribution agreement or have failed to meet their related legal obligations. A claim will be suspended until such time as the department can confirm compliance with the federal and provincial partners involved in compliance and enforcement, such as Employment and Social Development Canada, Service Canada, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, Passport Canada, Public Health, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

In response to (c), a payment may be withheld if there is a compliance issue. Any specific information related to this file is confidential. However, in the event of an issue, in order to resolve any concern and determine if an employer meets all program eligibility criteria, AAFC would work closely with other federal and provincial government departments and agencies responsible for the management, compliance, and enforcement of the regulations in place regarding temporary foreign workers in Canada, including Employment and Social Development Canada, Service Canada, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, Passport Canada, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Once complete, a payment will proceed if confirmation is received that the employer satisfies all eligibility criteria under the MISTFWP.

In response to (d), payments will be issued once compliance with all eligibility criteria has been confirmed.

Question No. 657—Mr. Kelly McCauley:

With regard to foreign aid provided to entities outside of North America since January 1, 2016, broken down by year: (a) what is the total amount of funding provided to entities outside of North America; (b) what is the total amount of funding provided to entities either based in or operating in Africa; (c) what are the details of all foreign aid funding provided to entities in Africa, including the (i) date of funding agreement, (ii) recipient, (iii) type of funding, (iv) location of recipient organization, (v) location where the funding was meant to benefit, (vi) purpose of funding or project description, (vii) amount of funding, (viii) agreement file number; (d) what is the total amount of funding provided to entities either based in or operating in Asia; (e) what are the details of all foreign aid funding provided to entities in Asia, including the (i) date of funding agreement, (ii) recipient, (iii) type of funding, (iv) location of recipient organization, (v) location where the funding was meant to benefit, (vi) purpose of funding or project description, (vii) amount of funding, (viii) agreement file number; (f) what is the total amount of funding provided to entities either based in or operating in Europe; and (g) what are the details of all foreign aid funding provided to entities in Europe, including the (i) date of funding agreement, (ii) recipient, (iii) type of funding, (iv) location of recipient organization, (v) location where the funding was meant to benefit, (vi) purpose of funding or project description, (vii) amount of funding, (viii) agreement file number?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following reflects a consolidated response approved on behalf of Global Affairs Canada ministers.

Canada's presence abroad includes 178 missions, comprised of embassies, consulates, high commissions and trade offices, and a number of permanent missions to international organizations in 110 countries. Global Affairs Canada undertook an extensive preliminary search in order to determine the amount of information that would fall within the scope of the question and the amount of time

that would be required to prepare a comprehensive response. The information requested is not systematically tracked to the level of detail required to produce and validate a comprehensive response. A manual collection of information would be required and is not possible in the time allotted and could lead to the disclosure of incomplete and misleading information.

Canada is committed to transparency and accountability and is among the world leaders in publishing open data on its international assistance. One of the many tools available through international assistance open data is the historical project data set, where the majority of the information requested can be found. The historical project data set publishes detailed information for each international assistance project for a given year in a database-friendly format. The information is detailed by country, sector, type of project, and partner organization. It also includes useful details about the specific characteristics of international assistance projects, such as tying status, partner type, policy objectives, and the modality used to deliver the international assistance.

International assistance open data is available at https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues_development-enjeux_developpement/priorities-priorites/open_data-donnees_ouvertes.aspx?lang=eng&_ga=2.250842310.1746972543.1620232706-1440816363.1600970333.

The historical project data set is available at https://www.international.gc.ca/departement-ministere/open_data-donnees_ouvertes/dev/historical_project-historiques_projets.aspx?lang=eng.

Question No. 658—Mr. Kelly McCauley:

With regard to Development Finance Institute Canada (FinDev) and their funding of Kenyan company M-KOPA, since January 1, 2018: (a) what is the total amount of funding provided to M-KOPA, broken down by type of funding (equity investment, grant, repayable loan, etc.); (b) how many jobs were projected to be created from the funding; (c) how many jobs were actually created; (d) on what date were FinDev officials made aware of M-KOPA's firing of 150 staff after the company received the subsidy; (e) was there a review conducted by the government to determine what went wrong with this funding, and, if so, what were the results of the review; (f) on what date did the Minister of International Development first approve the M-KOPA funding; and (g) on what date did the Minister of International Development become informed that the company had fired 150 staff?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), FinDev Canada has invested a total of \$12 million U.S., in two stages: in February 2018, a total investment of \$10 million U.S., and in January 2020, another \$2 million U.S.

In response to (b), at the time of FinDev Canada's investment, M-KOPA's business plan projected to double its workforce by 2023 to 1,600, creating 800 new direct jobs, and increase its direct sales representatives from 1,600 to 2,500.

In response to (c), since FinDev Canada's initial investment, over 200 new direct jobs have been created to date. At the end of 2020, M-KOPA had increased its direct sales representatives by an additional 1,600 agents.

Routine Proceedings

In response to (d), FinDev Canada did not provide a subsidy to M-KOPA. As mentioned in the response to question (a), FinDev Canada's investment was made in February 2018. M-KOPA's decision to reduce overhead and associated operating losses, including the closure of operations in Tanzania and the reduction of staff at its headquarters, started in November 2017.

FinDev Canada's investment helped M-KOPA expand its business. As stated above, over 200 new direct jobs have been created to date. M-KOPA also contracts a commission-based salesforce, which grew from 3,400 agents in 2018 to 5,000 agents at the end of 2020, which represents an additional 1,600 agents.

In response to (e), no review was conducted by the government.

To date, FinDev Canada's investment in M-KOPA has been successful in creating jobs and market development, empowering women through quality jobs and access to products and services that enhance their well-being, and helping mitigate the effects of climate change by avoiding CO2 emissions through increased access to clean energy.

An environmental and social risk management review, including an assessment of compliance and policy programs, was conducted as part of the due diligence process. Further, M-KOPA provided written assurances in the transaction documentation, in the form of representations and warranties, to the effect that M-KOPA is compliant in all material respects with all laws relating to employment, including in relation to wages. M-KOPA has also recently confirmed that it is fully compliant with applicable labour law across its principal markets in Kenya, Uganda, and Nigeria.

Further due diligence was conducted by FinDev Canada in 2019, which fed into the recommendation for the follow-on investment noted above in the response to question (a).

In addition, FinDev Canada participates as an observer at the M-KOPA board meetings and engages as needed with M-KOPA management to review performance on a regular basis.

In response to (f), FinDev Canada's investment in M-KOPA was approved by FinDev Canada's board of directors on February 1, 2018.

The Minister of International Development is not involved in FinDev Canada's decision-making process.

In response to (g), there was no formal communication to inform the Minister of International Development. The timing of the staff reductions in M-KOPA occurred in advance of FinDev Canada's investment. The media coverage in the spring of 2018 did come to the attention of FinDev Canada and was shared with the appropriate government stakeholders.

Question No. 659—Mr. Larry Maguire:

With regard to providing and administering COVID-19 vaccinations to individuals living on First Nations reserves in northern Manitoba: (a) how many doses did the government estimate were needed to cover all of the reserves in northern Manitoba; (b) how did the government come up with the estimate, including what specific data was used; and (c) how many doses have been sent to reserves in northern Manitoba as of April 26, 2021?

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to parts (a)

and (b), as the administration of vaccination falls under the purview of each respective province or territory, the department does not have access to this information. However, Canada has a strong vaccine safety monitoring system that involves health care professionals, vaccine manufacturers, the provinces and territories, the Public Health Agency of Canada, PHAC, and Health Canada. Significant coordination and planning around the vaccine rollout between partners, and provinces, territories and the federal government has occurred and vaccine administration is well under way in communities. To assist with the rollout in indigenous communities, a COVID-19 vaccine planning working group was established by ISC. This working group supports linkages between provinces and territories, PHAC and first nations, Inuit and Métis partners, and provides a space for exchange of information and advice to those responsible for vaccine planning and administration.

With regard to part (c), as of April 26, there were an estimated 40,750 total doses shipped for first nations in northern Manitoba through the following health authorities: Four Arrows, Island Lake communities, 4,430 doses; Northern Regional Health Authority, 18,120 doses; Interlake-Eastern Regional Health Authority, 10,020 doses; Prairie Mountain Health Authority, 4,460 doses; and Southern Regional Health Authority, 3,720 doses.

An additional shipment of 6000 doses was scheduled for the following week.

Question No. 660—Mr. Larry Maguire:

With regard to Canada's former ambassador to the United States, David MacNaughton: on what date did he meet with John F. Stratton?

Mr. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in August 2019, David MacNaughton completed his term as Canada's Ambassador to the United States to take up a new challenge in the private sector. During his tenure, the former ambassador did not meet with John F. Stratton.

Question No. 662—Mr. Kerry Diotte:

With regard to the 15th report of the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates entitled "Modernizing Federal Procurement for Small and Medium Enterprises, Women-Owned and Indigenous Businesses" which was presented in the House on June 20, 2018: (a) what is the current status of the government's implementation of each of the 40 recommendations contained in the report, broken down by individual recommendation; and (b) for each recommendation that has not yet been implemented, what is the timeline for implementation?

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Public Services and Procurement Canada, PSPC, is delivering on government commitments to modernize and simplify procurement.

A broad range of initiatives have been identified in the government's response to the report presented on October 18, 2018. The government continues to work on implementing the recommendations made by the committee, and is pleased to further outline progress to date. The initiatives can be seen at www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/42-1/OGGO/report-15/response-8512-421-444.

PSPC remains committed to modernizing procurement practices so they are simpler and less administratively burdensome. By implementing measures such as the electronic procurement solution, PSPC is taking actions to remove barriers that have prevented small businesses from participating in federal procurement. This includes implementing a simplified contract model, improving and making existing procurement tools more accessible to diverse suppliers, and expanding support to bidders with limited or no success bidding on government opportunities, from coaching service to personalized assistance.

Further, PSPC's office of small and medium enterprises, OSME, provides assistance and advisory services to increase the participation of smaller and diverse businesses in federal procurement. Examples include supporting the Rise Up Pitch Competition, a Black women entrepreneurs pitch competition and program for entrepreneurs across Canada to join and receive support for their businesses, and ongoing webinars provided in partnership with the United Nations Decade of Persons of African Descent Push Coalition. The OSME also works with indigenous businesses directly, as well as through partner indigenous organizations, to provide awareness, education and assistance on how to participate in federal procurement.

In addition, budget 2021 provides \$87.4 million over five years, starting in 2021-22, and \$18.6 million ongoing to modernize federal procurement and create opportunities for specific communities by diversifying the federal supplier base. Specifically, Public Services and Procurement Canada would implement a program focused on procuring from Black-owned businesses; continue work to meet Canada's target of at least 5% of federal contracts being awarded to businesses managed and led by indigenous peoples; improve data capture, analytics and reporting of procurement; incorporate accessibility considerations into federal procurement, ensuring goods and services are accessible by design; and leverage supplier diversity opportunities through domestic procurement, such as running competitions open to businesses run by Canadians from equity-deserving groups.

On May 3, 2021, PSPC committed to provide an update on its procurement modernization activities to the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates, which is being prepared and will be provided to the committee shortly.

* * *

[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURN

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the government's responses to Questions Nos. 643 to 645, 647 to 649, 651, 652, 656 and 661 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 643—**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:**

Routine Proceedings

With regard to contracts signed by the government for gowns, ventilators and syringes in 2020 and 2021: (a) what are the details of each contract for gowns, including the (i) vendor, (ii) contract value, (iii) date the contract was signed, (iv) title of the official that signed the contract; (b) what are the details of each contract for ventilators, including the (i) vendor, (ii) contract value, (iii) date the contract was signed, (iv) title of the official that signed the contract; and (c) what are the details of each contract for syringes, including the (i) vendor, (ii) contract value, (iii) date the contract was signed, (iv) title of the official that signed the contract?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 644—**Mr. Robert Kitchen:**

With regard to the government's target of a 30 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by limiting nitrogen fertilizer and the concerns raised in an April 20, 2021, release from the Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association that the government has never consulted industry or farmers if this is even achievable: (a) were any industries or farmers consulted in the viability of the target and, if so, what are the specific details, including the dates and list of participants in the consultations; and (b) has the government conducted any formal studies on whether or not this is viable for farmers and, if so, what are the details of the studies, including the website where the study's findings can be found?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 645—**Mr. Todd Doherty:**

With regard to the government's Wellness Together portal: (a) what specific programs or services are offered through the self-guided tools offered by the providers identified on the Wellness Together webpage, including (i) Mindwell, (ii) Welltrack, (iii) Tao, (iv) Breaking Free Wellness, (v) BreathingRoom, (vi) Kids Help Phone, (vii) Homewood Health; (b) for each of the programs or services in (a), (i) how many Canadians have been enrolled, (ii) how many Canadians have fully completed the course of treatment, (iii) what has been the total cost of each of the programs and or services identified, (iv) what is the cost utilization, as reported to the Public Health Agency of Canada; (c) what programs or services are offered through the peer to peer support and coaching tools offered by the providers identified on the Wellness Together webpage, including (i) Togetherall provided by Togetherall, (ii) I CAN SFI provided by Strongest Families Institute, (iii) MindWell's Studio Be provided by MindWell, (iv) All People All Pathways provided by CASPA, (v) Greif and Loss Coaching provided by Homewood Health; and (d) for each of the programs or services in (c), (i) how many Canadians have been enrolled, (ii) how many Canadians have fully completed the course of treatment, (iii) what has been the total cost of each of the programs or services identified, (iv) what is the cost utilization, as reported to the Public Health Agency of Canada?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 647—**Mr. Tony Baldinelli:**

With regard to government departments and agencies that accept credit card payments: what was the total amount paid to (i) Visa, (ii) Mastercard, (iii) American Express, (iv) each other credit card companies, in relation to credit card processing fees in 2020?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 648—**Mr. Kelly McCauley:**

With regard to Official Languages Impact Analysis (OLIA), since January 1, 2016: (a) how many initiatives funded by the government had an OLIA conducted; (b) how many initiatives funded by the government did not have an OLIA conducted; and (c) what are the details of all initiatives funded by the government with total expenditures exceeding \$1 million that were not subject to an OLIA, including the (i) date of the funding approval, (ii) title and description of the initiative, (iii) reason the initiative was not subject to an OLIA, (iv) total expenditures or projected total expenditures related to the initiative?

(Return tabled)

*Government Orders*Question No. 649—**Mr. Tony Baldinelli:**

With regard to the government's decision to require airline travellers arriving from outside of Canada to quarantine at a designated airport hotel: (a) how many travellers refused to stay in a government approved quarantine hotel; (b) how many fines or tickets were issued by the Public Health Agency of Canada related to the refusals in (a); and (c) what is the breakdown of (a) and (b) by airport of entry?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 651—**Mr. Kenny Chiu:**

With regard to immigration removals and the 2020 Spring Report of the Auditor General of Canada: (a) what is the current national removal inventory; (b) how many removal orders have been confirmed removed in the past year; (c) what are the current working and wanted removal order inventories; (d) of the inventories in (c), how many are criminal cases; (e) which of the Auditor General's recommendations are currently being acted upon; (f) what is the proposed timeline for fulfilling these recommendations; and (g) has COVID-19 adversely impacted the Canada Border Services Agency's ability to complete removal orders in any way, and, if so, what are the specific details?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 652—**Mr. Peter Kent:**

With regard to Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) and individuals presenting COVID-19 test results at points of entry, since testing requirements were put into place in January 2021, broken down by type of crossing (land, air): (a) how many individuals did the CBSA intercept with a suspected fraudulent or false test result; (b) how many individuals did the CBSA intercept with a test result that was otherwise deemed unsatisfactory, such as the wrong type of test; (c) of the individuals in (a), how many were (i) admitted to Canada, (ii) denied entry; (d) of the individuals in (a), how many were (i) ticketed or fined by the CBSA, (ii) had their cases referred to the RCMP or other law enforcement agencies; and (e) of the cases in (b), how many were (i) admitted to Canada, (ii) denied entry?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 656—**Mr. Brad Vis:**

With regard to the stated intent of the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) "to commit all funds before March 31, 2021" of the Rapid Housing Initiative's projects stream: (a) what was the (i) total number of approved projects, (ii) total number of approved housing units, (iii) total dollar value of federal funds committed; (b) what is the breakdown of each part of (a) by (i) municipality and province or territory, (ii) federal electoral constituency; (c) what is the breakdown of funds committed in (a) by (i) individual application, (ii) contributor source, (i.e. federal, provincial, territorial, municipal, Indigenous government, non-profit, other agency or organization), (iii) province or territory; and (d) what are the details of all applications in (a)(i), including the (i) location, (ii) project description, (iii) number of proposed units, (iv) date the application was submitted to the CMHC?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 661—**Mr. Kerry Diotte:**

With regard to the Development Finance Institute Canada (FinDev): (a) what are the details of all equity stakes in companies FinDev has acquired an equity stake in since January 1, 2018, including the (i) name of the company, (ii) location, (iii) description of work being done by company, (iv) date the government acquired an equity stake, (v) number of shares and percentage of company owned by FinDev, (vi) value or purchase price of equity stake at the time of purchase, (vii) current estimated value of equity stake; and (b) for each acquisition, if applicable, what is the timeline for when the government expects to sell or dispose of the equity stake?

(Return tabled)

[English]

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

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

CRIMINAL CODE

BILL C-6—NOTICE OF TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Minister of Diversity and Inclusion and Youth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, an agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Orders 78(1) or 78(2) with respect to the third reading stage of Bill C-6, an act to amend the Criminal Code (conversion therapy).

Under the provisions of Standing Order 78(3), I give notice that a minister of the Crown will propose at the next sitting a motion to allot a specific number of days or hours for the consideration and disposal of proceedings at the said stage.

A majority of the members want to see this legislation through. It is only the Conservatives who do not, so we do not need to act on this notice if the Conservatives can respect the majority of members and—

• (1230)

The Deputy Speaker: I think the key element there is the notice. In any case, I am sure the House appreciates the notice on the part of the minister.

We will now go back to the previous item.

* * *

[Translation]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2021, NO. 1

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-30, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 19, 2021 and other measures, as reported (with amendments) from the committee, and of Motion No. 2.

The Deputy Speaker: When this bill was last before the House, the hon. member for Joliette had five minutes remaining for questions and comments.

The hon. member for Shefford.

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Joliette for his speech.

He spoke in particular about the Canada emergency wage subsidy, which was used a lot in my riding to help businesses like those in the Granby industrial park get through the crisis.

I would like to come back to a somewhat troubling statement made by a Liberal colleague. He said that a political party can be compared to a business that is struggling during the crisis. He was attempting to justify the fact that political parties got to put their hands in the cookie jar as if they were no different from businesses that were going through a difficult crisis and that needed the subsidy to survive.

I would like to hear what my colleague has to say about this very troubling statement by the Liberal Party.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague and friend, the member for Shefford.

What the political parties in the House did, with the exception of Bloc Québécois, was despicable and inexcusable.

In a time of crisis, the government decided to implement a program to support workers and businesses that might not be able to make it through the crisis. That money will have to be paid back through taxes and the collective debt.

The Liberal Party and the other political parties are distorting the spirit of the bill by claiming that political parties are like non-profit organizations. The Prime Minister ordered the agency administering this program to cast the net wide. He got what he wanted. The Liberal Party made \$1 million from it, when it already had a record fundraising year. That is unacceptable, and the amendment that the government is proposing to Bill C-30 is despicable. As of this summer, the political parties will no longer be eligible for the Canada emergency wage subsidy, but they have already emptied the cookie jar. That is shameful and inexcusable. I would be ashamed to—

The Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Joliette for his speech. His passion for securities is remarkable. That was very interesting.

I would like to raise a more long-term issue.

Although there are some good things in this budget, there is a lot missing. I will get into that later during my speech.

I think this budget is short-sighted. We are emerging from a pandemic, but I do not see any long-term planning in this budget for the next health or economic crisis. There will be more viruses. There will be more pandemics.

Did the government learn anything from COVID-19 about our social safety net or our health care system? Will it make the same mistakes next time? A more aggressive, deadlier virus could strike and make our lives even more difficult.

Does my colleague from Joliette think the government is making that transition?

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Mr. Speaker, my regards to my colleague from Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, and I thank him for his intervention. I look forward to listening to his speech because his remarks are always very constructive.

I completely agree with him, and I will give an example. The Standing Committee on Finance heard testimony from the Conseil national des chômeurs et chômeuses. The organization's spokesperson, Pierre Céré, told us to be careful because, as of September, employment insurance will once again have two blind spots that have been around since the 1990s and that need to be fixed, because no one has done it yet.

We tried to change that in committee, with the member's colleague from Burnaby South, but our request was not deemed receivable. The government does not want to fix the problem. We are therefore stuck with an EI program that has to be changed. The crisis revealed that it does not work, but we are back to the Axworthy

Government Orders

reforms of the 1990s, with all the problems that entails. It is a somewhat short-sighted budget.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-30 is a continuation of what the Prime Minister and the Liberal caucus committed to back when this all began a year ago; that we would have the backs of Canadians and be there in a very real and tangible way. We developed a suite of programs and supports so Canadians would be in a better position to get through the pandemic, and this is a continuation of that.

Could the member provide his thoughts on the passage of the legislation and how it would continue to provide ongoing support for Canadians?

• (1235)

[Translation]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question and comments.

I would like to note one thing that concerns me in Bill C-30: the reduction of the Canada emergency wage subsidy, including for the hardest-hit sectors like the cultural industry and the tourism sector.

The minister has the power to increase the percentage of this subsidy and even extend it to November. With no predictability being offered to these hard-hit sectors, we have little guarantee that they will get the support they need. I would like a commitment from the Minister of Finance on that.

[English]

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-30, the budget implementation act, 2021, no. 1.

Before I do so, I want to take the opportunity afforded to members in this place to speak to another issue of national importance.

Canada has stood in mourning with the survivors of residential schools and their families after the recent tragic discovery of 215 children in an unmarked grave at the former Kamloops residential school. Last week, I was asked by the former chief of the Tk'emlúps first nation, Manny Jules, to read a poem of healing for the nation, and I ask members for their understanding and patience as I do so now. I hope from the way he read it to me, that I can do this justice.

This poem is entitled *Monster, A Residential School Experience*, by Dennis Saddleman:

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I hate you residential school
 I hate you
 You're a monster
 A huge hungry monster
 Built with steel bones
 Built with cement flesh
 You're a monster
 Built to devour
 Innocent native children
 You're a cold-hearted monster
 Cold as the cement floors
 You have no love
 No gentle atmosphere
 Your ugly face grooved with red bricks
 Your monster eyes glare
 From grimy windows
 Monster eyes so evil
 Monster eyes watching
 Terrified children
 Cower with shame
 I hate you residential school i hate you
 You're a slimy monster
 Oozing in the shadows of my past
 Go away leave me alone
 You're following me following me wherever i go
 You're in my dreams in my memories
 Go away monster go away
 I hate you you're following me
 I hate you residential school i hate you
 You're a monster with huge watery mouth
 Mouth of double doors
 Your wide mouth took me
 Your yellow stained teeth chewed
 The indian out of me
 Your teeth crunched my language
 Grinded my rituals and my traditions
 Your taste buds became bitter
 When you tasted my red skin
 You swallowed me with disgust
 Your face wrinkled when you
 Tasted my strong pride
 I hate you residential school i hate you
 You're a monster
 Your throat muscles forced me
 Down to your stomach
 Your throat muscles squeezed my happiness
 Squeezed my dreams
 Squeezed my native voice
 Your throat became clogged with my sacred spirit
 You coughed and you choked
 For you cannot with stand my
 Spiritual songs and dances
 I hate you residential school i hate you
 You're a monster
 Your stomach upset every time i wet my bed
 Your stomach rumbled with anger
 Every time i fell asleep in church
 Your stomach growled at me every time I broke the school rules
 Your stomach was full You burped
 You felt satisfied You rubbed your belly and you didn't care
 You didn't care how you ate up my native Culture
 You didn't care if you were messy
 if you were piggy
 You didn't care as long as you ate up my Indianness
 I hate you Residential School I hate you
 You're a monster
 Your veins clotted with cruelty and torture
 Your blood poisoned with loneliness and despair
 Your heart was cold it pumped fear into me
 I hate you Residential School I hate you
 You're a monster
 Your intestines turned me into foul entrails
 Your anal squeezed me
 squeezed my confidence
 squeezed my self respect
 Your anal squeezed
 then you dumped me
 Dumped me without parental skills
 without life skills
 Dumped me without any form of character
 without individual talents
 without a hope for success
 I hate you Residential School I hate you
 You're a monster
 You dumped me in the toilet then
 You flushed out my good nature
 my personalities
 I hate you Residential School I hate you
 You're a monster.....I hate hate hate you
 Thirty three years later
 I rode my chevy pony to Kamloops
 From the highway I saw the monster
 My Gawd! The monster is still alive
 I hesitated I wanted to drive on
 but something told me to stop
 I parked in front of the Residential School
 in front of the monster
 The monster saw me and it stared at me
 The monster saw me and I stared back
 We both never said anything for a long time
 Finally with a lump in my throat
 I said, "Monster I forgive you."
 The monster broke into tears
 The monster cried and cried
 His huge shoulders shook
 He motioned for me to come forward
 He asked me to sit on his lappy stairs
 The monster spoke
 You know I didn't like my Government Father
 I didn't like my Catholic Church Mother
 I'm glad the Native People adopted me
 They took me as one of their own
 They fixed me up Repaired my mouth of double doors
 Washed my window eyes with cedar and fir boughs
 They cleansed me with sage and sweetgrass
 Now my good spirit lives
 The Native People let me stay on their land
 They could of burnt me you know instead they let me live
 so People can come here to school restore or learn about their culture
 The monster said, "I'm glad the Native People gave me another chance
 I'm glad Dennis you gave me another chance
 The monster smiled
 I stood up I told the monster I must go
 Ahead of me is my life. My people are waiting for me
 I was at the door of my chevy pony
 The monster spoke, "Hey you forgot something
 I turned around I saw a ghost child running down the cement steps
 It ran towards me and it entered my body
 I looked over to the monster I was surprised
 I wasn't looking at a monster anymore
 I was looking at an old school In my heart I thought
 This is where I earned my diploma of survival
 I was looking at an old Residential School who
 became my elder of my memories
 I was looking at a tall building with four stories
 stories of hope
 stories of dreams
 stories of renewal
 and stories of tomorrow

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• (1240)

That, again, is a poem called *Monster; A Residential School Experience*, by Dennis Saddleman. Again, I was asked by the former chief of the Tk'emlúps first nation, Manny Jules, to read that as a way to help the nation heal. When he read it to me, it was quite emotional and I hope I did that justice.

The government continues to move forward on this file, something that is very important, and it is time for action. As an opposition, we have asked for a clear action plan by July 1 on calls to action 71 through 76 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report. All first nations communities across Canada need that healing. It is time we listen to them and follow their lead and have action.

• (1245)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for sharing that poem with the House.

Lives do matter, and the number 215 appears now in many windows in the north end of Winnipeg. In fact, when I drive down Dufferin, I see a red dress in a window. When I drive over the Salter Bridge, I see red and orange ribbons. It reminds me almost on a daily basis of the importance of reconciliation. We all have a very important role to play in being supportive and encouraging people, in particular indigenous community members, to speak out and to lead us on the reconciliation. I would like to think that we each have a role to play, all members of Parliament.

I wonder if my friend could provide his thoughts on just how important reconciliation is for his community and indeed for all of Canada. I am thinking of the calls to action and the report on murdered—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock.

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Mr. Speaker, I agree with the member for Winnipeg North. I think each and every one of us has a role to play in this place and in our communities; how we listen, how we react to these stories. They are quite painful in many cases, but it is how we move forward.

Reconciliation comes in many forms. As a Parliament, as a government, as members who live in each of our communities, we do have that role to play and we do need to start listening to those voices on the ground that are telling us their path forward and how they wish to proceed. That is of utmost importance.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, *meegwetch* to the member for his testimony.

In the context of the budget debate, one very alarming thing that we do not talk about enough in the House is the importance of affordable housing, social housing and housing full stop. We talked about it briefly this week. The need for housing for first nations is absolutely critical.

Should this budget not have made more room for housing, including first nations housing? This is a matter of dignity, quality of life and respect.

[*English*]

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Mr. Speaker, my friend could not be more right. The need for proper housing in indigenous communities should be top of mind for everyone in this place. During the pandemic we have all seen the crowded situations and the fact that the virus does spread quicker inside tight spaces with lots of people. This is where governments need to re-evaluate how they are doing business because in many cases, the first nations communities have ideas and ways to fix this problem.

I am not just blaming one government. It has been successive governments over many decades, actually 100 plus years, so that is where, rather than “Ottawa knows best” and Ottawa deciding how things are done, we start doing things differently. Let us listen to the people on the ground in the communities who know how to fix this problem. We just are not listening.

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for his comments and to acknowledge how it has impacted his own heart.

However, here is the thing. Yesterday, I put forward a unanimous consent motion seeking truth, to call what happened in residential schools for what it is, a genocide. That truth was denied, leaving survivors and families and our experience up for debate.

I believe my colleague has a level of understanding. Will he honour this truth about our Canadian history, that what happened in residential schools was violent and in fact a genocide, so that we can close the debate that survivors have to go through continually?

• (1250)

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate the passion of my friend from the NDP. We served on many committees together over the years and she is truly a strong voice for her community. I appreciate every time I have the opportunity to work with her because I have learned a lot from her. I hope to continue doing that.

In terms of her question, I do support the Truth and Reconciliation Commission calls to action. It is a cultural genocide, there is no doubt about that. We continue to learn and try to fix mistakes of the past, but also learn so things like this never, ever happen again.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my Conservative colleague for his moving and heartfelt speech. It will be hard for me to follow that, and I will not be able to convey such a deep respect for human dignity in light of the horrific events that occurred all over the country and throughout its history. I thank my colleague for his speech and I will do my best to speak to Bill C-30, the budget implementation bill.

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There are some good things in this budget, but there are also things missing from it. I will obviously get back to this, since that is part of my job as an opposition member. What worries me most about this budget is that the government still seems to be putting a band-aid on a cancer and scrambling to fill in the potholes. This budget lacks vision. It is as though the government cannot see the forest for the trees.

We have not yet emerged from the crisis we have been dealing with for the past year and a half. However, the vaccination numbers, especially in Quebec and Ontario, are reassuring. We are on track for 75% of people to get their second dose by the end of the summer. Canada is behind many other countries, but I think we are getting through this together. This crisis was a huge tragedy. Tens of thousands of our fellow citizens got sick and will get sick in the coming years. Many others died.

Over the past 18 months, we have also realized how poorly prepared we were, and I am worried that future events could catch us just as unprepared. We want to believe that we learn from our mistakes and that things will be different next time, yet we have been through SARS and other epidemics before. Each time, we were not prepared and were caught unawares.

Both our social safety net and our health care systems had flaws and weaknesses. However, instead of fixing them, at times we made them worse, including by making cuts to health transfers to the provinces, something that was started by the Conservatives and carried on by the Liberals. Outside of some one-time measures, it does not seem like the government is really enhancing our capabilities and our public services to provide high-quality services and care with the right equipment to get through a pandemic like this one.

Make no mistake, this pandemic will not be the last. Pandemics happened several times in the 20th century, they have already happened a few times in the 21st century, and they will continue to happen. Will we be prepared next time?

Will our health care system and professionals be treated well? Will we provide our orderlies and nurses with better working conditions and decent shifts? Will we collaborate to ensure that we do not let down seniors in long-term care? The death toll at the beginning of the pandemic, especially at the Herron long-term care home in Dorval, on Montreal's West Island, was appalling.

Will we change the way we work? In terms of workplace relations, will we continue to work from home, or will we go back to the office? What will we do to prepare for next time? Will we have enough medical equipment for everyone?

Will Canada have the industrial capacity to do vaccine research, but also to design, create and manufacture vaccines as well? Over the past few years, our country has lost its entire domestic vaccine production capacity, and we saw how unprepared we were for the pandemic as a result and how dependent we were on our neighbours to manufacture vaccines, medical equipment, respirators and ventilators.

Will we have enough oxygen cylinders next time? If the next virus is more aggressive, more contagious and more deadly, will we

be able to overcome it and ensure that our social safety net can protect everyone and leave no one behind?

I believe that this budget addresses some but not all of the short-term needs, but unfortunately, we are not planning for the post-pandemic reality and the new society that we could collectively create if we had the resources. We could create a society that is fairer, more prosperous, more equitable, greener, and also better prepared to face these kinds of challenges, because this will not be the last time that we have to.

● (1255)

This will also not be the last time that climate crises could worsen because of global warming. That is another subject, but it is still related because of the public health problems it can cause, whether it be respiratory problems or the spread of certain viruses, or simply disasters that will be extremely costly to both the agricultural sector specifically and societies in general.

This budget and this budget implementation bill have flaws. The pandemic demonstrated that we had societies that were very inequitable, and these inequalities have widened considerably over the past 18 months. I have seen statistics showing that the wealth of the richest families and individuals in Canada grew by about \$78 billion during the pandemic. We are talking about less than 1% of the population. While most people were suffering, losing their jobs, watching their small businesses struggle to survive or even close down, the ultrarich were lining their pockets.

The Liberal government has not included any concrete measures in this budget to attack this excessive, outrageous and indecent increase in wealth, except for a special tax on the purchase of certain boats, luxury vehicles or private planes. A super-rich person who pocketed tens of millions of dollars in profit just has to avoid buying a private plane, and this measure will change absolutely nothing in their life.

As Oxfam Canada revealed a few months ago, as a result of this rise in inequality, people from big companies, like Amazon's Jeff Bezos, made truly gargantuan profits during this pandemic. Jeff Bezos has approximately 600,000 employees around the world, which is quite a lot. If Mr. Bezos took out his cheque book and wrote 600,000 cheques for \$110,000, one for each of his employees, he would still be just as rich as he was before the pandemic. Needless to say, he was already far from poor before the pandemic.

What are the Liberals presenting in this budget to reduce inequality and make the super-rich, multi-millionaires and billionaires pay their share? Not much, as I said. The budget talks about boats and planes, but that is about it.

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The government could have imposed a tax on wealth. It could have imposed an additional tax of 1% on people with a fortune of over \$20 million. That does not seem excessive to me. It would free up a considerable amount of revenue so we could have social programs that would take care of people and a truly public health care system that could meet the needs of the population. Why is there no tax on wealth?

I mentioned Amazon and Jeff Bezos. Why is there no special tax on excessive profits during a pandemic? In the riding of Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie and pretty much all over Montreal, small businesses have suffered and have had a hard time making ends meet. Many of them have gone out of business even as giant Internet corporations like Amazon and its ilk have raked in the cash. Not only are web giants not yet being taxed by the Liberal government on what they earn in Canada and Quebec, but they have also been reaping obscene profits during the pandemic. The Liberal government does not have the courage to do anything about this.

Why has the government not altered its approach to tax havens? Every serious assessment of the situation, including those by the Department of Finance and the Conference Board of Canada, tells us that we are losing tens of billions of dollars every year because the super-rich can squirrel their money away in the Cayman Islands or Barbados so they do not have to pay a penny in taxes in Canada or, if they do, it is a pittance. This has been going on for years, with neither Conservatives nor Liberals doing anything about it. Most of these tax havens were created by Canadian banks, which were able to make rules that suited them so they could enable their clients and KPMG clients to avoid paying tax here by using financial schemes that no federal government has made any real effort to take down.

As Professor Alain Deneault has explained, if you are injured and you have to wait in an emergency room for 10 or 20 hours to see a doctor, it is because of tax havens. When you are waiting for a bus on a street corner in the rain and the bus does not come because it is broken down, there is no one to fix it and public transit is deficient, that is because of tax havens. If our communities do not have sufficient social housing and co-operative housing, it is because the rich are not paying their fair share. It is because of tax havens.

I wish we had a government that had the courage to tackle these issues. An NDP government will do just that one day.

• (1300)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada now has \$4 of debt for every dollar that our economy brings in. That is a record ratio and is double the average over the past 60 years.

The government is printing money and has created \$354 billion through the Bank of Canada. This is driving up inflation, especially with respect to house prices. This inflation could drive interest rates up, which would affect the record levels of debt held by our families, businesses and governments.

Does the member agree with me that we could end up with a crisis if interest rates rise before we reduce our debt?

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Mr. Speaker, we do need to be careful. We do not want to wind up with inflation that prompts extremely excessive interest rates for our economy.

However, we also need to put things in perspective. Every country in the world has increased its debt during the pandemic. We are not alone in that. The same thing happened in Europe, Japan and the United States. In this context, our debt-to-GDP ratio is still competitive compared to most other OECD countries.

I would say that it is still more important to target the wealthy and the web giants who are not paying their fair share. We must not only look at expenditures, but also look at government revenues, which the Conservatives and Liberals unfortunately do not generally do.

Some investments provide excellent returns. If we give some households access to social housing, it frees up money for these people to participate in economic activity, join in activities in their neighbourhood, village or city and contribute to economic growth. It lifts them out of poverty, and that is good for everyone. Furthermore, providing more low-cost housing, such as social housing, reduces pressure on the market and prevents house prices from rising as quickly as they are at present.

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

The Minister of National Revenue boasts about having injected \$1 billion into the fight against tax evasion. Had this been done properly, perhaps she would have had more money for her fishing wharfs, which are not getting enough funding. There is one approach that would cost absolutely nothing, and that is making regulatory amendments to eliminate some tax havens.

In this context, can we agree that the government's measures to combat tax evasion and avoidance are more smoke and mirrors than anything else?

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Saint-Jean for her question, and I completely agree with her.

There are aspects of Canadian tax law that the government could change, namely a regulation or two, without even having to introduce a bill. This would eliminate all kinds of excessive tax avoidance and even tax evasion. However, the government is not doing that because its hands are tied by the people on Bay Street, for whom these arrangements are quite advantageous, because their super-rich, multi-millionaire friends profit from them.

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The government said that it is going to give the Canada Revenue Agency more inspectors and more resources. The problem is that many of these schemes are legal. There is no point in setting more police officers to guard the bank if bank robbery is legal. The government needs to change the regulations and the laws because, otherwise, nothing will change. These people will continue to laugh in our faces, they will continue to use their little schemes and we, collectively, are the ones who will pay the price. It is the middle class that ends up paying for our infrastructure and public services, while the super-rich do not contribute.

• (1305)

[*English*]

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his very important and powerful speech. I just want to acknowledge the member for Hamilton Mountain and his fierce work around addressing the issues that seniors face in our country. Right now, what we are seeing is a two-tier system for seniors. We have the “junior seniors” who get paid one amount, and then we have the “senior seniors” who get paid a bit more. I think that is absolutely unfair.

What are the member's thoughts on that?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her excellent question. Indeed, we cannot understand why the Liberals are creating two classes of seniors in this country.

People aged 65 and over used to be able to count on certain rights and services. They had access to certain programs, like OAS.

Now the Liberal government says that people aged 75 and older will receive a 10% increase, and tough luck for people aged 65 to 75. Meanwhile, the circumstances of seniors who live in poverty have not really improved during the pandemic. They have even been quite catastrophic.

I agree with my colleague from Hamilton Mountain when he says that this is discrimination against our seniors, and the NDP will fight against that. I also want to commend him on the work he has accomplished over the course of his career to protect our workers' pensions and retirement plans.

[*English*]

Mr. Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today and speak to the budget. I actually did not think I would get the opportunity to do this. I did not think I would see a budget from the government, so I am pleased to speak to it today.

I want to put this into the context of COVID-19. Last March, the government shut down the economy because of the pandemic, and we Conservatives co-operated with a lot of these emergency support measures, which was important to do at the time. I want to highlight the Liberals' approach to this.

The very first thing the Liberals did was use their bills as a power grab. They wanted to have the superpower to be able to do whatever they wanted and spend however much they wanted until December of this year, which is still six months from now. That is

what they had asked for. Of course, we did not allow them to do this.

The second thing they did was take the power they did have, which was to spend some money, and direct that money to their friends. We think of former Liberal MP Frank Baylis, who got a contract for respirators even though his company had no experience or specialty in that area, and of course the WE scandal, which we have heard a lot about this week, where the government found a way to funnel money to its friends the Kielburgers.

When we exposed all those things, the Liberals did a third thing, which was to prorogue Parliament. They did not want investigations. They did not want documents to come out, and they did not want people to know what was going on. That prorogation of Parliament has created where we are now, where we have this last-ditch, last-hour effort to get this budget passed.

While all of that was going on, Canada was in a significant recession. Our GDP was negative 11.5% last summer. We had record double-digit unemployment, and many small businesses were shut down, including many in Saskatoon, particularly in the tourism sector. Then finally, in the fall, we got an economic statement. Finally, there was some acknowledgement that the government needed to provide some numbers, and yet even that understated the depth of the economic calamity that was hitting Canada.

While all that was going on, the solution to the problem, which was the acquisition of vaccines, was a failure by the government. The first thing the Liberals did was bet the farm on the Chinese dictatorship supplying all the vaccines Canada would need. Of course, that failed and the partnership with CanSino was a failure.

Once that failed, the Liberals talked a big game about ordering vaccines. They like to highlight all the vaccines they ordered. I was in charge of a manufacturing plant, and my boss was not overly concerned with what I ordered. He wanted output. He wanted me to produce products. When I told him I could not, he did not want to hear excuses; he just wanted the products produced. It is one thing to talk about excuses, about ordering this and that, but the real deal is landing those products in the country, in this case in Canada, and getting the vaccines into the arms of people.

Canada has consistently been at the bottom of OECD countries when it comes to getting people fully vaccinated. Why is that? It is because of this difference between ordering and actually landing products in the country. After all these months, we are still at less than 10% of Canadians fully vaccinated with two doses. The Liberals are very good at talking and not so good at actually doing.

On this budget, it is a major letdown. Unemployed Canadians feel let down, workers feel let down and families feel let down. It is not a growth budget. There is no plan to encourage Canada's long-term prosperity, and even the Parliamentary Budget Officer has said it will not stimulate jobs or create economic growth. This is a budget about Liberal partisan priorities. It is an election budget. There is not even a plan to return to a balanced budget in the forward-looking years.

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For Saskatoon West, there was money for Meewasin Trail and for VIDO-InterVac, our vaccine-producing organization associated with the University of Saskatchewan. Both are projects I have been advocating for since my election. I have asked numerous question period questions, raised it at committee, written to ministers and brought media attention to it, and I think the Liberals finally just got tired and provided some funding there.

Was there money in Saskatoon for housing projects? No. Was there money for palliative care? No. Was there money for fighting the opioid crisis? No. Was there money for mental health resources? No. Did the people of Saskatoon West get slapped with the largest deficit and debt in the history of this country? Yes, they did. Let us talk about that deficit and debt.

This past year's debt is \$354 billion, and next year's is going to be \$154 billion. The deficit control plan of the government is getting the deficit down to \$30 billion a year in five years' time. Now, 18 months ago, \$30 billion would have been viewed as a massive deficit, and today it is seen as nothing. It is not nothing.

• (1310)

This document is projecting a \$1.4-trillion debt. That is \$37,000 of debt for every man, woman and child, every Canadian; \$150,000 for a family of four. That is a small mortgage. It is like the government stole the identity of every Canadian, took their credit cards and racked up \$37,000 in charges that they would have to pay. Not only that, in the background, the government is still taxing Canadians.

Some people would say, "So what? Who cares? Just print more money." Basic market principles in economics care. Every time in history when a government prints money to pay off its debts, record inflation follows. Inflation means higher prices and the money Canadians earn is worth less and less.

I want to remind Canadians of events that occurred 30 years ago. The government, at that time, had racked up unprecedented debts, and by 1995, the government was unable to borrow money. Former Liberal finance minister Paul Martin was forced to raise taxes and reduce spending. A period of hardship and pain for all Canadians followed those decisions. The government was forced to get its debt in order by the markets.

I want to personalize this a bit, because decisions that we make here in this House affect individuals. My wife and I bought our first house in 1989, right in the middle of this period. Our interest rate on our first mortgage was 13%. To put that in perspective, if someone has a \$1,000 mortgage payment today because of a 2% interest rate, and that interest rate were to go to 13%, like my first one, that \$1,000 payment becomes a \$2,700 a month payment, almost triple. Even if interest rates only went to 5%, that \$1,000 becomes a \$1,500 payment. It is a 50% higher payment.

With this budget, the Liberal government has made a trillion dollar bet that interest rates are going to stay low forever. Of course history says otherwise. From 1965 to now, the average five-year mortgage rate was about 9%. There was a 20-year period from 1975 to 1995 where the average mortgage rate was about 12%. It is only in the last decade that it has been consistently below 5%, and that is not sustainable.

The government is repeating the same mistakes of 30 years ago. At best, we are mortgaging our children's future. At worst, we are going to face another debt crisis, like Paul Martin did. The Liberals are spending money now, knowing that inflation is going to cost our younger generations.

What did we get for all this spending? We got \$52 million for Liberal pet project A, and \$300 million for Liberal pet project B, and hundreds of billions more split up against other Liberal pet projects. Will some of these benefit Canadians? Time will tell. Will the cost of Liberals buying votes for the next election burden generations of Canadians to come? Absolutely.

I want to turn to my home riding of Saskatoon West. Our Saskatchewan economy is built on agriculture, mining, forestry and energy. Saskatoon West is the centre of many of these industries. Our downtown houses many head offices. We have industrial parks, and we have a large railway switching hub and an airport that services all of Saskatchewan, especially the north.

I want to talk specifically about the energy sector. I sit on the environment committee, so I have a unique perspective. The budget was a missed opportunity to grow Canada's largest economic sector. In fact, the Liberals are failing our energy sector. Energy East, of course, cancelled. Teck Resources, Kitimat LNG cancelled. Keystone XL cancelled just this week. The Trans Mountain pipeline is in limbo. Also in limbo is Enbridge Line 5, which delivers much of western Canadian oil to Ontario and Quebec via the U.S.A.

What about small businesses in Saskatoon West? I have been a consistent advocate. The Liberal COVID-19 programs failed small businesses. The initial rent program was horribly designed, and left most tenants without help. The wage subsidy was initially written to exclude most workers, and we had to push the government for the rules to be changed. Then, of course, the CRA began auditing small businesses. We had to put forward a motion to end those unnecessary audits. I have spoken about these issues. Conservatives will continue to be there for small business.

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I graduated from university as an accountant, and I worked for many years in business management. I worked in different companies, from large multinational businesses to owning and operating my own small business. The reason I ran for office here stemmed from my desire to bring some business acumen to the federal government. I believe we need a good cross-section of skills. We need drama teachers and journalists, but we also need financially minded people who understand economics and monetary policy. I think this budget proves my point very well.

This is an election budget. The foundational question was not what is in the best interests of Canadians. It was, what is the sure-fire way to get re-elected. Canadians can see right through this. That is why the people of Saskatoon West elected a Conservative MP in 2019, and that is why we need to elect more Conservative MPs next time. Only a Conservative government could secure our economy and secure our future.

• (1315)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my concern with the Conservatives' approach to this is that, on the one hand, they say that we could have done more in terms of providing financial support and then, on the other hand, they are critical because we have borrowed as much money as we have. We have consistently provided support packages for seniors, students, workers and businesses to enable us to build back better once we get through the pandemic.

I wonder if my colleague could provide his thoughts on the importance of being consistent in what one says in the chamber.

Mr. Brad Redekopp: Mr. Speaker, there is a phrase that I live by: Work smarter, not harder. Many of the things that we have seen from the government are the opposite of that. Money was given to dead people. If we look at the cross-section of who got the most money, it was the wealthier families that got it. It was not the lower-income families. There were many things, in the way these programs were set up, that were inefficient and poorly designed.

I truly believe that had Conservatives been in power, we could have achieved better results for less money, because that is the way we Conservatives do things and that is the way we think.

Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my friend from Saskatoon West was talking about financial support. What I am hearing in Hamilton Mountain and across the country is that many seniors have complained about the latest budget having a two-tiered pension system for those over the age of 65. They feel it is wrong and they have high costs like everybody else.

I want to know if the member is hearing the same thing in his riding and if he supports the Liberal way or would he support making sure all people aged 65 and up are treated the same?

Mr. Brad Redekopp: Mr. Speaker, I am hearing the same thing. I have talked to many seniors who are upset with many different aspects of what the government is doing.

I believe that seniors built our country, seniors are the foundation upon which we live and it is because of seniors that I am standing

here today. We all stand on the shoulders of our seniors, so they are very important.

We need to provide for seniors. We need to be fair to seniors. No, I do not think it is right to have the two-tiered system for seniors. The government needs to do what it can to take care of them. That is something Conservatives are committed to and I certainly am.

• (1320)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member talked about debt. Canada has \$4 of debt for \$1 of GDP, a record ratio. There is \$8.6 trillion of debt. The government is printing money to pay for all this debt, which is driving up inflation that will lead to higher interest rates and cause a debt crisis.

Does the member worry that when the government's policy of printing money to drive up inflation and interest rates fully plays out, we will have a debt crisis?

Mr. Brad Redekopp: Mr. Speaker, I absolutely think we will. I can speak to that because I lived through that. I lived through the 1990s. Like I said, my first mortgage had a 13% interest rate and I worry that my children and my future grandchildren, if I have any, will have to deal with this. They will have high interest rates that they simply will not be able to afford. When we talk about housing affordability being out of reach right now, it is going to be impossible if interest rates go to those kinds of levels. That is the future we are heading into with budgets like this.

Hon. Alice Wong (Richmond Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to the budget implementation bill and give some overall thoughts about the budget. The document itself, as tabled by the Minister of Finance, was 725 pages long. It is the largest budget document in federal history. Unfortunately, quantity does not necessarily mean quality.

In terms of quantity, we have record spending and deficits. This fiscal year and the last fiscal year are ranked one and two, and both contain the largest amount of spending and the largest deficits in recorded Canadian history. It is not even close to the third-highest deficit. The current deficit that will have to be paid by Canadians will total over half a trillion dollars. That is just for the last two years. There is surely more to come. If we write on a piece of paper the number 5 followed by 11 zeros, that is nearly the amount of accumulated deficit incurred since Confederation. We are far from where we were when the Prime Minister promised "a modest short-term deficit" six years ago.

Canadians will be paying for this spending for decades. Since all of the spending comes from borrowed money, we will also be paying interest. We are not paying off the debt today, but its effects will drag on our economy like an anchor weighing down a swimmer in the ocean.

Right now, interest rates are being held low. The Bank of Canada is purchasing government debt off the open market, which puts downward pressure on interest rates. This allows the government to borrow and spend, but this is impacting the lives of everyday people in my riding of Richmond Centre.

Consequently, the price of everything is increasing. Indeed, with easy credit due to low interest rates, the prices of real estate have skyrocketed. Young constituents of mine cannot afford a place to live, while older folks are sitting on a windfall. Rents are getting higher because landlords must afford to finance and pay back higher and higher levels of debt. Unaffordability of places to live is one consequence of huge government deficits.

Higher prices are also seen in everything else, ranging from food to gasoline, services, and the list goes on. Disruptions in supply chains due to COVID-19 are not helping. Everybody at street level can see this happening. Prices were bound to rise, but the government's fiscal policy is making things a lot worse than they should be.

I do concede the point that last year in March, we knew a lot less about COVID-19 than we do today. Governments around the world reacted in different manners, but most were consistent in providing emergency supports to the population while we figured things out.

Beyond that, there was no excuse for what we have seen out of the government over the past half-year or so. The Liberal government has been very slow to bring us back on the path to recovery. Nothing illustrates this more than the snail pace of COVID-19 vaccinations that we have seen. Hundreds of millions, if not billions, of dollars were wasted in this initial effort.

We should be a first-world nation with first-world results, but instead the Liberal government has been lagging badly. Most Canadians at this point, including me, are in the category of having received a partial vaccination. Compared to our fully vaccinated friends down south in the U.S. and compared to countries like Israel, we have underperformed. This will cost us, and we see it in the budget today.

We see plenty of media out there showing obvious evidence that things are heading back to normal in places outside of Canada. People are attending sporting events, socializing and exercising without having to wear masks. Indeed, we are seeing hints of that occurring today from our provincial governments. However, people remember the initial promise of the federal Liberals when they said it would take two weeks to flatten the curve, which did not turn out as expected at all.

With this uncertainty, why would anybody want to make preparations for a recovery that may or may not occur? The rug has already been pulled from the floors of the restaurant industry in British Columbia, twice, with incredibly short notice.

• (1325)

My point is that the government's failed response with COVID-19 vaccinations has directly resulted in the necessity of additional emergency spending support. Tens, if not hundreds of billions of dollars would not have had to be spent had we been one of the leaders rather than a laggard in our COVID-19 response.

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However, the current Liberal government has made so many missteps that will slow down this road map. The slowness of our government's COVID response has also caused distortion in the labour market. I speak to businesses that cannot find employees because government benefits are competing with them, competing with businesses that want to hire. Going back to my original point about costs, it means the cost of labour is rising and this results in increased prices for everything. The volatile economic climate caused by the government's missteps is stalling our recovery.

At least before COVID-19, Richmond was home to a vibrant tourism sector. Today, we have travel centres and tourism-sensitive areas of the economy that are completely shut down. We need to create an environment that will get this sector back to where it was. We support tourism, but not birth tourism. This is what I have been telling people here in Richmond.

While nearly every industry from coast to coast to coast has felt the negative effects of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the hospitality and tourism industries have been especially hard hit. From international border closures to provincial border regulations and stay-at-home orders, the livelihood of hundreds of thousands of Canadians, either directly in the tourism and hospitality industry or in an adjacent field, have been hammered by COVID-19.

I have heard from countless constituents who work for airlines and in the travel infrastructure, hospitality and tourism industries, and they have all told me the same thing: "We need help."

I want to take this opportunity to express my thanks to my colleagues from Niagara Falls, Abbotsford and Durham for their efforts in bringing the voices of those in the tourism industry to parliamentarians and to this place to be heard, and indeed, they were heard.

Richmond Centre is also home to the YVR airport and to many great aerospace firms that operate and maintain our airlines, airplanes and helicopters. The budget funding needs to be implemented in conjunction with an aerospace strategy that allows us to compete in the global marketplace.

The final area I want to touch on is one which is extremely close to my heart. For a number of years, I was very fortunate to be able to serve not just Richmond, but Canadians from coast to coast—

• (1330)

The Deputy Speaker: We have finished the time allocated for Government Orders for this afternoon. The hon. member for Richmond Centre will have two minutes remaining in her time and then the usual five minutes for questions and comments when the House gets back to debate on the motion.

It being 1:30 p.m., the House will proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

*Private Members' Business***PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS***[English]***GOVERNOR GENERAL'S ACT**

The House resumed from April 26 consideration of the motion that Bill C-271, An Act to amend the Governor General's Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, before I begin my speech, I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge and hold up the Muslim community across Canada. This past week has been an extremely painful one for all of the beautiful Muslim people in our communities, who are now afraid of what Canada has become. I pray that we are tireless in our work to make this country an even safer country. Everyone should feel safe to walk in their neighbourhoods in our country.

I am here to debate Bill C-271, an act to amend the Governor General's Act. This proposed act would reduce the Governor General's salary to one dollar a year, remove the right to retirement annuity and amend other acts in consequence.

When I read just the title of the proposed act, I was actually interested in having a meaningful review of and discussion about the next steps Canada has to take to look at this and the realities we have seen over the last while. Sadly, the content of the bill is not a serious attempt to reform how the Governor General is selected, and it would, obviously, limit potential candidates to those who are independently wealthy. For me, having more wealthy people in seats of power is simply not a priority.

It is obvious that we need some changes. In the most recent situation with Julie Payette, there is no doubt that the Prime Minister failed to undertake basic due diligence in the vetting process. If this were a piece of legislation that spoke to creating clearer rules and guidelines around vetting, I would be very interested in the content.

While it is true that I personally feel that Ms. Payette does not merit the pension or perks because she really did fail in her duties, there should be a much better vetting process and a clearer pathway around consequences when a person does not serve this important role appropriately.

I believe the member and I agree that, instead of paying her for the rest of her life, the Prime Minister needs to send the message that Canada's public institutions will not be a safe haven for those who abuse their employees. I think that this is an important factor and needs meaningful action. However, this bill is not that.

Canadians know that the Governor General plays a role in the constitutional arrangement of our democracy. Our democracy is not perfect, but it is something that I will always fight for. There is no doubt that Canadians want the Prime Minister to take responsibility for the flawed process of appointing Ms. Payette. This flawed process has left taxpayers holding the bag, and I am not okay with that. I also believe that, for this specific case, we want an independent investigation into the allegations of harassment at Rideau Hall. In the long term, there needs to be a better plan to keep all of our workplaces safe.

The Prime Minister has been heavily criticized for making key appointments, such as the Governor General and other House officers, based on politics rather than merit. This is concerning for Canadians, and I have heard that from my constituents. When we look at key roles, I believe that Canadians want people who we can all have faith in. When politics and key roles of leadership in our country get mixed up, it makes it harder for Canadians to feel trust in these roles.

Now, because of a poor system, we are in a situation where the chief justice of the Supreme Court of Canada is currently assuming the duties of the Governor General. Having the chief justice give royal assent on legislation that may one day come before the court does present a potential conflict, so this needs to be addressed. However, the solution offered in Bill C-271 does not provide the constructive criticism to get us to the next level, which obviously, this conversation needs to have.

Now, the Liberals have announced that they will have an advisory panel to help select the new Governor General. This approach for appointing a governor general was used by the previous Conservative government but was dropped by the Liberals after they were elected in 2015. While the Conservative panel was non-partisan, the Liberals have decided to appoint Liberal co-chairs, and this is clearly partisan.

• (1335)

Again, how do Canadians trust in a process if it is not fair, if they are not taken out of the partisanship realm and placed, as they should be, in the non-partisan one? This is a lot of taxpayer money being spent and, quite frankly, Canadians deserve better.

Some constituents tell me that they do not want a governor general anymore and that ties with the Queen of England just do not fit what Canada has become. This is a very worthy and important debate to have. However, again, the bill does not provide any meaningful space for this dialogue.

It is time for the Prime Minister to show Canadians that there are consequences for employers who create toxic workplaces and abuse their employees. Our former governor general should be disqualified from receiving a gold-plated pension and a lifetime expense account.

I hope in the future we have bills that provide information to address these key factors. When we debate in the House, we have to talk about solutions that will be long term and will not undermine our democratic process.

[Translation]

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I will speak frankly. The Bloc Québécois proposes that the next Governor General of Canada be given a salary of one dollar. The reason for this is very simple: When one holds a position of symbolic value, it only makes sense that one should receive a salary of equally symbolic value.

Private Members' Business

Historically, as it was mentioned earlier, the role of the Governor General called for the incumbent to make several decisions about the future of Canada. The role has become ceremonial and symbolic; nevertheless, the Governor General's approval is at the heart of certain processes, despite what I would qualify as its redundant quality, and the absence of this approval could even keep government from functioning.

Let us run through the Governor General's duties: He is governor-in-chief of the army; he gives royal assent to bills adopted by the House of Commons and the Senate; he signs official documents; he reads the throne speech; he presides over the swearing in of the Prime Minister, the Chief Justice of Canada and the cabinet ministers; he appoints the lieutenant governors, who are the Queen's representatives in Quebec and the provinces; and the list goes on, of course.

Now let us look at the various forms of compensation. If there are any, they seem less significant. That is actually more or less the point of today's dispute. Under current Canadian legislation, the Governor General's compensation package includes, but is not limited to, an annual salary of more than \$270,000, a generous expense account associated with the office and a lifetime pension of \$150,000.

I will spare my colleagues the details of each case, but I could go on and on and break them down into all the associated expenses that are covered. I could talk about Julie Payette, for example. It may sound amusing to call it a party, but that is really what it was: a swearing-in party, a \$650,000 swearing-in party at taxpayers' expense, because that is what was spent on the last governor general. That is to say nothing of the plans for a \$150,000 staircase that never came to fruition, or the millions paid by the National Capital Commission or even all the repairs and upgrades to redecorate Rideau Hall. Clearly, it can be a long list.

I could give other examples. I did not mention Michaëlle Jean, whose party cost \$1.3 million. That is twice as much as Ms. Payette's.

It is quite simply outrageous for taxpayers to have to cover all of the expenses incurred by the Government of Canada to maintain a symbolic position of critical insignificance, to paraphrase constitutional expert Patrick Taillon, expenses that include this person's activities, personal expenses and a comfortable retirement.

Speaking of redundant symbolism, I would say that we have our share of that in the House. Since I arrived here, I have seen all kinds of things. Some that I expected to see and others I did not quite expect, but maybe I was naive. The monarchy and prayer are examples of that.

I cannot ignore the monarchy because it is closely connected to the role of Governor General. I must say that, as a Quebecker, I find it is rather hard to constantly be hit over the head with this reminder that we were colonized and are still not free. It is beyond hard; it is unbearable, and is something that I quite simply refuse. It is just as outrageous as thanking and venerating a sovereign who, I should point out, is the head of the Church of England and the Anglican Church, and who lives on the other side of the ocean. That is outrageous to me.

Closer to home, we have the Governor General. I mentioned that position, but I want to talk about it again. The logic is similar. I find it insulting to be paying for the monarchy, the Crown's representative or the Governor General. As I already pointed out, this is all a symbol of an outdated monarchy. That may even be an oxymoron.

● (1340)

I am a little emotional because it makes absolutely no sense. It is just beyond comprehension, especially in 2021. I represent people, I represent Quebeckers, I represent my riding. As members know, 75% of Quebeckers are in favour of abolishing the monarchy, but not the position of Governor General, which will happen afterwards.

Naturally, to some extent, figuratively speaking, I am also revolted. I see that we cannot manage to separate religion from state, which really concerns me. I am saying this in the House, but we need only think about this past week. This separation has not yet been achieved.

Holding on to symbols that are devoid of meaning and colonial relics prevents us from seeing elements that are symbolic, but on which a democracy is founded. I will humbly and very briefly pay tribute to the Patriotes. As I am a Quebecker, I will speak of the Patriotes in Quebec, but there were some on this side of the river as well. The Patriotes fought. We know the story of these people who fought so we could have more rights, freedoms, transparency, responsibilities and representation.

Preserving the spirit of freedom is a matter of honour, dignity and collective memory. That is what I humbly strive for as a parliamentarian. I would like to see us stand up and reject the link that still chains us to colonial times. The Patriotes dreamed of a representative democracy. They would turn over in their graves if they knew that we were still at the mercy of the British Crown. We often wonder what people learn from history. In this case, I do not think we have learned a thing.

I would humbly say that I do not need all that to be able to represent the ideals of democracy and liberty. I have no need for any superfluous symbols.

On another note, I spoke briefly about my history in the House, where I learned a lot of things. I would also like to talk about the prayer that we say before every sitting of the House. In the last Parliament, I moved a motion to consider doing away with that practice, which is absolutely archaic, in my opinion. Canada prides itself on its secularism, but it still prays to God, the Queen and the Governor General before every sitting of the House. That is another symbol. Sometimes I get the impression that these symbols are forcing us not to take our own responsibilities. I am a parliamentarian and, if I want to talk about democracy and freedom, then I do not need someone to remind me of that. I am capable of doing it myself. I am capable of being responsible and of thinking critically and rationally so that I can properly represent my constituents and Quebeckers. I do not need to pray to ask someone to save me or to tell me how to think in order to do my job properly.

Private Members' Business

As a parliamentarian and a legislator, I also believe that the role of Governor General is a relic of the monarchy. As for the prayer, a gesture that is still current, I refuse to participate in this cheap symbolic practice. It goes without saying that I am against spending money to be represented by someone who in fact does not represent me at all.

In closing, I represent the people of my riding and Quebecers. I would note that 75% of people are in favour of abolishing the monarchy and I am accountable to them. I am not a humble subject of Her Majesty. I am the member for Manicouagan and I am accountable to my constituents. I hope that Canada will divest itself of these archaic symbols. I hope it will turn to something tangible, based on stories that are more meaningful, freer—I can say freer since I was talking about patriots earlier—instead of relying on a Crown overseas.

● (1345)

The Bloc Québécois and I firmly believe that our vision of the future is the exact opposite of what the Governor General exemplifies. Quebec and Quebecers would like to be free and to be respected. We want to make our own decisions. Until the Quebec nation achieves independence, we wish to take a first step to detach ourselves from the monarchy and reduce the salary of the Governor General to one dollar. As one of my economist friends, Jean-Denis Garon, says, this amount would not even be indexed to inflation, because a symbol should remain a symbol.

[English]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to discuss Bill C-271, concerning the office of the Governor General. I find some of the assumptions underlying this proposal to be perhaps well-intentioned, but definitely misinformed. I welcome the chance to set the record straight on a few critical points.

The bill proposes to limit the salary of the Governor General to a dollar a year. This appears to be based on the notion that the office is purely symbolic in nature and therefore does not really do anything substantive. This implies that it could somehow be recast as part-time, voluntary or having no impact. Of course, nothing could be further from the truth. The job is, in fact, one of the busiest in Ottawa. It is a 24-7 commitment for the individual and their spouse. It is an incredible honour to serve in the office and is very rewarding, but members should make no mistake, it is all-consuming.

I think it is important to understand this when reflecting on the bill before us, so if the House will indulge me, I would like to take a moment to reflect on exactly what the Governor General does and how they spend their time.

It is perhaps easiest to look at the role from two different perspectives. There are the constitutional functions and the ceremonial functions. On one hand, we have the business of helping the government run smoothly and on the other we have an office whose role and purpose is to celebrate Canada, Canadians and the shared values that bind us together.

As parliamentarians, we are pretty familiar with the constitutional and administrative side of things. There are activities such as swearing in members of cabinet, reading speeches of the throne and

proroguing or dissolving Parliament, but these are not the full picture. There is also a legislative component that can be very time-consuming. Governors General have to approve orders in council and other instruments, as well as legislation passed here in the House and in the Senate. In a typical year, those can be well over 1,000 individual instruments and, while it would be nice to say that governments are well-oiled machines and that those instruments only get signed during the workday, that is not the reality. I am sure that if we were to ask Mr. Johnston or Madam Clarkson, they could tell us about getting phone calls from Privy Council Office officials on weekends and evenings, asking them to review and sign urgent documents so that programs could start, money could flow or appointments could be made. That is the nature of the job, and Governors General are often called upon to be flexible and to rearrange their plans at a moment's notice.

Of course, the constitutional aspect is only a part of the equation, and I would suggest a comparatively small one when we divide up the actual workday. More time is generally spent on ceremonial aspects of the job, such as on representing and celebrating the country and the best of our citizens and our society, but the Governor General represents Canada. They do this at home and abroad. They receive visiting heads of state and they conduct state visits abroad, sometimes having to criss-cross the globe on trade missions or to attend funerals of foreign dignitaries. They accept the credentials as foreign diplomats.

Equally importantly, they encourage excellence and achievement. Many Canadians likely do not realize that Rideau Hall administers the Canadian Honours system. It is responsible for awards such as the Order of Canada, the Medal of Bravery and the Polar Medal. In a typical year, the Governor General would attend dozens of ceremonies and give out hundreds, if not thousands, of awards to worthy Canadians. It is always gratifying and humbling to see how many talented and caring Canadians there are in communities across the country. Part of the Governor General's job is to identify, highlight and celebrate these people and their accomplishments so that they serve as examples to everyone in Canada.

In a similar context, the Governor General is a patron to many charitable organizations, using their office and stature to draw attention to worthy causes. Another important role that the Governor General plays is that of commander-in-chief of the Canadian Armed Forces. In this capacity, they give out military honours and awards and visit Canadian forces personnel, their families and friends at home and abroad. Most importantly, they celebrate the accomplishments of our troops, and they are there to grieve with them and support them during times of tragedy.

Private Members' Business

• (1350)

What I have described is clearly not a symbolic job. This is not a job where the incumbent shows up occasionally and cuts a few ribbons here and there; the workload is significant. I am told that in a typical year, the incumbent would see over 500 events. An incumbent might be asked to give over 200 speeches in a year, visit dozens of communities and open the doors to Rideau Hall and his or her home to hundreds of thousands of guests every year. This is, by all objective criteria, a full-time commitment. Those people deserve to be fairly compensated when they agree to work such as this on behalf of a country.

This takes me to the second concern about the bill. For the sake of argument, let us say the member is right and the Governor General should receive only a dollar a year. What are the consequences of that? Where does that take us? The answer is nowhere good.

I would ask the member if he could afford to work for a dollar a year. The work we do here representing Canadians is critical to the functioning of our democracy. Would he be willing to do all of that on a volunteer basis? Would Canadians honestly say, even if they wanted to, that they would assume full-time employment but not be paid for it? Not many would. In fact, only a very small and very wealthy percentage of the population could ever entertain that proposition.

Our government is looking to ensure that public institutions reflect the diversity of our country. This means embracing diversity in appointments to Crown corporation boards. It means having a senior civil service drawn from Canadians from all parts of the country, with diverse backgrounds and experiences. I would argue the same should be true for the highest office in the land. To suggest that only the rich need apply closes the door to the vast majority of Canadians. That simply is not fair nor is just, and is bad public policy.

Finally, I have heard it suggested that limiting compensation would be a move to somehow take money away from the Queen and the monarchy, as if we cut a cheque for the Governor General directly to Buckingham Palace. Again, this is simply not reality. The Office of the Governor General is a uniquely Canadian institution. It is fundamental to our Canadian system of responsible government. For seven decades, it has been held by a Canadian who is supported by dedicated Canadian public servants. I believe in the importance of the institution. I know I am certainly not alone in the House when I say that.

While I firmly believe that institutions need to continually evolve and meet changing public expectations, what is being proposed simply is not positive or helpful toward this change.

• (1355)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is quite an interesting bill from the Bloc. I had a few different thoughts about it.

One is it shows a shifting view on the minimum wage. I wonder what precedent it would set for our minimum wage laws if we started paying a government employee one dollar a year.

Another thought was just to reflect on one of my favourite quotes from Winston Churchill. He said that the genius of a system of constitutional monarchy is that, when a nation wins a battle they say God save the Queen; and when they lose a battle they vote down the prime minister.

The third thought I had on this bill was that it really amounts to a throwing out of the baby with the bathwater. Let me explain the context around that a bit.

We had a fairly serious scandal over the last number of years involving the Governor General. It really started with a choice by the Prime Minister to not use the review and vetting process that had been put in place by the previous government. There had been some discussion about the appropriate mechanisms for review of a vice-regal appointment and the creation of a committee to assist with that work. The Governor General is an extremely important position in our political life. The appointment of that position is very consequential, so steps were taken under the previous Conservative government to strengthen the effectiveness and the independence of that appointment process.

The Prime Minister, whether just in a typical but ill-conceived desire to be different from his predecessor or for some other political reason, decided to ignore that process. There was an appointment in which clearly, as a result of some of the problems that happened after the appointment took place but also evident in other things that came to light, the Prime Minister had shown a real lack of wisdom in bringing this scandal about by simply not using the appointment structure that had been put in place previously. Had the Prime Minister simply chosen to consult and follow the processes that had been laid down, then we would not have had this problem.

Following that, with the scandal emerging and the resignation of the former governor general, there has justly been a public outcry around the significant post-office benefits that the Governor General receives when he or she leaves that position, in particular in the context of a governor general who did not even complete the full term and had to leave as a result of scandal. I have certainly been hearing from many constituents who think, especially for somebody who does not complete their term of office, that these benefits are not appropriate.

There is a lot of work done, and I salute the work being done by my colleague, the member for Sarnia—Lambton, around trying to address this issue and identify the particular problem in the context of the scandal and a solution. There is a failure of the Prime Minister in this case, and we have seen a lot of scandals out of the current government. Any time there is a scandal, it raises questions about our public institutions because it can weaken faith in those institutions. Sometimes we have those within this Parliament who want to capitalize on that to run down the institution completely. This is what we see, frankly, with this Bloc bill that is taking a real issue following a real scandal as a result of the Prime Minister's failures to engage in proper vetting and use the process that was available. The Bloc is trying to take it to the other extreme and essentially downgrade the office of the Governor General by saying that we would pay the Governor General one dollar a year.

Private Members' Business

I have a couple of points specifically on that proposal. I am not entirely sure it is a serious proposal. Of course, given the number of ridings it runs people in, the Bloc will never form a national government, but hypothetically if it did, I do not think this is a policy it would even implement. It is obviously untenable for lots of reasons. However, it is interesting to just observe that in our parliamentary history, the history of our system, I do not think in this country but historically in the U.K., there was a time when parliamentarians were not compensated.

• (1400)

It was actually a big reform, the idea that members of Parliament should be paid for what they do. As much as we do not often hear clamouring from the public for higher salaries for functionaries or politicians, there was a reality to the need for that reform because at one time politics, because members of Parliament were not paid, was the exclusive proviso of the wealthy. If something is not paid, then only people who have other sources of revenue could do that activity. However, if a salary is introduced, even a modest one, for something, then it makes that position accessible to more people.

As much as we can debate the specific levels, the fact that we pay some salary to elected officials, to public servants, to people who hold important ceremonial offices, is necessary if we want those positions to be accessible to all Canadians.

The proposal from the Bloc, to the extent that it is a serious proposal, to effectively not pay the Governor General would mean that a person would have to be quite independently wealthy to be in this position, because they would likely be looking at five years, hopefully, if they serve out their term, of not receiving any compensation. They would have to be volunteering full time for that period.

If the Bloc wants to go down this road, we may see private members' bills for them to eliminate their own salaries and eliminate the salaries of other people who work in government. I do not anticipate we would see that. The reality is that we want important offices of state to be accessible to people based on their merits and based on the support they receive, not based on their ability to maintain themselves from other sources of revenue while they are in those positions.

I do think there is another issue, perhaps the substance behind what the Bloc is trying to do here, and that is to undermine the system of government, to challenge the idea of constitutional monarchy in general. I would just say that the structure of our system is time-tested and it has been effective, having a kind of locus of national loyalty that is independent of elected politicians.

In presidential systems, there is an elected person who also sort of represents the nation in a symbolic sense. I think the genius of constitutional monarchy is that the decision-making power is in the hands of the people's representatives, but there is also a locus of national loyalty that is independent of elected politicians. This breeds what I would call a healthy disrespect for politicians. That is, we are not the people who are the ultimate locus of shared national focus.

We do not have a president who embodies these dual roles, political but also ceremonial. We have a separation between the ceremonial function of the person who represents the unity of the nation

and elected politicians, who have important decision-making roles but who inevitably, by engaging in the process of making decisions and debate, become points of division. People can agree or disagree with what a particular politician is saying, but hopefully a monarch or a viceregal can become an expression of universally shared values.

That distinction is a better system. It is well embodied by that quote I shared from Winston Churchill at the beginning, that when a nation wins a battle, they sing *God Save the Queen*, and when they lose a battle, they vote down the prime minister. In great moments of national celebration, it is not all about the politicians. It is about the values that a nation shares and the ability of a monarch or a viceregal, independent of politics, to seek to embody those values.

• (1405)

The Governor General is an important office. The failures of the Prime Minister that precipitated a scandal in the context of that office are unfortunate, and we need to do better going forward, but let us not accept this Bloc attempt to throw out the value of these institutions just because of this scandal. We can address the issues in this scandal while still recognizing the critically important role played by this office.

The Deputy Speaker: Resuming debate.

[*Translation*]

I invite the hon. member for Mirabel for his right of reply. He will have five minutes to make his observations.

Mr. Simon Marcil (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, five minutes is enough time for me to say everything I need to say about the position of Governor General.

That position has been vacant since we started debating this bill. Does anyone really miss the Governor General? Does anyone think not having one is unfortunate? Is anyone in a hurry to get a governor general? I do not hear anyone saying so, and I am pretty sure the atmosphere is much improved since the former governor general decamped.

To be perfectly frank, if I were the Prime Minister, I would take advantage of the fact that I was in England to tell the Queen that our country can survive without a governor general. My last sentence was a bit clumsy, but that is because the Prime Minister has two second languages, English and French, and one can never be too sure his words will make sense.

The Prime Minister will not do that though, because Canada needs that connection to the monarchy. The monarchy is an ever-present symbol, much like multiculturalism, bilingualism and even the prayer in the House. That prayer is utterly absurd, as my colleague from Manicouagan pointed out earlier, because the state is supposed to be secular. None of that stuff represents Quebec.

The events of recent months have clearly demonstrated that we do not need this type of outdated and truly offensive symbol of British imperialism. It is a nostalgic tribute to the great victory of the English over the French, and we are sickened by it.

That does not reflect who we are in Quebec. The solution is to do away with this position, but that will not happen. We see that our colleagues from Canada are not there yet. I understand that. They have also not made enough progress when it comes to labour law or family rights and they are not even able to provide adequate child care. That is not the first area where they lag behind Quebec.

For reasons of their own, they still want to keep in position the representative of a regime that fought against their country's democracy and independence, even though they often forget that. They still bow to the Queen and are still happy to have a governor general.

The Bloc Québécois has made many compromises. We are reasonable people. We are therefore proposing a measured solution: a symbolic salary for a symbolic position. We propose that the Governor General's salary be just one dollar. It is simple and coherent and it is perfect because the position is useless in any case.

I remind members that the Governor General is housed at taxpayer expense. He dines on the finest hors d'oeuvres and petit fours, all the fancy little tidbits that are served at high-society receptions. He drinks champagne and gets to go to all the parties he likes. I am certain that many people would gladly sit through a few boring ceremonies for free year-round room and board.

The Governor General exists, but serves no purpose. In short, it is a symbolic position that deserves a symbolic salary. I urge my esteemed colleagues, who are not so esteemed as all that, to vote in favour of my bill. Unfortunately, they will not, because they like the monarchy.

A constitutional monarchy is irrelevant in a democratic Parliament. Instead of the Governor General or the Queen, we ourselves

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can better represent the hard-working citizens who elect members to help them and represent them in Parliament. That is what democracy is all about. People are proud to be independent, and they are proud to be governed by the people and the will of the people as embodied by elected members. Members are proud to be here, no matter what their profession or surname may be, because they were chosen by the people.

Maybe Canada does not need a symbol that is fundamentally based on the notion that not everyone is born equal. This country prides itself on being a great democracy, but by constantly recognizing the monarchy and the Governor General, it is saying that not everyone is born equal. That is a major problem. This position is undemocratic.

Canada is certainly not ready to take this step. My colleagues may have an epiphany and understand what we are trying to say, but until then, I will just say that one dollar is enough.

• (1410)

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on the motion.

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

Mr. Simon Maril: Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded division so we can see exactly who supports the monarchy and who is against it.

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to order made on Monday, January 25, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, June 16, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

It being 2:13 p.m., the House stands adjourned until Monday at 11 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 2:13 p.m.)

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