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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, February 16, 2022

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayer

• (1400)

[English]

The Speaker: Before we open the doors, the hon. Minister of Tourism will be leading us in the singing of the national anthem.

[Members sang the national anthem]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

LIAQUAT ALI BAJWA

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our community is mourning the loss of a much-beloved and respected man from a much-respected and honoured family. Liaquat Ali Bajwa passed away earlier this month at the much too young age of 71. It was too young, given the legacy he has left us of a life well lived in the spirit and service of Surrey's robust diversity.

Mr. Bajwa dedicated himself to nourishing our Pakistani community's links to its arts and culture as the largest promoter of programs and events that entertained and enriched. As a Muslim, he was a champion and as a dad, Mr. Bajwa and his wife raised three great sons who serve today in medicine, the law and the family construction business.

This gentleman's reputation was one of a straight shooter with a heart of gold. He never sought praise or recognition. He earned it, receiving the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal in 2013. To his wife, Samara, and his sons Ammar, Affan, Zohaib and their families, we, like them, will miss him. May his memory always be a blessing.

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FOOD BANK CHALLENGE

Mr. Kyle Seebach (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, even in challenging times such as these, there can be extraordinary things. I am really proud today to talk about some extraordinary constituents in the great riding of Dufferin—Caledon. Jaylen Padayachee, together with the support of his father Koven and his sister Isabella, successfully concluded their second annual food bank street challenge. Jaylen and his dad came up with the idea because

food banks were suffering as a result of COVID-19 and a lack of donations. Why did they call it a challenge? It was because once a person collected food, they challenged their neighbours to do the same thing. The extraordinary thing is that this challenge was mostly driven by children. In the first year they brought in 30,000 pounds of food. In the second year, they brought in another 7,500 pounds of food. Again, this was mostly driven by children.

I want to give a hearty congratulations on behalf of myself and everyone here today, to Jaylen, Koven, Isabella and everyone who took up the food bank challenge.

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• (1405)

CANADA FOUNDATION FOR INNOVATION

Hon. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, 25 years ago, the Government of Canada created the Canada Foundation for Innovation. Its mandate was to increase the capacity of Canada's universities, colleges, hospitals and other organizations by investing in research infrastructure. The CFI has transformed the research landscape in Canada by giving researchers the labs and tools they need to think big and conduct world-class research.

Since the start, the CFI has invested over \$9 billion in almost 12,000 infrastructure projects at 170 research institutions across Canada. These investments have led to breakthroughs in such areas as health, AI, quantum computing and the environment.

I invite all members of the House to join me in congratulating the Canada Foundation for Innovation, led by president Roseann Runte and her team, on its silver anniversary.

Here is to the next 25 years of supporting discovery, exploration and innovation.

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[Translation]

MARIE-ÈVE BOUCHARD

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on the night of July 13 and in the early morning hours of July 14, a tragedy was prevented thanks to the quick reaction of a Saint-Constant resident, Marie-Ève Bouchard. Her husband, Nick Saint-Jacques, unexpectedly went into cardiorespiratory arrest and collapsed in front of their children.

Statements by Members

Despite her emotional involvement, Ms. Bouchard's instincts kicked in and she began CPR, while ensuring that emergency services were contacted right away. Thanks to Ms. Bouchard's knowledge and tremendous composure, Mr. Saint-Jacques was lucky enough to make it through this incident without any serious long-term consequences.

What happened shows Ms. Bouchard's great resilience, but it also serves as a reminder to us all of the importance of knowing CPR. It saves lives. That is literally what Ms. Bouchard did for her husband because she was prepared. Whoever saves one life, saves the world entire. Ms. Bouchard is a real hero, and I want to tell her how much I admire her.

* * *

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every year in February, we are proud to celebrate Canada's Black community. However, 28 days is not enough time to recognize the contributions of Black Canadian trailblazers, past and present.

This year's theme, "February and Forever", recognizes the remarkable contributions of Black leaders here in the House of Commons and in every community in Canada.

In my riding, Shernett Martin, Isaac Olowolafe, Charline Grant and Chris Campbell are tireless advocates for Black entrepreneurs and for the well-being of families, women and children. They promote diversity and serve as modern-day role models for the Black community. The destiny of Black Canadians is closely linked to Canada's history, the moments of passion, courage and hope. Today and every day, let us raise our voices to ensure that theirs are better heard.

Happy Black History Month to everyone.

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[English]

SASKATCHEWAN BY-ELECTION

Mr. Gary Vidal (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to rise in the House today to congratulate newly elected Sask Party MLA Jim Lemaigre on his historic victory in last night's by-election in the provincial riding of Athabasca.

A proud member of the Clearwater River Dene Nation, Jim has been a voice for northern Saskatchewan, built around a career of community service. He served on the council of the Clearwater River Dene Nation holding the education and natural resources portfolios. He also served as a member of the Meadow Lake Tribal Council's office of education. In addition to these roles, Jim is a retired member of the RCMP, and served many northern communities and first nations.

In its 114-year history, the Athabasca riding has only been represented by the Liberals, the CCF or the NDP. Today begins a new exciting chapter for northwest Saskatchewan. I look forward to working with Jim to grow the north's economy, keep our communi-

ties safe and make life more affordable for everyone across northern Saskatchewan.

Congratulations to Jim on his historic victory.

* * *

AFGHAN WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION

Mr. Michael Coteau (Don Valley East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to highlight the outstanding work of the Afghan Women's Organization Refugee and Immigrant Services in my riding of Don Valley East.

Adeena Niazi, the executive director, and her entire team continue to empower women, their families and Afghan Canadians in my community, and more broadly throughout the GTA. From settlement services, to advocacy, to humanitarian work in Afghanistan, the AWO has been a lifeline to so many people seeking its help. This organization is helping people and their families build new lives here in Canada. Some are starting with absolutely nothing, having left everything they own behind after surviving the devastation back home. I have always been impressed by its passion and dedication toward helping others and the success of the programs and services it delivers.

We are lucky to have such an organization here in Canada, and I want to thank it for all of its work.

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● (1410)

TRIBUTE TO FAMILY MEMBER

Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Fredericton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I am honoured to rise in the House to celebrate the life of Evelyn Gertrude Powell, better known to those who know her as Betty.

Betty was born in Ontario and raised in Cape Breton. She was the proud wife of a brave Canadian soldier and raised four boys in the Oromocto PMQs at CFB Gagetown. Betty gave all she had to the people around her, whether it was through her famous tea biscuits, singing in the choir at church, delivering the blessing before a meal or being the last to leave the legion for cleanup after a function.

Betty is a charter member of the Ladies Auxiliary Branch 93, serving for over 50 years as a colour guard on Remembrance Day. She was a goodwill ambassador for the Fredericton capital district, a dedicated fundraiser for the Heart and Stroke Foundation among many other causes, and a model volunteer, including running the Dolphins Seniors Swim Club at the University of New Brunswick and being the secretary for the Oromocto sea cadets.

Betty has always believed in our great nation. She has always had a deep respect for our democracy, our institutions and Queen Elizabeth. She is even the recipient of the Queen's Jubilee medal. Betty embodies the definition of selflessness, and has made the world a better place for her contributions.

Betty is my grandmother.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Mr. Speaker, inflation is at 5.1%, its highest level since 1991. Last week I received a letter from a constituent, who said, "I just got a natural gas bill in the mail. I have never seen my gas bill go over \$350 a month. For this month it was \$645, and \$120 was for the carbon tax for the feds to squander. It's a tax grab and I'm upset. I'm on a limited and fixed budget. This hurts me financially. I know the Prime Minister could care less about me and my family. He figures my budget will balance itself. I love our country, but my family just cannot afford him and the Liberals. Sorry for venting. I have to go and figure out how to pay my bill for the month."

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PLASTIC WASTE

Mrs. Jenna Sudds (Kanata—Carleton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians dispose of three million tonnes of plastic waste each year. This waste pollutes Canada's rivers, lakes and oceans. As data shows the serious impact of single-use plastics on our environment, all Canadians can appreciate efforts at every level of government to transition to sustainable alternatives.

In my past role as deputy mayor and city councillor here in Ottawa, I worked with the City of Ottawa administration to eliminate the sale of plastic water bottles from the city's administrative, recreational and cultural facilities. I am proud to share that the City has just announced that, as of the end of June, Ottawa's facilities will no longer distribute or sell plastic water bottles. Instead, Ottawa residents can turn to water fountains and water bottle refill stations in municipal facilities.

I highly commend the city for taking this step, and look forward to supporting more initiatives to achieve the government's goal of zero plastic waste by 2030.

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DISASTER ASSISTANCE

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the good people of Princeton, British Columbia. It is, as many in this place may recall, a small rural community of less than 2,000 citizens struggling mightily to rebuild after devastating flooding. After that flooding, the Prime Minister told the good people of Princeton not to worry, he had their backs and he would be there for them.

Now the bills are due. It was reported in The Similkameen Spotlight that the Prime Minister's Office gave Mayor Spencer Coyne a special phone number. They told the mayor it was a special link to call if in trouble. The mayor has called that special link and he was told to talk to the province.

Statements by Members

I hope everyone in this place can agree that, when the Prime Minister makes a promise to have someone's back and to be there for them, the Prime Minister must be a man of his word.

* * *

● (1415)

SERVICE CANADA

Mr. Scott Aitchison (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC): Mr. Speaker, recently a constituent of mine in Parry Sound—Muskoka told me the nightmare she experienced trying to access parental benefits after she spent weeks in SickKids hospital with her newborn. She sent her paperwork for parental benefits to Service Canada in late August 2021. She delivered her baby in September, and only yesterday finally received her benefits. Service Canada officials, at every step of the way, told her that they were overworked and were still learning how to deal with COVID. This was late 2021, two years into the pandemic.

In a riding like mine, where many seasonal workers and folks rely on the EI program, the excuse that Service Canada is still learning how to work with COVID is just simply not good enough. At a time when restaurants and businesses are reopening and learning how to live with COVID-19, it is time for the government to do the same and ensure the services delivered to the people who need them are done in a timely fashion.

* * *

UKRAINE

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the President of Ukraine has declared February 16 as a day of national unity.

Canada has over 1.3 million people of Ukrainian heritage and millions more who are watching closely and care deeply about what is happening in Ukraine today. The Canadian government continues to work with its allies to support Ukraine in whatever way we can, which includes supplying defensive weapons.

On this day of Ukrainian solidarity, let us all, in our own way, recognize the importance of Ukraine and support the very principle enshrined in article 2(4) of the UN Charter: the respect of sovereignty and independence.

Statements by Members

To the people of Ukraine on this day of solidarity, know that they have a friend in Canada, unwavering in our support for Ukraine. Along with our physical support comes with it millions of prayers. I stand today to support the call for Ukrainians and friends of Ukraine worldwide to stand united as part of a global solidarity campaign. Long live Ukraine.

* * *

WORLD THINKING DAY

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, every year on February 22, Girl Guides celebrate World Thinking Day. It is an opportunity to speak up on issues that affect girls and young women, commemorate the founding of Girl Guides and celebrate with the over 10 million members of the Guiding movement around the world.

In my province of British Columbia, thousands of Girl Guides light up their communities year-round through leadership, community service and efforts to create a better, more equitable world.

Thinking Day is usually marked with large gatherings, campfire singalongs, community events and special camps, but due to the ongoing pandemic, instead this year Girl Guides will celebrate the sisterhood of Guiding in a COVID-friendly way, through Guiding Lights across Canada.

Outdoor landmarks, bridges, buildings and stadiums will be lighting up in Guiding blue in support of girl empowerment. In Victoria, one can admire the lights at City Hall, Government House, the Legislative Assembly and the Steamship Terminal.

I invite all Guiding members this World Thinking Day to shine their Guiding lights.

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[Translation]

RETIREMENT CONGRATULATIONS

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today I would like to honour Sylvie Brosseau, whose extraordinary 38-year career will draw to a close on February 25 when she embarks on a well-deserved retirement.

Over the course of nearly 38 years, Sylvie held various positions at NexDev, the economic development organization in Haut-Richelieu. As the executive director since 2019, Sylvie led a number of files that are key to the region's economy.

A woman of unrivalled competence, Sylvie was also known for her kindness, compassion and dedication. Anyone who knows her has only good things to say about her. With her positive leadership style and sophisticated understanding of the issues and of business people, not to mention the fact that she knew absolutely everyone, Sylvie was the person who brought out the human facet of our economy.

Sylvie, with all you have accomplished, you leave behind some mighty big shoes to fill, but I think you deserve a little you-time at last.

Happy retirement.

[English]

EMERGENCIES ACT

Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Liberal, NDP and Green MPs defeated a motion calling on the federal government to provide Canadians with a plan to lift restrictions. Supporting this motion would have allowed the Liberals to demonstrate that they are committed to ending mandates and restrictions. However, that did not happen.

The Liberal government instead invoked the Emergencies Act. This is the reformed War Measures Act that gives Ottawa and police sweeping and never-before-used powers. The Emergencies Act suspends civil liberties.

The Prime Minister thinks he looks strong but he looks weak and unable to lead Canada while respecting our rights and freedoms. Invoking the Emergencies Act is a dramatic misuse of federal powers. It is a deep stain on Canada's reputation as a defender of rights and civil liberties.

Totalitarian regimes around the world are delighted, for if Canada does this, who could say they could not do the same when their capital cities are filled with people objecting to their policies?

* * *

● (1420)

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, February is Black History Month. It is a time again to learn about the history and culture of Black Canadians and how they have contributed to Canada.

I rise to recognize the hard-working and inspiring leadership of some key Black leaders in Ottawa, such as John Adeyefa, Hector Addison, Sahada Alolo, Chuks Imahiagbe, Thomas Ngwa and Francis Yel of the African Canadian diaspora; Franklin Epape, André Azambou, Germaine Basita, Justin Materania and Alain Lutala of the French-speaking African Canadian community; June Girvan and Godwin Ifedi of Black History Ottawa; Ingrid John-Baptiste of the Caribbean Canadian diaspora; and Abdillahi Roble and Ali Jama of the Somaliland Canadian community.

There are dozens more I could name but my time is limited.

To all of the simply phenomenal Black leaders in our community and across the country, we say thanks.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Hon. Candice Bergen (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is clear the Prime Minister has more of a political emergency on his hands than a national emergency. The borders at Coutts, Surrey, Windsor and Emerson have all been cleared. There are no more blockades at any borders. Trucks are still here downtown in Ottawa and they need to move.

In light of the rapidly changing landscape, can the Prime Minister tell us where the serious threat of violence is to Canadians for ideological purposes, which is the threshold that needs to be met for the Emergencies Act?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the invocation of the Emergencies Act is not something to be done lightly. It is not something to be done as a first resort or even a second resort. However, it was necessary to be done to give local law enforcement across the country the tools to handle these illegal blockades, to be able to ensure restoration of order and to make sure that Canadians, whether they are losing shifts or seeing supplies delayed on their way to the border, are able to get back to their daily lives. This is a decision we took and of course Parliament is going to have an opportunity to debate it.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the law is clear: Any limitations to Canadians' fundamental freedoms must be justified and must meet a legal criteria. Experts across the country have said these requirements have not been met. The Prime Minister has not given Canadians a clear reason why he is invoking the Emergencies Act. In fact, things are de-escalating as we speak.

Why is the Prime Minister using this hammer on Canadians? Is it not true he is doing it just to save his own political skin?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the past few weeks, Canadians have been suffering, whether it is because of border crossings or it is because of illegal blockades in their neighbourhood. These are some things that required extra tools, which we have put in law enforcement's hands. Of course, local law enforcement with jurisdiction can use these tools or not as they are available, but the threshold was met for the Emergencies Act and now across the country, police of jurisdiction have the tools necessary to keep people safe.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister calls people he disagrees with racists and misogynists. He spent the last month wedging, dividing, stigmatizing and traumatizing Canadians. I understand the Prime Minister admires basic dictatorships, but let us remind the Prime Minister this is Canada. This is not a dictatorship. The Prime Minister is actually pouring gasoline on embers.

Is it not true the Prime Minister is doing this for one reason, and one reason alone? It is to save his own political career.

• (1425)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives simply cannot have it both ways. They spent

Oral Questions

weeks complaining that we were not doing enough to restore order in this country and now when we move forward to give people the tools they need—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. I am going to have to interrupt the right hon. Prime Minister.

I have been getting emails from people who are watching us at home and they are pretty ashamed of their Parliament because of the shouting that goes on. One person brought something up. They said all the shouting happens at the beginning, so why not start with the end questions? If this continues, I am going to the last question, turn my list upside down, and we will start at the end.

The hon. Prime Minister, please continue.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, Conservatives cannot have it both ways. They spent the first few weeks of this challenge and illegal blockades saying that the government needed to act and take responsibility. When we finally move forward in a responsible way when the time was right to bring in the Emergencies Act, they are now complaining that we have done too much. At the same time and throughout, they continue to stand with, support and cheer on these illegal blockades. They are the ones playing politics.

* * *

HEALTH

Hon. Candice Bergen (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is from the man who wore blackface more times than he can remember, who took a terrorist with him on a trip to India and who gave Omar Khadr \$10 million. We are not going to stop talking to our constituents just because the Prime Minister disagrees with them.

The Prime Minister says he is following science when it comes to mandates, but that is not what Canada's top doctors are saying. It is time to end the mandates and the restrictions. The Prime Minister is ignoring the science. There is a mental health crisis in this country, and continued lockdowns and mandates, keeping Canadians separated, are making it worse.

Will the Prime Minister commit to Canadians that he will follow the science?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the invocation of the Emergencies Act is extremely serious and we have taken it extremely seriously. It followed specific steps that were taken and this will continue in the House. It followed consultation with the premiers. It gives tools, in a proportionate and responsible way, to the officers of jurisdiction to be able to end these illegal blockades.

Oral Questions

This will be a moment that will be studied in the history books. What people will see is that the Conservatives never stopped playing personal partisan politics.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt the pandemic has had a devastating impact on our mental health, putting further strain on a system that already had long-standing gaps. In Waterloo-Wellington, 15 children and youth were waiting to be seen by child psychiatrists at CMHA before the pandemic. Now they have 190 on a waiting list. The fact is that mental health is health.

As called for by the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health and others, will the Prime Minister prioritize funding and legislation to ensure that every Canadian has timely access to inclusive and accessible mental health?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I cannot agree enough with the member for Kitchener Centre. Mental health is health.

We must ensure it is a full and equal part of our universal health care system. It is why we are committing to establishing the Canada mental health transfer to expand the delivery of high-quality free mental health services. We want to encourage all Canadians who need support to check out wellnesstogether.ca for resources and to download the PocketWell app, available 24-7, where people can access a range of resources, including free and confidential virtual sessions with social workers, psychologists and other professionals.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the numbers speak for themselves. Alcohol and substance abuse, suicide, domestic violence and child abuse have all increased over the last two years. These are not just statistics. These are real Canadians who are dealing with real heartache.

Unnecessary mandates and restrictions are hurting us all. Science has saved lives, and the science is clear: We can start to open up.

Will the Prime Minister trust the numbers, trust the experts and tell us when he will end the mandates and the restrictions?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know how difficult these past two years have been for Canadians with this pandemic, but we have also demonstrated that throughout it, Canadians have had each other's backs, just as the government has had Canadians' backs with vaccines, with rapid tests and with supports for small businesses, workers and families.

We will continue to have people's backs and follow the science. That is why we were pleased to announce a loosening of the restrictions on borders as travel is more available to Canadians. We will continue to follow the science every step of the way to keep Canadians safe.

* * *

• (1430)

[Translation]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in hindsight, and after reading the documents pertaining to the use and invocation of the Emergencies Act, this feels more and

more like an exercise in covering up the failures of the government and the Prime Minister above all else.

I look forward to debating this matter in the House with all of my colleagues, because the National Assembly of Quebec unanimously opposes it.

The Government of Quebec opposes it. The Bloc Québécois opposes it. The Conservative members from Quebec oppose it.

Why will the Prime Minister not simply exclude the provinces that do not wish to enforce these orders?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois leader has spent the last two weeks or so begging the government to take firm action against these illegal blockades and demanding that it do so.

We are using the Emergencies Act in a proportionate and responsible way that fully respects the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The provinces and territories that do not need to use it do not need to do so.

The leader of the Bloc Québécois is looking for something else to criticize. That is his job as the leader of an opposition party. My job is to protect Canadians.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's job is to serve Canadians, and he is not supposed to achieve that by doing Quebecers a disservice.

Canada's current Prime Minister, of all people, should be aware that Quebecers are particularly sensitive to any reference to this thinly disguised spawn of the War Measures Act.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada has always been here for Canadians in need, and that includes Quebecers.

When long-term care facilities were overwhelmed, the Government of Canada sent in the Canadian Armed Forces to help. We have now offered support to police services across the country. They can decide if they need to use these tools during this difficult time.

We have total respect for Quebecers and all Canadians, but we will provide the necessary tools to maintain order and keep all Canadians safe and free.

[English]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we are in a national crisis because all levels of government have failed to acknowledge the seriousness of this crisis. On top of that, we see a glaring difference in the treatment of indigenous and racialized protesters as opposed to the way the convoy is being treated. Canadians are deeply concerned about that, so what is the Prime Minister going to do to address the serious concerns people have that there is a disproportionate treatment of racialized people and indigenous people as compared with those in the convoy? What will he do to fix that?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a government for a number of years now, we have recognized systemic racism and pledged and worked toward reducing it. The reality that racialized Canadians and indigenous Canadians face worse outcomes and treatments from our justice system and police systems is one of those things we have pledged to counter. We work closely with Black and indigenous communities to make sure that we are reducing barriers and ensuring equitable treatment, particularly in moments of crisis like this one.

[Translation]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we are in a national crisis and we have to deal with it. It is also important to ensure that the Emergencies Act is not used in regions where it is not needed.

Will the Prime Minister promise not to apply the Emergencies Act where it is not needed?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Emergencies Act was invoked in a responsible and proportionate way. It is targeted to where it is needed. It gives local law enforcement more tools in case they need them. If not, they do not have to use them. That is how this reasonable application of the Emergencies Act works.

• (1435)

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on Friday, February 11, the Prime Minister said that the Ottawa police had all the resources they needed to end the impasse. On Monday, February 14, he suddenly invoked the Emergencies Act.

What happened between February 11 and 14 to justify this decision? What legal principles is this decision based on? Is this an attempt to deflect attention from his serious lack of leadership?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the invocation of the Emergencies Act is not something to be done lightly. It is a matter of giving law enforcement the resources they need to do their job.

We have been there from day one to provide more resources to the Ottawa police and police services across the country. On Monday, we chose to invoke the Emergencies Act to give them even more tools.

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Premier Legault has the situation under control in Quebec, and other provinces do not want the Emergencies Act to

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apply to them either. All the Prime Minister is doing is adding fuel to the fire and playing partisan games.

Will the Prime Minister explain why the whole country must suffer the consequences of a specific situation that is only happening in Ottawa?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, these illegal blockades are impacting the whole country. We have seen blockades at the border across the country, and it is an emergency that requires the Emergencies Act.

We therefore have given local police tools they may use at their discretion. That is how the Emergencies Act works. This law will always respect the terms of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms wherever it is implemented.

[English]

Ms. Leslyn Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the emergency measures act is a declaration of a state of national urgency. It is a blunt force tool that should only be used under the most serious circumstances when legal powers have been exhausted. Canadians do not believe the Prime Minister has exhausted all efforts. The emergency measures act gives extraordinary powers to the government.

The Prime Minister would have received judicial advice from judicial officers. When will the Prime Minister make that advice available to the public?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, the members of the Conservative Party are trying to have it both ways. They spent the first few weeks complaining that the federal government was not acting while encouraging the illegal barricades, and now that the federal government has put in the hands of local police officers justified, proportional, measured tools that will absolutely conform with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, they are complaining that we have acted. We will continue to do what is necessary to keep Canadians, their communities and our economy safe.

Ms. Leslyn Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are tired of talking points. They want real answers. The Prime Minister's own words created fear: What are we going to do with these people? These people are taking up space, he said. These are the words of a failed leader who robbed Canadians of hope and unity. That is why they took to the streets.

When will the Prime Minister stop doubling down on his failed leadership and admit that it is his divisive words and mandates that led to so much turmoil in this country?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, unlike what the member opposite believes, the vaccines mandates we came forward with in this country saved lives. The vaccine mandates for travellers and federal public servants contributed to one of the highest vaccination rates in the world, by Canadians. That has kept people safer, it has allowed our economy to come roaring back and it has allowed us to get through this challenging pandemic better than most.

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Unfortunately, the Conservatives are now supporting illegal blockades that are harming our economy. That is not what—

• (1440)

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

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, earlier in question period the Prime Minister said that the Emergencies Act should not be the first or second thing that should be used to resolve a crisis situation. What were the first and second things the Prime Minister did? How does the failure of those actions provide legal justification for the invocation of the Emergencies Act?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when we began to see illegal blockades in place, we made sure that the RCMP was there to offer resources to local police of jurisdiction and to work with the OPP to ensure that the support and planning were there for the police of local jurisdiction to take action. As time went on and these illegal blockades became more and more dug in, we saw there was a need for more tools, until it got to the point where the livelihoods and well-being of Canadians and the residents of Ottawa were being severely impacted. Threats of violence at border crossings across the country—

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

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the problem with that argument is that the illegal blockades at the Ambassador Bridge and the Coutts crossings occurred prior to the Emergencies Act being involved, without federal help. The Emergencies Act was not needed to settle the rail blockades of 2020, the Oka crisis, the crisis at Caledonia, September 11, the COVID-19 pandemic or any other dispute in Canadian history.

The Prime Minister has not provided any legal justification for the use of the Emergencies Act, which is a historic unfettered power grab. He needs to calmly tell Canadians why he has failed and what is different today.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the invocation of the Emergencies Act is not something to be done lightly. On that we absolutely agree. That is why we not only laid out the rationale and explained to Canadians why and how we are doing it, but made sure that the new powers are circumspect, are proportional and are to be used only where they are needed. We are also about to have days of debate in the House on exactly these questions so that parliamentarians, and indeed all Canadians, are able to see that this was necessary.

[Translation]

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I invite the Prime Minister to read his own order before reading out his answers to questions in the House. It does not say that the provinces have a choice. It says that the federal government chooses where it will or will not take action.

Second, I invite members of the NDP to seriously reflect on this given the history of their party, which courageously opposed the War Measures Act in 1970.

Third, it is shameful to compare the use of the Canadian army in Quebec for humanitarian purposes to the Emergencies Act.

Does he realize that turning away—

The Speaker: The right hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this pandemic has been hard on all Canadians. We have lost too many loved ones. We have had restrictions on all kinds of things we took for granted. We have had to deal with mental health challenges in our communities, but we have also seen Canadians be there for one another.

This has brought out the best in Canadians, from frontline workers in Quebec to emergency services in British Columbia to the neighbours helping neighbours.

Canadians now need us to implement emergency measures to deal with these illegal blockades across the country.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure the Prime Minister actually understands how truly difficult things are for ordinary people.

Does he realize that health care falls under the jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces? Does he realize how little he had to do in that regard? Does he realize how much he has messed things up? Does he realize that the energy that should be put towards combating the pandemic is now being spent on fighting a security problem that should have never happened under his watch?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the federal government sent \$63 billion in health care funding to the provinces and territories to help all Canadians through this pandemic.

The federal government has directly contributed eight dollars out of every \$10 in support for Canadians. We have been there for people. I know it terrifies the Bloc Québécois to think that the federal government could be there for Quebecers, but we have been there and we will continue to be there for as long as necessary.

• (1445)

[English]

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, “a positive, optimistic, hopeful vision of public life isn’t a naive dream; it can be a powerful force for change” and “if Canadians are to trust their government, their government needs to trust Canadians”. Those are the words of the Prime Minister in 2015.

“Very often misogynistic”, “racist”, “women haters”, “science deniers”, “the fringe”: these words were said by the same Prime Minister six years later as he fanned the flames of an unjustified national emergency.

When did the Prime Minister lose his way? When did it happen?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Conservative Party members can stand with people who wave swastikas. They can stand with people who wave the Confederate flag. We will choose to stand with Canadians who deserve to be able to get to their jobs, to be able to get their lives back. These illegal protests need to stop, and they will.

The Speaker: I just want to remind the hon. members, including the right hon. Prime Minister, to use words that are not inflammatory in the House; and that is for both sides.

The hon. member for Thornhill

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is unbecoming as a Prime Minister.

It has been 48 hours that the government went from doing nothing to a national emergency, 48 hours into using the measures, 48 hours without providing Parliament with a justification, so my question is simple.

When will the Prime Minister admit that he has lost control of the situation, that he has lost control of his country, that he has lost control of his caucus and that he has lost control of his leadership?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the question of caucus support for these blockades, the Conservative politicians need to make a choice. Are they for the blockades or are they for communities, our economy and regular Canadians?

The member for Provencher pointed out that with the illegal blockades, he has never seen such a patriotic display in Canada. There is nothing patriotic about hurting fellow Canadians.

The member for Grande Prairie—Mackenzie claims that the economy is not being held hostage. All the while, hundreds of millions of dollars were being lost in trade due to blockades.

The member for Sarnia—Lambton does not believe her constituents need guaranteed access now to the Blue Water Bridge.

We stand with Canadians.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in 2020, when anti-energy protesters were blocking vital transportation, ships were backed up in ports and trains were stopped, the Prime Minister did not stop them. In fact, he actually sent a government delegation to meet with them, but now that the protests are about something that he disagrees with, the Prime Minister uses inflammatory language, hurls personal attacks and makes a massive power grab.

We know that the PM finds democracy inconvenient and that he admires China's dictatorship, so will the Prime Minister admit that this is all just a move to crack down on dissent?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would advise the hon. member to be careful in that line of questioning before people actually look into what he and his fellow Conservative Party members said—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I want to remind the hon. members that shouting names at each other is not the way this place works.

Oral Questions

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: No, no. Before you start clapping, start looking at your own benches.

The right hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, people across the country have noticed the difference between the words and the rhetoric of the Conservative Party of Canada in regard to indigenous protests, in regard to Black Lives Matter protests and in regard to marginalized people asking for their rights, versus what we are seeing here with illegal blockades that are hurting regular Canadians. They even talked about the potential overthrow of a duly elected government. That is not what is responsible for the Conservative—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Regina—Qu'Appelle.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Conservatives denounced the blockades of vital transportation routes in 2020, and we have denounced the same blockades this time. The only thing that has changed is the Prime Minister's reaction. When he agreed with the anti-energy protesters, he let them continue for weeks and even offered a settlement. This time, he grants himself unprecedented powers to attack those he disagrees with. Canadians do not want to live in a country where the Prime Minister gets to personally decide which protests are legitimate.

Once again, is this not all just about cracking down on dissent?

• (1450)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a government we have always stood up for the right to peaceful protests. We have always stood up for the right to freedom of assembly or freedom of expression. These illegal blockades are hurting Canadians and their livelihoods and are hurting and endangering the well-being of people in communities across this country.

The former leader of the Conservative Party points out that his party has stood against the blockades. Unfortunately, many members of his party have stood with these illegal blockades and even encouraged them to continue blockading their fellow citizens.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we are in the midst of a national crisis, and this national crisis has exposed some real frustrations Canadians feel. Canadians who have gotten vaccinated and followed the public health guidelines are looking at a rigged system in which billionaires and millionaires make out like bandits and increase their wealth, while working-class families are struggling to get by.

What is the Prime Minister going to do to respond to the frustrations of Canadians who cannot put a roof over their heads and who are having struggles to put food on the table? What is he doing to respond to that real, legitimate frustration?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every step of the way through this crisis, from the beginning of the pandemic, we have had Canadians' backs with unprecedented supports for health systems so that people could get tests, vaccines and health supports, so that people could get wage subsidies and rent subsidies to keep small businesses going and to keep people in their jobs. There was direct support for seniors, for youth, for working families and for mothers.

These are things we have moved forward to have Canadians' backs, and we will continue to be investing in housing, in immigration measures and in the measures that are going to be supporting Canadians into the—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Burnaby South

[Translation]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this national crisis has exposed inequities in the system. Billionaires are making record profits while ordinary Canadians are having a harder and harder time finding affordable housing and making ends meet.

Will the Prime Minister commit to responding to people's frustrations, implementing measures to meet their needs, and addressing the increased cost of living and lack of affordable housing?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in my previous answer, I talked a little bit about everything we have done since the beginning of this pandemic. We also know that we need to do more going forward.

However, I would like to point out that there are families across the country, in places like Alberta and Manitoba, who are saving hundreds of dollars a month with less expensive and more affordable child care spaces. We have directly improved the living conditions of families across the country with affordable day care, and we hope that Ontario will sign soon and also become part of this solution.

* * *

[English]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Environmental Protection Act was introduced in the Senate last week for senators' study and comment. As a member of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, I look forward to reviewing this legislation when it comes to this place.

Could the Prime Minister comment on the importance of this legislation in helping us to address the climate crisis as well as in recovering clean lakes, rivers and streams and providing ongoing protection for our environment?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Guelph for his important question and his tireless advocacy on behalf of the environment.

This bill is a big step towards strengthening the protection of Canadians' health and the protection of our lakes, rivers, lands and forests from harmful chemicals and other toxic pollutants. This legislation can help us all become better stewards of our environment,

making Canada a better place for us and for the generations that follow. I encourage all parliamentarians to work together to pass this bill as soon as possible.

* * *

HEALTH

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, two-thirds of Canadians want to see COVID restrictions and mandates lifted. We have among the highest vaccination rates in the world, but Canadians are still living under restrictions that many other less vaccinated countries have lifted. Canadians want a plan for ending restrictions, and they are incredibly disappointed that the NDP and Liberals blocked our Conservative motion asking for one.

If 32% of the vote is good enough for the Liberals to form government, why is 90% not good enough to lift mandates?

● (1455)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for two years Canadians have been there for each other, and all of us together have followed the science. We made sure that people got vaccinated, we made sure that people have access to rapid tests, and every step of the way, we will be ensuring that we are doing exactly what is necessary, both to keep people safe from COVID and also to get back to the things we love as quickly as possible.

This week I was pleased to see the lifting of a number of restrictions around international travel. We are going to continue to monitor the situation carefully and ensure that we follow the science as we keep Canadians safe.

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the only thing this Prime Minister has made sure of is that he has politicized this pandemic and divided Canadians at a time when we should be working together and supporting one another. His lack of leadership has divided, stigmatized and traumatized Canadians.

Provincial premiers are leading the way, giving hope and confidence and rebuilding trust in leadership. When will the Prime Minister follow their lead?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the 90% vaccination rate in Canada shows that Canadians have actually never been more united. The stories we saw throughout this pandemic of people being there for their neighbours, people being there to support frontline workers and people being there to support their communities demonstrate the ability of Canadians to step up to be there for one another.

Yes, there have been people who have been harassing and intimidating frontline workers, and yes, there are people involved in illegal blockades, but the vast majority of Canadians continue to stand alongside each other and support one another.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, two-thirds of Canadians are united because they want an end to mandates and lockdowns, but the Prime Minister said they are “racists” and “misogynists”, a fringe who take up space, and he said they shouldn’t be tolerated.

Security experts say that the Emergencies Act is “absolutely unprecedented” and excessive overreach, and half the provinces oppose it.

This PM’s pattern is failure and top-down division. He has gone from name-calling to nukes. Is this not really about the Prime Minister taking a sledgehammer to Canadians that he thinks are unacceptable?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I believe the member opposite misspoke. I think it is actually 100% of Canadians who are tired of this COVID pandemic, tired of having to be restricted and tired of being impacted by this pandemic around the country and around the globe. We all want to get through it. However, the way to get through it is by following science, by keeping each other safe, by being there for each other. The way through this pandemic is not to engage in illegal blockades that are harming their fellow Canadians.

* * *

[Translation]

HEALTH

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Quebec government announced yesterday that it is lifting vaccine passport requirements and that it has a detailed reopening plan with clear objectives. Why can the federal government not do the same?

Even the member for Louis-Hébert voted in favour of our motion to lift measures. The Prime Minister is really using the pandemic for partisan, electioneering purposes to save his job. When will he lift all health measures in Canada?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member knows very well that the vast majority of health measures in Canada are imposed by the provinces.

Borders, on the other hand, are a federal responsibility, and I am very pleased to point out that we just recently announced changes to border restrictions. We are making it easier for vaccinated Canadians to work or travel overseas.

This is good news for Canadians, and we will continue to follow the science when it comes to easing restrictions. That is what Canadians want and what we all need.

Oral Questions

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister referred to the investments made by the federal government during the pandemic.

I would remind him that these investments are being made with borrowed money, money that belongs to Quebeckers and Canadians. He is leaving a debt to Quebeckers and Canadians, and he should have incurred it without trying to impose conditions before making much larger health transfers and the mistakes of the past few days.

He showed no shame in also referring to some of the darkest moments in the recent history of his country.

Does the Prime Minister realize that we do not need him to go to the bank and that we do not need the Emergencies Act to contain the crisis in Quebec?

• (1500)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians across the country have lived through two extremely difficult years, suffered tragic losses, made personal and collective sacrifices that we have all had to make.

At every step of the way, the government was there for them. It was there with free vaccines for everyone. It was there with investments to help small and large businesses, workers, families and seniors.

At every step of the way, the federal government was there for everyone, including Quebeckers, and that is why the Bloc Québécois is disappointed.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, that summary the Prime Minister just delivered is, in a way, a summary of his own failure.

Is he aware that an act as important as the Emergencies Act requires some consensus in the House?

The official opposition is against it. The Bloc Québécois is against it. Once again, I urge the NDP to give this matter some careful thought.

Does the Prime Minister realize there are other ways to handle this and that he lacks the legitimacy to impose this act on Quebec?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is extremely important for everyone to understand that the Emergencies Act is written and structured in an extremely clear way and that we are following the instructions for applying it to the letter.

From day one, we recognized that we need to target these measures, that they must always be subject to the individual protections in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and that they will be used only if needed by local police.

That is how the Emergencies Act works.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have never heard such shameful and dishonourable remarks coming from the Prime Minister. My great-grandfather flew more than 30 missions over Nazi Germany. My great-great-uncle's body lies at the bottom of the English Channel. Members of the Conservative caucus are descendants of victims of the Holocaust. For the Prime Minister to accuse any colleague in the House of standing with the swastika is shameful.

I am giving the Prime Minister an opportunity. I am calling on him to unreservedly apologize for this shameful remark.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians deserve their freedoms back. These illegal blockades have continued to interfere with people's livelihoods, their daily lives—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I have to interrupt the right hon. Prime Minister. I would ask everyone to calm down so we can hear the answers.

The Right Hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the measures put forward in the Emergencies Act are proportional, responsible and, quite frankly, completely folded within the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The steps we are taking are important and measured to restore order for and freedoms to Canadians in this country. That is exactly what we are doing.

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the lack of an apology from that Prime Minister speaks volumes. I have given the Prime Minister an opportunity to retract a shameful remark, where he would accuse any hon. member of this House to stand with a swastika.

As I said before, we have colleagues who are descendants of victims of the Holocaust. I am giving the Prime Minister one more chance. Will he apologize to all members of the House?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, even as the members of the Conservative Party were calling on us to take more action on this over the past two weeks, they continued to stand with and encourage these illegal blockades.

Canadians are watching carefully, and they see exactly where the Conservative politicians who stood with the blockades are standing. We will stand on the side of Canadians who deserve their lives back and who deserve their livelihoods back.

• (1505)

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I do not know how any member of the government caucus could stand by the Prime Minister when he accuses hon. members of this House of standing with a swastika. I am calling on all members of the Liberal caucus to denounce the Prime Minister. I have given him two chances to apologize. He has refused to apologize.

Mr. Prime Minister, apologize.

The Speaker: Once again, I want to remind the hon. members, and I know this is getting emotional, to place your questions through the Speaker, not directly to each other.

The Right Hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, these illegal blockades have been going on in Ottawa for 20 days now. People have been interrupted in their daily lives. They have been made to feel fearful. They have been made to miss shifts from their work across southern Ontario. These are things that cannot be stood for, which is why we are moving forward with a responsible set of measures to allow the local police of jurisdiction to do their jobs.

We continue to defend freedom of expression and freedom of assembly, as long as it is peaceful and legal.

* * *

[Translation]

HEALTH

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the tourism and travel sectors have been hard hit by the pandemic. Businesses and organizations in these sectors are excited and look forward to being able to welcome and move even more vaccinated people.

Can the Prime Minister tell us more about the easing of health measures at the airports?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for all the work he does for his riding, Lac-Saint-Louis.

Our measures for travellers change as the pandemic and public health recommendations change. That is why, starting on February 28, we will lift the ban on flights to all airports that usually receive international flights. This will help support local tourism and contribute to creating good jobs and growing our economy.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has proven today that all he cares about is getting out of the crisis that he, himself, created.

His lack of leadership is the direct cause of this crisis. He mentioned the history books earlier. He will go down in history as the Prime Minister most lacking in leadership in the history of Canada.

He has barely answered any questions from the opposition on the real reason he invoked the Emergencies Act. The Prime Minister is struggling in the polls, in his party and in his own caucus.

Why is the Prime Minister putting his own interests ahead of the interests of the country?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been there from the beginning to support the local police in their handling of these illegal blockades.

As things progressed, we saw that we needed to give them additional resources, and we took responsible, measured action to do just that on Monday evening.

We are here to help where needed. That is what Canadians expect. While the Conservatives continue to encourage these illegal blockades, we are working to help local police remove them.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, insulting Canadians, as the Prime Minister has done, is not what we would call leadership. Canada has never been as divided as it is today. That is what happens when a Prime Minister chooses to play at being a master politician rather than act like a head of state.

He is not seeing the discontent in our ridings or in his party and caucus. He is not seeing the discontent across the country. That is the reality.

Can someone tell us why the Prime Minister always takes too long to do the right thing but is quick to take action when his own reputation is on the line?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I completely understand, and we all agree that everyone is fed up with this pandemic and with the measures that need to be taken to protect each other.

We want this whole thing to be over, but I would remind the Conservative member that illegal protests are not the way to end this pandemic. We need to follow the science, gradually adjust public health measures in a responsible way and get vaccinated.

That is what Canadians have done. Canada's unified response to vaccination shows that we will always be there for one another.

• (1510)

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let us look at what he did. When he had the opportunity as the head of government to take action to deal with COVID-19, he chose to play politics. He called an election in the middle of a pandemic, which allowed him to divide Canadians and stigmatize those who do not think like him.

He imposed a vaccine on truckers without any scientific evidence. He demonized and ridiculed some of his citizens instead of listening to what they had to say. He stayed in hiding instead of facing this situation and then he accused others of not doing their job.

Enough is enough. When will the Prime Minister apologize to Canadians for politicizing this crisis?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, in the last election, which the Conservative Party did not win, Canadians were consulted on the issue of vaccine mandates and vaccination.

The majority of Canadians voted for candidates who supported mandatory vaccination for public servants and for air and rail travel. Canadians themselves chose this. What is more, with a vaccination rate of roughly 90%, we have seen that Canadians are united, that they are in agreement and that they will continue to be there for one another.

Oral Questions

[English]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Ms. Jean Yip (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, immigrants from coast to coast to coast have significantly contributed to the prosperity of this country and my riding of Scarborough—Agincourt. Last year we exceeded our goal of welcoming over 401,000 immigrants who will make Canada their home. This was a historical record that will help shape Canada's growth.

Can the Prime Minister update the House on our government's plan to welcome more newcomers in the coming years?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, immigration is and has always been essential to Canada's success. This pandemic has highlighted the contributions of newcomers to the well-being of our communities and across all sectors of the economy.

That is why we have tabled our most ambitious immigration levels plan yet. This plan will welcome more newcomers in the coming year and will continue to help key sectors of our economy. It will help staff almost a million unfilled positions across all sectors. It will also help with filling in the five million Canadians set to retire by 2030.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, many Canadians are raising serious concerns that the Emergencies Act should not apply to legal protests. We know that there have been many counterprotesters standing up to the convoy, and we have seen some of those counterprotesters arrested by police, instead of the actual convoy, so Canadians have raised this question.

What assurances will the Prime Minister provide that legal protests will not be impacted by the invocation of the Emergencies Act?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that was an excellent question and one we are also very much preoccupied with, which is why, in the measure set forth, we have been very clearly indicating that illegal protests, illegal barricades and illegal blockages are the ones that we are giving extra tools for the police to respond to.

Of course, we will always stand up for Canadians' charter rights. We will always stand up for freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of expression. That is extremely important, but we also know that it is the police of jurisdiction who need to do their jobs, and not Canadians taking things into their own hands to end these illegal protests. That is what we are ensuring with this measure.

*Points of Order***PEACE TOWER CARILLON**

The Speaker: I would like to remind hon. members that, when the Peace Tower was inaugurated in 1927 as a memorial to Canada's First World War sacrifice, Prime Minister Mackenzie King called the carillon "the voice of the nation".

Since 2008, Dr. Andrea McCrady has been the soul behind that voice as Canada's Dominion Carillonneur.

[Translation]

Dr. McCrady has been able to give a voice to our country's emotions during our most joyful and most painful moments. She has channelled her artistic talents, compassion and enthusiasm into telling our stories and our histories.

● (1515)

[English]

The rehabilitation work on the parliamentary building has now reached the Peace Tower. On February 18, this Friday, the carillon will fall silent for several years. The Dominion Carillonneur will continue to work with young students of the instrument, but we will sadly have to do without her recitals for a while. I will miss Dr. McCrady's performance more than I can say, and I know that all members will join me in thanking her for her irreplaceable gift of making the bells of Parliament speak for the people of Canada.

POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTIONS

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am a strong Jewish woman, a member of the House and a descendant of Holocaust survivors. This has never been singled out and I have never been made to feel less, except for today, when the Prime Minister accused me of standing with swastikas.

I think he owes me an apology. I would like an apology, and I think he owes an apology to all members of the House.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. I want to encourage all members to be as judicious as possible when using words in this chamber and to reflect on what they say in all cases.

[Translation]

The hon. member for Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia on a point of order.

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Mr. Speaker, there have been consultations among the parties and I think you will find unanimous consent for the following motion: That the House, in conjunction with a unanimous motion from the Quebec National Assembly, express concerns about the current disruptions in Ontario and around certain federal border crossings; that it affirm that no emergency situation currently justifies the use of special legislative measures in Quebec; that it ask the Canadian government not to enforce the Emergencies Act in Quebec; and that it reiterate the importance of working closely with the Government of Quebec, in particular to ensure peace of mind and safety for residents in the Outaouais re-

gion who are affected by the ongoing demonstrations in Ottawa and who could suffer from any further deterioration of the situation.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

[English]

UKRAINE

Mr. Yvan Baker (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties, and if you seek it, I think you will find unanimous consent to adopt the following motion:

That the House:

- a) stand firm in supporting sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity in the face of growing Russian aggression in and around Ukraine;
- b) strongly condemns the Russian Duma's vote recognizing the so-called Donetsk and Luhansk people's republics, which would be a clear violation of the Minsk agreements, and a threat to the security and stability of the region; and
- c) call on the international community to stand together in opposition to any further Russian aggression and support Ukraine and its people in the face of these growing threats.

The Speaker: All those opposed to the hon. member's 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.

(Motion agreed to)

POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTIONS

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to carry on with the point that was made by my colleague from Thornhill.

When comments made in the House are injurious, insulting and unparliamentary, they rise to the level of a question of privilege. As you know, you have the ability to rule on that immediately.

I will not even go into the hypocrisy of a man who did blackface so often that he cannot remember it accusing somebody else of doing anything remotely racist. However, his comments made to a Jewish member of the House are beyond unparliamentary. They are reprehensible. I ask that you rule that this rises to the level of a question of privilege. I am prepared to move the appropriate motion.

● (1520)

The Speaker: I will take that under advisement and return to the House should I see fit.

On the same point of order, we have the hon. Minister of Families.

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, emotions are obviously running very high right now, and I think it is incumbent on all of us to take a step back and reflect on the values of the House.

I am also a proud Jewish woman who is the descendant of Holocaust survivors. My family found refuge, support and a life in this country. We must listen to each other and must ensure that no one in the House is standing with those who support white supremacy, who support Nazi views or who look to contribute to and enable racist views. I ask that all of us in the House use our words judiciously, including the member opposite, who just yelled out something completely inappropriate. All of us have reason to be here. I call on the members opposite not to stand with those who are sharing those views.

How does it feel, as a person in the House, to see colleagues taking pictures with people who are looking to overthrow the government? That is what I ask those colleagues to think about.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall: Mr. Speaker, I am rising on the same point of order. I understand that we are all fairly agitated at this moment. Can we imagine how what happened in the House today is impacting Canadians who are very aware—

The Speaker: I need to interrupt the member, as I am afraid interpretation is not happening. Please make sure the headset is functioning.

We will wait for the hon. member to get her microphone working, and in the meantime we will go to the hon. member for Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston.

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I do not think we should engage in an exercise of comparative victimhood credentials. I will observe that I too have Jewish ancestors. My grandmother was born in Bialystok. Fortunately, she came here before the Holocaust occurred, but of the 10,000 Jewish residents of Bialystok when she left, only 500 survived World War II.

It is not for the member opposite, although I know she spoke sincerely, to speak out on this. It is for the Prime Minister to come back and retract his words. The Prime Minister is very good at apologizing for acts that took place before he was born by people he was not involved with, and it is time for him to take responsibility for his own words and apologize for what he said.

The Speaker: Before we go to the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville, I note this is evolving into a debate. If hon. members would like to call this back as an emergency debate or something along those lines, or bring it up as a motion, I think it would be more appropriate.

We will now go to the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to voice my perspective on this. It is really important that the Prime Minister do the right thing and apologize for the statement he made today, especially in reference to the House, but also because this statement has been abused and used against Canadians, and he has not recognized in any way the thousands and millions of Canadian flags that have flown over the past two or three weeks.

Government Orders

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1525)

[English]

OLD AGE SECURITY ACT

The House resumed from February 15 consideration of the motion that Bill C-12, An Act to amend the Old Age Security Act (Guaranteed Income Supplement), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: It being 3:25 p.m., pursuant to order made on Tuesday, February 15, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at the second reading stage of Bill C-12.

Call in the members.

• (1555)

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

(Division No. 31)

YEAS

Members

Aboultiaf
Albas
Alghabra
Allison
Angus
Arseneault
Ashton
Bachrach
Bains
Baldinelli
Barrett
Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu
Bendayan
Benzen
Bergeron
Bérubé
Bibeau
Blaikie
Blanchet
Blaney
Blois
Boulerice
Bragdon
Brière
Brunelle-Duceppe
Cannings
Carr
Casey
Chagger
Chambers
Champoux
Chen
Chong
Collins (Victoria)
Cormier
Dabrusin
Damoff
Davidson
DeBellefeuille
d'Entremont
Desilets
Dhaliwal
Diab

Aitchison
Aldag
Ali
Anandasangaree
Arnold
Arya
Atwin
Badawey
Baker
Barlow
Barron
Battiste
Beech
Bennett
Bergen
Berthold
Bezan
Bittle
Blair
Blanchette-Joncas
Block
Boissonnault
Bradford
Brassard
Brock
Calkins
Caputo
Carrie
Chabot
Chahal
Champagne
Chatel
Chiang
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Cooper
Coteau
Dalton
Dancho
Davies
Deltell
Desbiens
Desjarlais
Dhillon
Doherty

Government Orders

Dong	Dowdall	Noormohamed	Normandin
Dreeshen	Drouin	O'Connell	Oliphant
Dubourg	Duclos	O'Regan	O'Toole
Duguid	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Patzner	Paul-Hus
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dzerowicz	Paupé	Perkins
Ehsassi	El-Khoury	Perron	Petitpas Taylor
Ellis	Epp	Plamondon	Poilevre
Erskine-Smith	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Powlowski	Qualtrough
Falk (Provencher)	Fast	Rayes	Redekopp
Fergus	Ferreri	Reid	Rempel Garner
Fillmore	Findlay	Richards	Roberts
Fisher	Fonseca	Robillard	Rodriguez
Fortier	Fortin	Rogers	Romanado
Fragiskatos	Fraser	Rood	Ruff
Freeland	Fry	Sahota	Sajjan
Gaheer	Gallant	Saks	Samson
Garneau	Garon	Sarai	Savard-Tremblay
Garrison	Gaudreau	Scarpaleggia	Scheer
Gazan	Généreux	Schiefke	Schmale
Genuis	Gerretsen	Seebach	Serré
Gill	Gladu	Sgro	Shanahan
Godin	Goodridge	Sheehan	Shields
Gould	Gourde	Shipley	Sidhu (Brampton East)
Gray	Green	Sidhu (Brampton South)	Simard
Guilbeault	Hajdu	Sinclair-Desgagné	Singh
Hallan	Hanley	Small	Sorbara
Hardie	Hepfner	Soroka	Spengemann
Hoback	Holland	Steinley	Ste-Marie
Housefather	Hughes	Stewart	St-Onge
Hussen	Hutchings	Strahl	Stubbs
Iacono	Idlout	Sudds	Tassi
Ien	Jaczek	Taylor Roy	Thériault
Jeneroux	Johns	Therrien	Thomas
Joly	Jones	Thompson	Tochor
Jowhari	Julian	Tolmie	Trudeau
Kayabaga	Kelloway	Trudel	Turnbull
Kelly	Khalid	Uppal	Valdez
Khera	Kitchen	Van Bynen	van Koeverden
Kmiec	Koutrakis	Van Popta	Vandal
Kram	Kramp-Neuman	Vandenbeld	Vecchio
Kurek	Kusie	Vidal	Vien
Kusmierczyk	Kwan	Viersen	Vignola
Lake	Lalonde	Villemure	Virani
Lambropoulos	Lametti	Vis	Vuong
Lamoureux	Lantsman	Wagantall	Warkentin
Lapointe	Larouche	Waugh	Webber
Lattanzio	Lauzon	Weiler	Wilkinson
Lawrence	LeBlanc	Williams	Williamson
Lebouthillier	Lehoux	Yip	Zahid
Lemire	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Zarrillo	Zimmer
Liepert	Lightbound	Zuberi— 335	
Lloyd	Lobb		
Long	Longfield		
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)		NAYS
MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacGregor	Nil	
MacKenzie	MacKinnon (Gatineau)		PAIRED
Maguire	Maloney		
Martel	Martinez Ferrada		
Masse	Mathysen	Nil	
May (Cambridge)	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)		
Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)		The Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to a committee of the whole.
McDonald (Avalon)	McGuinty		
McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)		
McLean	McLeod		Pursuant to the order made on Tuesday, February 15, Bill C-12, an act to amend the Old Age Security Act (Guaranteed Income Supplement) is deemed considered in the committee of the whole, deemed reported without amendment, deemed concurred in at report stage, deemed read a third time and passed.
McPherson	Melillo		
Mendès	Mendicino		(Bill read the second time, considered in committee of the whole, reported without amendment, concurred in, read the third time and passed)
Miao	Michaud		
Miller	Moore		
Morantz	Morrice		
Morrison	Morrissey		
Motz	Murray		
Muys	Naqvi		
Nater	Ng		

POINTS OF ORDER

TERMS OF DEBATE UNDER THE EMERGENCIES ACT

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order to seek your ruling concerning a key procedural aspect of the very important and historic debate the House will be having this week. On Monday, the Prime Minister announced that Canada was under a public order emergency, invoking the Emergencies Act for the first time in that law's existence. That will require a debate in the House to confirm the government's declaration of emergency, a debate we expect to start later this week. I wanted to rise on this point of order at the earliest opportunity to allow you as much time as possible to prepare a ruling.

Subsection 58(6) of the Act requires that the motion “shall be debated without interruption until such time as the House is ready for the question”. That is a legal requirement, yet there is some difference of opinion within this building about how to give it effect. I understand there is a head of steam building up behind the view that the words “without interruption” unbelievably allows for interruptions for members' statements, question period and nightly adjournment. However, when my predecessor, now the leader of the official opposition, sought the advice of the table concerning a potential debate under a different statute, a debate that did not happen, but if it had, would also have been without interruption, the advice she received from the clerks at the table was that it would override S. O. 31s and QP, and see us sit into the night until completed.

Members can appreciate that this is something that needs clarity, and quickly. The *Canadian Oxford Dictionary*, second edition, defines the verb “interrupt” as, “act so as to break the continuous progress of (something) temporarily”. That is in line with the advice the table gave my predecessor three years ago. To my mind, this means that nothing could or should get in the way of the debate once it has been launched, regrettably not members' statements, certainly not the evening adjournment, and definitely not the upcoming constituency week. That, I would submit, aligns with both the letter and the spirit of the Emergencies Act.

The government has said this country, the whole of it, is in a state of emergency. That is a big deal. A situation so serious and grave requires a dedicated and determined focus by the Chamber on it, and I think our constituents would expect no less. We must vote on the Prime Minister's emergency. Very few of the debates the House has held have been governed by rules written into statute rather than our Standing Orders. Those debates are enumerated at pages 709 and 710 of the *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition. Of these, only four have been held under a law that required the debate to be held without interruption, according to my office's research. The first was held in November 1974 under an Act to Amend the Veterans' Land Act. Bosc and Gagnon, at page 714, describes the second and third of these cases:

Many statutes that prescribe provisions for statutory debates also stipulate that the debate may not be interrupted. Nevertheless, in 1977, debate on the motion pursuant to the Anti-Inflation Act, which took place over four days, was interrupted on three occasions for the Adjournment Proceedings, after which the motion to adjourn was deemed withdrawn and debate continued, pursuant to an Order of the House adopted on May 30, 1977. In 1985, the debate held pursuant to the Western Grain Transportation Act was interrupted for a ministerial statement by the Minister of Finance pursuant to an Order made by the House.

Points of Order

The most recent of these without-interruption debates was held in December 1992 under the provisions of the Special Economic Measures Act.

There are also key distinctions between the relevant legal provisions and the context of those four debates and our current circumstances. While subsection 1(3) of an Act to Amend the Veterans' Land Act, which governed the 1974 debate, required the debate to occur without interruption, it was also to be held “in accordance with the rules of the House”, and was to be concluded “not later than the end of the first sitting day next after the day the motion is first so taken up and considered”. The 1974 debate was meant to be subject to all of the Standing Orders of the House, along with the concept of being divided between sitting days as well as providing a cut-off for the debate. None of those three concepts is found in subsection 58(6) of the Emergencies Act.

● (1600)

Those concepts did, however, appear in subsections 46(6) and 46(7) of the Anti-Inflation Act as amended by subsection 11(2) of an act to amend the Anti-Inflation Act, which required the 1977 debate to happen without interruption, but also that the debate was limited to four sitting days and would occur “in accordance with rules of the House”. Again, these additional concepts are missing from subsection 58(6) of the Emergencies Act.

As for the 1985 debate held pursuant to subsection 62(6) of the Western Grain Transportation Act, the law actually specified that the debate would occur “For a period not exceeding the duration of the normal business hours of the House on that day”. That is rather cut and dried, and it is also different from subsection 58(6) of the Emergencies Act.

Finally, the 1992 debate pursuant to subsection 7(4) of the Special Economic Measures Act was also held without interruption but, importantly, “for not more than three hours”. As I have established, there is no time limit in subsection 58(6) of the Emergencies Act.

Essentially, we are left with a situation where we need to square two different sets of rules that have been adopted by the House, one being the Standing Orders and the other being the Emergencies Act.

Page 267 of Bosc and Gagnon notes that:

In the case of statutory provisions, the House of Commons endeavours to ensure that its Standing Orders and practices are consistent with statutes while retaining the exclusive jurisdiction to determine whether the provisions of a statute apply to its proceedings.

Routine Proceedings

I would respectfully argue that the distinctions between the Emergencies Act, on the one hand, and the laws under which all of the other without-interruption debates were held rendered those debates inappropriate precedents to follow to the letter. A critical maxim applied judicially in statutory interpretation cases would be instructive here. It is that “Parliament does not speak in vain”. That touchstone is elaborated upon in various entries in *Sullivan on the Construction of Statutes*, which is the leading Canadian authority on the interpretation of laws. I will simply offer two short quotes from the 6th edition.

First is paragraph 814, which says, “Although ordinary speakers or writers require much co-operative guesswork from their audience, a legislature is an idealized speaker. Unlike the rest of us, legislatures are presumed to always say what they mean and mean what they say. They do not make mistakes.”

Then there is paragraph 8.32, which I believe speaks to Parliament's use of caveats and the requirements of some debates to be held without interruption. There are no such qualifications on the requirements in the Emergencies Act.

It reads, “It is presumed that the legislature uses language carefully and consistently so that within a statute or other legislative instrument, the same words have the same meaning and different words have different meanings. Another way of understanding this presumption is to say that the legislature is presumed to avoid stylistic variation and once a particular way of expressing a meaning has been adopted, it is used each time that meaning is intended. Given that practice, it follows that where a different form of expression is used, a different meaning is intended.”

Page 122 of Bosc and Gagnon instructs us that, “The right to regulate its own internal affairs does not mean that the House is above the law. However, where the application of a statute law relates to a proceeding in Parliament, it is the House itself which decides how that law is applied.”

In this case, I believe the path forward is that we must apply the rules set out in the Emergencies Act to this week's debate. The Standing Orders obviously can supplement all of those areas where the act is silent, such as the maximum length of speeches or how long the bells for a vote would ring, to name just two examples.

Ultimately, the statutory rules that apply to this specific debate must, I would respectfully submit, trump the general provisions of the Standing Orders where there is any conflict. Nonetheless, the House's authority to interpret the law leaves it open to the House to adopt a special order through unanimous consent to structure the terms of the debate in a way that suits the House best. That was certainly the case, for example, in 1977 and 1985, when the House had adopted special orders, as I cited from page 714 of Bosc and Gagnon. I also understand that the 1992 debate was guided by a special order.

● (1605)

That would be the correct approach to the House exercising its privileges to determine how to regulate our procedure and how to interpret the law. It would be correct for the House collectively to reach that decision. Let me stress that again: It is for the House. It would not, though, be for any single member to substitute, and cer-

tainly not for the government House leader to dictate, new interpretations of a simple phrase like “without interruption”.

The Prime Minister today said that the government would follow the letter of the law. I cannot believe I am going to say this, but I agree with him. Let us follow the letter and the spirit of the law, and ensure that the House takes up this declaration of emergency debate with the urgency a supposed national emergency should naturally require.

The last thing we need to do is leave here at 2:30 on a Friday for a 10-day vacation, as much as I am sure the Prime Minister would like that. Let us debate the emergency, let us air the concerns of our constituents and their views, and then let us have the vote.

The Speaker: I want to thank the hon. member for that point of order. I will be coming back to the House as quickly as possible with a ruling.

I wish to inform the House that because of the deferred recorded division, Government Orders will be extended by 12 minutes.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Hon. Mary Ng (Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), and in accordance with the enhanced transparency requirements set out in the amended policy on tabling of treaties in Parliament, I am pleased to present to the House of Commons the Government of Canada's objectives for negotiations for a Canada-United Kingdom free trade agreement.

The Government of Canada intends to commence negotiations with the United Kingdom as soon as practicable. In accordance with the policy, the commencement of negotiations will take place no earlier than 30 days from today.

* * *

● (1610)

PETITIONS

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition. Thirty years ago, on February 26, 1992, 613 Azerbaijanis, including 103 women and 63 children, were massacred by the Armenian army in a two-hour offensive attack on the civilian town of Khojaly.

This was one of the worst massacres, and indeed, the worst massacre in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, which has resulted in the ethnic cleansing of 800,000 Azerbaijanis and the ongoing illegal occupation of Azerbaijani territory by Armenian forces.

The petitioners call on the Government of Canada to officially condemn the Khojaly massacre, declare February 26 a national day of remembrance for the victims of the Khojaly massacre, and work with the governments of Azerbaijan and Armenia to bring about the normalization of relations, as well as demarcation and delimitation of the borders between the two countries, with the aim of supporting sustainable peace in the region.

RIGHTS OF CHILDREN

Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to table e-petition 3608, signed by nearly 2,000 of our fellow Canadians.

The petitioners wish to draw the attention of the government to the 2019 United Nations report on children and armed conflict, which calls on Israel to uphold juvenile justice standards and cease the use of administrative detention for children. The petitioners remind Canada of its obligations as a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Finally, the petitioners call for the Subcommittee on International Human Rights of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development to undertake an urgent study of the treatment of children in occupied Palestine.

QUEEN JULIANA PARK

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour and with some urgency that I present this petition. These paper petitions are coming in large numbers from Ottawa residents who are concerned about the logging and destruction of the trees within Queen Juliana Park. The park was established to recognize the sacrifice of the 7,600 Canadians who died in the liberation of the Netherlands. It also serves as the home of popular traditional Algonquin powwows, it being the territory of the Algonquin peoples.

The loss of the forest in this very popular urban-area park in Ottawa would allow for 17 acres of parking, including a four-storey parking structure. It opens the door to development within Ottawa, which is very worrying to the petitioners. Over 8,000 people have signed petitions. The one I am presenting today has 117 additional signatures.

The *raison d'être* for all this destruction is the decision to reject the recommendation of the National Capital Commission to have the new Ottawa Hospital located at Tunney's Pasture and to instead move it to this different location, which includes a great deal of the Experimental Farm, which has also provided green spaces until this development decision.

In summary, the petitioners call on the Government of Canada to restore the National Capital Commission's original recommendation to build on Tunney's Pasture as the ideal location, to preserve Queen Juliana Park and the entire Central Experimental Farm as green spaces and to support the request for a public inquiry as to why the NCC's recommendation was set aside so quickly and without transparency.

Government Orders

• (1615)

CLIMATE CHANGE

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I present a petition signed by constituents in my riding of Wellington—Halton Hills. The petitioners call on the parties in Parliament to work together to commit to reducing Canada's greenhouse gas emissions by at least 60% from 2005 levels by 2030, to establish a concrete plan to end fossil fuel subsidies, to stop all new fossil fuel expansions, to restart the just transition consultations and to pass legislation as soon as possible.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

ONLINE STREAMING ACT

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.) moved that Bill C-11, An Act to amend the Broadcasting Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, imagine a day without art and culture: no music, no movies, no television or books. It would be really boring. This is why I am so happy to speak today about Bill C-11, the online streaming act. This legislation will update Canada's broadcasting rules to include online streaming services and will require them to contribute in an equitable way to our culture.

This is the first of a few pieces of legislation that are part of my mandate as Minister of Canadian Heritage. The bills are with respect to online streaming, online news and online safety. All three will work together to make the Internet a fairer, more inclusive, safer and more competitive place for Canadians.

[Translation]

When the Internet came along, we all thought that it was great and wonderful, that we would let it develop on its own, that we would not get involved at all, and that it would create new opportunities, strengthen democracy and connect people.

Government Orders

That is true. The Internet has connected so many people and has had and continues to have so many positive impacts. The Internet is a true vector of change, but it is also responsible for an increase in polarization and misinformation. When it comes to culture, for example, the Internet has completely changed the way we produce and consume cultural goods.

What is more, unfortunately, anyone, particularly young people, can easily be exposed to completely unacceptable online content, such as content promoting hatred online, child exploitation and bullying. We all have a role to play, including the platforms that dominate the Internet and take up so much space in our daily lives.

[English]

We need to take action to address these issues now. If not, they will continue to harm Canadians, chip away our cultural sovereignty and weaken our digital society. This is about making the Internet a better place for all Canadians.

How are we going to do this? It starts with this bill, the online streaming act. It starts with making sure that online streamers contribute to the strength and vitality of Canada's cultural sector. Let us remember Canada's strong culture is no accident. We made that decision. We decided and we chose to be different. We chose to be different from our neighbours to the south. We chose cultural sovereignty.

We are reminded of this every day, especially yesterday on National Flag of Canada Day. When we chose the maple leaf as our flag, we were choosing a symbol of our national identity, a symbol that is distinct and set us apart from the cultural superpower to the south. After 57 years, the maple leaf is the most widely recognized Canadian emblem in the world. To each and every one of us, it is a symbol of a Canada, a country, made by all of us together.

• (1620)

[Translation]

Our culture is all of us. I say that often. It is our past, present and future. It is how we talk to one another and how we tell our stories.

[English]

For more than 50 years, the Broadcasting Act has helped us share our stories. That is how we built a strong Canadian culture. That is how we forged our Canadian identity, and that is how we brought Canadian voices to the world. We want to build on this for the future. We must recognize that times have changed.

[Translation]

The last time our system was updated was in 1991, and the world was a very different place. People were going to Blockbuster Video to rent movies. I am sure you used to go there yourself, Mr. Speaker. We all went to Blockbuster to rent VHS tapes and paid a fee when we brought them back late. We had Walkmans. That is how we used to listen to music.

So much has changed in the last 30 years. Online content delivery has changed how we create, discover and consume content, and the system in place today needs to reflect this.

Canadian broadcasters have been investing in the system for decades to create the content we love, so it is only fair that online

broadcasters be asked to contribute. We are only asking them to do their part, nothing more, which is fair.

Companies like Netflix, Amazon and Disney, to name a few, are already investing in the Canadian economy, which is great. We all benefit from that. Some of their content is really entertaining. This means money for and significant investments in our country. We are very pleased that they continue to invest here and pursue their projects in Canada.

Let us be honest, though. There is another reason why they are investing in Canada. It is because we have incredible talent here, including directors, actors and technicians. We have amazing talent, by any measure, so it makes good business sense to come and invest in Canada.

Basically, what Bill C-11 does is it updates the rules so that all broadcasting platforms contribute to our culture. That is all. That is what the bill is all about.

[English]

The online streaming act would bring online broadcasters under similar rules and requirements as our traditional broadcasters. Unlike traditional Canadian broadcasters, platforms profit from our culture but have no obligation to contribute to it. With money leaving traditional broadcasters, day after day, to go to these platforms, this is putting our creators, our industry, our jobs and even our culture at risk. We have to act.

Our system must also pave the way for new and upcoming Canadian artists. There is so much talent in this country. For decades, our current system introduced us to the incredible artists that we all love, many of them now share their art around the world. They are known everywhere. There are so many talents. I am thinking of *Anne of Green Gables*, *The Tragically Hip*, *C.R.A.Z.Y.*, Drake, Charlotte Cardin, Lara Fabian, Shawn Mendes, *District 31* and *Schitt's Creek*.

[Translation]

I could name so many other success stories from television, film and the music business.

[English]

We want to make sure that our children as well as future generations grow up as we did, having the chance to watch our stories and to listen to our songs.

[Translation]

Culture is an extremely powerful and foundational form of expression. It enables us to share moments, feelings and dreams. It enables us to forge a shared identity. Its scope and influence are greater than ever.

People need their culture to reflect who they are. For example, as francophones, we depend on culture to preserve our language. If we want our children to speak our language, we need to keep our culture strong. To do that, we need a system that is both just and fair.

• (1625)

[English]

Indigenous peoples are counting on it too. Diversity and inclusion are Canadian values and they must be key elements of our cultural policy. This is a key pillar of the online streaming act. Racialized Canadians, women, LGBTQ2+ persons and persons with disabilities deserve to have a space to tell their stories to other Canadians but also to the world.

This bill claims that space and makes sure that online streaming platforms contribute to Canadian culture, to our culture.

[Translation]

Currently, our Canadian broadcasters have to follow a set of rules, but streaming platforms follow a different set of rules. It should be the same for everyone, and that is exactly what we are going to do with the online streaming act. Anyone who makes money from the system has to contribute to it.

[English]

It is true that in the previous Parliament there were many important debates about the role of social media in supporting Canadian artists and culture. That is why we listened to the concerns around social media and we fixed it.

In response to this debate, Bill C-11 clearly outlines that the regulator would have no power to regulate the everyday use of social media by Canadians. Let me be clear. We will not regulate users or online creators through the bill or our policy, nor digital-first creators, nor influencers, nor users. Only the online streaming companies themselves would have new responsibilities under this act. That is our goal and we will achieve that goal.

How will we do this? Our new approach to social media responds to concerns about freedom of expression. At the same time, it takes into account that music is largely broadcast online. That is why this bill includes very important updates that would only focus on relevant types of commercial content. In fact, a study conducted by Media Technology Monitor in 2020 found that about two-thirds of Canadian adults use YouTube to listen to music, which outpaces dedicated music services such as Apple Music and Spotify.

The proposed amendments in the online streaming act regarding social media would not apply to content uploaded by users or to the users themselves. They would only apply to commercial content based on specific criteria defined in the bill. This responds to the needs of music stakeholders who stated that platforms that broadcast commercial music must contribute to the system. This is a creative way of doing this. We are defining the sandbox for the regula-

Government Orders

tor in the law. There is a sand box there. This is a compromise, an effort in good faith, by the government.

I met with many social media content creators, including YouTubers and other digital-first creators, and I heard their concerns. It was a great conversation. They are amazing. They are all over the world and they are incredible and creative. I heard them very clearly and will continue to listen to them. These creators share incredible content with audiences here in Canada, but also, as I said, around the world. This bill is not about them. It would not require them to do anything new. It would not change anything for them.

If I have not been crystal clear on this yet, let me add that once this bill has gone through the parliamentary process and received royal assent, we will make it even more clear to the regulator, through a policy directive, that this legislation does not touch users, only online streaming platforms. Platforms are in; users are out.

Once again, I want to be extremely clear. This law will never control what Canadians can or cannot see online. We will always be able to choose what we listen to and what we watch. Users are not broadcasters. The content will not be regulated and an individual online creators' content will not be regulated. Again, the principle is simple: Platforms are in; users are out.

• (1630)

[Translation]

Our goal of updating our system has not changed. The system needs updating because 1991 was a long time ago.

As a country, we made the choice decades ago to protect our cultural identity so our artists and creators would always have a place on our airwaves to showcase their work here at home and around the world. That is why one of the conditions for obtaining a broadcasting licence is investing in and promoting Canadian content.

Our goal here, as we have said many times, is to ensure that everyone contributes to Canadian culture and puts our music, our TV shows and our films on the map. That goal has not changed. What has changed is the medium, the market and other things. It is time to adapt. It is not 1991 anymore.

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Since the last major reform in 1991, the system has served Canadians well by creating a distinct space for our culture. Thanks to this system, generations of Canadians have grown up listening to Canadian music on the radio and watching Canadian movies on television, and generations of artists have been able to showcase their art and touch the lives of many Canadians. Now that the Internet has opened the door to new cultural connections, we want Canada's cultural success to continue, expand and accelerate. Never before has this been so necessary. I would say that it is now or never.

We have said it, we have seen it and we have lived it: COVID-19 accelerated our transition to the online world, and I am certain that applies to everyone. Physical distancing has pushed Canadians toward online platforms and streaming services. Canadians are communicating with their friends and families online, and millions of people are teleworking. Students, including my daughter, are taking their courses online, and in these difficult times, many of us have found an escape in streaming online music, television shows and movies.

[English]

Canadian artists and creators are facing many pandemic-related challenges that have severely limited their revenue streams for almost two years. An unbalanced system with unequal obligations is only making this situation worse for our artists, our creators and our culture. With fewer resources, fewer opportunities and fewer productions, Canadian music and stories will become harder and harder to find, and that is not what we want. We want the opposite. Without intervention, current trends in the market are expected to result in a decline in the production of Canadian television content of almost \$1 billion by 2023 when compared with 2018. This is only a measure of the economic loss. The truth is that our cultural identity is at stake.

[Translation]

A distinct space lets us speak to and understand one another, build our own Canadian identity, and work together to find solutions for national issues. As our space erodes, our ties dissolve, and our stories, values and perspectives fade, there is a problem, and doing nothing is not an option.

We have taken action and will continue to do so to protect our culture, our jobs, our creators and the voice of Canadians.

The online streaming act will make a direct contribution to the vitality of Canadian culture. We just want online streamers to do their fair share, no more, no less, to fund, create, produce and distribute Canadian content. The act will ensure the future of Canadian broadcasting, as well as promote and protect our cultural sovereignty.

• (1635)

[English]

This legislation is the result of years of hard work and consultation on the part of Canadians, industry, stakeholders and parliamentarians, and I want to thank them for their thoughtful insights and hard work. As we start the debate on this very important piece of legislation, let us remember that at the end of the day, this is about updating our system to reflect today's digital reality.

Things have changed and streaming platforms are the new big players. This bill would make sure that everyone contributes in a similar and equitable way to our culture. The objectives of our cultural policy and broadcast system have not changed. This is about fairness and good middle-class jobs in the cultural sector. It is about having the power to shape our culture and making sure that everyone can see themselves in our culture. It is about being proud of who we are, being proud of being Canadian.

The Deputy Speaker: Before we get to questions and comments, members want to be disciplined in how they ask their questions so that everybody gets an opportunity to do that.

We have a point of order from the hon. member for Winnipeg North.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, in workplaces in the province of Ontario, people are mandated to wear masks. When I look across the aisle, 20% of the Conservative caucus is not wearing a mask. I look to the member for Carleton, an Ontario member of Parliament. We are in Ontario, and Premier Doug Ford has mandated masks in the work environment. Should we not be wearing masks?

The Deputy Speaker: The Speaker responded to this yesterday in a point of order and tried to clarify it. The BOIE made a decision that it is strongly recommended but not required. It just depends on where one draws the line of "strongly recommended". I will strongly recommend that members of the House keep their masks on when they are not speaking.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Carleton.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I took my mask off to speak. I note the member had his mask off while he was very quickly condemning others for not wearing a mask. It is ironic.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: He has had it off for 10 minutes. He just lied to the House.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: The minister wants us to trust his government to regulate what Canadians see and say online. Let us look at how the government uses the powers it has.

This very week, it decided to invoke the never-before-used Emergencies Act, an act with vast powers. It was not used after the attacks of 9/11. It was not used when a gunman came into the parliamentary buildings after shooting a Canadian soldier dead. It was not used with the blockades of the pipeline in British Columbia. These powers will allow the government to invade the privacy, the freedoms and even the bank accounts of Canadians. That is why the Conservatives will fight it all the way.

[Translation]

The Conservatives will fight against this abuse.

[English]

The government has abused the freedoms of Canadians. Why should Canadians now trust that same abusive government with the power to censor what Canadians see and say online?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his leadership speech, although maybe this is not the right forum for that. Maybe he should do that in his own caucus meeting room, not here, because I am talking about something else. We are talking about—

The Deputy Speaker: We have a point of order from the member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Mr. Speaker, just after the member for Carleton started speaking, the member for Kingston and the Islands said, in a volume loud enough for all members in the House to hear, that another hon. member had lied. I believe if we were to check Hansard, it would confirm this, and I believe the folks at the table heard the same thing.

I ask the Speaker to invite that member to unreservedly apologize for impugning a members' character and speaking in an unparliamentary way about an hon. member of this place.

• (1640)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, because it is not appropriate to call another member a liar in the House, I certainly take that comment back. However, I will say that for eight minutes we watched the member without that mask—

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the member.

An hon. member: He's not wearing a mask.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Are we done? I thought now that we were into debate on this bill, we would have a nice quiet time talking about it.

The minister did not have an opportunity to answer, so we will go to the hon. Minister of Canadian Heritage.

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez: Mr. Speaker, I am not sure there is much to respond to because that was more of a leadership speech to the member's friends and was maybe not adapted to the debate before us today. It is a very important debate on culture, on who we are as Canadians and what we need to do to support our Canadian stories, musicians, actors and directors. This is the debate before us. I would have loved if the member for Carleton had asked a question that had anything to do, even closely, with this bill, but he did not. It gives me the opportunity to say that this bill is extremely important for our culture and who we are as Canadians, and I hope they are going to support it.

[Translation]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for his speech and his willingness to quickly reintroduce this bill that is so important to Quebec's industry.

In Quebec, there is a high demand for French-language made-in-Quebec content that is tailored to Quebecers' tastes. However, industry players are deeply concerned about the intense pressure of

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the rising cost of local production and the ability to pay the production crew. They have to compete with big corporations like Netflix, which have extremely deep pockets.

By putting everyone on the same footing, we are forgetting the principles that were listed in the minister's speech, the principles of equity for smaller broadcasters that will not be able to keep spending the way they are now to support Quebec creators.

There are two messages here: the importance of local broadcasters in our system, but also the matter of taxing Netflix just like everybody else.

Did the minister think about excluding the second part from his bill? Why was that not done?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question and thank the members of the Bloc Québécois for their sincere commitment to culture. I have had a number of discussions with my colleague across the way, the official opposition heritage critic. These have been constructive discussions, since we ultimately have the same goal.

We may have different opinions on how to get there, but we very much agree on the objectives. I would even say that we agree on many aspects of Bill C-11.

As for my colleague's question, by requiring these online streaming companies to make no more and no less than a fair and equitable contribution to our culture, we will ensure that there is more money for all systems, which includes francophone broadcasters.

[English]

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadian cultural workers, our creators and our artists, as well as our broadcasters, have suffered because of the unfair competition from streaming web giants and big corporations such as Netflix, Disney+ and Amazon Prime Video.

For years, the NDP has been calling for an end to this unfair system. I support the first steps in Bill C-11 to level the playing field. It is especially important to ensure that these corporations have obligations to fund and ensure discoverability of Canadian cultural content. However, web giants, including some of most profitable corporations like Netflix, Google, Amazon and Facebook, still do not pay their fair share of taxes on the profits they make in Canada.

The government likes to talk about tax fairness, but it continues to protect the profits of these big web giants by delaying the implementation of the digital services tax. Does the minister know how much these web giants have avoided in taxes since 2015?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for her sincere interest in this subject matter and the bill. I have to say, I had a very productive discussion with my counterpart from the NDP on this.

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This bill is about those big streaming companies that already invest here. Some of them invest a lot of money and we love that. We are in favour of it, and we ask them to invest even more.

The approach will be very flexible. It is going to be based on the company's own business model. Not everyone will have to act the same way. The contributions or participation will be different to take into consideration the fact that they are very different. At the end of the day, it will bring more money into the system to help our Canadian creators and Canadian artists.

• (1645)

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague, the Minister of Canadian Heritage, for his remarks today and his work on this bill.

This bill was presented, or certainly the spirit of it was, in the 43rd Parliament. I had conversations with constituents who were confused because they thought the government was trying to regulate free speech. Of course, we just heard the member for Carleton with his remarks, so no wonder constituents get confused.

I used the opportunity of those phone calls to say that the government was seeking to modernize the act so that digital giants would be more akin to traditional broadcasters and would also be required to actually contribute to Canadian content. Some of my constituents do not believe in the idea of contributing to Canadian content. That was fine and they understood that. Others, of course, once I explained it, understood the fundamental elements of the bill.

I thought the minister did a very good job in his remarks. Could he remind my constituents that we are about protecting Canadian content in an evolution in how we receive digital content in Canada?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez: Mr. Speaker, my colleague's question is one of the best I have heard in a very long time. I have to say, it was an excellent intervention.

The member said it very well. Last time, sadly, the debate was a bit hijacked by something else. However, if we look at the bill and we read the bill, it is only about the streamers contributing to our Canadian culture, which is important. I am sure all of us think it is important, including my official counterpart from the Conservatives. It is one thing to say it, and another thing to act.

We can all say we love culture, love Bryan Adams and love this and that, but at the end of the day, what do we do? What are my friends from the Conservatives doing? Are they going to help us this time and help our creators, help our film industry and help our music industry? This has nothing to do with freedom of speech. It only has to do with the streamers contributing to the Canadian culture. That is it.

Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I can say to the minister, “stay tuned”, because my speech is coming up right afterward.

I want to look very closely at section 4(2). I am sure the minister has heard, like I have, from digital first creators who are concerned about the exclusions, specifically the criteria about direct or indirect revenue. I would ask if he has heard from digital first creators and

whether he takes their concerns to heart and would entertain amendments to exclude the exclusion from this bill.

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez: Mr. Speaker, that is a very interesting and important question. As I said during my speech, we heard the concerns about social media, and we fixed it. We brought back section 4.1, with the exception of commercial content.

The criteria for commercial content is really specified in the bill. There is a clear sandbox. It is very precise. It is about the revenues. It is about the fact that we can find the same content on, for example, YouTube or Spotify. It is about codes that could be encrypted in some of that content.

I did meet with digital first creators and those were honestly fascinating conversations. Some of them were 18, 19, 20, 21 years old. They are all over the world. They do incredible things. I love it. However, it is not about them. It is about those streamers contributing to the Canadian culture. That is it.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the member for Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, Justice; the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, The Environment; the member for Calgary Midnapore, Labour.

Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a great honour to rise in the House as the Conservative critic for Canadian heritage and present the official opposition's response to Bill C-11, the online streaming act.

I want to begin by recognizing and celebrating the contributions made by our creators, including artists, actors, musicians and everyone who works in the Canadian arts, culture and heritage sector. There is no doubt that Canada is home to world-class talent that has found success at home and around the world.

Meanwhile, our young talent continues to develop, which will contribute to our national culture for years to come. This is especially true of the exceptional Quebec and francophone talent that we all want to see flourish.

These creators and artists deserve to be treated fairly and to have the tools they need to succeed. They deserve an economic environment that allows them to be fairly compensated for their work as they tell our stories, whether through music, prose, movies, television or, increasingly, online content.

• (1650)

[English]

The Broadcasting Act has not been updated in any meaningful way since 1991. Believe it or not, times have changed a little since that time. When I was a seven-year-old kid in 1991, the phrase “be kind, please rewind” reflected so much of the broadcasting world. Now, three decades later, as a legislator, I can acknowledge that times have changed. Technology has changed, and how Canadians enjoy Canadian stories has changed.

What has not changed, as has been acknowledged, is the legislative and regulatory framework that governs this sector. The Government of Canada and, through the government, the CRTC must update their approach to the treatment of arts, culture and media to reflect the realities of the third decade of the 21st century. As many of colleagues know, my riding is home to some of the great cultural institutions in Canada, including the Stratford Festival, Drayton Entertainment, and the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum. Moreover, our community has a vibrant music scene through events, such as Stratford Summer Music, and it is becoming a destination for television and film production.

When I was asked to serve as the official opposition's shadow minister for Canadian heritage, I was certainly honoured to do so. It has provided me with the remarkable opportunity to meet with so many arts and culture stakeholders from across the country. I have met with many artists, musicians and creators who are deeply invested in the future of the industry and the future of this very particular piece of legislation.

[Translation]

The Conservative opposition agrees that the existing system is outdated. However, we have watched the government fail and waver in its efforts to modernize the Broadcasting Act, adapt to our new digital reality and prepare for future disruptions that we cannot even predict today.

[English]

That is what the government and the CRTC ought to be doing. They should be there to ensure they are not in the way of the next disruption or the next innovation. Rather, they should be there to lay out the ground rules to ensure that when that next disruption happens, when that next innovation happens, it happens right here in Canada, and that it allows Canadians and Canadian creators to benefit from and export our top-notch talent around the globe.

In fact, in our 2021 election campaign platform, we committed that a Conservative government would conduct a full review of the CRTC to ensure that it better reflects the needs of Canadians and does not prevent Canadian broadcasters from innovating or adapting to changes in the marketplace. Speaking of election platforms, I want to be clear about where our Conservative opposition stands on updates to the Broadcasting Act related to foreign streaming service.

[Translation]

In our platform, we clearly stated that we would support legislation that updates the Broadcasting Act to deal with the realities of

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an increasingly online market and the need to provide businesses with certainty and consumers with choice.

We will require large streaming services like Netflix, Disney+ and Amazon Prime to reinvest a significant portion of their Canadian gross revenue into producing original Canadian programming, of which a mandated proportion must be in French.

If they fail to do so on their own in a given year, they will be required to pay the difference into the Canada Media Fund. The proportion chosen will vary based on the nature of the streaming service and would be determined based on the best practices of other jurisdictions, such as those in Europe and Australia, as well as the nature of the Canadian market.

Content reinvestment requirements will also recognize and incentivize partnerships with Canadian independent media producers.

• (1655)

[English]

We were also very clear in our platform that we would do this while ensuring that Canadians who uploaded content to social media platforms continued to enjoy freedom of speech and the ability to express themselves freely within the confines of Canadian law.

Let me be clear. Most Canadians understand and expect that large, foreign-owned streamers ought not to be given advantages over the regulated Canadian broadcasting sector. Large, foreign streamers should pay their fair share. What is more, it is logical to expect that those who benefit from the Canadian regulatory regime should also be expected to contribute to Canadian content. We want to see Canadians telling Canadian stories.

Much has been said about the origins of the current regulatory regime. In reviewing the interventions of past colleagues on this topic, I was drawn to the comments of the then minister of communications, the Hon. Marcel Masse, from November 3, 1989. At page 5,546 of Hansard, Minister Masse states:

...let us retrace the development of our broadcasting system. How did it start? How can we define it? Since its beginning, Canadian broadcasting has had to adjust to Canadian realities: the proximity to the United States, a vast and sparsely populated territory, as well as the existence of two official languages. Every measure taken by public authorities since the turn of the century can be explained by these economic, social and cultural challenges, which lie at the root of the bill before us today.

The minister goes on to state:

What has changed, however, is the technology of communications and the significant evolution of Canadian values.

With the important addition of the consideration of indigenous languages and culture, I would suggest that commentary, provided in the House on that November day in 1989, rings true today as well with the challenges and opportunities faced in today's broadcasting system here in Canada.

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While we are going down memory lane, I want to turn back to something not quite as far back as 1989 and look at what happened in the previous Parliament with the former bill, Bill C-10. As all members of the House will remember, and many Canadians watching this debate will remember, in the previous Parliament the iteration of Bill C-10 was one of the most poorly managed and poorly messaged policy proposals that I have seen from the government.

The new bill, Bill C-11 picks up where the old Bill C-10 left off. That flawed bill made headlines for all the wrong reasons. The decisions that were made by the government seemed to fail from drafting to introduction to third reading.

Conservatives were not alone in our concerns with Bill C-10. Many individuals and organizations were concerned about free speech and the implications of government overreach and expressed strong concerns with the former Bill C-10. Professor Michael Geist, a University of Ottawa professor and the Canada research chair in Internet and e-commerce law, called the former Bill C-10, “an exceptionally heavy-handed regulatory approach where a government-appointed regulator decides what individual user generated content is prioritized”.

He further pointed out that “no one—literally no other country—uses broadcast regulation to regulate user [generated] content in this way.” Even the Senate, which is now filled with a plurality of senators who were appointed by the current Liberal Prime Minister and who generally share his agenda and ideology, refused to pass Bill C-10 before the Prime Minister called his unnecessary attempt at a power grab in the summer of 2021 election.

One of the main flaws with the former Bill C-10 related to user-generated content, which we will hear a lot about in my comments and the comments throughout this debate. Under that bill, there was originally an exception, proposed section 4.1, which would have allowed those who generated content on social media sites like YouTube and other content-sharing sites to be excluded. However, at committee, government members removed that exclusion, meaning the CRTC could have regulated the content individual users put up on those social media sites.

Further complicating the matter was the unclear and unaccountable authority Bill C-10 proposed to give the CRTC. Bill C-10 proposed to give the CRTC broad new powers, but not clear direction on what those regulations would be. With little to no government oversight, it was concerning that an unaccountable government agency would be enforcing and controlling what people see and do not see on social media sites, which brings us to the current bill before the House, Bill C-11.

I can appreciate a certain irony that this bill was introduced on February 2, groundhog day, because it certainly feels like we have been here before. When I was first appointed as shadow minister for Canadian heritage, I spoke with and I wrote to the Minister of Canadian Heritage and had wonderful, productive conversations with the minister. There were two things in particular that I urged him to do. First was not to reintroduce the flawed former Bill C-10 in the same form. The second request I thought was important was, should he introduce amendments to the Broadcasting Act, that the government not interfere with the work of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage and that we as parliamentarians be given the

opportunity to properly study and, if necessary, amend this bill. That is still my hope.

I want to talk a bit about what this bill would not do. It would not reduce the current regulatory burden faced by incumbent Canadian broadcasters, nor would it reduce the costs to Canadian broadcasters. The government could take immediate action today to support Canadian broadcasters by adopting Conservative policies.

As I said in this place and elsewhere, the CRTC part II licence fees should be scrapped. These fees amount to a tax on Canadian broadcasters and do nothing but provide additional revenues to regulators and, by extension, the Government of Canada. In fact, in the 2019-20 fiscal year, these part II licence fees amounted to \$116,594,742. In the 2018-19 fiscal year, they were \$113 million. In those two years alone, that amounts to a quarter of a billion dollars that went to CRTC coffers, rather than contributing to Canadian programming. This bill, unfortunately, would not scrap part II licence fees.

As I hinted at earlier, we will be talking a fair bit about user-generated content. In the old Bill C-10, there was an exclusion for user-generated content, which was then excluded at committee in the melee that was clause-by-clause consideration of Bill C-10. In Bill C-11, the government has reintroduced an exclusion on user-generated content on social media and it is known as proposed section 4.1 of Bill C-11. However, in what can only be considered the ultimate in bureaucratic language, the Liberals added an exclusion to the exclusion as proposed section 4.2. This exclusion to the exclusion is so broad that the government, through the CRTC, could once again regulate wide swathes of content uploaded to social media.

● (1700)

I want to quote from key stakeholders who operate in the field. Matt Hatfield, from Open Media, said this:

Trying to exclude user generated content from CRTC regulation is a good step, and an acknowledgement by the government that last year's Bill C-10 was a mistake.... The problem is that it isn't clear if they've actually excluded user generated content. They're working from a foundation of a clean separation of professional and amateur content on the Internet that simply doesn't exist. Major Canadian Internet productions like podcasts could find themselves in the worst of all worlds—subject to CRTC regulation, while not able to seek CanCon funding.

What concerns me, and what concerns our official opposition, is the impact that this will have on creators, especially digital first creators who have found success in the digital world and should be encouraged rather than hindered.

According to a 2019 report from researchers at Ryerson University, “there are an estimated 160,000 Canadian content creators on YouTube, including 40,000 who have enough of an audience to monetize their channels. These 40,000 creators have in turn sparked the development of nearly 28,000 full-time jobs”. That is 28,000 full-time jobs through this type of digital first Canadian creation. This is just one small aspect, one positive economic part that we could realize through new media.

It is not Conservative politicians alone who are raising concerns about the impact this would have on digital first creators. We are raising these concerns on behalf of creators from across Canada.

Scott Benzie, the managing director of Digital First Canada, shared this about Bill C-11: “Bill C-11 still has many issues for Digital First Creators, the 'sandbox' that is said to be given to the CRTC is too broad and could include every piece of content online. Most concerning though is that there is still room in the bill for the government to force platforms to put 'approved' Canadian content ahead of independent Canadian content and artificially manipulate the algorithms. Even in the best case scenario this bill only has downsides for Digital First Creators while the traditional media industry gets their funding doubled.”

We can go on to Morghan Fortier, CEO of Skyship Entertainment, who shared these comments: “In Canada, digital content creators have built a successful thriving industry on platforms such as YouTube, TikTok and others that export a huge amount of Canadian content to the rest of the world. Creators bring revenue from other countries back home to Canada and use it to hire Canadian workers, and pay Canadian taxes. They've done this through their entrepreneurial spirit, their hard work, and largely without government interference or assistance. This achievement should be supported, celebrated and encouraged.”

I know my time is running short. I do want to offer a few final comments about Bill C-11, including the broad powers that are delivered to the CRTC. We, as parliamentarians, have a duty to examine and review proposals of the government. The challenge with this piece of legislation is the degree to which government envisions delegating its regulatory power to another entity, in this case, the CRTC. This is being done without, as of yet, clear policy direction from the government as to how these regulatory powers would be interpreted.

This “just trust us” approach does not inspire confidence. One example is the concept of discoverability, which could be so broad and vague that Canadians would be rightly concerned about what content the CRTC would have prioritized for Canadian viewing and, by extension, what would be further deprioritized for viewing by Canadians.

Also, Canadians want to know what constitutes Canadian content in the digital world. As I mentioned before, we want to see Canadians telling Canadian stories, but what is not clear is how the CRTC would adjust its criteria to ensure that real Canadian stories are captured within the CanCon rules.

We, as the official opposition, will be clear in our position on this bill. While we will not be supporting this bill at second recording, we will nonetheless fulfill our role as Her Majesty's loyal opposi-

tion in proposing reasonable amendments at committee. Our Conservative opposition will be there for Canadian creators, artists and broadcasters in asking the tough questions and raising important concerns here in the House and at committee.

● (1705)

[Translation]

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his remarks and for speaking in French. It is wonderful to see parliamentarians work on improving their skills in both official languages.

With respect to freedom of expression, the Minister of Canadian Heritage made it clear in his remarks that Bill C-11, like the bill in the previous Parliament, is designed to make digital giants contribute to Canadian content, not to restrict freedom of expression.

Does the Conservative Party of Canada agree with the idea that broadcasters should support Canadian content?

● (1710)

Mr. John Nater: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Kings—Hants and, likewise, I congratulate him on the quality of his French. As he said, it is great to see anglophones from Nova Scotia and Ontario using their second language in the House.

To answer his question, we Conservatives do support the idea that large international corporations like Netflix and Disney+ must pay their fair share in Canada and invest in Canadian content. That was in our election platform, and we support that concept.

However, we do have concerns with regard to creators of online digital content. They have concerns about this bill, particularly subsection 4.2.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his speech and his contribution to today's debate.

I understand that my hon. friend from Perth—Wellington has a rather vibrant cultural industry in his riding.

The only question that comes to mind is this: What did he say to the cultural community in his riding to justify his party's opposition to a bill that artists and the cultural community have been calling for and supporting for quite some time and that will save Quebec and Canadian culture?

Mr. John Nater: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean for the question.

Let me be very clear. The Conservatives are in favour of some parts of the bill. It was in our election platform. We want to see the major international companies pay their share and invest in Canadian content.

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I had the great pleasure of meeting many creators. They have different concerns.

We are in favour of many of the things in this bill, and I hope to work with my colleagues at the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage to improve this bill on behalf of Canadians and Canadian creators when it is referred to committee.

[English]

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, one of the things our party has fought hard for is to ensure that the orders and conditions required by the CRTC from web giants be transparent and public and not contain loopholes that would allow big web giants off the hook to circumvent their obligations to fund Canadian cultural content and make it discoverable.

Would my hon. colleague agree that this is absolutely critical and necessary?

Mr. John Nater: Mr. Speaker, I will go a step further, actually. We need to do much more in terms of how we oversee what happens at the CRTC.

In this particular case, the minister has yet to provide policy direction to the CRTC in terms of how this piece of legislation and how this regulatory regime would be implemented when it gets to the CRTC. Without that clear direction from the government, we are left not knowing how the CRTC will be negotiating with individual web giants like Netflix and Disney+. That is the unknown question.

I look forward to hearing from the CRTC at committee to see how it will be interpreting the broad legislative rules when it makes the regulatory changes.

• (1715)

Mr. Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his excellent analytical speech. In responding to the questions from my colleague across the aisle, he shared that there are aspects of the bill that we share with the government in terms of the intent of the legislation. Could he comment as to why the government wants to go that much further in regulating user content?

Mr. John Nater: Mr. Speaker, my colleague hit the nail on the head there. There is much that we can agree on in this bill. There is much we can agree on with respect to where we can go forward within the broad cultural milieu. Certainly the web giants and foreign streamers who are operating within the Canadian regulatory regime and enjoying its benefits should be paying their fair share.

Where we have concern is where it goes beyond paying their fair share and where Canadian artists, especially new, up-and-coming Canadian artists, have the opportunity to use social media to propel themselves to the next level. There is not the clear separation between professional and amateur content as envisioned by the minister in his comments on this bill. If we can remove part of that, if we can have a meaningful conversation about this at committee, I think there is much we can agree on, but that is the challenge that we are concerned about right now.

[Translation]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is on the official opposition's attitude rather than the substance of the bill.

It is no secret that during the study of Bill C-10 in the last Parliament, the official opposition did everything it could to prevent it from getting passed by using a variety of different tactics.

Artists, creators and the entire cultural community are calling on us to do everything we can to get this bill passed quickly. They say that they have been waiting long enough.

Does the member for Perth—Wellington agree that we can be constructive by proposing amendments, but without slowing down the process?

Mr. John Nater: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Repentigny for her question.

I want to work constructively with my colleagues on the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage. We can accomplish a lot together. I have asked the Minister of Canadian Heritage that the committee be able to hold discussions and hear from witnesses who work in the cultural sector, so that we can propose amendments to improve this bill. I will work constructively with my colleagues.

[English]

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, here in Port Moody we are named “The City of the Arts”, so this is very important to many in our community. Artists are both revered and appreciated here in Port Moody—Coquitlam and need support throughout this pandemic. Many of them have lost jobs and have lost many opportunities to share their talents.

For clarification, does the member acknowledge that the large corporations need to pay their fair share to assist and nurture Canadian artists and content after the pandemic?

Mr. John Nater: Mr. Speaker, at some point I would love to make it to that part of the country and see the vibrant arts scene in the member's riding.

Once again, our platform was clear: We believe that large foreign streamers should pay their fair share in Canada and should be investing in Canadian productions here in Canada, using Canadian talent and telling Canadians stories.

[Translation]

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am seeking unanimous consent to share my time with my colleague from Longueuil—Saint-Hubert.

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

There being no dissenting voice, the motion is carried.

The hon. member for Trois-Rivières.

Mr. René Villemure: Mr. Speaker, I am honoured and humbled to rise today to debate and get down to the brass tacks of a bill that is extremely important to the creators and people of Quebec and Canada. Allow me to digress a little and talk about some conceptual aspects before I offer some more practical recommendations.

It is time for Canada to get out of the stone age and catch up to the rest of the world. Most of us agree that this is essential. We also agree that, in doing so, we must absolutely protect the artists who are the living embodiment of our culture. We must not rush into things. We must take the time to think things through.

When the current Broadcasting Act was drafted in the last century, the world was a very different place. The war had reshaped borders. Radio and television were the only ways to get information.

Certain ancient or classical philosophies postulated that space and time were the only two things without which nothing was possible. An event must take place somewhere and at a given moment. It cannot occur anywhere or at any time because it would not be an event. Nothing can be imagined outside space and time.

In those days, many passed the time wondering how long it would take for a bird flying in the sky to fall to the ground if time did not exist. The answer is that it would take no time at all because it would not fall without time. That is the idea, but that was before the Internet.

The Internet did away with the notions of time and space. It is both nowhere and everywhere and it will be there always. Those of us who are used to the Cartesian way of thinking are sometimes destabilized by the Internet because it has no centre. It is all very well to call it the web, but it has no centre.

It is difficult to frame legislation when we cannot contextualize the subject matter. I will come back to that a little later. If we want to talk about the Internet, which is nowhere and everywhere, we need to change our paradigms and bring in regulations, which are found somewhere by their very nature.

To do that I will propose another philosophical reference, Heraclitus, who gave us the quote, "From all things one and from one all things". The Internet is a bit like that, from all things one. Geography and temporality have no meaning, it is nowhere and everywhere, always and never. How do we regulate that?

In Bill C-11, we are talking about expanding the CRTC's powers. I wonder if that is the solution. Should we not instead, like other governments, consider creating a separate dedicated agency made up of digital experts?

The Canadian government often needs to be reminded that it is the government that defines the rules, not businesses. The past gives us reasons to doubt. In the case of the digital world, it is time for the state to do more than just survey the damage.

When will we have a new digital agency? Obviously, we would expect transparency, which would instill trust. We must also keep in mind that trust does not exclude control. We should be able to verify what is going on and we must make the businesses in question accountable.

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Bill C-11 will give the government the herculean task of convincing and compelling web giants to agree to a balance between their commercial interests and the public interest. That is no small task. Bill C-11 covers it in 14 lines, but the actual work remains to be done.

It surprises me that these same web giants keep telling us it is important to innovate and keep up. Innovation does not justify everything. Some innovations should never see the light of day. Innovation does not justify wiping out a language or hiding it behind a skewed algorithm that automatically gives selective results for certain populations. Nobody can do that in the name of innovation. Innovation does not mean it is okay to collect individuals' data without giving them anything in return. That is not okay. Innovation is not an excuse for allowing surveillance capitalism to take root.

Many of the amendments the Bloc Québécois wanted to make to the old Bill C-10 are in Bill C-11, and we are very happy about that, but we cannot let our guard down or forget to think critically.

In some cases, the two versions differ by just a few words, yet the fate of the world can hang on a word. A word is a construct of sound and meaning. We need to be careful because sometimes words are stripped of their meaning and become nothing but sound, and then we have a language devoid of meaning.

● (1720)

As Orwell said a long time ago, the fewer the words, the smaller the temptation to think.

As an aside, when the first English-language version of the Bible was drafted, the King James Bible, there were about 6,000 words in that language universe. Shakespeare had 150,000 in his language universe.

These days, we have about 750,000 words with which to compose sentences, poetry, literature and music. Meanwhile, Donald Trump's lexicon was limited to 200 words. Only very crude ideas can be expressed in 200 words or less.

Words are a tool for preserving language, linguistic expression and culture. They also serve to create nuance, give life, and nurture culture. Words must not disappear. They are the tools with which culture and history can be told.

Let us come back down to earth. I realize my thoughts were a bit in the clouds just now. As the world becomes more and more digitized every day, it is unthinkable that the big media players, the web giants, have so few obligations to the citizens and states that make them rich.

In the past, the Government of Canada gave in to web giants. I would like to remind the government that it has the authority to be firm and a duty to ensure that the web giants pay their fair share.

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Many people have spoken about that fair share today. However, the fair share is not what the web giants agree to pay. It is not that at all. They must pay their fair share of taxes. They must contribute their fair share to the production of Canadian content. They must pay their fair share in order to compensate content creators. That fair share is not an equal share. It is the amount that each one fairly owes.

It will not be easy. We will have to be careful because web giants became giants for a reason. They are used to deciding for themselves what their fair share is. We will have to be vigilant.

In this world where we have to rethink our references to time and space, the Government of Canada must not think of Bill C-11 in isolation. It will have to harmonize its regulatory instruments with those of our neighbours, the nations around the world. Several jurisdictions, including the European community, have already thought about these elements, as have certain English-speaking countries. I urge the government to at least look at these two sources, because Anglo-Saxon sources are very similar.

I will conclude with this point: We must never give in without a fight. I believe that Bill C-11 is a good bill, that we must amend it to increase its scope a little and see how we can give it some teeth, and that creating a dedicated agency would be appropriate.

• (1725)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I understand that the Bloc will be supporting this very important piece of legislation to get it to committee, and I appreciate that. I recognize how important our culture and heritage are, as well as the ways we can support this industry.

Would the member not agree that this industry is very much alive today and that we need this modernization in order to ensure its longevity into the future? The potential for the industry to grow is very real and tangible. We see that in the number of artists of many forms. I would ask the member to provide his thoughts regarding the potential growth of the industry as a direct result of this legislation.

[Translation]

Mr. René Villemure: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Winnipeg North.

The industry is, indeed, very much alive, but it is struggling a little and was hard hit by the pandemic.

It was actually struggling well before the pandemic. I want to share a story about a friend of mine in the music industry who sells a fair number of albums. He told me that in the past, a successful album would have sold 320,000 copies, then that figure dropped to 100,000 copies, and now success is measured in play counts on Spotify.

This platform brings in one-quarter of what earnings would have been. His music has a lot of plays on Spotify, more than 320,000, but he receives just 25% of what he would have originally earned.

We must ensure that people in this industry, which is very much alive, no longer have to struggle and can continue to earn a living.

• (1730)

Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Trois-Rivières for his speech.

Has he heard the same concerns that I have from creators who use online platforms, like TikTok and YouTube, to share their content with the world?

Mr. René Villemure: Mr. Speaker, yes, I have heard those concerns. In the first bill, I was concerned about possible adverse effects, but quite honestly, I was reassured. My specialty is ethics, and I am quite familiar with issues around freedom of expression.

I currently have no fear for those who want to post a TikTok or share a cat video under Bill C-11.

[English]

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Trois-Rivières for his speech and in particular for reminding us all that philosophy can help us grapple with everyday issues so eloquently.

I do not know the cultural scene in Trois-Rivières well, although I did spend a summer in immersion at the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières some time ago. Nevertheless, I am sure that Trois-Rivières has its share of cultural workers and cultural production despite the pull of Montreal and Quebec. I am also sure that the loss of revenues during COVID for those organizations has left many of them struggling.

My question for the member is pretty simple, and I am sure he will agree with me. It is really important that we scoop back some of those revenues that were taken by the web giants and streaming services and direct that revenue to cultural production in our ridings across the country.

[Translation]

Mr. René Villemure: Mr. Speaker, Trois-Rivières is a riding full of events, culture and sports. Recently, I informed members of the House that I had applied for Trois-Rivières to host the Jeux de La Francophonie.

It is truly a place where people have suffered. Those who were already rich and have unfairly become richer during this time should be able to give back. The businesses that profited most from the lockdown are the web giants. I completely agree with my colleague. Compensation is something we might think about.

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, earlier, in criticizing the bill, the member for Perth—Wellington compared it to Groundhog Day. If memory serves, when the groundhog woke up on September 21, the composition of Parliament was the same, or almost the same, as it is today.

I would like the member for Trois-Rivières, an expert in ethics issues and legitimacy, to tell us how legitimate this bill still is and whether this legitimacy justifies moving it through the process quickly and constructively for our cultural industry.

Mr. René Villemure: Mr. Speaker, we definitely need to ensure that our creators stop suffering.

They have suffered unnecessarily because Parliament's work was interrupted for the sake of personal vanity. I think we should proceed quickly but stay vigilant.

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am so pleased to speak to this issue.

Right now, I am an MP, a politician, but in a former life, I was an actor and an artist. I was involved in quite a few films and TV series. I had theatre companies. I am of course deeply concerned about the fate of culture and artists, and that is exactly what I want to talk about today: culture.

I do not want to get bogged down in the technical details, the algorithms, the streaming services. I am going to try to focus the debate on the substance of Bill C-11. To me, what is at stake here is Quebec culture.

I apologize in advance to the interpreters. My speech is about Quebec culture, so I think they might have a very hard time interpreting some of the terms. My anglophone colleagues might not understand what I am talking about. However, the salient point is that ours is a minority culture within the greater North American context. We are in the middle of a technological revolution, and Quebec culture is in danger.

Let me begin by quoting one of my very good friends, filmmaker Pierre Falardeau, who had this to say about culture:

For me, that is what Quebec culture is all about. It's a direct, physical, deeply sensual connection with this land of the Americas. Culture is a landscape that grips your heart. It's a mountain, a lake, a valley that wells up from the depths of your youth. Quebec culture is a verse by Gaston Miron, [the images] of Pierre Perrault, the colour of the snow in a painting by Clarence Gagnon. Culture is also the smell of my mother's cooking. It's watching hockey on TV on Saturday nights, freshly bathed, hair perfectly combed, in your flannel PJs that smell of laundry soap and the wind. Quebec culture is also about my aunts being exploited by Imperial Tobacco in Saint-Henri. It's my uncle, a Lithuanian immigrant, who could walk on his hands. [It was wonderful.] Quebec culture is my father, who taught me about justice, solidarity and love for my people. Culture is the back alleys downtown. It is Reggie Chartrand's fists. It's a song from old France that takes you back 400 years, for no apparent reason. It is Champlain. It's the curve of the roof on our houses. Quebec culture is my girlfriend's "spaghette" sauce, my couscous from "Faubourg à m'lasse" and my children rapping in French. That's what culture is all about. It's a thousand little things that give life its flavour.

Obviously, a great many other things are associated with culture. Quebec culture has a vocabulary all its own. In fact, Quebecers talk about each season in a way no one anywhere else does. I will start with winter, represented in our national song, "Mon pays, ce n'est pas un pays, c'est l'hiver", or "my country is not a country, it's winter". Quebec culture is understanding the difference between *frais*, *frisquet*, *froid* and *frette*—cool, chilly, cold and bloody freez-

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ing. Quebec culture is coming out of blowing snow into slush and freezing rain. Quebec culture is the myriad colourful expressions that describe how Quebecers "attachent leur tuque avec de la broche", or brace themselves, against the long, cold winter and hang in there, even if "ils en ont ras le pompon"—they are fed up—even if "ils ont peur de péter au frette, de ne pas passer l'hiver", in other words, even if they fear they will not make it through to spring. "Pas passer l'hiver", not making it through the winter. Where else in the world would anyone say that?

Quebeckers also have a thousand and one ways to celebrate spring, from marvelling at ice jams and fiddleheads to enjoying the maple sugar season. The word "sugar" evokes a series of images and smells that resonate with Quebecers, capturing their world and their memories. That one word says so much.

Spring means breaking out the shorts and t-shirts at the first rays of warm sunshine as though dressing for warm weather will make it arrive sooner. However, a day that cool would have us reaching for a sweater in the fall.

Quebeckers also have a thousand and one ways to soak up the summer, from Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day to jam making and corn husking parties. We love getting back to nature and visiting outfitters in controlled harvesting zones, or ZECs. We have to take advantage while we can still have all the windows down.

● (1735)

Naturally, we also have a thousand and one ways to enjoy the fall, from picking cherries to admiring the fall colours. As the days start getting shorter, we quibble with our roommates over the best starting lineup for our beloved hockey team's upcoming season. Even after a miserable season, as soon as they pick up a few wins in a row, we already feel like the cup is within reach. As Quebecers, we always feel the cup is within reach, even when it is far away, although right now it seems a long way off.

Santa Claus and the tooth fairy may be universal, but Quebec has its very own fictional characters, like Séraphin, Donald, Ti-Coune, Lyne la pas fine, and Capitaine Bonhomme. Then there are some even more mythical characters, so mythical that they are known by all but have never been seen. There is Roger Bontemps, Madame Blancheville and the guy everyone loves, Joe Bleau, the most famous everyman in all of Quebec. No doubt he comes from Saint-Glinglin.

Saint-Glinglin, now that is interesting. Everyone knows it is far away, but nobody knows where it is. Quebec can be pretty disorienting to outsiders, what with our eastern border being on the north shore and our southern border being in the Eastern Townships. We also have square "arrondissements", not circular ones, and quiet revolutions. Quebec is the only place where piggybacking on someone else's idea is called "faire le pouce", and where sacred words can be used in decidedly profane ways, as long as one has the decency to blush.

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Quebec culture is all kinds of things. It is images, the luminosity of a Jean-Paul Lemieux, the abandon of a Riopelle, the impetus captured in a Krieghoff, the human form captured in a Corno. It is an aesthetic that does not even define itself as such. It is touchstone tomes that span the gamut from *Flore laurentienne* to *L'Almanach du peuple*.

Quebec culture can feel like one big family. Some names speak volumes in a single word. In Quebec, everyone knows who Clémence is. Janette, Dédé, Boucar and Ginette? Sure, we know all about them, and of course we all know Céline.

Unfortunately, Quebec culture also means a lot of political and linguistic misunderstandings with English Canada. When we say “secularism”, the English-language media calls it “racism”. When we say “academic freedom”, it is translated in English Canada as “racism”. When we talk about the survival of the French language, that too is translated as “racism”.

Quebec culture is about expressing modern ideas using new French words: *clavardage* for chat, *courriel* for email, *pourriel* for spam, and *balado* for podcast, not to mention all the words that were invented at the same time as the object itself. The *motoneige*, or snowmobile, is a perfect example of a Quebec invention. The snow blower and car mats were invented in Quebec too. Let us not forget poutine, Quebec's national dish. This decadent dish has conquered the world. Quebec culture is about all of those things.

As they say, everything is interconnected, or “tôutt est dans tôutt”, as Raoul Duguay put it in his song *Tôutt etô bôutt*. As for Ariane Moffatt, she wants it all, as she says in her song, *Je veux tout*. That is what is at stake with Bill C-11.

If we allow our media to plunge into even more hardship, if we neglect to support our creators and our platforms, all these great Quebec sayings will gradually get erased, and all these cultural touchpoints that still bring us together today will become foreign to a whole new generation, including my children's generation. This will sever the bond that ties us to our history and to everything that makes us who we are today.

Such is the risk of a people becoming nothing more than one demographic among many. A culture, especially a minority culture like ours, is a precious and delicate garden that could be swept away and destroyed by the fierce winds of technological globalization. If that happens, the world would lose our unique and irreplaceable colour from its spectrum. That would be a tragedy for the entire world, because when a culture dies, it is a loss for all of humanity.

• (1740)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member piqued my interest when he referenced hockey as one of Canada's great passions of culture. I think of the Montreal Habs and the Winnipeg Jets. How we love our hockey. Culture is very much the Céline Dions and many other celebrities in the performing arts, and the many contributions to writing, poetry or books in general. It is a very strong and healthy industry.

When we think of streaming on the Internet, this legislation would provide additional strength going forward to build on specific industries, arts and culture in particular. Would the member provide his thoughts on just how important it is that this legislation pass so that we can further support, and continue to support, our culture and heritage across Canada?

[Translation]

Mr. Denis Trudel: Madam Speaker, my colleague is absolutely right. We have to get going and pass this bill. Even before the last election, I was getting calls and emails from my artist friends, telling me I was lucky because I made it to Parliament. Our artists are starving. Distinguished artists, people who are really immensely talented, are not enjoying the fruits of their labour. It is shocking.

On YouTube, people automatically go for English content. We have to make French content discoverable. It has to show up, or people will not seek it out. That is why it is incredibly important to pass the bill as soon as possible.

• (1745)

Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his speech. It was very enjoyable. He spoke about Quebec content and francophone content on streaming services.

What proportion of Quebec content would my colleague want to see on the big streaming platforms?

Mr. Denis Trudel: Madam Speaker, you cannot put a number on success. If an artist produces a great song, that song needs to be heard.

The problem right now is that even well-known artists who are very successful in Quebec cannot make it on major platforms like Spotify and YouTube because they do not show up there.

We must ensure that successful artists from Quebec are on the platforms and available for people to listen to. That is the big issue.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his lyrical musings about his love for Quebec culture, which I share as well.

He made me think of the anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss. In a debate where he was asked whether humans were part of nature or culture, Lévi-Strauss answered that it was in man's nature to be cultural. We are therefore not human if there is no culture.

I believe that the way people discover songs is by seeing them pop up on social media platforms such as YouTube. If we want Quebec or French-language songs to be available and visible to consumers, we have to tweak the algorithms.

However, Bill C-11 prohibits the CRTC from tweaking algorithms. What does my colleague think of that clause of the bill?

Mr. Denis Trudel: Madam Speaker, I do not know if there is some technical reason that makes French-language content appear more frequently or whether we need to use algorithms. I am not an expert in that area. In any case, the issue remains the same.

Bill C-11 gives us a sort of guarantee that the major platforms will be asked to work on discoverability. It is not perfect. For the time being, we are not going to get involved in that. We will rework the bill. If there is reason to get involved in that area, the CRTC will decide in the end.

I do believe that the message is fairly clear in the bill: We want French-language content to be visible everywhere for anyone who wants to consume it.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am familiar with Bill C-11, having spent a lot of time working on the previous bill, Bill C-10, which addressed the same issues but was not passed by the Senate. This is a new version, but it is almost identical to Bill C-10, with some changes.

To set the stage, I think it is important to talk about tax fairness. Yesterday, I was listening to prominent left-wing economist Thomas Piketty on the radio. He said that getting the ultrarich, the billionaires, the big corporations, the web giants like GAFAM, to pay is key to being able to create societies that are fairer and more egalitarian, societies where we can pay for social programs to take care of our people, our communities and our neighbours.

This bill is a step in that direction. Unfortunately, the federal government, be it Conservative or Liberal, has not yet done anything to make these web giants pay tax in Canada. I can already hear the Minister of Canadian Heritage saying that it is not up to Canadian Heritage, it is up to Finance. He is right. I know that.

I am just saying that we have a major tax fairness problem preventing us from making necessary investments in health care, post-secondary education and infrastructure. Middle-class workers are always the ones who end up paying for those things, while the rich find a way out and go hide their money in tax havens. Big companies like web giants are still not paying tax in Canada. That is absolutely scandalous, and we should all be outraged.

I invite the federal government—I urge it—to heed the demands of those on the left, of progressives and the NDP, among others, and tell these companies that enough is enough. Google, Apple, Facebook and their ilk need to pay tax. They make mind-boggling amounts of money. They are literally stealing our money, and the middle class, the workers, the people we represent in our ridings, are the ones who always end up bearing the tax burden.

We are not talking about taxation in Bill C-11, but about a certain fairness in financial contributions to support our cultural sector. That is the link between the two. It is a small step, but a significant one for our artists, creators, and national, local or regional productions. It is becoming absolutely essential to be able to make this shift. It is high time that we did so. We are already lagging far behind.

The last version of the Broadcasting Act was enacted in 1991. It is now 2022. Spotify, Netflix and all these online streaming services did not exist in 1991. Fortunately or unfortunately, I remember it as an entirely different era. One thing is certain: we have a regulatory and legislative framework that is outdated and archaic. As the member for Trois-Rivières stated, it is literally from another century and must be adapted for the present day.

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Back then, the federal government was able to step in and pass legislation on TV and radio broadcasters because the airwaves had been declared a public good. Since they were a public good, the government could step in to oversee and regulate the use of these airwaves. That is not true of the Internet. The Internet is not considered a public good or even a public service, which is unfortunate. I do think it should be a public service. Back then, the legislation was drafted based on the concept of public airwaves for radio and later for television. We are light years beyond that.

• (1750)

We in the NDP welcome this kind of legislation, which aims to ensure that everyone is treated equally by bringing those who do not currently contribute to funding Quebec and Canadian cultural production in line with those who do. This should have been done a long time ago. We said this last year, before the election. Governments have been dragging their feet on this issue. It is culture, our cultural sector and our artists, who have suffered and unfortunately continue to suffer.

I find it particularly hypocritical that the Liberals argued for urgent action on the former Bill C-10, after introducing it too late in 2021 and then calling an election, knowing full well that this would kill the bill, which would die on the Order Paper in the Senate and therefore not receive royal assent.

The Liberals' political self-interest and the tactical, partisan decisions they made in the hope of gaining a majority led them to knowingly and willingly abandon the cultural sector and our artists. Because of the Liberals, these artists will have to wait months, maybe even a year, before this problem will be solved and the various stakeholders will help fund our cultural productions through the Canada Media Fund or other funds.

This sector has never been more in need of our support. The cultural sector, along with tourism, has probably been hit hardest by the pandemic. This is particularly true for the performing arts, which are not as affected by Bill C-11 and the Broadcasting Act but still employ a lot of people, who are desperate and struggling. The past two years have been extremely difficult, which is one more reason we need to be diligent and mindful in designing the best bill possible.

If this act is only reviewed every 33 years, it becomes even more important that we do a good job now, since we do not know when we will have the chance to make any changes.

As I was saying, technology has left our current system in the dust. On the one hand, our broadcasters and cable companies pay for arts, TV, film and music productions. On the other, web giants, all the online and streaming broadcasters, do not pay a penny to support the telling of our stories.

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This inequality, this inequity, this is what needs fixing and should have been fixed a long time ago. We are ready to work in good faith with our friends in the cultural sector to change this situation and find a solution to this problem.

The NDP supports the bill in principle, just as it supported the old Bill C-10. We want to work with our cultural sector, not just because we like culture or because it is what defines us as humans, but also because it is an important economic sector with tens of thousands of jobs. Those jobs in turn support cities, towns and regions. Lots of those jobs are in Quebec, in Montreal, and, I am proud to say, in my riding, Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, where I am fortunate to represent a very visible, active and creative artistic community that I am very proud of.

I would like to raise the two questions that we have, and I look forward to hearing what the minister has to say about them and talking about them in committee.

One thing that derailed the debate the last time was the official opposition's very partisan speeches. The Conservative Party was getting a great kick out of raising the doubts and concerns of people who were worried about being regulated and managed by a government body like the CRTC. However, a fair reading of the previous bill showed that such would not have been the case.

It seems the Liberals were worried that the debate would shift or derail like that again, so the new bill seems even more forceful with regard to what we generally refer to as cat or baby videos, which will not be subject to CRTC regulations. Users and user-generated content will be excluded.

• (1755)

That is stated and reiterated in the bill. We could discuss that, but I think we are headed in the right direction. That is not the purpose of the bill. The purpose of the bill is to make individuals and companies that use social media for business purposes and generate a significant amount of revenue contribute.

That is where things are unclear right now. For example, how will we calculate YouTube's contribution if we are making a distinction between commercial and personal or private use? I am saying YouTube, but the same would be true for TikTok, Facebook or Instagram.

These platforms and social media sites are used a lot for professional and business purposes. That is fine, but we need to make sure that we have a mechanism for determining the value of the commercial use of TikTok or YouTube, for example, and excluding private or personal use.

Based on the preliminary discussions we had with officials from Canadian Heritage, the answer is unclear. They seem to be floundering, unsure how they are going to find a solution. I suspect that they will end up negotiating with each of these platforms.

If we do not have transparency tools for obtaining information on the proportion of personal use versus commercial use, information that is held by these social media platforms and online streamers, how does the Liberal government plan to negotiate with these giants to ensure that they are not pulling a fast one?

How do we make sure that they stop failing to contribute their fair share and stop saving money on the backs of workers who actually do contribute by paying taxes in Quebec and Canada?

We need to seek clarification, and I think this is going to be important work to do in committee. The Minister of Canadian Heritage is going to have to explain this to us.

The second thing I wanted to talk about is the concept of discoverability. I have questions about this, and I am not the only one, because I heard my colleagues from the Bloc Québécois, including the former heritage critic, also raise this question. The bill touches on the issue of funding for various cultural activities, and the web giants now have to chip in.

We must ask ourselves one important question: Will consumers see this content? It is all well and good to say that there may be a Quebec film in the Netflix catalogue, but if it never appears on the home page when the app is opened, if people do not even know it exists, they are not going to watch it. The same goes for a TV show or a song.

For our artists and singers, YouTube is a major means of monetizing and selling their work. The Liberal government is telling us that it wants that work to be seen and found by consumers, but it does not want to intervene in the algorithms of these social media platforms and online streamers.

I am scratching my head a little and wondering how this will be verified. The home page and suggestions shown to each consumer may vary based on their streaming history, previous searches, areas of interest and also, I believe, a significant amount of data that these web giants share in order to create customer profiles.

How will we know if Cœur de pirate's latest song is easy for people to find when they are looking for music on YouTube?

I was told that these people will have an obligation to deliver and that they will look at the overall picture. I have no idea how they are going to monitor all that, collect the data and be able to verify whether the discoverability mechanisms are real or just wishful thinking and a declaration of intent.

• (1800)

I understand that algorithms are also a trade secret. This may be a touchy subject, but I have yet to get a clear answer on how we can achieve this from a technical standpoint without tweaking the algorithms. I think these are important questions.

If the bill simply says that it is very important for Quebecers and Canadians to have access to TV shows, films and songs from Quebec and Canada and that it is important that they be able to find them easily, but, in reality, none of what the bill says is enforced or enforceable, then the bill will fall short of its goal.

There are some worthwhile aspects, such as funding, national production, discoverability and diversity. The bill does take some steps in the right direction. For example, it contains some guarantees in terms of French-language content production.

As a member of Parliament from Quebec, it is obviously very important to me and to the people I represent across Quebec, and to francophones outside of Quebec and to people all across the country, that French-language works can be produced and are discoverable. We must avoid making the same mistakes the Liberals made with their big agreement with Netflix, when they seemed to have completely forgotten French-language or Quebec content. There were no guarantees.

The NDP is very much in favour of focusing on indigenous productions and indigenous-language content creation. That is something that has been neglected over the years, and there is some catching up to do. Investments are required. We are talking about money, about regional and provincial support. I do not know if we are going to want to look at quotas, but the fact that we are even talking about this and making it a priority is a step in the right direction. This is something that the NDP will emphasize strongly when we are studying the bill.

The bill addresses other points worthy of our attention, such as the idea of cultural sovereignty. If we cannot find a way to tell our own stories, the stories of our regions and towns, we will be crushed, completely overtaken. Our identity, be it Canadian, Québécois, indigenous or something else, will suffer. We have to be realistic. We are right next to the United States, the epicentre of global cultural imperialism. We need to make sure we have the tools to protect Quebec and Canadian content and our ability to produce it. We have to protect our content and promote the use of local talent. Quebec and Canadian artists have to be able to participate and be in those productions. They need exposure and recognition. That is crucial.

Bill C-11 misses the mark in that it fails to mention CBC/Radio-Canada. The government could have gone there. It could have included CBC/Radio-Canada. There is nothing in this bill about the independence of its board of directors or the role of advertising at CBC/Radio-Canada. That is something the NDP would have liked to see.

We have also been anxiously waiting for legislation that was promised by the federal government, including support for newsrooms to deal with the issue of online broadcasters using content created by journalistic sources. Sites like MSN take articles from here, there and everywhere without paying to use or disseminate them. This is a big problem.

Considering the situation in downtown Ottawa right now and the interference of far-right groups in some of the protests, I think a bill on online hate and radicalization would be extremely important. We really want the Liberal government to do something about this. We are still waiting for the Liberal government to take action to support journalism work and newsrooms, and to address online hate.

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• (1805)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it has been somewhat encouraging to hear the opposition members address the legislation. The minister responsible was very passionate in his explanation of, and love for, Canadian culture and heritage and all our different regions.

The legislation we have before us is needed. Technology has advanced greatly and the need for the legislation is very real. One of the reasons why it is before us today is to recognize that streaming has become a major aspect of society and ensure that our arts community is not left behind with regard to it. This is one of the reasons why I see the bill as very strong legislation.

The hon. member mentions a number of areas he would like to see changed. Does the NDP actually have some amendments the member would be able to share with the House, prior to the bill going to committee?

• (1810)

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Madam Speaker, given that we agree with the principle of supporting our cultural community, our artists and our creators, we will definitely push for a bill that does exactly that, with the necessary corrections. I talked about two of them earlier.

The NDP will therefore work constructively at committee to improve Bill C-11 and address the problems. However, I would encourage the federal government to do a much better job defending its bill than the previous heritage minister did. I hope the new Minister of Canadian Heritage does not fall into the traps that the Conservative Party will try to set on the issue of freedom of expression.

[English]

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Madam Speaker, I was just going through the bill, and there is one part in section 5 that talks about consultations with linguistic minority communities across Canada. The commission will have to seek consultation from these communities to figure out if the policies being made are actually going to be implemented, and what effect they will have on communities.

Does the member have any thoughts on that? Does he have any faith that these consultations will actually take place and make meaningful change to the Broadcasting Act to better serve the needs of these communities?

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his excellent question.

The bill has the support of several important groups, such as the Coalition for the Diversity of Cultural Expressions and the Coalition for Culture and Media in Quebec. It is also being closely watched by francophone communities outside Quebec, which are very interested.

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I remember meeting with people from Acadian cultural societies in New Brunswick. I hope that the minister will be honest in his consultations, and I think that changes or guarantees could be offered to these francophone communities outside Quebec. I am thinking about the Acadians, but also, as I mentioned before, the indigenous nations.

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie for his excellent speech and comments, which line up with most of our ideas.

I would like his take on the work that was done on the former Bill C-10. The Bloc Québécois made a lot of suggestions, additions and corrections to improve it. We are now faced with the current Bill C-11, which I certainly think could easily be passed once it is studied.

The thing that bothers me is the \$80 million a month that skips over the creators and goes straight to the broadcasting bigwigs. It makes me so mad. As a singer-songwriter myself, I know that all of my colleagues are up in arms over this.

Does my colleague also believe that we must deal with the bill urgently and efficiently?

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Madam Speaker, I share his sense of urgency. A considerable amount of money is being stolen from artists every month and every year. I am not an artist, but I am quite familiar with their situation because my brother is part of the Quebec folk band *Le Vent du Nord*. Members of the band are paying close attention, and they want the government to act as quickly as possible.

I think we can do that because Bill C-11 is a good foundation on which to build. The last time, the Bloc Québécois made a lot of suggestions and improvements, and the NDP supported most of them. I think that the Bloc did the same for the amendments suggested by the NDP, so I think we will be able to work together because we both have a strong interest in these issues.

[English]

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, I will begin by thanking my hon. colleague, who has done absolutely tremendous work in this area. I could not agree more with him that the arts community has been gutted, particularly now that we are in a pandemic. That is one of the reasons I put forward a bill for a guaranteed livable basic income, something that would be a game-changer for artists.

My hon. colleague spoke about how the NDP has fought to ensure that the orders and conditions required by the CRTC from the web giants are transparent, public and do not contain loopholes that web giants can use to circumvent their obligations to fund Canadian cultural content and make it discoverable. Could my hon. colleague expand on that and why this is critically important?

• (1815)

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question. I know that there is a very active and vibrant artistic community in her riding that has been weakened by

the laissez-faire approach of successive federal governments and by the current crisis, which is still ongoing.

I think she made an excellent point. As a progressive opposition party, we must be very vigilant about the powers given to the CRTC.

I spoke a bit about that earlier. We need to be very serious and firm about information, data transparency, negotiations with web giants and the obligations that will be imposed. In my past life, I often saw the CRTC being somewhat lax, weak and complacent with large corporations.

If the directives and guidelines are unclear, we cannot automatically assume that the CRTC will do the right thing.

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. He seems very knowledgeable about this issue; good for him.

He said the act has not been updated since 1991 and commented that he did not know if it was a good thing or a bad thing that he remembers those days. Unfortunately, I was not yet born, so I do not remember it. I am so sorry, but that joke really made me laugh.

I heard him mention algorithms, which is something that really interests me. At the end of his speech, he pointed out that the act does not really say much about CBC/Radio-Canada.

In the regions, we have issues with coverage. We have just one or two reporters covering Rimouski, Matane, Gaspé, Chaleur Bay, the Gaspé coast and the Îles-de-la-Madeleine. I think that deserves our attention. Perhaps my colleague agrees.

How could that have been built into this bill?

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia for her excellent intervention.

This reform of the Broadcasting Act could indeed have been a good opportunity to do that. The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation has beautiful, modern facilities in Montreal, but unfortunately, the corporation itself could use a little updating in terms of its mandate, its role and its resources.

I am also very sympathetic to what my colleague said about regional coverage. I would perhaps even go a little further than she did. There are also problems with coverage outside Quebec. Many francophone communities outside Quebec do not get much news coverage from Radio-Canada, so they get very little out of the public broadcaster. A lot of work needs to be done to improve that, particularly by having a more independent board of directors, who can then make their own choices.

[English]

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Louis.

It is an absolute privilege for me to stand in the House today, on behalf of the residents of my riding of Davenport, to speak in support of Bill C-11, an act to amend the Broadcasting Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other acts. I am truly grateful for the leadership of the Minister of Canadian Heritage and the work that he, his department and his team have done with respect to the bill.

As I have mentioned many times in this chamber, my riding of Davenport, in Toronto's west end, is home to more artists, creators and those in the cultural industry than probably most ridings across this country. Anything that impacts artists and cultural sector is of great interest to me and to the residents of my riding.

Before I go any further, I would like to acknowledge that I am delivering this speech from the unceded traditional territory of the Algonquin nation.

Our federal government is committed to advancing the interests of Canada and Canadians through a forward-thinking digital policy agenda. This will include steps to make the Internet fairer and safer for all Canadians, while ensuring that it remains an engine for innovation.

For decades, our system has guaranteed the creation of Canadian movies, TV shows and music. Today, streaming platforms benefit from access to the Canadian market, but have zero responsibility toward Canadian artists and creators. With Bill C-11, our online streaming bill, we are asking online streamers to showcase and contribute to the creation of Canadian culture. The online streaming act would also improve fairness in the broadcasting system and ensure the sustainability of our cultural industry and the livelihoods of Canadian artists and creators.

A key and important element of the online streaming act is its application to online streamers. This issue has seen a lot of debate in the past, but our approach moving forward is quite simple. Canadians will continue to be able to use social media as they always do and will not be subject to this legislation. User-uploaded programs on social media, including those of digital-first creators, are excluded.

The online streaming act is about broadcasting and ensuring that online streaming services that provide access to commercial programs are required to contribute in an equitable manner. During the last parliamentary session, this bill's predecessor was the subject of a lively debate about the treatment of social media services and their role in supporting our creators and culture.

We know that parliamentarians, broadcasters, cultural creators and all Canadians rightfully value freedom of expression. We are also passionate about supporting our unique, vibrant culture and ensuring that there is a prominent place on our airwaves, our TV screens and the Internet for Canadian music and stories.

Let us be clear. The online streaming act would not force a choice between these important objectives. Our federal government listened to the concerns of many different stakeholders, built on the work of my colleagues from the last parliamentary session and, as a result, changed the approach to appropriately recognize the role of social media platforms. Under this approach, users of social media,

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including online streamers, are not impacted. The bill would not impact their choice of freedom of expression.

Social media services play a role both as communication tools and as broadcasters. The online streaming act recognizes this dual function. When social media services are used as communication tools to share personal content, they are not covered by the bill. In fact, the vast majority of activity on social media services is not covered by the act.

At the same time, the CRTC can impose obligations of social media services in situations where their activities are the same as those of other online broadcasters. The approach is simple.

First, the users of social media services are not considered broadcasters. They will never face obligations under the act. This means that no matter how active we are on social media, what we post, read or comment on will always fall outside the scope of the Broadcasting Act. The online streaming act is not about our activities on social media.

Second, social media services like YouTube can only have obligations in relation to the commercial programs they carry on their services. Content that does not generate revenue, the content of digital-first creators that is only distributed on social media and amateur content are excluded.

• (1820)

Finally, when social media services are used to distribute commercial music, they can be required to contribute in the same way as other online streaming services. It is only fair. After all, two-thirds of Canadians listen to music on YouTube. We owe it to our talented creators and our Canadian broadcasters to ensure fair treatment of programs consumed on different platforms, regardless of how they are distributed.

I will outline this approach in greater detail. The online streaming act is not about regulating the Internet. It would not affect Canadians' ability to use the Internet. Canadians would be able to connect with friends and family, and stream their favourite movies and TV shows, just as they always have done. The act would set clear limits as to where the CRTC may impose obligations. Content uploaded by Canadians on social media platforms, such as Facebook or YouTube, would not face obligations, except in clearly defined circumstances as provided in section 4.2 of the act.

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Let me provide a few examples. Ottawa's Jade Taylor-Ryan uploads a video of her dancing cat, Ed, that reaches over 10 million likes on TikTok. Jade Taylor-Ryan is a user of social media and would never be covered by the act. TikTok would also not face any obligations in relation to Jade's video. Gurdeep Pandher, Yukon's famous bhangra dancer, uploads his YouTube videos that have danced their way into many hearts. Gurdeep Pandher is a user of social media, and would never be covered by the act. YouTube would also, in this case, not face any obligations in relation to Gurdeep's videos. YouTube and other social media services cannot face obligations in relation to these user-uploaded videos, because they are not the kinds of videos offered on other streaming or traditional broadcasting services, such as TV and radio stations, or Spotify and Netflix.

Again, if a Canadian uploads a video of their child's birthday party, that would also fall outside the scope of the act. Even when a Canadian captures their pet's hilarious moment and uploads it to social media, where it goes viral with millions of views, both the user and the content would always fall outside of the scope. Again, the act would not apply to content generated by everyday Canadians or to social media services for their distribution of that content.

This brings us to the question of digital-first creators. Social media platforms have helped turn many Canadians into household names. We have seen the rise of such talents as Gigi Gorgeous and Asian-Canadian pop singer, Alex Porat, on YouTube. Platforms like Bandcamp and SoundCloud have provided opportunities for artists such as Hussein Ahmed, a.k.a. Handsome Tiger. He is a producer and DJ of Anishinabe-Métis-North African descent. These individuals are among the many Canadian digital-first creators. Their content is developed first and foremost to be distributed on social media platforms. It is not distributed through other broadcasters.

The intention of this bill is not to interfere with or stifle these Canadian voices. That is why the government intends to instruct the CRTC through a policy direction to ensure that the content of digital-first creators be excluded from the act. Therefore, social media services would not face any obligations in relation to the programs of digital-first creators. We have been clear on this from the very start.

The online streaming act would only allow the CRTC to impose obligations on social media services with regard to a subset of commercial content, such as commercial music. The legislation includes three factors the CRTC would have to consider in identifying commercial programs. It would consider the amount of revenue generated by the program, whether the program was available on other traditional or online broadcasters, such as Netflix or Spotify, and whether the content had been assigned an international standards code number.

The objective here is fairness. Any service used to distribute commercial programs in our homes, cars or pockets would be required to contribute to Canadian stories and music. This approach would ensure that music like Edmonton native Ruth B.'s song, *Dandelions*, which is also popular, would be treated the same way when made available through YouTube as on the radio or Spotify.

In conclusion, the new approach to social media in the online streaming act would ensure that social media services contribute in

an appropriate manner to the Canadian broadcasting system while respecting the rights, freedoms and choices of Canadians. With our online streaming bill, we are asking online streamers to showcase and contribute to the creation of Canadian culture. Both Canadian broadcasters and streaming platforms should play from the same set of rules. I ask all the hon. members of the House to support the online streaming act. We owe it to our creators, our culture and all Canadians.

* * *

• (1825)

EMERGENCIES ACT

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2) I am tabling, in both official languages, a motion for confirmation of a declaration of emergency pursuant to section 58 of the Emergencies Act; an explanation of the reasons for issuing the declaration; and a report on consultations with the lieutenant governors in council of the provinces, with respect to the declaration. I am also tabling the proclamation declaring a public order emergency.

Finally, I ask that an order of the day be designated for consideration of the motion at the next sitting of the House, pursuant to subsection 58(5) of the Emergencies Act.

* * *

• (1830)

ONLINE STREAMING ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-11, An Act to amend the Broadcasting Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Madam Speaker, a lot has been said in the debate today about social media and about web giants. I was curious to notice that the member for Davenport has spent \$18,955 on Facebook advertising in the last couple of years. With subsection 4(2), on direct or indirect revenue generated from social media content, I am curious as to whether the member thinks that the \$18,955 she has spent on Facebook advertising would be captured under subsection 4(2) of the act.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his advocacy for everything to do with arts and culture in this country. As I mentioned, in my riding, we have so many artists that anything to do with this sector is very important.

The objective of this bill is to bring online streaming services under the jurisdiction of the Broadcasting Act. It is to modernize a very outdated piece of legislation and make sure that we treat our broadcasters the same as our online streaming services. That is the key objective of this legislation.

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[Translation]

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné (Terrebonne, BQ): Madam Speaker, my colleague and I are both members of the Standing Committee on Finance, and we heard some really compelling evidence from Sophie Prigent of the Union des artistes. She said that artists have suffered enormously during this pandemic, and that never before had they withdrawn so much money from their RRSPs.

Bill C-11 could have helped many of these artists earlier. Why did it take so long for the government to introduce it?

[English]

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Madam Speaker, that is a very important question.

In terms of this legislation, I want to point out, because it is important to raise this, this legislation would update CRTC guidelines that will increase the proportion of French-language content to be supported through the Canadian media fund and other streams.

In terms of support, we did introduce this relatively quickly. The last election happened only last September, and we came back into session in November and December, so I feel that we have made a priority of reintroducing this bill.

I will say, though, that I share her concern, and I have heard also from artists from my own riding as well, about the need for additional support. I am really proud of the support that our federal government has given to artists through the CERB and CRB to very targeted and specialized funding for the arts and culture sector. We have had the backs of our artists, and we will continue to do so moving forward.

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Madam Speaker, levelling the playing field with online streaming web giants is critical. Just as Canadian cultural workers, artists and broadcasters have been calling for these changes to ensure Canadian content is protected and supported, Canadian publishers have been calling on the government to address concerns in their industry.

I spoke to Orca Book Publishers, an incredible Canadian children's book publisher located in my riding of Victoria. It talked about the need to ensure continued access to a diverse range of Canadian-authored books published by Canadian-owned companies. One of the ways to do that is to ensure the Canada book fund is adequately resourced. It also spoke about how COVID-19 has exposed long-standing weaknesses in the Copyright Act. The legal framework—

• (1835)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I did ask for a brief question. I will allow the hon. member to respond. We do not have very much time.

The hon. member for Davenport.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Madam Speaker, I will say that in my riding of Davenport we have the House of Anansi, which is a wonderful publishing house. It is also looking for urgent changes and an update to our Copyright Act. I agree with the member that we should make that a priority as well.

[Translation]

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to rise this afternoon to speak to Bill C-11. During the 43rd Parliament, I gave a speech at second reading stage of the previous bill, Bill C-10, and I am pleased that this new version is being debated in the House.

I believe that, in a way, this bill represents a second chance. It gives the official opposition a second chance to clearly support our creators and to hold to account a massive industry that is gaining influence by the day. I am obviously speaking about the digital broadcasting industry, otherwise known as streaming services. This bill offers a second chance to hold the web giants at the heart of this industry to account.

The Conservatives say they support the little guy, but by opposing Bill C-10 in the previous Parliament, they sided instead with the giants, the most powerful players, those dominating the public space in the digital era.

Our creators play a key role in our society and our economy. They are not just here to entertain us, to serve as a distraction from everyday living or to offer an escape from real life. They have a much more profound and important role. Creators reinforce our identity and help it grow in a world that is constantly changing and evolving. Creators hold a mirror up to our society. They show us who we are, both the good and the bad.

Creators help us learn about and understand our past. They also serve as a beacon, illuminating a future full of possibility. Creators embody the soul of a people, a nation, a country, and their work feeds that soul. If we do not take care of our artists and creators, if we do not ensure they can earn a living, if we allow them to wither and die, our collective soul will pay the price.

Artists motivate us as individuals and as a society. They motivate us to keep building. For example, when we experience an exceptional piece of art, especially one that reflects our own stories and our own reality, it imbues us with a sense of pride in who we are and what we can accomplish. This pride motivates us to keep building our community and sharing our perspective with the whole world.

I am thinking of the work of Jean-Marc Vallée, who passed away recently. We recognize ourselves as Quebecers in his films, particularly *C.R.A.Z.Y.* and *Café de Flore*. We also hear our voice in his Hollywood movies like *Big Little Lies*, *Dallas Buyers Club* and *Demolition*. His Hollywood projects generated economic spinoffs for Quebec and Canada, even in my community of West Island in Montreal. I have a friend, Gavin Fernandes, who worked with Jean-Marc Vallée for a long time doing post-production work on some of his films.

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In very practical terms, arts and culture are an economic force. As for the sectors targeted by Bill C-11, let us look at broadcasting. Broadcasting contributes roughly \$9.1 billion to Canada's gross domestic product. That represents 46,556 jobs.

• (1840)

The film and video sector contributes approximately \$4.3 billion to the Canadian economy, which translates into 71,868 jobs. Finally, the music and sound recording industry injects \$572 million into the Quebec economy, which translates into 8,286 jobs.

I would take it one step further. Contributions made by the creative sector transcend the industries I just mentioned. Creativity is at the heart of nearly everything in a modern economy like Canada's, where things like ideas, experiences and symbols are increasingly consumed alongside physical products.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[English]

JUSTICE

Mr. Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Madam Speaker, I asked for this time in Adjournment Proceedings to give the minister another opportunity to answer a very simple question I asked him in the House in December with respect to Bill C-5: Is he willing to accept an amendment?

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to start by acknowledging that I am speaking to members from the traditional lands of the Algonquin people.

I am pleased to have an opportunity to speak to Bill C-5. I intend to focus on some areas where there appears to be some misunderstanding about the impact that repealing mandatory minimum penalties from the Criminal Code will have on our justice system and society more broadly.

I want to direct the member to take part in the committee, as well as the process where amendments can be made. We would welcome and review all amendments put forward by members at committee.

Let me make this clear from the outset. Repealing MMPs for certain offences does not signal that these offences are less serious. Instead, the government is aiming to restore judicial discretion to impose fit and appropriate sentences in more cases. These changes will also help address systemic racism and discrimination in the criminal justice system. Our approach is smart on crime and we will not take lessons from the previous Conservative government's failed approaches.

In Canada, sentencing courts are always required to consider public safety when imposing a sentence and to ensure that the system reflects both the seriousness of the offence and the degree of responsibility of the offender. I have faith that sentencing courts will continue to impose fit and appropriate sentence. I would also note that the courts understand the seriousness of offences involv-

ing firearms. For example, the Supreme Court of Canada in *R. v. Nur* confirmed that serious penalties should be imposed for our firearm-related offences when circumstances warrant it.

Here are the facts. The MMPs targeted by this bill have disproportionately affected indigenous peoples, Black Canadians and members of marginalized communities. In 1999-2000, indigenous peoples represented 2% of the Canadian adult population, but they accounted for 17% of admissions to federal custody. Since then, those numbers have risen significantly. As most recent available data suggests, they now account for 5% of the Canadian adult population, but 30% of federally incarcerated individuals.

What is more is that Black Canadians are overrepresented in terms of federally incarcerated individuals, representing only 3% of the Canadian adult population but 7% of federally incarcerated individuals. They are also overrepresented in respective import-export offences subject to MMPs in the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act.

It is hard to ignore the evidence that shows negative trends that span well over a decade and have only been getting stronger. Repealing the MMPs in Bill C-5 would not reduce public safety. In fact, these reforms would contribute to enhancing public safety because data shows imprisonment, particularly for lower-risk offenders, is associated with higher rates of reoffending.

Bill C-5 offers an important way forward. It is evident from the calls for reform made by Canadian stakeholders, as well as organizations and commissions, such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, that they believe these reforms will move criminal justice in the right direction. Having said that, I look forward to the member's feedback during the committee stage of this bill.

• (1845)

Mr. Alex Ruff: Madam Speaker, that was kind of a long-winded answer when "yes" was all I was looking for. I wish the parliamentary secretary could have answered the question in question period. It would have saved us all a lot of time.

That being said, I would like to correct him. He talked about the failed Conservative policies, but the 14 or so mandatory minimums being removed are all ones that were brought in by former prime ministers Pierre Trudeau and Jean Chrétien, and not anything that was brought in under former prime minister Stephen Harper. These are Liberal mandatory minimums being taken off the books.

Just to go to the member's whole point in his concluding statement, can he provide an extenuating circumstance of why someone found guilty of producing schedule I or II drugs, i.e., heroin, cocaine, fentanyl or crystal meth, should be let off as not a serious crime?

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to ensure that the idea behind Bill C-5 is put forward this evening.

Bill C-5 advances an evidence-based approach to sentencing policies in Canada. It proposes to repeal MMPs for certain firearm offences and all those in the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act in order to address unjust outcomes for indigenous peoples, Black Canadians and marginalized Canadians by remedying their overrepresentation in custody, including for offences punishable by an MMP.

MMPs have high economic and social costs, and they offer little or no return on our investment. They perpetuate unfair outcomes and offer a less effective criminal justice system. Bill C-5 is an important step that breaks away from rigid, one-size-fits-all sentencing policies that treat lower-risk and first-time offenders the same as hardened drug offenders. The reforms in this—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. parliamentary secretary's time is up.

The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I rise tonight to pursue a question I initially asked in question period late last year, on December 2, 2021. The question ended up with the Minister of Fisheries. This topic that I am going to raise again tonight crosses several different departments federally. At its core, it is about environmental racism. It is about the illegal dumping of toxic waste on Mohawk territory. I cannot imagine any non-indigenous or non-Black community allowing it, but we do have an environmental racism problem in this country. I hope my private member's bill, Bill C-226, will be passed soon. It is a non-partisan effort to make sure the federal government adopts a strategy to deal with environmental racism, as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has done for decades.

To my specific example, this was part of my question on December 2:

On the Mohawk territories of Kanesatake, there is a toxic waste dump. It has been leaking harmful chemicals, and it also affects the wildlife and the fish. It is not as though the government has not said something about it.

There was a directive delivered to the toxic waste facility from the federal government on November 18, 2020, to call for the toxic waste site to be cleaned up and for the dumping of toxic waste to stop. I asked the government, "Could the minister update us on what is being done to remove the toxic waste facility from Kanesatake?" The answer came from the hon. Minister of Fisheries. I think her answer was sound, but we did not have the details. The minister said that disposing of waste in this manner is dangerous to people, fish habitats and fish, and said, "We will hold any individuals who violate this act to account." As things progressed, it is clear that the illegal dumping continues.

The Province of Quebec allowed dumping outside the confines of the specific permit that was given in 2015 for a recycling landfill, which is what it was originally licensed for. The Province of Quebec gave that permit to G & R Recycling in 2015 and by 2016 the complaints had begun. They continued as residents nearby

smelled toxic and nauseating fumes and became sickened by these fumes. Finally, in September 2020, the Province of Quebec revoked the licence. Again, as evidence of environmental racism, it was not until the black ooze from this toxic waste facility began seeping on to settler culture farms outside of the Mohawk community that the province took action.

The federal government is still looking at this situation and the figures are just astonishing. This facility was licensed for storing up to 27,800 cubic metres of waste and it now has 400,000 cubic metres of waste, or 15 times what it was originally licensed for. This should not be tolerated. The community of Kanesatake is calling out for justice.

Chief and former RCMP investigator, Jeremy Tomlinson, has said that these facilities are being built and people are paying to haul the waste away, but "instead of getting rid of it at a designated site, they're dumping it here. Think about it, they're building on land that was stolen from us and dumping on what little land we have left. People have had enough." I am hoping in the late show we can get to some solutions for this community.

● (1850)

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, perhaps I will start by noting that Environment and Climate Change Canada is well aware of the issue and is working with the Kanesatake band council, Indigenous Services Canada and the Government of Quebec to resolve the situation. G & R Recycling SENC is a Mohawk company operating since 2015 as a sorting centre for construction and demolition materials on Kanesatake territory under a band council resolution and a certificate of authorization issued by the province.

Over the past three years, Environment and Climate Change Canada and Indigenous Services Canada have provided support to the Kanesatake Mohawk council's environment office to help the community address environmental issues on its territory. As part of this support, in April 2020, at the request of the band council, Environment and Climate Change Canada provided assistance to the Kanesatake environment office to carry out the environmental site assessment of G & R Recycling.

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Following complaints of a discharge of water into a water body next to the G & R site in 2020 and subsequent inspections, Environment and Climate Change Canada enforcement officers issued a direction under the Fisheries Act to G & R Recycling on November 18, 2020, with respect to the discharges of deleterious substances into waters frequented by fish. Since the issuance of the direction, Environment and Climate Change Canada enforcement officers have completed at least three follow-up inspections at the site, the latest of which was less than two weeks ago. To date, the inspections have found that the company is complying with the requirements of the direction. The company was also subject to a series of enforcement actions under the Quebec Environment Quality Act that culminated in March 2020 when the province issued a ministerial order directing G & R to immediately cease the deposit of residual materials and return the site to its original state.

As my colleague, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, mentioned during question period on December 2, the protection of fish habitat and prevention of pollution in fish-bearing waters are a priority for our government. The administration of the Fisheries Act allows us to achieve that goal. The Fisheries Act contains specific provisions for the protection of waters where fish live, and the administration of these were entrusted in 1978 to the Minister of Environment. Environment and Climate Change Canada officials will continue to work with all parties to verify ongoing compliance with federal environmental legislation at this facility.

• (1855)

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, if only any of that was true. I have great respect for the parliamentary secretary, but the illegal dumping is continuing. The whole tenor of the parliamentary secretary's answer was not to worry as there is nothing to look at here. We have illegal dumping continuing. The dump site itself has been closed, but there are constant reports of illegal, late-night dumping near the homes of people in the Mohawk community.

There also needs to be a cleanup. It probably will cost in the neighbourhood of \$35 million. We need to get on with it. Yes, I know Environment and Climate Change Canada is well aware of this issue. As the parliamentary secretary said, it has been aware since 2019.

As the people of this community are saying, enough is enough. We must respect UNDRIP. We must recognize that this is indigenous territory. We must make sure that everything we do is following the lead of this community. However, it is clear that the illegal dumping continues and the illegal waste sits there.

Mr. Terry Duguid: Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for her passionate remarks, which I appreciate. I will just stress again that the monitoring of the direction, with the co-operation of the regulated party, has made it possible to contain surface waters and prevent their discharge into the environment. Temporary surface water treatment solutions have been deployed, such as pumping as needed and ex situ treatment of contaminated water, pending the results of environmental assessments aimed at formulating longer-term solutions.

These solutions are now known and are in the process of being implemented. Continued monitoring is planned to ensure that surface water from the G & R Recycling SENC site no longer contra-

venes the Fisheries Act. Again, I appreciate the hon. member's comments this evening.

LABOUR

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Madam Speaker, on November 25, I asked the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion for information relative to a BDC report that found that 64% of companies said that they had difficulty finding workers, and this was limiting their growth. RBC also reported that over one-third of businesses were having problems at that time finding employees, resulting in 870,000 vacancies across Canada. Of course, businesses need workers to make money. Therefore, what was the minister doing in an effort to resolve these labour shortages?

This actually feels like a small problem today compared to what we have had to deal with since that time. We have incredible instability in the nation at this time as a result of the poor leadership by this government and by the Prime Minister at the helm. Unfortunately, the reality is that life goes on outside the Parliamentary Precinct. I am very happy that the situations at the borders have been cleared up. The problem still exists here in Ottawa, but the reality is that life goes on outside the precinct. The labour shortage still exists.

Unfortunately, this is the problem with this government. There are a number of serious problems that we should be dealing with as a government and as a nation as a whole, rather than dealing with these unfortunate, unnecessary distractions, which become significant problems as a result of the lack of leadership. I think of things that are relevant to the labour shortage, such as inflation, which of course was announced this week to be 5.1%. It is a historic number, in a bad way, when inflation is over 5%. The finance minister stands up time and time again and talks about 4.5% GDP growth. That is just not important to average Canadians who have to buy groceries and heat their homes.

This leads me to the next problem that this government ignores, apart from the continuing large problem, and that is the cost of living. We have seen time and time again members of the government in the House who cannot name the price of a whole chicken and cannot name the price of bacon.

I have to say that we see this inability to face problems also replicated within the numbers that government members provide. They talked about one million jobs in the pandemic recovery. Well, these are just the jobs that were recovered naturally during the pandemic as a result of people going back to their jobs when the economy opened up across this nation. It is a completely insincere number, and we even saw this with the 200,000 jobs lost, which was another failure. They talk about a 106% employment rate. This is also insincere, given that the workforce has shrunk. Seniors have left, individuals have left, so of course we are going to have 106% employment if the workforce has shrunk.

We see these problems in different sectors, including agriculture, food processing, retail, hospitality and health care. I have offered solutions, such as eliminating the LMIA and providing a credit for automation, but as with all the other problems, including the most significant one just outside these doors, this government just does not acknowledge them and does not come up with solutions to them.

● (1900)

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the pandemic changed Canada's labour market. Jobs have been lost and workers need to upgrade or learn new skills to successfully go back to work and meet the new demands. That being said, even before the pandemic, Canada's workforce was facing challenges. We were already seeing widening wage gaps, stagnation in training and skills development, as well as a volatile shift toward gig and part-time work. We need to build a stronger workforce and that is what the Government of Canada is doing.

We are currently implementing the new apprenticeship service, for which budget 2021 is providing \$471 million over three years. The goal of this initiative is to help first-year apprentices connect with employment opportunities at small and medium-sized enterprises, giving them the hands-on experience that is required to succeed in the skilled trades.

We are working closely with all our partners. For example, each year the Government of Canada provides approximately \$3.4 billion in funding for individuals and employers to obtain skills, training and employment supports through the labour market development agreements and workforce development agreements with provinces and territories. Each year, more than a million employment and training supports are provided to individuals and employers across Canada under just these agreements.

During the pandemic, the Government of Canada provided an additional \$1.5 billion for employment supports to individuals and employers who were affected by the pandemic. More than half a million CERB and CRB recipients across Canada benefited from training and employment supports funded by the labour market transfers. This meant that those individuals who lost employment and retrained during the pandemic were ready to participate in the labour market. It is an additional \$17.1 billion over five years that will be allocated under the agreements to help more Canadians upgrade their skills to meet the demands of the future labour market.

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Finally, to build a stronger workforce, budget 2021 announced the creation of the new sectoral workforce solutions program, which recently launched a call for proposals. This funding will connect Canadians with the training they need to get good jobs in sectors where employers are looking for skilled workers, such as in clean tech, health care and other sectors that were the hardest hit in the pandemic. Applications will be accepted until March 2022, with the hopes of getting a number of projects under way by the end of the spring. The program will support a wide range of sector-focused activities, including training and upskilling for workers and developing solutions to employers' workforce challenges.

In light of all I have just listed, I think there is no doubt that we are building the stronger workforce that we need.

● (1905)

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Madam Speaker, that is incredibly disappointing because it just seems incredibly canned. That seems to be a problem of the government, its inability to really listen to Canadians. It seems to be consistently out of touch with Canadians. When I think about the labour shortage, that is about people eating. When I think about the cost of living, that is about people starving.

Very frankly, here is some advice to the government. If I had to solve these problems in descending order, I would start with the removal of the emergency measures act. I would move on to inflation, then the cost of living and then, finally, the labour shortage.

Frankly, it is overwhelming. I certainly hope that the government, under its leader, who was very disappointing in the House today, will come to its senses and provide some solutions for Canadians.

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk: Madam Speaker, certainly the issue of labour shortages is an important one, and I thank my hon. colleague for raising the issue this evening.

The pandemic affected our economy, but we did not stand still. The Government of Canada is putting forward a broad plan to support hard-hit sectors, to help businesses adapt and to thrive, and to give people living in Canada the skills they need to find good jobs.

Part of the plan is our significant investment in apprenticeships through grants, loans, tax credits, EI benefits during in-school training, project funding and support for the Red Seal program.

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Part of the plan is also our close collaboration with the provinces and territories to adapt a national approach to demand-driven skills training. Moreover, part of the plan is expanding and scaling up supports for the labour market integration of skilled newcomers with a focus on in-demand sectors.

The Government of Canada is acting to resolve labour shortages.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:08 p.m.)

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