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Thursday, March 24, 2022

Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, March 24, 2022

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

● (1000)

[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8)(a), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 14 petitions. These returns will be tabled in an electronic format.

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PRESERVING PROVINCIAL REPRESENTATION IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ACT

Hon. Mélanie Joly (for the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-14, An Act to amend the Constitution Act, 1867 (electoral representation).

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

* * *

AERONAUTICS ACT

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-259, An Act to amend the Aeronautics Act (collision avoidance system).

She said: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce an important bill to Parliament. This legislation would increase aviation safety for all Canadians by mandating operational collision avoidance systems for gliding clubs across Canada. I would like to thank the member for Calgary Confederation for seconding this bill and for his support on this issue.

This bill is tabled in the memory of Adam Leinweber, who was killed in a 2019 crash because the tow plane's anti-collision system was not functional. It is important to note that some of the 30 incidents and near misses related to gliders in the last 12 years have involved commercial aircraft.

This is an issue of safety for all of us, and I hope all parliamentarians will support this important initiative.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

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CANADA POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-260, An Act relating to cash contributions by Canada and to criteria and conditions in respect of post-secondary education.

She said: Mr. Speaker, it is my great privilege to table this bill on behalf of residents of Edmonton Strathcona and on behalf of all Canadians who recognize the value and importance of quality, accessible post-secondary education in this country. I want to thank my colleague, the member for Edmonton Griesbach, for seconding my bill today.

Post-secondary education is key to growing our economy and to positioning Canada as a knowledge leader in the 21st century. However, successive governments over the past two decades have failed to make post-secondary education a priority.

● (1005)

Over that time, federal support for post-secondary education has declined over 40% and, not surprisingly, student debt has risen 40%. Declining federal and provincial funding for post-secondary education means higher tuition costs, the corporatization of universities and colleges, the outsourcing of academic and support labour and lower-quality education, and it is putting academic institutions in our country at risk of failure.

It is time for the federal government to be a real partner in post-secondary education again. This bill, the Canada post-secondary education act, would create a financial transfer for post-secondary education and would impose qualifying criteria that provinces must meet in order to receive federal funding, including limiting the use of short-term contracts and casual labour and ensuring affordability for students.

Students, faculty and staff deserve better from our government. I urge my fellow parliamentarians to support the Canada post-secondary education act for all Canadians.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

*Routine Proceedings***PETITIONS****VACCINE MANDATES**

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions.

The first petition calls on the government to lift all federal mandates against public servants, the military and contractors for federal organizations, as well as lift all restrictions and requirements relating to mandates at the borders.

PLATINUM JUBILEE MEDAL

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my second petition relates to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. It calls for the striking of a platinum jubilee medal to honour Canadians who deserve such recognition. I hope the government recognizes there is still time, even though it has now become a socialist government and may dispense with the monarchy altogether.

SENIORS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am tabling a petition from constituents of Winnipeg North who passionately believe that parliamentarians need to be strong advocates for seniors. The petition highlights issues related to long-term care and mental health and the importance of support programs like the GIS and OAS. They are calling on the Prime Minister, cabinet and all members of the House to be constant and steady advocates for seniors in Canada.

UKRAINE

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I have a petition from Canadians who are rightly appalled by the unlawful and unwarranted invasion of Ukraine by Putin. They call upon the government to lift the visa requirement for Ukrainians seeking sanctuary in Canada from this terrible invasion in furtherance of free travel to Canada.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it really is an honour to present a petition on behalf of Canadians who are, as we all are in this place, deeply affected, horrified and outraged by the Russian aggression and attack on the people of Ukraine. We know there are now verified war crimes being committed against the people of Ukraine, and that the Russian invasion is illegal, immoral and devastating to the people of Ukraine.

Canada wants to continue, with the very large and important diaspora of Ukrainians within Canada, to open our arms, our hearts and our homes to Ukrainians seeking refuge. The petitioners ask that the government immediately waive all visa requirements and grant visa-free travel to Ukrainians seeking refuge here in Canada.

• (1010)

B.C. WILDFIRES

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, each year, British Columbia faces numerous wildfires that devastate communities and wildlife. With every wildfire, lumber prices, job availability, the risk of mill closures, mudslides, home insurance increases and damage to critical habitat are all affected.

During the Lytton fire, residents were told to stay away and not try to put out fires as water bombers were coming. In many cases, those water bombers never arrived. In Ontario, there is an all-hazards agency that manages fires, floods and slides. This type of agency is desperately needed in B.C.

I rise today to present a petition on behalf of constituents in Lillooet, spearheaded by Councillor Laurie Hopfl, calling on the federal and provincial governments to work together on better forest management and fire prevention policies. We need to empower local residents, indigenous communities, ranchers, industry, firefighters and forestry workers who have the knowledge of the land to manage their forests and prevent future disasters. My riding has probably faced more natural disasters than any riding in the entire country, and my constituents, in good faith, are looking for more assistance and innovative policies to address these critical challenges we face.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Patrick Weiler (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I have the honour of presenting petition 11619443. This petition was initiated by For Our Kids, a group of parents on the Sunshine Coast in my riding who are concerned about the future we are leaving future generations as a result of human-induced climate change.

The petitioners are calling on the government to significantly reduce emissions with transparent accounting each year, make contributions to emission reductions in the global south, wind down the use of fossil fuel subsidies and transition to a decarbonized economy, uphold and implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, create good, green jobs and drive inclusive workforce development, expand the social safety net, decarbonize public housing and provide accessible public transit.

AGE VERIFICATION SOFTWARE

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I rise to present a petition signed by Canadians from across our country who share their concerns about the widespread availability of sexually explicit material online that includes demeaning material and material that depicts sexual violence. Although it is a very lengthy petition that has a number of asks, these petitioners simply ask that the House adopt Bill S-203, a bill coming from the Senate that I believe was known in the last Parliament as the protecting young persons from exposure to pornography act. It is a simple act that would have meaningful age verification to protect Canada's young people.

VACCINE MANDATES

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition on behalf of Canadians from across the country who want an end to all COVID-19 mandates. The petitioners state that throughout the pandemic, truckers have served Canada and are heroes but are now impacted by a vaccine mandate that is impacting the supply chain. They say that the Prime Minister has politicized vaccines and insulted Canadians who have disagreed with him. Moreover, the petitioners comment that it is the sacred duty of the government to guard against discrimination and guarantee the freedoms of all Canadians.

The petitioners call on the House of Commons to immediately end all COVID-19 mandates implemented by the federal government that regulate areas that include federal employees, truckers and travellers. They also call for the end of all vaccine mandates and restrictions.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise virtually today to present a petition on behalf of Prince Edward Islanders who are concerned about the climate emergency and who were inspired by Seth Klein's book *A Good War*. These petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to enact just transition legislation that would reduce emissions by at least 60% below 2005 levels by 2030, to make significant contributions to emission reductions in countries in the global south, to create good, green jobs and drive an inclusive workforce and to expand the social safety net through new income supports, decarbonized public housing and operational funding, among other things.

I am thankful for the opportunity to present this petition.

* * *

• (1015)

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 would ask that all questions be allowed to stand at this time.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

[Translation]

POINTS OF ORDER

STATUS OF OPPOSITION PARTY

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to rise briefly in the House today to comment on the point of order raised by the member for Barrie—Innisfil earlier this week. The point of order was raised again—unfortunately, in my opinion—by the member for La Prairie. I am sure all members are aware of the subject of these points of order, which I consider frivolous. Nevertheless, I will address some of the points that were raised.

Points of Order

My Conservative and Bloc Québécois colleagues have clearly—perhaps even deliberately—misunderstood the nature of the historic agreement that will enable us to deliver exceptional results for all Canadians. The Conservatives' and Bloc's entire argument rests on an erroneous depiction of this confidence and supply agreement, which they are incorrectly calling a “coalition agreement”.

[English]

I would like to remind those members that confidence and supply agreements are not coalition governments, and the U.K.'s Institute for Government distinguishes very clearly between coalitions and mere confidence and supply agreements, as follows:

Confidence and supply agreements, made publicly available, can provide for stable government that can operate without fear of defeat on key votes in exchange for specific policy and procedural concessions, and on the basis that support parties are consulted and kept informed of government plans. They do not, of course, guarantee majority support for the entirety of a government's legislative programme, so ongoing negotiations are needed to enable the government to get its business through. But they do allow the main party to hold all the ministerial posts...and to control the policy agenda more extensively than when power is shared in coalition.

For smaller parties, such agreements offer the opportunity to achieve certain cherished policy objectives and earn political credit for that. They must commit to backing the government on [certain] votes, including on often politically difficult budget plans, but they do not have to make the more extensive across-the-board compromises of coalition, allowing them to preserve their distinct identity.

[Translation]

One need only look at the details of the agreement, which was made public, to see that it is a confidence and supply agreement, not a coalition. Under the terms of the agreement, the NDP agrees to support the government on confidence and budgetary matters in exchange for concrete progress in various policy areas.

[English]

The NPD remains as an independent party and an independent caucus, and continues to approach individual legislative items on a case-by-case basis and hold the government to account.

There are no cabinet posts for the NDP.

[Translation]

Several examples of such agreements can be found at the provincial level, and each of these legislatures has recognized the parties' right to maintain their own structure and the processes to which they are entitled in opposition.

[English]

In British Columbia, the Green Party was actually given more committee seats and status as a consequence of the confidence and supply agreement, which stated:

Both caucuses recognize that, in order to promote greater stability, the government must be able to negotiate with the three BC Green Party MLAs as a single, recognized caucus. Similarly, to be a credible partner and fulfill the responsibilities that will be required of them, the BC Green MLAs require access to legislative tools that are only available to recognized political parties and sufficient support staff.

In Yukon, the Yukon NDP sits as its own caucus and is afforded all the rights and privileges accorded to opposition caucuses.

Business of Supply

● (1020)

[Translation]

Several examples also exist in other countries, and I would specifically point to the confidence and supply agreements that have been negotiated in countries that use the Westminster parliamentary system.

In the United Kingdom, in 1977, the Labour Party was able to stay in power thanks to a confidence and supply agreement with the Liberal Party. In return, the Labour Party agreed to make political concessions to the Liberal Party. In 2017, the Conservative Party won a minority government and entered into a confidence and supply agreement with the Democratic Unionist Party.

In Australia, in 2010, the Australian Labor Party formed a minority government and entered into a confidence and supply agreement with three independent MPs and one Green MP.

In all of these examples, the opposition parties retained their full rights and powers to hold the government to account.

[English]

In New Zealand, as noted previously by the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, the confidence and supply agreement saw Green Party members enter cabinet and still treated as an opposition party within Parliament. Confidence and supply arrangements are common in New Zealand due to the mixed member proportional representation system that is used there.

Conservative and Bloc House leaders are wondering what is in the agreement. It is freely available online and I, of course, would be more than pleased to offer them a copy of the agreement.

What is in the agreement? There is a historic expansion of our health care system to include dental care right across the country, which is important for more than 10 million Canadians. It includes the passing of the Canada pharmacare act, finally, for 10 million Canadians who cannot afford their medication. It includes historic investments in affordable housing for the first time since the ending of the national housing program decades ago. It includes significant investments for indigenous-led affordable housing. It includes just transition legislation to combat climate change, anti-scab legislation to protect workers and much more.

In conclusion, I hope the Speaker will rapidly rule on this and remind the Conservative and Bloc House leaders that a confidence and supply agreement is not a coalition government. This agreement is clearly in the interest of Canadians.

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

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—FEDERAL VACCINE MANDATES

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC) moved:

That, given that Canada has one of the world's highest vaccination rates and every province across Canada has lifted or has a plan to lift vaccine mandates, the House call on the government to immediately lift all federal vaccine mandates in order to:

- (a) protect the jobs of federally regulated employees;
- (b) enable Canadians to travel unimpeded;
- (c) ensure Canada's tourism industry recovery; and
- (d) allow for the free flow of goods across the Canadian border.

The Deputy Speaker: Since today is the final allotted day for the supply period ending March 26, 2022, the House will go through the usual procedures to consider and dispose of the supply bills. In view of recent practices, do hon. members agree that the bills be distributed now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise in the House on this important issue.

I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable, who will also speak to the importance of today's motion.

The Conservatives have brought forward this motion calling on the government to end all federal vaccine mandates now. After two years of Canadians doing all that was asked of them, including following the rules and being in lockdown, unable to visit their family or travel, the effects of these restrictions exacerbated the mental health challenges of many Canadians and was incredibly difficult for those who are on the margins of our society. These restrictions also caused delays and the postponement or cancellation of diagnostic screening appointments and treatments, leaving patients lacking for care. Canadians did everything that was asked of them, even boasting some of the highest vaccination rates in the world, but we cannot live under these restrictions indefinitely.

When we look to countries around the world, our allies, and provinces across this federation, they are ending the mandates. Every province in this country, following the advice of their chief medical officer of health, has either lifted the mandates or has publicly released their plan to lift the mandates. However, Ottawa, which is governed by this NDP-Liberal coalition, is not following medical science; rather, it is looking to the political science it has used to divide Canadians and communities at a time when we have needed real leadership.

I want to take members back to the beginning of this pandemic, when members on this side of the House, without wavering and without hesitation, were prepared to support reasonable efforts to make sure we could get Canada in a position to manage the great unknown at the time, which we now know to have been COVID-19. Co-operation and collaboration were the name of the game.

However, as we moved through the pandemic, we saw many examples of the Prime Minister taking every opportunity as a political opportunity. Even in those early days, when we looked to offer unwavering support to Canadians, the Prime Minister looked to undertake a historic power grab that would have given the government the ability to tax and spend without parliamentary oversight for two years.

We then heard unbelievable language from the Prime Minister in the intervening period, calling people misogynists or racists if they did not agree with his policies on COVID-19. Recently, we heard condemnation, not just from across Canada, but from around the world, for this type of divisive language. In all of these examples, he was not making decisions based on science. Therefore, when we are having this discussion today, I encourage all hon. members to ask the government which federal agencies and which doctors called for these mandates, these lockdowns, and the vaccine and mask mandates that the federal government is responsible for.

• (1025)

Now, we know that 10 out of 10 doctors in the provinces agree, and all provincial chief medical officers of health agree, on the medical science that says it is safe to lift these requirements.

Canadians are rightly confused. People can go into a sporting venue in this country and sit shoulder to shoulder with neighbours and members of their community, people who they have been hoping to see for two years, wearing the same jerseys and cheering on a sports team without proof of vaccination or a mask required, because the top doctors in all of the provinces have said it is safe to do that.

The Prime Minister is saying that while people can sit together in a theatre with their families, neighbours and members of the community to enjoy an experience they have not had in a long time, and watch a movie together without proof of vaccination and without wearing a mask because it is safe to do, they cannot get on a VIA train or a plane for 30 minutes or 10 minutes unless they show both of those things.

Today, I hope members in this place ask members of the government what the federal government knows. What science is the federal government withholding from the chief medical officers of health for all of the provinces? What science does the federal government have access to that it is not sharing with our international allies that shows that it is unsafe? We know that the government will not give an answer. It may reply and it may try to scare Canadians, but that is more of that fear and division that it is trying to sow on this issue.

Again, we are one of the most vaccinated countries in the world. Canadians did their part. They did what was asked of them, but that was not enough. Instead, the government looks to turn the screws on members of the federal public service, members of the Canadian Armed Forces, members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and federally regulated employees.

Even today, in every provincial jurisdiction where they all work, the chief medical officers of health, following the science, have said that it is safe to gather and work without those vax mandates and mask mandates. The government has not said it is going to of-

fer those folks their jobs back. It has not given them a path to re-entry, and to what end? What is the benefit to Canadian society when these people are unable to provide for their families? After offering themselves in service to this country in the federal public service, and members of the Canadian Armed Forces and members of our Royal Canadian Mounted Police putting on a uniform, they were unceremoniously booted from their jobs and told they did not have a right to provide for their families anymore because the Prime Minister saw a great political opportunity.

Let us take a new opportunity today to follow the medical science, to listen to those chief medical officers of health across the country, including in the province where this place is located. People can gather at an arena with friends and family unmasked and without that vax passport. Why is the government saying that it knows better than the experts and the physicians: the top physicians in our province?

Canada's Conservatives are going to stand up for Canadians. We are going to stand up for the science. We are going to stand up for what is right. It is time to end the mandates.

• (1030)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a difficult time with the motion that has been proposed by the Conservative Party. What I have found is that this is a party that has been absolutely inconsistent on this issue. It depends on which member of the Conservative caucus one actually talks to. That will determine whether they are progressive or conservative in their approach. The only party that has been consistent from day one is the Liberals: the Prime Minister and the government of Canada have said that we are going to listen to science, listen to health experts and follow the advice that we are being given by professionals. The Conservatives would not even listen to former prime minister Brian Mulroney, who suggested that the Conservative caucus should all be vaccinated. They are still not all vaccinated.

I wonder this. Could the member inform the House what percentage of the Conservative caucus today is actually vaccinated?

• (1035)

Mr. Michael Barrett: Mr. Speaker, 100% of Conservatives are following the science that the chief medical officers of health in their provinces prescribed. I hear the member opposite saying it is a joke. The member for Kingston and the Islands is saying that Dr. Kieran Moore is a joke, but we follow the science that he has offered.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, rising on a point of order, Dr. Kieran Moore is an incredible doctor who came from the city of Kingston. I revere him and hold him to be in the highest position. For this member to suggest that I think he is a joke is ridiculous.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Mr. Speaker, the member does not want to stand behind his heckles and wants to rise, but that is exactly what he said. The member for Kingston and the Islands saying that Dr. Kieran Moore is a joke is something that we do not agree with.

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Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I never said that Dr. Kieran Moore was a joke. Why does this member keep repeating that? I did not, Mr. Speaker, and I think you know that and everybody else in the House knows that.

The Deputy Speaker: This is why heckling sometimes does not work for all of us. Let us just try to keep the heckles down. This goes for all sides of the House this morning. Let us try to keep it down to the occasional smart heckle and keep the roar down so that we can get this debate through.

The hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Mr. Speaker, on that same point of order, the member for Kingston and the Islands has just said he could do that all day. While you were ruling and advising members of the House to return to order, the member for Kingston and the Islands said he would do it all day. The chair had pronounced on the matter and called members to order and this member effectively challenged the chair in doing that.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I do not understand how what the member just said is a point of order. What I said is that I could argue this issue with him all day long, and I will. I will be here all day long—

The Deputy Speaker: We have not been in a point of order since this started. This is debate among members. I thought it would be best to just remind everyone to keep the decorum in the House so that we can continue on with debate.

The hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Mr. Speaker, 100% of members of the Conservative caucus support the advice of Dr. Kieran Moore and their provincial medical officers of health. That is 100% of them. We are not hearing any disagreement. Where is the evidence that the Liberals are offering? They were gesturing to doctors in their caucus. I would like those doctors to stand up and say that they disagree with the science that says it is safe to end the mandates.

[Translation]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we agree with some of the things that were just said, including the politicization of the crisis by the Liberal government. We also agree that we are all fed up with the restrictions and this crisis in general.

As our official opposition colleagues know, when they moved a motion on February 10 to force the government to present a timeline for lifting restrictions and a plan for reopening, we voted in favour.

However, presenting a plan and a timeline means setting out specific dates for the different stages, including which restrictions will be lifted when.

What happened in a few short weeks for the official opposition to go from a progressive reopening timeline, with dates determined in a rational manner like the provinces are doing, to an immediate lifting of all restrictions?

[English]

Mr. Michael Barrett: Mr. Speaker, when we proposed that motion at the beginning of February calling for a timeline, we gave the government ample opportunity. Of course, seeing the reasonableness of the proposal, we are happy to see that the member's party supported it. Now, we are nearing two months since that time. It has been a month and a half since then, and the provinces continue to accelerate the lifting of their mandates.

We have parliamentary secretaries and the Minister of Seniors who could not even handle that I was calling for the federal government to follow the science and reduce the harm that their divisiveness is causing Canadians. Now we are asking the federal government to simply apply the provincial standards that have been adopted, which saw the end to masking and vax mandates.

• (1040)

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there are things that the NDP members believe are true. We need to reconnect people. We need to get people connected. I am really disappointed to see the way that the Liberals and Conservatives are speaking today. There are many women at home right now who are caring for seniors who are ill, caring for their families and caring for children who have not been able to go to school. It is time to really get serious about how this is impacting people outside of the House and not have these political games being played.

I support the idea of not having games played. I would ask that the Conservatives consider the NDP motion, which is to look at the most recent data. Many vulnerable communities and many children are being harmed. This is growing in Alberta.

Will the Conservatives consider the NDP amendment that we look at the current science and data based on what is happening in the real world, not in the House right now?

Mr. Michael Barrett: Mr. Speaker, at the health committee this week and last, Conservatives have asked the government what its plan is. The Liberals failed to provide that plan to Canadians. We continue to ask for their plan. We asked for them to show us what benchmarks they are using that will see the restrictions lifted and reduce the harm on the very vulnerable people that the member opposite mentioned. Of course, we want the government to show us the data, show us its plan and end the mandates.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what a great presentation by our colleague, the official opposition health critic. This excellent presentation illustrates how well the official opposition has been doing its job here in the House for weeks and months now, by calling for one simple thing: a plan for lifting federal health measures.

We started off by asking questions, asking whether the Liberals could provide Canadians with any dates, a path forward, or any hope that these measures would be lifted. From across the way, we got answers filled with statistics, case numbers and vaccination rates. We were told that the situation was worse here than anywhere else or, alternatively, that it was less bad. We got all sorts of answers except for the answer to our question. We wanted a plan with dates, and we wanted to know what criteria the government would set and evaluate for determining the end of the federal health measures.

It is always the same thing with the Liberals. We are always wondering when they are going to take action. At the start of the pandemic, they were behind the curve. They were late realizing that there was a pandemic. They were late purchasing vaccines in the beginning. They were lagging behind on just about everything. Now that the provinces are starting to lift health restrictions, the Liberal government is once again lagging behind. It is lagging behind the science and the decisions of the provinces and also of other countries.

The NDP-Liberal government is incapable of making decisions at the right time. Who is paying for the price? All Canadians. The fact that we are talking about this again today demonstrates that this government is incapable of taking action, and that it does not care about its own employees, its officials, the country's economy, cross-border trade, the tourism industry or all the federally regulated workers across Canada. All that is no big deal for the government.

It has become clear since Monday that this NDP-Liberal Prime Minister had other things in mind than lifting health restrictions in this country. In the current context, how can this NDP-Liberal Prime Minister justify keeping the restrictions in place while the provinces are systematically lifting them?

We have one of the highest vaccination rates in the world, because Canadians have stepped up and gotten vaccinated. I would remind members that at the beginning of the pandemic, no one knew anything about this disease. Science stepped up, and people stepped up by getting vaccinated in huge numbers. I commend all Canadians who did so, all the health care workers who worked so hard in such uncertain times when we did not know what we were dealing with, and everyone who worked on the front lines to be there for Canadians and ensure their health and safety.

The situation has changed in two years. I know that the NDP-Liberal Prime Minister likes to live in the past, but a lot of things have changed. For the first time in two years, Canadians have hope that life can get back to normal. Why does the Prime Minister insist on contradicting the experts? That is the real question. We do not have an answer to that. Why does this NDP-Liberal Prime Minister not want to listen to the experts? Why is he not doing what his provincial counterparts are doing? Does the Prime Minister now think that he is more important than the scientists whose recommendations he claimed to be following throughout the pandemic? Now, it is no big deal if he does not listen to scientists.

As my health critic colleague was saying, the Prime Minister is following political science, not medical science. That is what we are now realizing. He was unable to win the majority of Canadians' votes by calling an election in the midst of a pandemic. No one

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wanted an election, but he chose to do what he pleased and call an election anyway. It was no big deal, even if it broke some of the rules. He absolutely had to do it. He wanted his government to win a majority to lead the country. He did not succeed. Canadians were clear. They told him no.

• (1045)

What did the Prime Minister do? He bought a majority in Parliament through a coalition with the NDP. That was his response. That is what he has been spending the past weeks and months doing instead of thinking about public servants, Canadians and all those who are unable to do their jobs because the federal government decided to maintain vaccine mandates, which are no longer needed, according to the public health experts of all the provinces and many other experts around the world.

Speaking of experts, Quebec's health minister recently said that they were working towards lifting restrictions and that we need to learn to live with the virus. That is what the Liberals should be focusing on. I am not the only one saying this.

Two medical experts told the House of Commons Standing Committee on Health that there was limited scientific basis for vaccine mandates. Dr. David Jacobs, the president of the Ontario Association of Radiologists, spoke about the immature actions of the Prime Minister of Canada, which is not nothing, and about how he added fuel to the fire when he called unvaccinated people a fringe minority and racists. Those words are not becoming of the Prime Minister of Canada, or, I should say, the NDP-Liberal Prime Minister of Canada.

According to Dr. Jacobs, unvaccinated Canadians are people who are just simply afraid or who have looked at the research and disagree with the findings. He was essentially saying that one would expect the Prime Minister to be more open-minded.

Dr. Shirin Kalyan, a professor of medicine at the University of British Columbia, also expressed similar doubts about the current blanket vaccine mandates.

In January, Dr. Howard Njoo, deputy chief public health officer of Canada and one of the experts advising the NDP-Liberal government, went even further and stated that vaccination should be voluntary. I do not know what science the government says it is following, but we cannot find it. We would like to see it, as well as the advice that led it to make vaccination mandatory for federal or federally regulated employees. Unfortunately, it does not seem to exist. The advice always stated the opposite.

Yes, vaccination was highly recommended. However, did vaccination have to be mandatory? I remember a certain Prime Minister saying that he would never force Canadians to get vaccinated. Who was that? It was the NDP-Liberal Prime Minister.

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All of a sudden, two days before a certain date in August, vaccine mandates became the thing to do. Two days later, an election was called, and the pandemic became an election issue. The pandemic was exploited for political purposes. The Prime Minister paid the price, because Canadians said no. However, as I said earlier, he has since bought himself a majority, but that is another story, and we can talk about that later.

So far, the Prime Minister's inaction has hurt our economy, international trade and the Canadian tourism industry. It continues to cause irreparable harm, since thousands of federal employees and federally regulated workers are still out of work because the government is sitting idle and is not listening to its own experts.

In conclusion, I would like to know when the Prime Minister plans to get public servants back to work, lift the vaccine mandate and allow Canadians to get back to normal. It is time to stop playing partisan politics with COVID-19 and the pandemic. It is time to do what experts are urging us to do and end vaccine mandates across the country.

● (1050)

[English]

Mr. Marcus Powlowski (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we all agree that things are getting better with COVID, and everyone is justifiably relaxing the mandates, but the question is at what rate. Some provinces have been more cautious from the beginning; some have been less cautious. If we look at the numbers, we see that the provinces that have been more cautious have done better. Globally as well, if we compare countries, we see that some have been more cautious and some have been less cautious. As a result of that, the United States has three times the death rate per population that Canada has.

Does the member opposite not agree that perhaps in matters of public health, one ought to be cautious?

Mr. Luc Berthold: Mr. Speaker, the member is a doctor and he must follow the science, but he must not choose the science he wants to follow. I advise him to follow the medical science and not the political science of this Prime Minister. He is the one who said in committee that we will do everything to please the NDP. I have him quoted as saying that, and so now I know that he was supportive of this new neo-democrat government.

[Translation]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we basically agree. Everyone is tired of the pandemic, tired of the measures and just plain tired. The vaccine passport was eliminated, and everyone was happy. We are still wearing masks. We are fed up.

On Friday evening, I went to the Théâtre du Nouveau Monde, and there were 800 people crammed in, wearing masks. We cannot take it anymore. It was even a little ridiculous, because at one point in the show, the actors come into the audience, so they had to put on a mask. It totally broke the spell. We are eager to be done with all this, but we are not there yet. We cannot put the cart before the horse.

My colleague spoke extensively about scientists, but what does he have to say to Dr. Boileau, Quebec's interim public health direc-

tor, who said yesterday that Quebec would inevitably see another spike in COVID-19 cases? In Quebec, the science on health says we must be careful.

What does my colleague say to that?

Mr. Luc Berthold: Mr. Speaker, yes, let us be careful.

A doctor is telling us to be careful. A doctor is telling us that the number of cases is on the rise. They may be on the rise, but I did not see the Quebec government change its reopening and lockdown plans. I did not hear it say that it would lock the province down again and bring back the vaccine passport. It presented a plan based on science, and it is following expert opinion. That is what the federal government should do. The problem is that it is not doing it. The experts say we should start lifting the health measures. That is what the government should do.

In response, the Minister of Health keeps coming out with all sorts of numbers that mean absolutely nothing. More importantly, he is not giving Canadians any hope.

● (1055)

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, so far, the BA.2 subvariant has led to a significant increase in cases in the United Kingdom, Germany, Switzerland and other countries around the world. Hong Kong has the highest mortality rate in the world. South Korea is seeing a record number of cases.

My question is as follows: Does the hon. member believe that the COVID-19 pandemic is over?

Mr. Luc Berthold: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to congratulate my colleague on her French. I am grateful. Her French is excellent. I understood the question, and that says it all.

We will learn to live with COVID-19. I have never heard anyone here say that COVID-19 and the pandemic are over. The science is telling us that things have changed over the past two years. Everyone is vaccinated, or almost everyone. Canada has the highest vaccination rate in the world. We have treatments and tools. Hospitals and doctors now know how to treat COVID-19 patients.

We need to adapt to the new reality. We are simply asking the government to adapt, to lift the vaccine mandates, and to follow the science. That is all.

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for the opportunity to rise today in the House to address this very important topic.

The COVID-19 pandemic has obviously impacted everyday life across Canada and around the world for two years now. It has also put our health care systems to the test, disrupted our economy, and altered our social and economic interactions.

In response to the crisis, the Government of Canada took serious measures to protect Canadians' health and safety. As the pandemic evolves, it is important to keep reviewing the effectiveness of the measures we have taken.

I understand what the Conservative Party and the House itself want, and I understand the importance today of reviewing various mandates, such as the vaccine mandate, because it is something the Government of Canada does every day. This is part of the ongoing review of the measures in place to fight COVID-19.

As I said earlier, the Government of Canada is constantly reviewing the measures and will continue to do so with a view to protecting Canadians' health and safety using the least restrictive measures possible, in order to minimize the impact of these measures on our individual, personal, family, economic and social lives.

There are real consequences to adding or eliminating any public health measure. That is why, before imposing these measures, we have always done a thorough analysis based on scientific evidence and consistently reviewed our decisions. It is important to point out that the situation today is totally different from the situation we faced in March 2020.

In the past two years, Canadians have rigorously followed public health measures to protect one another. Most of them got vaccinated, wore masks, physically distanced, and stayed home when they were sick.

Thanks to these often difficult efforts, we entered a phase where it is easier to participate in activities in person, to attend gatherings and to travel. We all did our part. We learned lessons. As a result, we are now better prepared to move forward.

As Dr. Tam reminded us again recently, COVID-19 is here to stay. We are monitoring the omicron subvariants and in particular the BA.2 subvariant, which have led to an increase in the number of cases in many parts of Canada and the rest of the world.

Although the number of serious COVID-19 cases is dropping in Canada and most other countries, several hospitals in Canada are still under considerable stress. The pandemic is therefore still putting pressure on our health care system and our health care workers.

We need to be able to manage this pressure when public health measures are lifted in many parts of the country. We must also be aware that, during this transition period, we do not all see the lifting of health measures in the same light. Some people are thrilled to get back to their usual activities, while others are more careful and sometimes far less comfortable.

In the past two years, Canadians have shown incredible flexibility and great resilience, and they will continue to do so. They will make choices that reflect their own reality, based on factors such as their personal situation, their aversion to risk, their COVID-19 vaccination status, the number of COVID-19 cases in their environment, underlying medical issues, and the risk associated with contact with friends and others who are infected. For example, some people could very well continue to wear a mask, even if it is not mandatory in certain places.

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We therefore encourage everyone to continue making informed decisions in order to protect themselves, their family and their community, and to respect others' decisions by showing compassion.

• (1100)

Screening tests are among the tools that will help Canadians make informed decisions in order to manage their own health and safety. I would like to take a few minutes of your time to discuss them.

[English]

Rapid testing, in particular, empowers Canadians by providing them with the ability, on their own terms, to determine quickly and easily whether they have COVID-19, thereby building confidence and supporting reopening efforts.

[Translation]

Ensuring equitable and efficient access to COVID-19 rapid tests will remain a priority because Canadians are increasingly relying on them to make decisions about things such as whether they should visit a loved one, particularly someone in a long-term care facility, send their kids to school or organize a family gathering.

[English]

The federal government started buying and providing rapid tests, free of charge, to the provinces and territories as soon as October 2020. In last December alone, the Government of Canada delivered more than 35 million rapid antigen tests to provinces and territories. Another 140 million landed in Canada in January.

In light of the growing demand for rapid tests across the country, the Government of Canada also introduced Bill C-10, An Act respecting certain measures related to COVID-19. The bill, which received royal assent earlier this month, will provide Health Canada with \$2.5 billion in funding and the statutory authority to purchase and distribute rapid tests across Canada. With this funding, the Government of Canada will be able to ensure Canadians continue to have the rapid tests that they need, free of charge and in all provinces and territories.

In addition to supplying provinces and territories and indigenous communities, the funding also allows Health Canada to continue to provide tests for distribution through important partners such as the Canadian Red Cross, chambers of commerce and pharmacies. This will allow schools to stay open and help protect our children, as well as our parents or grandparents in long-term care. With this funding, the Government of Canada will put in place critical contracts in a highly competitive global market to purchase efficient and sufficient quantities of rapid tests to meet the anticipated demand across the country.

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As we continue to manage COVID-19, the Government of Canada is also making use of waste-water surveillance to help us understand the community transmission of COVID-19. This waste-water surveillance is an extraordinary tool, which PHAC, the Public Health Agency of Canada, is using independently of clinical testing so that we can learn whether the virus is increasing or decreasing in a community by testing the community's sewage.

Waste-water testing is conducted in collaboration with communities and local health authorities to help inform decision-making and public health guidance. The Government of Canada's scientists are working together on a community-level waste-water surveillance program in 65 locations across the country. Samples are then sent to the Public Health Agency of Canada's national microbiology laboratory in Winnipeg, and I know some of our members of Parliament will be happy to be reminded of the pride we have in that laboratory, for analysis and detection of the virus that causes COVID-19, including variants of concern.

Waste-water testing provides unique opportunities to detect and monitor emerging variants of interest and concern. With limitations related to clinical testing, for example, molecular and PCR testing across Canada, waste water is therefore an important surveillance tool to provide a picture of the community burden related to COVID-19.

• (1105)

[Translation]

The testing and monitoring tools I just mentioned and briefly described all help orient our public health measures, particularly those in effect at the Canadian border. These measures, together with all the other COVID-19 measures, are based on scientific data and evidence about the current epidemiological situation in Canada and around the world.

That is why, as of April 1, fully vaccinated travellers will not have to present COVID-19 test results prior to entering Canada by air, land or sea.

[English]

We will obviously continue to review and adjust our border measures, as we have always done, in an effort to keep Canadians safe while ensuring efficiency at our borders for both travellers and trade.

[Translation]

Everything I just mentioned has helped put us in a position to be able to manage COVID-19 more effectively in the coming months. The measures will continue to change along with the epidemiological situation.

All the knowledge and tools we acquired over the past two years, including the strategic use of testing and tracing, as well as changing border measures based on the most recent data, will be very useful to us.

That being said, it is very important to remember that vaccination continues to be the most important tool for protecting against the serious consequences and spread of COVID-19. Over 85% of Canadians have already received at least one dose of the

COVID-19 vaccine, and approximately 81% of Canadians are fully vaccinated. Nearly 18 million people received a booster dose, and approximately 57% of children aged 5 to 11 have now received at least one dose of the vaccine. Vaccination will continue to be essential as new variants and subvariants continue to emerge.

[English]

When it comes to COVID-19, we cannot afford to become complacent. This virus does not follow a predictable path. There will continue to be ups and downs. There will continue to be new variants, and there will continue to be new waves. We have to be prepared to manage that. This is a matter of responsibility and transparency. As well as we have done so far, we can always do better. In the short term, that means continuing to get vaccinated, including boosters.

[Translation]

About three million eligible individuals in Canada have not yet received the first or second dose of the primary vaccine series. In addition, approximately 60% of adults have received a booster shot, which considerably reduces the risk of serious consequences. That is not enough though. Even though we would like to put COVID-19 behind us, we cannot take our success for granted.

In conclusion, over the past two years, the Government of Canada's approach to addressing COVID-19 has always been based on scientific data, the epidemiological situation, and the precautionary principle, and that will not change.

We will continue to base our policies on the latest data and lessons learned over the past two years. Canadians expect nothing less. Even though many communities are beginning to reconsider their public health measures, we must acknowledge that COVID-19 is still very much a part of our lives, which means we must continue to be careful.

• (1110)

[English]

As Dr. Tam said before the Standing Committee on Health on Monday, the epidemiological situation in Canada is improving but it is unstable. We have seen this in Europe, where there has been a resurgence of COVID-19 very recently.

[Translation]

The same thing could happen here in Canada because of the presence of omicron and the emergence of the BA.2 subvariant, which is 50% more transmissible and contagious than the original omicron variant.

As such, even as we carefully return to the many activities we have missed over the past two years, we must not let our guard down. Vaccination continues to be one of the most effective ways available to all Canadians to protect themselves and their family. This, combined with masking and other personal protection measures, will remain important in the weeks to come.

[English]

As I conclude my remarks today, I want to acknowledge the full range of emotions that we are feeling right now as jurisdictions adjust the public health measures that we have lived with on and off for two years now.

[Translation]

I strongly encourage everyone to be prudent and patient and compassionate toward others as we continue to adapt to the evolving pandemic.

[English]

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for taking the time to speak to our motion today. In his remarks, he talked about transparency and about the different surveillance tools and the monitoring that happens. I am wondering if the minister will take the opportunity today to be transparent with Canadians and share with us what the benchmarks are.

He mentioned the lifting of one of the testing requirements on April 1 at the border. If we use that as an example, what were the specific metrics that were used, whether it was hospital capacity, numbers in wastewater surveillance or case positivity rates? As well, will the government commit to releasing the metrics it would use to reimpose COVID restrictions once they are lifted?

We are calling on the government today to follow the science that the provinces have used to lift the restrictions that the federal government has put in place. Will the minister commit in this place today to release the metrics that were used previously to lift some measures and could potentially be used to reimpose measures in the future? What are those metrics?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for his fair and fine question. I will answer only one piece of it, as he spoke about border measures.

We have been using a set of measures to monitor the way in which those border measures should be adjusted. One of them has been on the PHAC website for more than a year now. It is the positivity rate for people entering Canada. We have had tests, PCR tests, for more than a year now.

If the member looks at the PHAC data, he will see that because of omicron, in January the positivity rate for people travelling into Canada, either by land or through airports, was 40 times the positivity rate that we had seen prior to omicron at the beginning of December. Fortunately, that positivity rate then fell in February and again in March, which is the reason we are now going to be able to move to new rules on April 1.

[Translation]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Minister of Health for his presentation on everything the government has done to manage the crisis.

One thing he did not mention, which I would have liked to hear, is his justification for Canada's vote at the WTO against temporari-

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ly waiving patents. This proposal came from India and South Africa, two countries that were the source of variants of concern.

To call this a global crisis means that what happens in one country will automatically impact other countries. However, if we leave the distribution of vaccines and medications solely and blindly in the hands of the market, what will happen is that only the rich countries will be able to procure doses. Meanwhile, vaccines and medications will be treated as business opportunities rather than shared resources to be used to address this global health crisis.

When the question comes up again, will Canada continue to treat vaccines as a source of profit for big pharma, or will it actually do the one thing that will get us out of this crisis? Let me remind the House that while we are here talking about administering a fourth dose, there are billions of people around the world who have not yet had access to their first.

• (1115)

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his very good question.

First, as my colleague suggests, the Canadian government and Canada will have to continue to work with the other countries to ensure that the distribution of pharmaceutical production capacity, such as for vaccines, is equitable, including in developing countries.

Second, Canada committed to delivering 200 million doses of vaccine in 2022. So far, we have already delivered roughly 100 million doses, or around half. There remains another 100 million doses to deliver, and we will see to it as soon as possible.

Third, Canada ranks sixth among the countries that provide vaccines. We are very proud of that, and we will continue to work hard not only to deliver these vaccines, but also to have these vaccines administered in developing countries.

[English]

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Qujannamiik, Uqaqtittiji.*

Health measures are being lifted by provinces. Many first nations, Métis and Inuit communities continue to say they lack basic health care and infrastructure. This is dangerous, especially for elders.

Does the minister agree that increased financial investments and infrastructure must be provided for indigenous health?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Mr. Speaker, through the member for Nunavut, I would like to thank Minister John Main in Nunavut, with whom I have a very good relationship. I have a lot of esteem for him. We have been working on many different things, including providing health care support to the people of Nunavut, including providing rapid tests. We had a brief very recent exchange on that to make sure that the rapid tests and of course vaccines are coming at the right speed and in the right manner.

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I congratulate and thank the large number of people in Nunavut who have been vaccinated. As we build on the health care support and investment that we have provided to Nunavut over the last few months, we will continue to be able to protect the health and safety of those living in that territory.

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we all know, the health restrictions in our country and the vaccination rates across our nation have contributed to a hearteningly low death rate in Canada when compared to many of our peer nations in the G7, particularly in the U.K. and the United States.

It is evident that our protocols have managed to keep Canadians safe. What specific protocols can we look back on as ones that contributed to our lower death rate?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Mr. Speaker, I think we heard recently that if we had the same death rate in Canada that we saw in the United States, there would have been 60,000 more people dying in Canada than we saw over the last two years. Despite that, 7,000 Canadians did die over the last few weeks because of omicron. These are obviously individual and community tragedies.

The reason we have been able to do much better in Canada relative to many other countries is that there has been less misinformation and less disinformation, in particular on vaccination. In Canada, we have been able to trust our experts, trust our scientists and get access to that tool, which is the most important tool for continuing to protect people's health, lives and safety.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the isolation, the financial pressures and the extraordinary measures that Canadians have endured have all taken a toll on our mental health. Pre-COVID statistics tell us that every day an average of 11 Canadians die by suicide. For every person lost by suicide, over 275 Canadians attempt suicide each and every day. Unnecessary vaccine mandates are further exacerbating our mental health issues.

Over 468 days ago, the members opposite all voted in favour of my motion to bring an easy-to-remember three-digit suicide prevention number, 988, to Canada. Can the minister tell us why they have done nothing to bring the 988 to Canada? They have dragged their feet. Why have they not implemented this important number?

• (1120)

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Mr. Speaker, I have these brief reactions.

The member is correct in speaking to the impact of COVID-19 on mental health. About half of Canadians report that their mental health has suffered because of COVID-19. Eighty per cent of health care workers also say that their mental health has fallen. I was speaking to a representative of the Canadian Pharmacists Association yesterday. About 90% of pharmacists in Canada have found the experience of the last two years very stressful.

Regarding the engagement and commitment of the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, the minister spoke to that at the health committee just a few days ago, I think on Monday. I would invite the member to look at the record. We assure him that the

Minister of Mental Health and Addictions will keep working very diligently on that important file.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would first like to indicate that I will be sharing my time with the member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques.

Since the start of this pandemic, I have often asked myself the following question: What should I do? It is the pre-eminent ethical and political question.

In this debate, we must consider the ethical principle of responsibility. That is the approach taken by the Bloc Québécois from the outset of the pandemic. Since the first wave, we have been making decisions by trying to predict the positive and negative impacts they would have on the future. We did not make decisions based on what had happened or what would happen. We owe it to the most vulnerable to do what is ethically responsible.

I will try not to make this a partisan debate. Obviously, everyone is fed up with the pandemic and tired of restrictions. When making public health policy, we must avoid making decisions based on whims or on which way the wind is blowing. As representatives of the people, we must avoid being opportunistic and partisan. Above all, we must make informed decisions that are based not on individual interests or how we feel that day, but on the common good and everyone's best interest. The position that the Bloc Québécois is taking today is guided by these ethical considerations.

It might be easier if we were in an endemic situation. Has the pandemic reached its endemic threshold? Some people think that, once we reach this threshold, we will be able to lift all of the health measures and act as if the pandemic and the virus no longer exist.

In the five waves that have hit us, what infuriates me is to see how some people and some members of the House have unfortunately appropriated the opinions of experts and scientists. We have embraced a new religion, scientism. Scientists, however are unpretentious people. Usually, they are certain only about their uncertainty. Science is merely the calculation of uncertainties. The difference between science and religion is that science can be falsified.

That being said, it is really tiresome to hear so many people say that we need to base our decisions on science. I do not have a problem with that, but scientists themselves cannot agree on many issues. Beyond the scientific facts, we need to apply the ethics of responsibility for the common good. That is the point to our discussion today.

Will immediately lifting all the health measures as proposed in today's motion help or hurt the situation? That is the question.

I would like to talk about the endemic phase, because no one has brought it up during this debate. Some experts, if I may use the term, say that those who believe that the word "endemic" means living with the virus and lifting all health restrictions are wrong. It can even be dangerous to believe that, because it can lead to an excess of optimism and, by extension, unexpected waves of outbreaks.

In the endemic phase, we still need to control the disease. We need to limit the spread of the virus by providing better ventilation, controlling the spread and increasing hospital capacity, since some people will end up in hospital.

● (1125)

Point (a) of today's motion says that we need to protect jobs. I looked at the employment rate recently. In February 2020, it was 5.7%. Two years later, in February 2022, after two years of pandemic, it was 5.5%.

Point (b) mentions enabling Canadians to travel unimpeded. As of this morning, according to the United States embassy and consulate, if I want to cross the border, I must show a passport, proof of vaccination or a negative test result. If I want to go to Europe, the same rules apply.

Just recently, WHO spoke out strongly against the lifting of measures in Europe. Were measures lifted too soon?

Earlier, I was listening to the member for Mégantic—L'Érable, who talked about a plan throughout his speech. We agree that a plan is needed. The federal government should have tabled a plan like the provinces and Quebec did. A plan would enable us to plan and to adapt to the situation. There are some constants in this pandemic.

Quebec's plan includes lifting the mask mandate in some public places as of mid-April, but just having a plan gives Quebec the time to react if the number of cases grows, as is currently happening in Europe. It is therefore quite possible that the Quebec government will tell us that the lifting of the mask mandate is postponed for two weeks. However, the federal government did not table a plan, and that is shameful. It would be good if the government would think about that and if today's debate would inspire the government to table a plan.

Point (c) of today's motion says that we need to ensure the recovery of Canada's tourism industry. However, the day we lift all restrictions and face a resurgence in the number of infections, the tourism industry will be the first one affected.

One of the constants of this pandemic is that we have always had a month to see things coming. What happens in Europe happens here a month later. We thought we would be spared during the first and second waves, but that has never been the case, and we might be on the verge of a sixth wave.

Another constant that everyone has experienced is that infections surge every time restrictions are lifted. The restrictions were lifted for legitimate reasons, such as ensuring that people would keep complying with public health measures and messages, to protect mental health, or to give people a break over the Christmas holidays or March break, for example.

Implementing public health measures is akin to practising medicine on a large scale. If patients stop complying, there is nothing else that can be done. I believe that we are on the verge of a new wave, at least in Quebec.

The people who are saying that it is not so bad because omicron is milder should try saying that to patients with terminal cancer who do not have COVID-19 and who feel abandoned. The pandem-

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ic is affecting our health care networks, which were already weakened. Our quality of life has been restricted because these networks have not been able to provide care to patients dealing with anything other than COVID-19.

● (1130)

The federal government needs to increase health transfers immediately. It is inconceivable to think that the government would not provide more funding to strengthen our networks so that we can get through the sixth, seventh and eighth waves without having our lives disrupted like they were during the first five waves.

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his balanced and well-thought-out speech, as well as for his collaboration at the Standing Committee on Health.

I have a simple question. Did the experts my colleague talked to indicate that the time has come to declare this pandemic over?

Mr. Luc Thériault: Mr. Speaker, we could, in fact, be on the verge of a resurgence of infections. Quebec is preparing for a sixth wave.

We have not yet reached what is referred to as the endemic phase, where the rate of infection levels off and, with the appropriate measures and predictability, we are able to control the vectors and therefore the health care networks. We are a long way from that.

Just look at what is happening in other countries. This is going to affect us too or is starting to affect us. I am talking about the resurgence that happened in Denmark and is currently happening in Europe.

We have to continue to be careful. The precautionary principle must be applied. We owe it to the most vulnerable.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Montcalm for his speech.

I want to follow up on a question his colleague, the member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, asked the Minister of Health earlier this morning.

Given that vaccination rates remain significantly lower—below 15%—in low-income countries, we obviously need to do more to support global vaccine equity if we are to get through this pandemic.

Can my colleague comment on the importance of Canada supporting the World Trade Organization's efforts to temporarily waive certain parts of the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights as it relates to COVID-19 technologies?

I thank my colleague for his patience as I work on my French.

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Mr. Luc Thériault: Mr. Speaker, my colleague speaks French very well and his question is fundamental. We are in a pandemic. By definition, a pandemic is global. This is not an epidemic; it is a pandemic.

I invited members of Amnesty International to appear before a parliamentary committee. They came to speak to us about this waiver, which Canada should support. It is absolutely clear.

Canada has good intentions, but it does not seem to be following through. It must be much more proactive and help get patents waived since that would democratize access to vaccines and antivirals.

We must also provide more support for the supply and deployment chain in developing countries. It is not good enough to send vaccines that sometimes expire two weeks later. We must provide the logistical support needed so that the vaccines can be administered.

Having vaccines produced on site would prevent a lot logistical problems in many cases. It would make it possible for people to be much more autonomous in terms of vaccination and enable them to provide the drugs needed to fight the pandemic.

• (1135)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a quick question. The resolution itself is very clear. It says:

the House call on the government to immediately lift all federal vaccine mandates

I wonder if the member can provide a simple answer as to whether or not the Bloc supports the resolution.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Thériault: Mr. Speaker, as one of my colleagues stated this morning, the Bloc supported the Conservatives' last motion, which called for a plan.

Today, we continue to ask for this plan, but we will not support the motion. In light of the situation around the world and here in Canada, vaccination is not the only indicator used to monitor the pandemic. That is why we will be voting against the motion.

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Montcalm for his speech and the essential work that he does for the Bloc Québécois on the very important health file.

I, too, am going to talk about the Conservative Party's motion, which calls on the government to immediately lift all federal vaccine mandates. I will not keep members in suspense for very long. I can say right now that my Bloc Québécois colleagues and I will be voting against the Conservative motion.

It would be both irresponsible and excessive to immediately lift all vaccine mandates, and the Conservatives chose a rather strange time to move this motion. I am wondering which media outlet the Conservative strategists get their news from.

I would like to inform my colleagues of the latest news. After a period of pandemic calm combined with the lifting of restrictions across the western hemisphere, we have been seeing a strong resurgence in cases of COVID-19 in Europe over the past week. According to the World Health Organization, or WHO, there has been a resurgence of the pandemic in the United Kingdom, Ireland, Greece, France, Italy, Germany and 12 other countries in the European region. On Tuesday, the WHO director for Europe criticized European countries for lifting their COVID-19 restrictions too abruptly, saying this was likely responsible for the current rise in cases.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the COVID-19 waves have started in Europe and then come to Canada. There have been five waves in two years, so we are starting to get familiar with the pattern. There is nothing to indicate that the sixth wave will be any different. Just yesterday, Luc Boileau, Quebec's director of public health, announced that Quebec should prepare for a new wave of COVID-19 because of the arrival of the BA.2 subvariant of omicron.

According to published epidemiological data, this variant is responsible for one in two infections in Quebec. Moreover, this variant is 30% to 50% more contagious than omicron, which suggests that transmission of this variant is likely to accelerate in the coming days and weeks. Yesterday, new cases topped 2,000 in Quebec, a high that has not been seen since mid-February. It seems irresponsible to demand that the remaining measures be lifted at this time. We run the risk of abruptly going from too much to too little.

We would be better off taking a cautious and well-thought-out approach that takes into account the epidemiological data on the ground. Decisions must be made based on the science. This type of motion is excessive and serves no purpose right now. This motion looks more like an attempt by the Conservatives to politicize the pandemic, vaccination and health measures. The Conservative Party is not the only one doing that, however. The Liberals and the Prime Minister are also guilty of fuelling the extreme polarization that Canadians deplore. I remind members that the Liberal Party made mandatory vaccination for federal employees a key part of their campaign during the election that they called last summer for no other apparent reason.

By constantly inserting the vaccination issue into political debate, the Liberal Party has helped turn this public health issue into an ideological one. That is bad. It has turned the choice not to get vaccinated into a political act, an act of protest. Rather than foster compliance and solidarity, it has kept Quebecers and Canadians away from vaccination clinics and divided them.

The Conservatives, for their part, have adopted a frankly irresponsible attitude since the start of the public health crisis, and this has only gotten worse in recent months. They have become standard-bearers for the most radicalized elements of movements opposed to public health measures. Early last month, that opposition culminated in a full-blown siege of Canada's parliamentary precinct. For three long weeks, the day-to-day lives of the people of Ottawa and Gatineau came to a standstill. Businesses had to close up shop, and historic and symbolic monuments were desecrated by the invaders.

• (1140)

As this chaotic circus was unfolding just a few dozen metres from the House, the Conservatives were taking photos with the illegal protesters.

There are no winners in this ideological war being waged between the Liberal Party and Conservative Party. Everyone loses. In contrast to these two warring parties, which are ignoring science so as to further their political interests, the Bloc Québécois is rising above the fray and advocating a reasonable, transparent approach based on science rather than points in the polls. In that sense, we believe that the government must act prudently by lifting health measures gradually and in accordance with the evolving epidemiological data.

In addition, in order to encourage compliance with measures that need to be maintained for a while, the government needs to be transparent and explain why certain measures must be maintained. Pandemic fatigue is real, and people deserve information and some degree of predictability from their government. In that sense, the government needs to justify the measures it decides to maintain, while setting out, with the help of public health, the conditions and thresholds that must be met for them to be lifted.

I would remind members that these measures should protect the most vulnerable, our health care workers and our hospital system, which were hit even harder in the fifth wave. However, it would be false and dangerous to believe that the health care system is only vulnerable because a minority of people continue to refuse to be vaccinated. The system is vulnerable because, unfortunately, the federal government has slowly cut its investments in health care over the decades. In 1958, the federal government covered 50% of the system's costs, while today it funds only 22%.

The provinces and Quebec have had to steadily rationalize the services provided as they kept being forced to do more with less. Until we have a robust health care system, we will be vulnerable to health crises and at the complete mercy of the epidemiological ups and downs caused by the emergence of new variants. In March 2020, many believed that COVID-19 was over. Two years later, very few people dare to predict how much longer it could last.

To be adequately equipped to deal with the pandemic and stop the revolving door, the first step is for the federal government to restructure health care funding. On that point, the Liberal government needs to understand that it is completely alone in its stubborn decision to keep transfers too low or to postpone until after the pandemic negotiations with Quebec and the provinces to increase health transfers. Every opposition party is united in support of a major increase in health transfers. The premiers of the provinces and Que-

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bec are united in condemning the federal disinvestment in health. On hospital floors, health care workers are expressing the urgent needs they see and the inhumane conditions they have to work in because of the lack of resources. Even PHAC is inviting the government to learn from the pandemic and ensure that there is stable and ongoing funding for public health expenses.

I will conclude my speech by calling on the Liberal government to take note of the consensus expressed at all levels of Quebec and Canadian society and realize that we cannot fully and sustainably get out of this pandemic without a robust and sound health care system. The government needs to increase health transfers to 35% of the cost of the system and guarantee a subsequent annual escalator of 6%. These transfers also need to respect the jurisdictions of Quebec and the provinces, which have the expertise and the constitutional prerogative to lead their respective health care systems.

• (1145)

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques for his judicious speech today.

He quite rightly noted that we must remain vigilant. The Conservatives have continuously politicized the pandemic.

Can my colleague comment on our mutual obligation to do the prudent and responsible thing in the face of such a risk?

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Mr. Speaker, on the subject of prudence, I have a few suggestions for my colleague, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health.

Calling an election in the middle of a pandemic is not very prudent. Making mandatory vaccination of federal employees an ideological issue right at the start of a pointless election campaign was not very prudent either, and it certainly did not encourage compliance.

When it comes to prudence, I would invite my colleague to stop and think about whether his government's actions really resulted in greater compliance or whether they divided people and raised tensions over vaccination.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Charter rights of three million unvaccinated Canadians have been violated over the past year. They cannot board a plane or train or cross the border.

Does the member think this is one measure that could be lifted right now?

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Mr. Speaker, extraordinary times call for extraordinary measures.

Is it unreasonable to want to protect people who use certain means of transportation? I do not think so. This is about trying to protect people. I think what is unreasonable is calling for the removal of measures without taking the science into account, especially when case numbers are going up and people expect the government to keep things predictable.

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We agree with the Conservative Party on that, but just tossing all the restrictions with no real plan in place is unthinkable.

• (1150)

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am looking at the work we have to do.

The cultural sector is in need of assistance, the employment insurance regime is in need of reform and health transfers need to be paid, yet today we are debating the opposition motion.

When the Liberals brought up vaccines during the election campaign, they cast their line. Since then, the Liberals have been reeling in and the Conservatives are the fish flopping around. In the meantime, we are not getting our job done.

Could my colleague tell us what we could be working on for Quebecers and Canadians if the Liberals had not politicized the vaccination issue?

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Mirabel for his question.

We would be working on all kinds of things, such as an upcoming budget. The government did not present a budget for two years, which was unprecedented.

We would certainly be working on the record inflation rates that are affecting all Quebecers and Canadians.

We would certainly be working on improving working conditions in our health care system, while the government stubbornly tries to hold off negotiations with the provinces and Quebec on the increase to health transfers until the pandemic is over. No one knows when this pandemic will be over, which means that the government is shelving that issue.

We would be working on the housing crisis that is raging in Quebec and in many regions, including my own. The city of Rimouski has a historically low vacancy rate of 2.2%.

In the meantime, members are sowing division and trying to figure out who is and who is not vaccinated.

Those are the types of things we are not working on.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, one implication of the motion is that the Canadian government could facilitate the exchange of goods and services across the border unilaterally, but there are still U.S. government requirements for vaccines that affect the exchange of goods and services.

Would the member like to comment on that aspect of the motion?

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his invitation to comment.

Just because health measures are lifted or the Canadian government decides to go in another direction, it does not mean this will have any influence or significant impact on what neighbouring countries, particularly the United States, decide to do.

I would add that the Liberal government prides itself on being a strong advocate for science and evidence, but Canada is the only G7 country that cannot produce its own COVID-19 vaccine. There

has been a lack of investment in science and research over the past few years. The Liberals need to walk the talk in the next budget.

[English]

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time today with the member for Vancouver Kingsway.

It is my great honour, as always, to stand in this place and address my colleagues, and I want to start by acknowledging something that I know we all know. We all know how difficult COVID-19 has been on us. We all know how hard it has been on children and we all know how hard it has been on parents and families. I am a mother myself, and to see my teenage children missing parts of their childhood and parts of their teenage years has been very hard. To be trapped in a house with a very active 14-year-old boy is not easy for any of us, and I sympathize with families across the country and around the world that have had to deal with that.

This pandemic has been very difficult on people's livelihoods and on businesses too. There are businesses in my riding that started right before the pandemic and could not access supports throughout this pandemic, and it has been heartbreaking to see that. We have seen the impacts on women, and not just women in Canada but women around the world, who have been set back decades by what has happened during this pandemic.

Of course, my heart breaks for the people who have lost their lives and for the families that have lost children, mothers, fathers, brothers or sisters. My heart breaks for them. In my province of Alberta, over 4,000 people died. That is 4,000 families. That is a massive impact in a province like Alberta.

When I think of all of these things and our best way forward and the best way we can work together to come out of COVID-19, what I keep thinking is that we cannot and we must not ever politicize something like a global health pandemic. We must listen to science. We must listen to medical professionals. I am not a doctor; that is not my role in this pandemic. My role will be to listen to doctors, to listen to scientists and to listen to experts. What I know is that experts are telling me that COVID-19 is not over.

I do want COVID-19 to be over. That is fine. However, that is not how global health pandemics work. It is not over. We have numbers spiking around the world. We have numbers spiking in places as far away as South Korea, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. The numbers are climbing; the variants are developing.

I am going to talk today a bit about the need to have a global response. I do not think anyone in this place will be surprised that vaccine equity is one thing that is vitally important to me and a tool we need to use. I also want to talk a bit about what results when we politicize this pandemic, and I am going to use my province as the example for that.

Members all heard the Premier of Alberta tell us that last summer was going to be the best summer ever. My premier went so far as to print hats that said, “Best summer ever”. Do members know what it became instead? It was a cautionary tale for provinces and countries around the world. We know what happens when COVID-19 is politicized. All we have to do is look at Alberta.

Albertans have been hit hard by COVID-19, and when the premier's poll numbers were hit just as hard by his terrible decisions, he decided to do the wrong thing. He decided to politicize COVID-19. He put politics, or in this case his own political survival, ahead of the interests of Albertans. He said, “influenza...does not generally threaten life apart from the elderly and the immunocompromised”. He said it is a flu. He mimicked Donald Trump's lines and even pushed ineffective and potentially dangerous treatments.

• (1155)

During the third wave of COVID-19, Alberta had one of the highest infection rates in Canada. It had one of the highest infection rates in the world. This is what happens when we politicize this.

I also want to talk about an idea. I think all of us in here could recognize, at least intellectually, that if we want a global health pandemic to be over, we need to have a global response. We need to make sure vaccines are available for everyone. We cannot have a motion that asks us to ignore science and thinks that is a reasonable response to the global health pandemic.

What I would have liked to see is the Conservative Party bring forward a motion that said something like, let us update our Canadian access to medicines regime to include COVID-19 medications. Let us work together to make sure that Canada is playing an active role in waiving intellectual property rights so that countries around the world can produce their own vaccines for their own populations, and let us work with countries around the world to help with vaccine hesitancy, to make sure that when vaccines are delivered, there are supply chains, there are syringes and there are all those things that need to happen so that people can actually get vaccinated.

I would have loved, and would have been so supportive of, a Conservative motion that called for the Canadian government to finally live up to its obligations to deliver the promised doses to COVAX. COVAX is a system that was supposed to ensure that the world was vaccinated. However, that system does not work when countries such as Canada have bilateral agreements and take all of the vaccine stock, and leave countries that desperately need doses to vaccinate their health care workers and their vulnerable populations with none.

This is the opposite of a good global health response. This is the opposite of what we need to do. I have to say that I look at our response to COVID-19, and I think to myself: We face a global challenge with Ukraine. We face a fundamental global challenge with climate change, and our global responses have not lived up to that task. I worry that these are showing us what a global response will look like in the future for other challenges.

I am not a virologist. I am not an epidemiologist. I am not a physician. I am pretty sure there are few of us in this chamber who

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are. This motion that has been brought forward is asking us to be all of those things. It turns what should be a scientific decision into a political decision, and that is wrong. It is not up to us to make scientific decisions. It must never be our role to make scientific decisions. Our job is to develop policy and legislation that is in the best interests of Canadians.

In my province of Alberta, we have lost more than 4,000 people, and we are going to lose more. Yesterday we had 500 more cases reported, and variants continue to threaten us. Until we are able to vaccinate the world, and until Canada does its part to vaccinate the world, including by signing the TRIPS waiver, the virus is going to continue to evolve, and variants are going to continue to plague the world, including our country of Canada.

This motion asks us to give up the hope that we will get through this pandemic. This motion asks us to give up our fight against this virus. It asks us to surrender. It asks us to ignore public health and science. It asks us to pretend to know better than scientists. Canadians are better than this. We care about science. We are not about to surrender at the end. We are going to continue to care for one another.

• (1200)

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would just like to correct some of the facts for my colleague, the member for Edmonton Strathcona.

Could the member deny how happy Albertans are now, since some, or even most, of the restrictions have been lifted, and how relieved families are at all levels that life is going back to normal? I am sure the member is receiving as many emails as I am about how happy people are about their lives going back to normal.

I am not sure if the member's speech reflects the reality of Edmontonians and Albertans with respect to this situation and the lifting of restrictions. I hope the member will take this opportunity to correct the fact that Albertans and Edmontonians are happy, and everybody wants out of the pandemic.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for the question. We often see eye to eye as neighbours and members of Parliament for the wonderful city of Edmonton, but I have to say that my perception of where my constituents are on this is very different from what the member brought forward.

I am getting many emails from people who are deeply worried about those who cannot receive a vaccination, such as children. I am hearing from teachers who are absolutely terrified to be back in classrooms that have not dealt with the ventilation problems that we have had so far and that have not dealt with overcrowding. I am talking to health care workers who are exhausted. They are on their last straw, and hearing that the Government of Alberta does not care enough about them to maintain some of these restrictions that will keep them safe is heartbreaking. I am hearing about seniors who are worried about their own care.

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● (1205)

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague and friend for her passionate speech today, and for always standing up for people who are vulnerable and for people who need a voice in this space. She is always there for them.

Today, I would like to respond a little to the notion that our job in the House might be to do what is always popular. I think we have an obligation to do what is prudent and to do what is responsible. We were elected to make decisions based on good facts, evidence and science, and we have done our best over the course of the last two years. Obviously, in retrospect, people make mistakes, but hindsight is always 20/20.

I would ask my hon. colleague this. In looking across the country at various jurisdictions, who are we here to protect?

Ms. Heather McPherson: Mr. Speaker, like my colleague, I also feel that we have, as a Parliament, tried to work together for the betterment of Canada and for Canadians.

It is not always easy decisions that parliamentarians are asked to make. Our constituents did not send us here to have the honour of representing them in this place to do cheerleading for them or to do the popular things. We are here to make the difficult decisions, and there are things that we could have done much better. A perfect example of that is the Canadian access to medicines regime, CAMR, which I talked about earlier. We could put those medicines, those therapeutics and vaccination medicines on that list, but we have not done that yet. The Canadian government has the opportunity and could do it today. That would be one way that we could work together.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her excellent speech.

In debates about the pandemic, it has often been said that the challenge for public health policy has been to ensure that people are willing to comply throughout the pandemic.

Does my colleague not think that if the government came up with a plan to ease these restrictions, this would provide some degree of predictability and encourage compliance?

[English]

Ms. Heather McPherson: Mr. Speaker, I think that a plan is very important. Canadians deserve to have answers and they deserve to get information, but in my mind what that might look like is a plan to actually review the mandates: to look at them and see which ones can be lifted and at what point. To have that research into that piece is really important. However, it cannot be a decision that is based on what the member wants or what I want, but rather on what scientists and medical professionals tell us.

I would very quickly add that it is very important that our health care system is strengthened, which is another thing that I think all of us in the House should be fighting for.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as we enter the third year of this pandemic, Canadians are feeling ex-

hausted, frustrated and anxious about the future. Instead of divisive political pandering, they deserve honest answers and responsible leadership from their elected officials.

Far from feeling this pandemic is over, Canadians are deeply concerned about what is coming next. People are worried about the emergence of new variants and the potential that COVID-19 will be circulating for years to come. However, after two years and many flawed and changing public health measures, New Democrats believe that Canada is due for a re-evaluation of our public health strategy for the COVID-19 pandemic. That is why New Democrats are taking a responsible and science-based approach, calling for a review of all federal public health measures that is transparent, data-driven and informed by the advice of public health experts.

New Democrats believe the prompt completion of this review is in the public interest and should proceed without political interference. That is why, last week, we wrote to Canada's chief medical officer and requested that the Public Health Agency of Canada conduct a thorough review of every federal COVID-19 health policy based on data and science, with a goal of either confirming that we are on the right path or making changes if we are not. Unfortunately, the motion introduced by the Conservative opposition today is the opposite of this approach.

By calling for an immediate end to all federal vaccine mandates, the Conservative motion is premature and politicizes a decision that should be based on science. Wedge politics and polarization are not going to end this pandemic. Rather than reckless declarations from the floor of the House of Commons, New Democrats believe that we must take a cautious and informed approach to protect public health until the COVID-19 pandemic is over.

This motion before the House violates these principles and this approach in a number of ways. First, it is premature and a threat to public health. This motion assumes, incorrectly, that we are done with the pandemic. It assumes, without scientific basis, that we have entered the endemic phase. This is something no responsible science has declared. It ignores what is happening in countries around the world, especially those that have relaxed their public health measures too quickly.

Second, it is politically motivated. Both the Liberals and Conservatives have played partisan politics with the pandemic over the past two years. That has been irresponsible and dangerous. I can do no better than to quote a Liberal member of the government: the MP for Louis-Hébert. He stated:

I can't help but notice with regret that both the tone and the policies of my government changed drastically on the eve and during the last election campaign. From a positive and unifying approach, a decision was made to wedge, to divide and to stigmatize.

He added:

I fear that this politicization of the pandemic risks undermining the public's trust in our public health institutions.

He was right. Politicians should not be deciding public health measures; health professionals should. Public health decisions should be based on data, evidence and science, and not on political considerations. This motion reflects the Conservative Party playing the very same game.

Third, it is precise yet overly broad. This motion calls for the immediate lifting of all vaccine mandates, yet there are very different mandates with different purposes and impacts. For example, there is a clear difference between requiring vaccination for a federal health professional who visits a remote indigenous community to treat vulnerable seniors with compromised immune systems and for an Ottawa bureaucrat who works from home, yet this motion makes no distinction whatsoever and would immediately remove both. There are different considerations when we consider passengers on an airplane sitting inches apart in a closed environment for many hours, than for those on a bus where people may be able to physically distance. Some mandate aspects might indeed be properly removed, yet it may be prudent to retain or perhaps alter others. This motion precludes that approach.

Fourth, it is factually incorrect and misleading. The motion erroneously claims that all provinces have lifted or have plans to lift their vaccine mandates. What is correct is that all provinces have lifted their proof of vaccination requirements for people attending certain social and recreational settings and events, except for British Columbia. The requirement will be lifted there on April 8. In British Columbia, mandatory vaccination policies remain in place for workers in health care, long-term care and public service. New Brunswick has dropped its COVID-19 vaccination mandate for most employees, except for those who work in health care and other vulnerable sectors. The Government of Nova Scotia has indicated that higher-risk areas in the front lines of health care and long-term care will still require COVID-19 vaccinations when the mandates in other sectors are lifted in the province.

• (1210)

When the motion claims that Canada has one of the highest vaccination rates in the world, it is referring only to a two-shot vaccine series and ignores the third booster vaccination figures. While it is correct that the two-jab rates are in the 82% range, still leaving almost 20% without full vaccination, incidentally, that rate drops to less than half of Canadians, 46%, with booster shots. This motion misrepresents the vulnerability of Canadians and risks their health in doing so.

We know that vaccination continues to be the best course of action to protect Canadians from serious illness, hospitalization and death. According to Canada's chief public health officer:

...with the Omicron variant, having two doses—the protection against infection and further transmission goes really low. You really need a third dose to provide augmentation against transmission. All that should be taken into account as the federal government looks at the policies going forward.

In addition, we need to study the impact of infection-acquired immunity, transmission dynamics and the viability of future treatments.

We also know that this virus knows no borders and what happens elsewhere is certain to affect us in Canada, so let us look at the current state of COVID-19 cases globally. After a consistent decrease

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since the end of January, the number of new weekly COVID-19 cases globally has now increased for a second consecutive week, with a 7% increase reported from March 14 to March 20 as compared to the previous week. According to the World Health Organization, a combination of factors is causing the spike, including the highly transmissible omicron variant and its BA.2 subvariant, as well as the lifting of public health and social measures.

The emergence of the BA.2 subvariant has led to a steep rise of cases in the U.K., Germany, Finland, Switzerland and other European countries in recent weeks. Hong Kong is now reporting the world's highest death rates from COVID-19. China is also seeing major outbreaks in major cities, putting millions of people under lockdown and halting production in major international manufacturing centres, providing grave implications for supply chains. South Korea recently set a new daily record, with reported infections topping 600,000. Australia and New Zealand, which had previously held cases to low levels, have also seen spikes in recent weeks, as have Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

Here in Canada, a spike in early surveillance signals across the country has experts worried we could be on the verge of another resurgence. While BA.2 does not appear to be associated with more severe illness in vaccinated populations, it is still capable of causing severe disease among people without prior immunity, which underscores the importance of getting up to date with COVID-19 vaccines, including a booster.

What do respected health experts say as opposed to Conservative politicians? The WHO director said this:

There are different scenarios for how the pandemic could play out, and how the acute phase could end—but it is dangerous to assume that Omicron will be the last variant, or that we are in the endgame.

On the contrary, globally the conditions are ideal for more variants to emerge.

Dr. Isaac Bogoch, an infectious disease physician at Toronto General Hospital and member of Ontario's COVID-19 vaccine task force, said this:

Even though we're in a much better place now than we were one and two months ago, there's still a lot of COVID around and there's still a lot of people in hospital with COVID....

Sadly, this is not over yet.

Finally, Dr. Jason Kindrachuk, assistant professor of viral pathogenesis at the University of Manitoba and Canada research chair of emerging viruses, stated:

Watching what's going on in terms of case numbers in Europe, I think should be certainly a bit of a stark reminder that the virus has not disappeared....

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BA.2 should, in my mind, kind of reinvigorate us to realize we're not through with this yet and in fact the virus can still change.

The NDP is fully committed to reviewing all federal vaccine mandates and restrictions, as I said earlier, so we would propose that we amend the motion in the following way.

I move that the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the words “has lifted or” and substitute the following: “is planning to lift vaccine mandates, the House call on the Public Health Agency of Canada to conduct a comprehensive review of all federal vaccine mandates and restrictions based on the most recent data and best available evidence to determine whether such mandates should remain, be lifted or be altered and request that this review be tabled in the House within four weeks following the adoption of this motion.”

By accepting this amendment, we can put this decision in the hands of those it should be, those of scientists, based on data, based on evidence and for the protection and best health of Canadians.

• (1215)

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): It is my duty to inform hon. members that an amendment to an opposition motion may be moved only with the consent of the sponsor of the motion. Therefore, I ask the hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes if he consents to this amendment being moved.

[English]

Mr. Michael Barrett: Mr. Speaker, we reject the amendment from the government member.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): Accordingly, pursuant to Standing Order 85, the amendment cannot be moved at this time.

[English]

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am sure it was not the intention of the member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes to mislead the House by suggesting that the member for Vancouver Kingsway is a member of the government. That is obviously not true. I wonder if he might want to correct the record.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): I thank the member for that clarification.

The hon. member for Sarnia—Lambton.

[English]

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I hear a lot of talk in the debate about science and how we need to follow the science. I just want to let people know that I am a chemical engineer. I did work in science and research, so I do have some understanding of the issue.

One of the facts that I want to talk about is how the 90% of people who are vaccinated in Canada can get and transmit COVID-19. We know this. The Prime Minister has had it. I have had it twice,

and a lot of people in the House have had it. These 90% are able to go back and forth across the border easily and get on a plane and take their masks off while they are eating lunch, etc. However, the 10% who are not vaccinated can also get and transmit COVID, but they are not allowed to go anywhere. As the World Health Organization has pointed out, this is accomplishing nothing other than violating the charter rights of these individuals.

Would the member agree that this would be one measure we could drop today without any adverse impact?

• (1220)

Mr. Don Davies: Mr. Speaker, as a person interested in science, I am sure my hon. colleague is also interested in the accuracy of numbers. It is not 90% of Canadians who are vaccinated. It is 81.6%. Of course, as I pointed out in my speech, only 46% of Canadians have had their third booster, which, in my view, now ought to be considered required to be considered fully vaccinated.

We know, based on the science, that the impact of vaccinations wanes over time. After three, four or five months, we know that the efficacy of the vaccine, particularly the mRNA vaccines, can go down to very low numbers, so getting that third booster is incredibly important.

I would just say that federal policy should be to encourage people to be vaccinated and to do everything possible to ensure that all Canadians receive their third boosters. Relaxing and withdrawing mandates, in that respect, at this time, I think, is not only irresponsible but harmful to the health of Canadians.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is nice to see you in the chair. As you would know and no doubt attest, with regard to the province of Quebec, toward the end of November or beginning of December, no one would have anticipated that the province of Quebec would have been implementing a curfew in the month of January because of omicron.

I think it is really important that we do not lose sight of the fact that we cannot just wish the pandemic away. There is a responsibility. Things can change and, as we have seen with the omicron variant, they can change quite quickly and rapidly.

I am wondering if my colleague can provide his thoughts in regard to why it is so important that we listen to what health care experts have to say.

Mr. Don Davies: Mr. Speaker, I agree completely. There is really a number of fundamental flaws in this motion before the House today. Again, it assumes that politicians should be making public health policy. I personally do not agree with that. The Conservatives seem to think that should be the case.

Second of all, I believe that the decision should be data-driven and it should be accurate. Again, this motion, as I have pointed out, suffers from a number of inaccuracies, if not outright mistakes.

Finally, I would say that we have been through this before, where we get a temporary lull because of the public health measures and we get case counts coming down, so we prematurely move to relax public health measures. What have we seen? We see a flare-up again. I believe in the prudent, precautionary approach. I personally believe we should be moving very carefully and cautiously for the health of Canadians.

[Translation]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate you on your excellent work.

I think that the pandemic has shown how fragile the health care system is in Quebec and across Canada. We know that seniors in long-term care homes were hard hit. It was hard to find people to work in those facilities. There was not enough money.

Now that my colleague is in power or on the government's side, I would like to know whether he will acquiesce as soon as possible to the call of Quebec and every province in Canada to increase health transfers from 22% to 35% so that the same tragedies we experienced in Quebec and across Canada will not happen again during a future pandemic.

[English]

Mr. Don Davies: Mr. Speaker, I am sure that Quebeckers are so grateful to the NDP for working co-operatively with the Liberals in the 1960s to bring them public, universal, comprehensive health care, which he clearly supports because he wants more money for it. That is because the NDP, unlike the Bloc Québécois, works constructively and positively in Parliament in order to deliver for Canadians, which is something they do not do.

Absolutely, the NDP is the party of health care. We are going to continue to fight for more federal contributions to get the federal government up to its 50% contribution to public health care in this country, as it should be.

• (1225)

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is good to see you in that chair. I am going to split my time with the member for St. Albert—Edmonton.

For two years, Canadians have been living with COVID-19 restrictions. That is two years of lockdowns, of not being able to visit loved ones and of not being able to travel. It is two years of isolation. While Canadians understood the need for various restrictions applied during the pandemic, despite the lack of consistency, despite the mixed messaging and despite the confusion, Canadians have done what was asked of them.

However, today what they can no longer be expected to live with is the indefinite nature of these restrictions and timelines and the lack of data. They are noticing that leaders across the country, 10 provinces, are following the evidence and advice from public health officials, evidence that supports ending the mandates.

Provincial leaders have lifted or have plans to lift mandates in their provinces. The only government in Canada that has no plan to lift restrictions is this one. I am sure that members opposite will argue that their compulsion for continued mandates is somehow justified by public health officials, but Canada's own top doctor says

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that the omicron variant is a game-changer and that it has forced us to rethink vaccine mandates.

Dr. Tam said that we are at a “very important juncture” and that COVID-19 policies need to shift from “an emphasis on requirements to recommendations.” That is the government's own adviser. The government's own adviser says that federal vaccine mandates are under review now, because the science tells us the COVID-19 vaccine, or at least the first two doses, offers very little protection against the transmission of the variant.

Advice once valued by the government is now suddenly ignored in an attempt to drive division and dehumanize those who do not agree, doubling down on a tactic that some members of their own caucus have called out.

The travel vaccination mandate has prevented approximately six million Canadians from travel within Canada and it prevents them from flying out of Canada. They cannot travel. They cannot visit family and friends. They cannot take international vacations or even fly across the country. They cannot live ordinary lives.

Canada is the only country in the developed world that bans citizens from air travel. If we couple that with Dr. Tam's statements of re-evaluating mandates, one can deduct that the rationale for a ban on air travel is no longer justified. However, the government seems to have a different view, one that suits its political narrative. It may see travel as a luxury, but what about work across federally regulated industries?

Let me tell members about one of those industries that is pleading for fairness, common sense and conditions in line with anywhere else in the world today, even with its competitors in our own airports: the air travel industry. The Minister of Transport's mandate for vaccinations, enforced through interim orders, was implemented swiftly across the industry. Despite this being a matter of health and safety, employers developed and implemented mandatory vaccination policies without consultation.

[Translation]

The majority of airline workers complied with their employer's policies, while other workers were placed on unpaid leave without benefits or access to medical benefits. The industry fully supported efforts to ensure the safety of workplaces, workers and the public, as did all members of the House.

It is important to point out that unvaccinated people are being disproportionately penalized. These workers were required to work during the pandemic, unlike other workers whose workplaces were closed but who were able to continue working from home. These workers flew personal protective equipment to other parts of the world, ensured the supply of basic necessities and even worked under conditions where their health and safety were not protected.

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• (1230)

[English]

In the travel sector, vaccinations ended up being the only tool employers relied on in the fight against COVID-19, yet there are many tools to achieve the same goal. We know that. We have used them in other industries.

We kept each other safe. Most were unimpeded by severe outbreaks, and at a time when employers were experiencing worker shortages, particularly in this industry, they were terminating experienced and seasoned workers. Employers and workers have the equal responsibility to keep workplaces safe, yet the failure to do so results in uneven and disproportionate consequences.

For workers, the consequences of the loss of employment of well-paying, unionized jobs, those with benefits and pensions, will impact not just the individual but the entire family. It is unlikely these workers will find other employment that is unionized and stable, which will inevitably impact their family's standard of living. No one should lose their livelihood because of personal beliefs, particularly when alternatives to reach the same goal exist. The government knows that.

We think workers who kept the industry flying during the most challenging times of the pandemic deserve better. By creating an end timeline, an end to this interim order, and a path forward, the government can eliminate the need for these employers to terminate the frontline workers we depended upon and celebrated during the height of this pandemic. It could do that today. Cases of the variant are receding in most parts of the country, and advocates for continued mandates are claiming the mantle of science to justify political positions instead of evaluating the scientific findings that have turned up in each one of our provinces and across the globe.

Just this week, a member of the House stood and offered masking advice to other members in a contrived attempt to virtue signal superiority, despite the clear rules of this place. These are based, of course, on expert evidence, presumably science, the same science the government is relying on, and which are, it is also worth noting, completely in line with what happens outside the door of this place. That exchange not only suggests a disdain for those who follow the rules the member does not like, it creates an arbitrary standard of opinion masquerading as science. That is exactly what we are hearing today. It is gross. It is purposeful, and in some respects, it speaks to a continued deliberate attack on those who do not share the views of the government. We have seen that.

When Canadians see behaviour like that, they lose their confidence in those who are responsible for public health decisions. The trust erodes. It suggests to them that the same disdain displayed for members may extend to people outside of the House. Perhaps it does because, in the absence of any data, benchmarks, timelines and plans to end these mandates, there really is nothing to suggest that continued mandates are not just an opinion of the government. If they are, that is troubling. If they are not, they require an explanation that has not been shared, other than talking points about science.

The intention of the mandates were predicated on increased vaccination rates. We have among the highest in the world. When that

narrative is no longer supported because of those high rates, the goal posts move. This week it became about surgical backlogs, which is tragic and most certainly a capacity issue, but is still inapplicable in relation to the continued federal mandate. Then it was simply a shoulder shrug from the Minister of Health, while he stated that COVID is still here. Of course, it is still here. It will always likely be here, but I hope that has not become the benchmark by which to determine when to lift these mandates or drop these restrictions. I hope that is not the case. I hope we are not hearing about COVID zero from the government.

It is time to end these unjustified mandates. I hope members of the House realize that public experts, their own public experts, the government's own public experts, have said that it is safe. The provinces have said that it is safe. Public health officials have said it is safe. I hope they agree with the Conservatives and lift the mandates so Canadians can get back to work and get their lives back.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when we read the motion and listen to the members from the Conservative Party, it is abundantly clear they have used their political science to make the determination that all federal mandates need to end today. I do not know if they are feeling somewhat obligated because of their presence at the blockade protest, but I suggest it is highly irresponsible.

My question for the member is this: Does she not recognize she cannot just wish the pandemic away, that there is still a need? If we look at what is happening in some of our provinces, there is great concern regarding other variants. I wonder if the member is prepared to say today that we no longer have a pandemic. Would she not at least try to keep an open mind as to what the health experts are telling us?

• (1235)

Ms. Melissa Lantsman: Mr. Speaker, I just want to remind the member that the national immunization task force never called for vaccine mandates. The Public Health Agency of Canada never called for vaccine mandates. The Prime Minister himself, while gallivanting across the country during an election in the midst of this pandemic, said that he would not impose vaccine mandates.

Does the member know when vaccine mandates were imposed? It was when it was politically expedient, so I am not going to take lessons from the government on political science. That is exactly what it is practising with this pandemic. That is exactly what we have seen for the last number of months. It is a shame. It is a shame for Canadian workers that it would turn its back on them.

[Translation]

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is very simple.

Considering what we have been hearing in recent days, what public health authorities are saying in Quebec, and the fact that there is now a sixth wave, I can understand the feeling of being totally fed up that people are talking about.

However, I feel like we are not connecting. On the one hand, we are hearing about concrete solutions with health transfers to deal with a sixth wave. On the other hand, we are being encouraged to listen to our constituents and, because they are fed up, some want to let them shed more measures.

I am trying to understand. The word “immediately” is used in the motion. Could we perhaps take a slightly more long-term view?

[English]

Ms. Melissa Lantsman: Mr. Speaker, it is not just Conservatives calling for this. It is public health officials. It is public health officials from across the 10 provinces that have already lifted their mandates. There are countries around the world where somebody who may not be vaccinated can get on an airplane. We are the only place where that does not happen.

Absolutely, it should be immediate. In fact, it should have been yesterday. We can talk about the sixth, the seventh and the eighth waves, but every single public health official, including Canada's chief public health officer, has said that it is time to live with this pandemic. It is time to give Canadians their lives back.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring to my colleague's attention, after her great speech, a conversation on an Ottawa radio station yesterday with an individual responsible for tracking the variants in the sewage treatment in Ottawa. The numbers have gone up.

The individual was asked about whether we should be doing what we are doing right now in terms of lightening the mandates and giving people their lives back. His comment was that it is not a problem that the rates are rising because immunity levels are rising at the same time. I wonder if the member would like to make a comment on that.

Ms. Melissa Lantsman: Mr. Speaker, certainly the gentleman on the radio is in line with public health officials, including Dr. Tam and health officials from across the 10 provinces that have lifted restrictions. At some point, we have to give Canadians their livelihoods back. We have to stop being vindictive about the punishments of mandates, particularly if they are not justified and if there is no scientific purpose to say they reduce any kind of spread.

There are people who are not working. There are people who have lost their livelihoods. There are people who have lost entire incomes for entire families. They cannot return to work. We ought to think about that.

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of our Conservative motion calling on the NDP-Liberal government to immediately lift all federal vaccine mandates.

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When one listens to the members opposite and their friends in the NDP, we hear it is all about science, and that they are following the science. I ask members of the NDP-Liberal government this: Where is the science? Where is the data? Where is the evidence?

For example, where is the evidence that an unvaccinated trucker, who spends most of his or her day working in isolation, is a public health risk, which somehow merits them being fired from their job? It does not take much delving into science. Indeed, it simply takes a matter of applying basic common sense to recognize what an absurdity that is, but that is precisely the policy of the NDP-Liberal government.

In the face of vaccine mandates that have infringed so significantly upon the rights and freedoms of Canadians, the very least Canadians could expect is compelling scientific evidence to back them up to demonstrate a rational connection between the mandates, stopping transmissibility and keeping Canadians safe from COVID.

After six months, the government has failed to tender any science, data or evidence whatsoever to demonstrate such a rational connection. There is a very simple reason for that, and that is because there is no rational connection. These mandates have nothing to do with science and everything to do with politics, politics of the worst kind.

Millions of Canadians have suffered as a result. As a result of the NDP-Liberal government's punitive vaccine mandates, millions of Canadians are unable to travel freely within Canada. They are unable to get on a plane or a train. These same Canadians, who are our friends, colleagues and neighbours, cannot leave the country for work, travel or health reasons, or to be reunited with loved ones. They are stuck here at home.

This is a serious, unprecedented violation of the mobility rights of Canadians and is contrary to section 6 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and article 12 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. When one thinks about not being able to travel within one's country, of not being able to be able to leave one's country, we think of the former Soviet Union, East Germany and Communist China, but this is Canada, and this is the reality millions of Canadians have been living through for the past six months.

So extreme are these NDP-Liberal vaccine mandates that Canada is the only country in the developed world that restricts air travel on the basis of vaccination status, the only country in the developed democratic world. Under the NDP-Liberal government, Canada is now an international outlier in restricting the freedom of movement of its citizens.

• (1240)

Again, it got to this point not because of science but because of an arbitrary policy of the Prime Minister, who said some months ago that it was the policy objective of his government to impose the most restrictive COVID measures in the world, no matter how unrelated and unconnected to the science they might be.

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We are not talking about a severe infringement just on mobility rights; we have also seen tens of thousands of Canadians lose their jobs and the benefits they had paid into for their entire working lives, stripped of the dignity of work and the dignity of their career. They include men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces who have fought bravely, putting their lives in harm's way to defend the freedoms that Canadians enjoy, who are now being threatened with dishonourable discharge because of a personal medical decision that they made. This is happening in Canada.

What these mandates are really about is control. It is about the government saying that Canadians must do as it says, and if they do not, they will be unable to travel, they will lose their jobs and benefits, they will be vilified and they will be treated as second-class citizens. How wrong. How un-Canadian.

Everywhere around the world, mandates are being lifted. In all 10 provinces, they have already been lifted or will be lifted, as well as in most of Europe. Yesterday even New Zealand, which had a completely failed approach of getting towards zero COVID, announced that it is lifting its mandates—even New Zealand. Here, we have a government that has not even provided a plan, has not even provided any metrics by which these mandates will be lifted. Instead, the government has allocated \$37.4 million over the next three years to make what were supposedly intended to be temporary measures into permanent ones.

Canadians do not want to be controlled. They want to take back control of their lives. They want their freedom back, and they want it now. The only thing standing in their way is the Prime Minister and the NDP-Liberal government, its punitive, discriminatory, unscientific mandates that have caused enormous harm to Canadians.

When the Prime Minister talked about imposing the most restrictive mandates in the world, if the Prime Minister's definition of success is being punitive, he has certainly succeeded at that, at great harm to everyday, law-abiding, taxpaying Canadians who are upstanding members of their community.

End the mandates and end them now.

• (1245)

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member spoke about vaccine mandates and about travel restrictions in particular. He spoke about travel restrictions and mobility rights, and he actually made our travel restrictions tantamount to the regime in the Soviet Union. However, I recall that just last year it was his party on that side of the House that was screaming for border measures to be implemented and for travel to be restricted for Canadians.

Did the hon. member refer to his former leader and his party as being equivalent to leaders in the Soviet Union, or is it just political talk today and amnesia about his own party's previous position?

• (1250)

Mr. Michael Cooper: Mr. Speaker, with the greatest respect to the hon. parliamentary secretary, it might have been a good question if there was any basis in fact to support it, but the problem is that there is no basis in fact to support it, because it has never been the position of the Conservative Party to impose these types of re-

strictions on Canadians to limit the ability of Canadians to enter and leave and re-enter Canada.

These are unprecedented measures, they are draconian measures and they are inherently un-Canadian measures.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the member for St. Albert—Edmonton today spoke a lot during his speech about the obligations we have to Canadians and the freedoms that Canadians are entitled to. I want to read to him what Dr. Katharine Smart, who is the CMA president, had to say.

She said, “While governments and Canadians are hoping to move past the pandemic, an exhausted, depleted health workforce is struggling to provide timely, necessary care to patients and make progress through a significant backlog of tests, surgeries and regular care.”

My question for the member is this: What do we owe our health care professionals, who have stood on the front line and worked so hard? Do we not owe them that? Further, in addition to protecting our health care workers, I would ask the member whether or not he would be supportive of increasing the health transfers to provinces, as the premiers have all asked for, to 35%. Would he be supportive of that?

Mr. Michael Cooper: Mr. Speaker, my brother is a health care worker, a medical doctor, so I appreciate the important role that health care workers played on the front lines throughout COVID. What I would say to them, and what we owe to them, is that we do not fire them the next day after they were there on the front lines.

The member speaks about COVID being here and says that Canadians are tired. Yes, we are tired; yes, it is here; and yes, it is going to be here for a long time. The questions that must be answered are on these mandates. Is there a scientific basis to support them? Is there a rational connection? Are they actually making a difference? All 10 medical health officers across Canada have said no and that it is time to move on.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, an hon. member speaking earlier used a line that stuck out to me. She said that what the Liberals have presented to the House and to Canadians as a whole is “opinion masquerading as science”.

When we see the difference between political science and medical science, I believe we certainly see where this government has followed the former, the political science. In other words, it has done whatever was politically advantageous to it at the time. Right now, 10 provinces have lifted their mandates and countries all over the world have lifted their mandates, yet this government insists that truckers cannot cross the border and come back into Canada without a vaccine, and it has no science, zero science, to reinforce these mandates.

My question to the member is this: Does he see an ounce of evidence or scientific proof that these mandates should in fact continue in place as they are now?

Mr. Michael Cooper: Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend for Lethbridge. She is a great champion of freedom.

In short, there is no evidence that the Liberals have tendered. The ball is in their court. Where is the evidence? There is no evidence. What they are more interested in doing is playing COVID theatre, which they do in this place every single day.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Pickering—Uxbridge.

It is truly amazing to listen to some of the Conservatives, especially my friend from St. Albert—Edmonton. In responding to a question from my colleague in regard to travelling, he tried to give the false impression that the Conservative Party, at no point in time, wanted to limit travelling outside of Canada or coming into Canada.

That is the problem with the Conservative Party. It is that there is that extreme right element, and then there are those who want to be more on the progressive side of the Conservative Party. The member who made that statement is the one who was standing out there when we had the blockade, preaching, at least through the media, in support of the blockade.

As for misinformation, we have what he stated today. We were all here inside the chamber when the Conservative Party was asking the federal government to put in more restrictions on travel. He does not have to take my word for it. I know he can read. He can read Hansard, and he will see that this is in fact a fact.

I would like to take a look at what the Conservative Party is actually saying today through its opposition motion. It is in essence a proclamation to all Canadians from the Conservative Party in Canada that they should not worry and that mandates are no longer necessary. They are not saying to give due diligence. They are not saying to review science or consult with health care professionals. They are not saying that at all—

• (1255)

Mr. Damien Kurek: Have you read the motion?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: —and I have read the motion. The motion says, “the House call on the government to immediately lift all federal vaccine mandates”. To my friend who posed the question, the real question is whether he has read the motion.

The Conservative Party collectively, inside the House, stands alone once again. It is not just the Liberals, the New Democrats and the Bloc members agreeing; we are all saying “no” to this motion because it is a stupid motion. The Conservatives cannot click their heels and wish an end to the pandemic. Members should keep in mind that there was a blockade that cost the economy millions of dollars, and potentially billions. There were a number of Conservatives who were out there encouraging—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): The member for Lethbridge is rising on a point of order.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: Mr. Speaker, I think if you look back about 30 seconds, you will note that the hon. member across the way called this motion stupid. He said, “a stupid motion.” I believe that if you were to look at parliamentary history, you would know, and I believe this member knows as well, that this is unparliamentary language, so the House would like an apology for that.

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Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, our rules, and in particular if we look at Beauchesne's, are very clear. It would be most inappropriate if I were to say that the member is stupid, but it is okay to make a generalization about a political statement and classify it as being stupid. There is nothing wrong with saying something, especially if it is about the real situation, and in this case it is, and I hope that the point of order will not take away from my time.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): I heard the arguments from the two members and we will resume debate for now. I remind all of my colleagues to conduct themselves with decorum in this chamber.

Before resuming debate, I want to assure the parliamentary secretary that this point of order has not cut into his speaking time.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I think if we were to canvass our constituents, taking a look at how the Conservative Party has brought forward this motion today, they would suggest that it has been greatly influenced by the far right. I really and truly believe that. Even the right-wing guru Jason Kenney from the province of Alberta, the one many Conservatives look up to, would not, I think, support this particular motion. It is quite possible that I could be wrong, but what I do know is that Jason Kenney was very critical of elected officials talking with individuals who were participating in the illegal blockades.

There is a reason I raise that. What were those individuals asking for? They were asking for an end to vaccines. The illegal blockades and the protests that were taking place were demanding an end to mandates, and today we have the Conservative Party echoing, at least in part, what the blockaders and the protesters were saying just weeks ago. That is, in fact, the case.

Let us take a look at what has actually happened. Right from day one, when the pandemic came to Canada and went around the world, the government responded by putting in a litany of programs and supports to be there for Canadians as we got a better understanding of the cost of the pandemic from a health perspective. We invested a great deal of resources, whether it was civil servants or financial resources, and had a team Canada approach in dealing with the many different stakeholders out there and in coming up with ways to minimize the damage of the pandemic. That was led by looking at science and listening to what health experts had to say.

Members should have listened to what the Minister of Health said in his opening remarks on this today. He talked about the easing of some restrictions on April 1 for pretesting when crossing the border. That is based on what we are being informed through the numbers.

We had a dramatic increase that occurred through the omicron variant, and we were not the only ones to put in place certain aspects to protect Canadians. We saw different provincial governments take action too. The Province of Quebec implemented a curfew. My home province put in more lockdown measures. Who would have anticipated this back in November and December?

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The federal government provided somewhere in the neighbourhood of 30-plus million rapid tests to the provinces and territories in the month of December alone last year, which was more than a number of months prior when there was no demand for rapid tests. We had to put into place stockpiles in order to accommodate changes because the pandemic is not gone. We still need to be sensitive to what might be around the corner. As an increase in the demand for rapid tests came, in the month of January, through procurement, we received approximately 140 million additional rapid tests, in good part circulated to where the demand was: to our provinces and territories and, as I understand, even to businesses and other stakeholders.

• (1300)

At least on this side of the House, we recognize that the pandemic is not something people can just wish away. There is a responsibility for all of us to make decisions based on facts and science and to continue to listen to health experts. When members of the opposition talk about Dr. Tam, one might get the impression that she is saying to lift mandates. That is not the case. Our chief medical officer is saying that we need to be diligent. We need to have reviews and we are having those reviews. That is the responsible thing to do.

As for the Minister of Health, if we read his comments from earlier, we can see there is a plan in place that has some fluidity to it because circumstances change. We on this side of the House recognize that, and we wish the Conservative Party would do likewise.

• (1305)

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is certainly a lot that could be unpacked in terms of falsehoods, misdirection and avoiding the very clear question. I am confident, and in fact I know, that many Canadians from Liberal ridings have been reaching out to Conservatives across the country, desperate for somebody to listen, desperate for somebody to hear their concerns. Those individuals are among the thousands of public servants who have been fired by the government because of a vaccine mandate.

Members opposite laugh when we bring forward the concerns of these Canadians within this place. However, what is the member's message to the people of his constituency who lost their job because of the federal vaccine mandate that the Prime Minister promised he would not implement but then a few months later did, right before an election? What would he say to the constituents of MPs across the country and the members of the public service who have been fired because of the government's mandate?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I would say to my constituents, as I have, that as a government, from day one we have been listening to and following the advice of health experts, realizing that the very best thing we can do for Canadians is work with Canadians in getting through this pandemic. That is one of the reasons that, ultimately, Canada has fared so well in ensuring we have the vaccine supply and the supports in place to be there for workers, seniors, people with a disability, students, just name it. We have been there in a very real and tangible way because we care about the people of Canada and we are not going to put politics ahead of that caring.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, given the rough week that the member for Winnipeg North has had, I can understand why he is so energetic and impassioned here today.

We are calling for a plan and for more predictability with respect to health measures. This will help maintain social cohesion.

I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on the idea of a flexible plan that would enable us to look forward and provide some predictability surrounding the measures.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I understand that opposition members will often ask for plans. I was in opposition at one point too and asked for plans. That kind of implies that there is no plan, but nothing could be further from the truth. There is a plan. We have ministries with very competent civil servants who work every day to ensure that we are listening to what health experts and science are saying and what Canadians are saying. We are ultimately making decisions based on that.

It is not that on April 1 we are saying we do not have to have the pretest. That was decided a little while ago in anticipation, because the science and the numbers were allowing us to make that adjustment. In essence, when members say there is no plan, I would counter it by saying that we do have a plan and we see that plan in action every day.

• (1310)

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Qujannamiik, Uqaqtittiji.*

Nunavut's chief public health officer has stated that they will be cautious in lifting these measures. These changes in public health rules do not mean that COVID-19 is gone, but rather that we must live with COVID-19.

Does the hon. member agree that measures to protect vulnerable communities remain a priority and increased investments on current commitments are necessary?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the member raises a very valid concern and it is something I tried to emphasize. There is a lot of fluidity with regard to the pandemic, and there are certain sectors of our communities where we do need to ensure that extra attention is given. That is one of the reasons the Prime Minister and many of us have recognized that there are ways in which we can learn from the pandemic to enhance programs going forward. The best example that comes to my mind is the issue of long-term care. Let us understand it and look at ways we can improve it through, for example, national standards for long-term care.

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak out against the revisionist party of Canada, also known as the Conservative Party of Canada, and its motion today to confuse and conflate what we are dealing with and every sacrifice that Canadians have made throughout this pandemic, as a way for them to try to save their floundering party and the division within it.

It is shocking to sit here and listen to the Conservatives today, although it should not be shocking after the last six years of being in this place with them.

Let us talk about the pandemic and the mandates across the country, in particular the fact that I do not think there is a single Canadian who has not been impacted by the pandemic and who does not want to see the lifting of these mandates. Everybody, on all sides of the House, wants to see a return of normalcy, but what Canada and countries around the world have done and what responsible governments around the world have done has been to implement public measures to keep people safe.

A recent Harvard study actually indicated that if it were not for vaccinations and strong public health measures, over 400,000 Canadians would have died during this pandemic.

I sat here today and listened to Conservatives scream and say they wanted their freedom back. What about the freedom of those 400,000 families that would no longer have that family member sitting across from them, or that employer who would no longer have that employee, or that young person who might have lost their grandparent before they had the time to have more cherished memories?

While the Conservatives say they want their freedom back, they mislead the House and they mislead Canadians with regard to the very real tragedies across the country. The actual number of Canadians who have sadly passed due to this pandemic has been over 37,000. It is a number that I find the Conservatives continue to gloss over.

They talk all about the inconveniences. Trust me, it is an inconvenience. It has been difficult not to travel like we want to, to wear masks and to have limitations, but the alternative has been losing lives, losing family members to this disease and having worker shortages across the country due to infection rates.

While the Conservatives scream and talk about freedom, they very much do not represent the reality of the over 37,000 Canadians who lost their ultimate freedom because they died due to this disease, and of the family members who have lost that opportunity to spend time with them.

With that said, obviously, the need to lift restrictions is inevitable. We have seen provinces and territories do it across the country, but what the Conservatives like to gloss over is the fact that, throughout the pandemic, over the last two years, every province and territory has experienced different things at different times. They have had the ability to adjust and put in place measures based on the risk profiles at the time. Leave it to the Conservatives to be out of touch and say they know better than provinces and territories what is needed in their local jurisdictions.

I come from Ontario, and we have had a very different experience than, for example, my friends and colleagues from Nova Scotia have. Does that mean that the Conservatives know best and they will just implement whatever they want, no matter the local dynamics at the time?

It is no wonder that Canadians did not trust Conservatives in this place to deal with their health care needs.

Business of Supply

Let us talk about flip-flopping and changes in positions, because I have listened to the Conservatives. The member for St. Albert—Edmonton actually said in his speech, or in a reply to a question from me, that the Conservative position has never been to restrict Canadians' travel abilities. It was actually his former, former, former leader. I forget now how many they have had, as there have been so many. It was the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle, who in April 2021 slammed our government for not restricting travel more.

● (1315)

Also, the member for Calgary Nose Hill, who I sat on committee with when I was parliamentary secretary to the minister of health, demanded that we put more travel restrictions in place, but then a few months later, once the Conservatives had another leadership convention, they changed their position back.

Let us talk about the ultimate hypocrisy coming from the Conservatives. Their former leader, the member for Durham, said in the last election campaign that anyone travelling with him or his family had to be fully vaccinated, yet for the rest of Canadians travelling on planes, buses or trains, that requirement was not there. What is good for the goose should be good for the gander, but we know that when it comes to members of the Conservative Party, they will take measures to protect themselves, but then try to stoke up the flames of the party's base.

Let us also talk about the fact that I have listened in this place to the members opposite say that they support science and that there is no science for these mandates. It is a little rich to hear members of a party still debating whether or not climate change is real say that Canadians should listen to them on their accreditations about science. Even without that, if the members opposite truly care about science and think that science is going to lead us out of this pandemic, which I certainly believe, then why is it that they still allow members, such as the member for Niagara West, to actually promote Ivermectin as a treatment? It is horse dewormer. I am sorry. The Conservatives are correcting me on the pronunciation. It is something that they have been researching and promoting.

Conservatives suggested that instead of vaccinations, Canadians should use horse dewormer. This has been widely proven to be false information, but those are still the voices in the Conservative Party that they want Canadians to listen to. They say they are the arbiters of science. There was also the member for Provencher who had to apologize in this place because he made the claim that double vaccines were 13 times more likely to kill people than the delta variant. The member had to apologize. He is still a sitting member in this place on the Conservative benches.

Business of Supply

It is outrageous to think that Canadians should trust the Conservative Party of Canada with their health or with the decision of when mandates should be lifted. There is no question that all mandates will eventually be lifted, as they should be and as we have been doing constantly. As the pandemic has changed, so have our mandates because we have been following the science. What I think Canadians find truly offensive, and certainly I do after listening to the debate in this place, is the suggestion by the party of climate change deniers and horse-dewormer medication strategies that vaccines are not safe. It will not even disclose who is vaccinated or not, and its members continue to spread conspiracy theories on their social media and in this place. Those are not the people who Canadians have trust in to lift mandates and take care of their health.

The pandemic has been incredibly difficult for everybody, but we must never forget the lives lost and the heroes throughout this pandemic, such as health care workers who are still overwhelmed in hospitals and still care for residents in long-term care homes. We want out of this pandemic, but the only way to do it is through science-based decisions, not the revisionist type of conspiracy theory policies that Conservatives have put forward.

On this side of the House, we will continue to look out for Canadians, for their health and for the well-being of their families and the economy, and we will reject the politicized alt-right policies of the Conservatives.

• (1320)

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague is so unbelievably virtuous and knowledgeable about science. If we had not moved this motion today, we would not have even had the opportunity to debate the issue of vaccine mandates.

On my side of the House, we think that scientists have the right answers. Could my colleague explain why the advice of 10 Canadian provinces that have scientists working on COVID-19 is not valid?

[English]

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell: Mr. Speaker, I never suggested that the decisions of provinces and territories, and the scientific advice they are following is not correct. In fact, if the member was listening to my speech, he would have heard that I said that as provinces and territories have made decisions about their particular situations, we, as a federal government, should listen to what provinces and territories feel is best in their particular jurisdictions.

However, that is not what the Conservative motion is. That member should know that the Conservative motion is saying that Ottawa knows best, and that it should tell provinces and territories how best to deal with this pandemic. We are saying we are going to continue to work with them and we are going to follow the evidence.

[Translation]

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I cannot quite believe what I am hearing. All the scientists' ears have got to be ringing. As much as they want us to believe their de-

cisions are informed by science, I think it is actually the opposite because this feels like we are in the magical land of unicorns.

The House is debating an important issue, but the mood is all-or-nothing politics. The Conservatives are in camp nothing. They say we should cancel all the measures. The Liberals say they are keeping the status quo and will lift the measures someday, who knows when. Is there even a plan? The Liberals say they have one, but they are not telling us what it is.

Is there any way they can tell Quebeckers something of substance about the public health measures and when and how the Liberal Party will give us some kind of plan so we know what to expect and have some predictability, all without remaining frozen in time?

[English]

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell: Mr. Speaker, I actually agree a lot with her statement that it is this all-or nothing proposal that we seem to be debating. In fact, I disagree with that.

For example, on April 1, there will be another federal restriction lifted when it comes to vaccinated travellers and testing requirements. As much as I wish we could provide a predictable plan, I think in the past two years of the pandemic, we have seen that there is nothing predictable about COVID except that it is serious and it is deadly. We need to make sure that we are agile to lift restrictions and ensure that Canadians can live as we always have, but that it is done with public health measures at the forefront and ensuring that we do not see increased spikes or increased deaths across this country, including in Quebec.

• (1325)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that the other thing that is fairly consistent is the fact that the Conservative Party has never taken this issue seriously from day one. As a matter of fact, at the beginning of the debate today, one of the members in the Conservative Party started to talk about how the government has been late on everything. Meanwhile, the Conservatives were late to put on masks, they were late to support Canadians in the supports that were being rolled out to them, and they were late to get vaccinated. We still do not know how many of them are vaccinated. They have been late in almost every single regard as it relates to COVID-19, yet they seem to hold a superior opinion as to how the government should be dealing with this now.

Can the member expand on that?

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell: Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend and colleague for Kingston and the Islands who has been a champion for his community and for us here in the House.

I think what is critical in this debate is the fact that the Conservatives, throughout this pandemic, have flip-flopped their way through the entire policy process. As I said, the example I gave in my speech of their former leader, the member for Durham, having a different perspective for him and his family than for the rest of Canadians says it all.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today. I will be splitting my time with the member for Peterborough—Kawartha.

I am glad to have an opportunity to speak to our Conservative motion, which reads:

That, given that Canada has one of the world's highest vaccination rates and every province across Canada has lifted or has a plan to lift vaccine mandates, the House call on the government to immediately lift all federal vaccine mandates in order to:

- (a) protect the jobs of federally regulated employees;
- (b) enable Canadians to travel unimpeded;
- (c) ensure Canada's tourism industry recovery; and
- (d) allow for the free flow of goods across the Canadian border.

Of course, before my colleagues across the way try to shame and attack me for various and sundry, let me give a full disclosure for the record. I have had my vaccinations and I have also had COVID-19 twice, once at the beginning of the pandemic and once at Christmastime. I also know quite a bit about science. I have been a chemical engineer for nearly 40 years, so I would like to approach this from a scientific point of view.

I will start by talking about the charter rights violations.

This government has trapped almost three million Canadians in the country. They cannot take a plane, they cannot take a train and they cannot cross at the land borders. There was a point in time when this would have been considered a reasonable measure, according to the medical health experts and the World Health Organization, because we were in the time of trying to control the transmission of the disease. However, with omicron, we are now at a place where the World Health Organization has said that omicron is everywhere. Therefore, these types of restrictions are no longer working, and that is the reason countries all over the world are opening up.

If we think about it, we have quite a high rate of vaccination in Canada, and those people can get and transmit COVID-19. I talked about having it myself. The Prime Minister had it. The member for Beauce had it. A lot of members in the House have had COVID-19, and we have all had our vaccines. Therefore, if we have almost 90% of those people going back and forth across the border, what is the additional risk of allowing another 10% of people who can get COVID-19 and transmit it from going back and forth across the border? There actually is no difference in risk from a science perspective. The government can no longer rely on section 1 of the charter, which allows it to temporarily infringe the charter rights of Canadians to freely come and go. That is one mandate that I would like to see dropped immediately.

The second thing I will talk about is the people who were fired for not being vaccinated.

First of all, I think this is just wrong on so many levels, but let us talk about it from a science perspective. Let us take a person who is a federal employee working from home who is vaccinated. What is the chance of that person spreading their germs to somebody in another building who is also working from home? The answer is, quite simply, there is zero risk. Now, if one is an unvaccinated federal worker who is working from home, what are the odds that this

person is going to transfer their germs to somebody who is also working from home in another building? The answer from a science perspective is, again, there is zero risk, but those people were fired by this Liberal government. That is discriminatory. It is not based on science, and it is just one example of the many things this government has done to deliberately punish people who chose not to get vaccinated.

I have had many people approach my office who wanted to get an exemption because they had a history of stroke or a history of heart and kidney problems or other comorbidities. Originally, many of them received exemptions from their doctors, but then the Royal College of Physicians overturned all of those exemptions and threatened the medical licences of doctors in this country if they wrote exemptions for anything other than an anaphylactic reaction to the first vaccine. That is the reason many people were not able to get their exemptions, but they still had valid reasons for not taking the vaccine. I would like to see the federal government hire back every person it fired who is working from home regardless of vaccination status.

• (1330)

Now all provinces have started to lift their mandates. Let us take Ontario, for example. We have vaccinated and unvaccinated people whose children are going to school without masks, who are going to malls, who are eating in restaurants and who are all breathing the same air, so it is ridiculous to think that we have to protect them in some way in other places when they are already exposed. That is why, for all these mandates that have to do with the requirements on planes and trains and keeping unvaccinated people out of that line, the science is not there. These people are already exposed to omicron, just like the vaccinated. Everybody can get it and transmit it, so that needs to go.

With respect to the things causing problems at the border, let us talk about ArriveCAN and the ability to input all of that stuff. Some people do not have cellphones. A lot of seniors are not computer literate. What is the increased risk of exposure to COVID-19 if the federal government eliminated the need for ArriveCAN today? What is the difference? There is no scientific risk of increased COVID exposure related to an application. It can get rid of it today, and I suggest it does.

At the same time, I am very concerned about some of the privacy invasions that happened during the COVID-19 pandemic. We have seen privacy issues that have been put forward to the Privacy Commissioner. We have also seen the digital tracking of Canadians. I am concerned about those things as well.

Some members may know that at the beginning, when we returned to this parliamentary session, I was quite passionately standing up for civil liberties. I had meetings with MPs who had their concerns. I happened to keep the paper with the list of things we wanted to see addressed, so I thought I would tick these off one at a time.

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There was the elimination of the PCR test for vaxxed and asymptomatic people. I am glad to see that was removed. There was no scientific evidence that it was needed, so that went away. I talked about ArriveCAN and the rules at the border. With respect to those things as well, there is no scientific merit to keep them in place. They are not going to prevent the spread of omicron and need to go. There were the medical privacy violations. I just spoke about that one. Then there was trapping Canadians in their own country. I just spoke about that one. Finally, there was the firing of the unvaxxed, and I just spoke about that one.

I would like to share a little story. In my own riding of Sarnia—Lambton, Bluewater Health fired 18 medical workers and forced 300, under duress, to take the vaccine or lose their jobs. Four weeks after it did that, there was an outbreak of COVID-19 among the vaccinated medical staff. What was accomplished? It was absolutely nothing but misery for the 18 families of the people who lost their jobs.

Keep in mind that these are health care workers who, from the beginning of the pandemic, were dealing with COVID on the front lines with their personal protective equipment. Nobody was vaccinated then and they were considered heroes. Then, fast-forward, they were fired. Really, they were the safer ones. They were getting rapid-tested every day and wearing their PPE, whereas the vaccinated ones who ended up having the outbreak were not. Therefore, we can see that all of these mandates are intended to discriminate and punish, but they are not based on science and they do not accomplish anything.

I do not think we need to talk about the provincial mandates. There are plenty enough at the federal level so we do not need to bring a lot of that in, but it is the same sort of thing. We need to look at the World Health Organization, which is recommending that we drop these mandates. We need to look at the other countries that have opened up. We need to look at the U.S., where 40 states have dropped all of their mandates. We need to look at the provinces, which have all dropped or are dropping their mandates.

The current government needs to get rid of these things immediately. We all want to work together. The people who are vulnerable will want to continue to protect themselves, and I support that, but at this point in time we need to learn to get on with our lives. We need to stop punishing people. We need to stop violating their charter rights.

Together, we will be better prepared for the next pandemic when it arrives.

• (1335)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the last 10 minutes, I listened intently to the comments given by this member. I will note she started off by telling us about her expertise as a chemical engineer, but then went on to talk about charter rights violations and civil liberties, both at the beginning and end of her speech. I know for a fact that she is a highly qualified chemical engineer. She was indeed educated at the best university in the country for engineering, but I did not know that she was a scholar when it came to civil liberties or charter rights.

I wonder if she can inform the House, when she talks about charter rights violations, when they were tested in the courts, how the courts ruled on them and what the ultimate decisions were.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for recognizing that the best university is in his riding of Kingston.

Actually, I was informed in previous debates by the Liberal members who are actually members of the bar on the Oakes principle, which is applied when looking at section 1 of the charter in trying to determine whether or not the threshold has been met for being able to infringe upon people's rights. It is intended to be temporary, and it has to be shown that there is a threat to Canada. That is my principle at this point in time.

We cannot show that at this moment in time, with omicron being everywhere and being able to be transmitted by people who are vaccinated and who are not vaccinated, that anything is being accomplished to protect Canada by keeping the unvaccinated trapped in their own country.

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Qujannamiik, Uqaqtittiji.*

According to Indigenous Services Canada, as of yesterday, March 23, the data recorded for COVID-19 for first nations on reserves was 93,154 confirmed cases of COVID-19, 2,384 active cases, 3,068 hospitalizations due to COVID-19, 90,084 recovered cases and 686 deaths due to COVID-19.

With these kinds of statistics still in existence, does the member believe that the COVID-19 pandemic is over?

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Mr. Speaker, the member pointed out a couple of things that are worth noting. First, there are a lot of numbers out there and the bar just kept getting changed from the beginning of the pandemic.

At the beginning of the pandemic, the concern was to prevent deaths and to prevent our ICUs from being over capacity. Once the ICUs were not over capacity, then it became tracking the number of cases and then it became 70% vaccination. Then that was not good enough and it needed to be 80% vaccination, and so on and so forth.

Now, essentially, we see that the ICUs are not over capacity in our country, and we know that every year, when we have flu season, 12,000 Canadians die from flu and upper respiratory illness. I could not minimize the seriousness of COVID-19, especially for those who are vulnerable and have comorbidities, but I think we need to stop looking at case counts. We do not measure case counts when we talk about the flu every year.

We do need to look at what is happening with the ICU, and it is a static situation. We could see another pandemic. We could see another strain. We have learned from the past how to react quickly to those and as appropriately as need be at the time.

• (1340)

[Translation]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, since this morning, we have heard several Conservative MPs talk about the need for a plan. I would remind members that, a month ago, we voted in favour of their motion for a plan to be tabled.

The problem is that there is no mention of a plan in the current motion. Why is the need for a plan being brought up in the speeches when it is not included in the motion? Would the Conservatives be open to amending the motion to explicitly set that out?

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question.

I think that we do indeed need to have a plan. The Liberal-NDP government does not have one at this time.

I believe that we must get rid of the requirements that are currently in place, for example the ones at the border for people who lost their jobs. We must put an end to these requirements immediately and set out a plan for all the rest.

[English]

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Mr. Speaker, everything has an expiration date. Our country was hit with a pandemic that no one had experienced before. We implemented measures we thought were best, and Canadians really delivered on what was asked of them.

An emergency plan needs to be three things: timely, targeted and temporary. We do not even have a plan, and it has been two years. Every province has lifted, or has a plan to lift, mandates. I can, in fact, go outside of this federal building right now and not show my vaccine passport or wear a mask, yet I have to in here.

How is the science outside of this federal building different than a non-federal building? People can attend an NHL game with 20,000 unmasked and unvaccinated people, but we still have not fully opened our borders. Why?

As shadow minister of tourism, I can tell members the travel industry is without a doubt one of the hardest-hit sectors. It is important to take this time to truly convey the magnitude of this industry and how hard it has been impacted by these travel restrictions. People have been shamed for wanting or needing to travel, and that is wrong.

Many people will say that travel is privilege, but I challenge everyone to think about the millions of people who have a job, a paycheck and a purpose because of the travel industry. People have saved their life savings to go on a trip. I challenge everyone to think about family members who need to travel to see each other.

Before this pandemic, Canadian tourism was a \$105-billion industry. It has been slashed to less than half of that, and unless we take action today, it may not recover.

It is time to drop the federal mandates and the confusing restrictions. Canada is lagging in the world of travel, and we need to restore travel confidence today. Canadians and international travellers

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are travel hesitant. The rules and unnecessary restrictions are huge barriers to this industry recovering.

People will book a trip to visit family or to get away, only to cancel it shortly thereafter because the rules keep changing. We need to move forward. We need to learn to live with this virus, and we need to restore travel confidence. That is key in the recovery.

Each week, I receive hundreds of heartbreaking stories from constituents who have not been reunited with family and friends. I have a friend who never got to say goodbye to their mother, who passed away alone. This is all connected to the travel industry. Whether one travels by plane, train or automobile, one needs to rely on the tourism sector when one travels.

Maybe someone needs a dog kennel, a hotel, a restaurant, food, supplies, gifts or clothes. Maybe someone wants to visit the spa and get their hair or nails done before they leave or while they are at their destination. All of these businesses have been decimated, and it is our duty to help them recover.

The Canadian tourism and travel sector cannot recover without the support of the government. The government took travel confidence away from Canadians, and it is its job to restore it. We need to restore travel confidence and fully open the border. The government needs to show the world Canada is safely open for business. It also needs to take the action to prove it, and not just say it.

The tourism industry relies on plans that are months out, and our window gets smaller and smaller every day to help this sector recover and restore travel confidence. Travellers who are currently making summer, fall and winter 2023 plans will bypass Canada if we do not act today.

Travel and tourism is both a foundation for our economy and our mental health. Those who work in the industry are suffering and those who travel are suffering. This is a huge industry that impacts all demographics. People need hope and relief.

Tourism is the backbone of many local economies across our country, including in my riding of Peterborough—Kawartha. Rhonda Keenan of Peterborough and the Kawarthas Economic Development says that 87.5% of arts, entertainment and recreation businesses were closing their doors or cancelling.

Many businesses in the tourism sector have shared heartbreaking stories with me about their struggles. Many have invested their life savings, remortgaged their homes or can no longer afford their homes. These businesses cannot endure another season of closure and uncertainty.

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• (1345)

I want to share some stats with you. The Canadian Federation of Outfitter Associations is a voice for resource-based Canadian tourism. The industry has an economic impact of over \$5 billion annually and provides over 35,000 jobs. The industry can accommodate over 700,000 clients for fishing and hunting, many of whom come from outside of Canada. Clearly, this is a significant industry and it needs our help to recover. Ending federal mandates would help it recover. The Saskatchewan Commission of Professional Outfitters reported decimating revenue losses of up to 100%. One in five outfitters did not open its camps in 2021.

Next, I want to share the experiences of Brian Edwards of Rocklands Entertainment Canada. Brian has been in the industry for decades. He, like so many others, has seen it destroyed. Brian wrote to me recently saying that I was 100% correct that tourism and entertainment are about as connected as one can get. He described how every year they booked hundreds of airline flights, hotel rooms, buses and meals. The bus groups they worked with all across Canada in some cases survived entirely on taking people to entertainment venues. He also said that, for the mental well-being of everyone, including, but not limited to, artists, producers, technicians, promoters, agents, managers and, last but not least, the audience, it needs to survive. He asked if I could believe that one of our most celebrated and successful Mirvish productions, *Come From Away*, had had to shut down and cease production.

As we start to hear these stories, we are reminded just how big the travel and tourism industry is and how many lives it impacts. Stewart Grant from Stonetown Travel said that revenue is down over 90% and 50% of retail travel agencies had been lost in their constituency. ITAC, which is the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada, said that Canada's indigenous tourism sector has experienced an almost 70% decline in direct GDP and a 59.4% decline in employment. The Tourism Industry Association of Canada, TIAC, is still at 50% of where it was in 2019.

Since the pandemic started, only 1% of all cases of COVID-19 in Canada have been related to travel, yet it is portrayed and perceived as an unsafe thing to do. The constantly changing restrictions also cause so much confusion. To put this into perspective, in 2021, which was supposed to be a year of recovery, the industry reached only 13% of the total number of international visitors compared to 2019. The year 2021 was worse than 2020 in terms of international inbound travellers.

The tourism industry was the first hit. It was the hardest-hit. It will be the last to recover if we do not plan and act now to remove the unscientific mandates. It is time for the NDP-Liberal government to give hope and relief to the tourism sector and end the restrictions that continue to hold their businesses back.

Why are we punishing the industry that brings us the things that we need the most right now: jobs, mental health, a thriving economy, happiness and hope? It is time to end the federal mandates.

• (1350)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the topic of vaccine mandates and requiring people to have vaccines, it was found out that during the 2021 election this

particular member went into a retirement home being not fully vaccinated. I wonder whether she has had an opportunity to reflect on that and if she thinks that was a wise choice.

More important, would she recommend that somebody else do the same thing? Would she encourage anybody going into a long-term care home to be fully vaccinated?

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Mr. Speaker, it is important to note that many of those who work in long-term care are not fully vaccinated.

I want to point out for the member opposite that it is unfortunate that he does not care about the travel and tourism industry and all of the statistics I provided in my speech. Clearly, for somebody who has a riding as beautiful as the member's, it is unfortunate he does not care about the travel and tourism industry.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on February 4, Dr. Tam said that Canada's public health restrictions should be re-evaluated. Later that month, the Conservatives brought a motion to the House for the government to table a plan. New Democrats voted against that motion at the time because there was an illegal occupation in the nation's capital, and we did not think it was appropriate to signal that public health restrictions were to be re-evaluated at that time. That is not a secret to the Conservatives. They knew that at the time because we said it at the time.

The illegal occupation is now over. Today, the member for Vancouver Kingsway proposed an amendment to this motion that would call on the chief public health officer of Canada to conduct that review in a timely way and for that to be concluded within four weeks. Unfortunately, the Conservatives, despite knowing that is something that would lead to greater agreement in the House, declined to have that amendment considered. Can I ask the member why?

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Mr. Speaker, this tourism sector cannot take anything else. That is what I am here to talk about today. That is my role, to stand up for this sector that cannot survive another season of closure. There are no more plans. How do we not have a plan? How do we not have these mandates being lifted when they have been lifted in every other province? We are the last in the travel industry worldwide.

That is what I am asking for today.

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Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola we have three valleys. The Okanagan Valley is well known for tourism, but so are the Similkameen and Nicola valleys. In fact, Experience Nicola Valley recently received the 2022 marketing program of the year award from the Canada Prestige Awards program. They are sharing the stories that get people to come to places like Nicola Valley, but unfortunately, many of the restrictions on travel are stopping people from coming.

Could the member please say what needs to happen to allow groups, such as Experience Nicola Valley, to capitalize on their good work? What other things can the government do to make it better for our tourism sector?

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Mr. Speaker, the very short answer is to restore travel confidence. People need to know that Canada is safely open for business. As I said, less than 1% are impacted by this. We need to open it up. The government took travel confidence away. It is its job to restore it.

I cannot wait to visit the Okanagan Valley.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): Resuming debate. Before giving the floor to the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs, I must note that he will have about five minutes to speak right now. He may continue his speech after oral question period.

Mr. Darrell Samson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It was kind of you to point that out.

[English]

I will be sharing my time with the member for Vaughan—Woodbridge today after my speech.

It has been two years now, and I still remember on March 13 getting ready to board a plane to return home on a Friday afternoon on Friday the 13th. It has been two years now, and we have been through a lot as a country and as a world. It was a global issue, but from day one the focus of our government has been on supporting the health and security of Canadians. The second objective, of course, was to help them financially through many of the challenges they faced.

I have to be honest. When we were faced with a global challenge and trying as a government to put programs together to meet the needs of Canadians, with everybody in this game and all members of Parliament from all parties needing to be engaged because we needed to make sure we were supporting Canadians quickly, doing that while we were moving forward at 150 miles per hour was very difficult. I remember spending 67 consecutive nights talking with colleagues in our party and with ministers and the Prime Minister about the various programs that would be needed, because we were getting information about what would be needed from our constituents, the people on the ground who were facing the challenges.

There were three million jobs lost overnight. What did we do to help them? Canadians have been there with us, paying taxes for years, and they were in need. We were in a much better position as

a government to help them financially rather than to ask them to be burdened by that expense, which would be tremendous. I remember each day getting more information from our constituents, and then in the nighttime talking to members and colleagues and saying that some things were not going to work for a company and that some things were just not going to work for an individual. We put our heads together to find solutions and tweaked the various programs to meet the needs of the people on the ground.

That is tremendous, in my opinion. That is why I came into politics. It was to help and support people and Canadians, and we were doing that every single day, seven days a week. That, in my opinion, is very important. That is why I want to thank all Canadians, but I also want to thank the individual frontline workers, because most people were scared to leave their homes, yet those workers were going to work every day. I cannot thank them enough, nor our teachers. We have seen our school systems right across the country stay open and continue to ensure solid education for all students, which is crucial.

I have to thank the businesses, because we were quickly in need of PPE, gowns, gloves and whatnot. Our companies right across the country, from all provinces and all ridings, were able to find ways to support Canadians, and that was extremely important. Then it was a question of making sure we could find vaccines, and it is a very tough challenge to be able to get that done very quickly. Again I want to thank our researchers and the health organizations. All countries were working together to help and to meet those needs, and we were ahead of everybody in the G7 in getting vaccinations. Today, as we speak, over 90% of Canadians have had at least one dose.

What types of programs did we use to help Canadians? We had the CERB for people, which guaranteed \$500 a week for up to four months to help them. We had the wage subsidy, because we wanted people to stay at work if at all possible. We knew companies were struggling and could not keep people at work, but instead of keeping them at home, we could keep them at work, so we offered the wage subsidy at 90%, which was extremely important. Then we moved forward all kinds of recovery benefits as well. Those are some of the programs we put together to allow Canadians to pull through this pandemic.

I will have the opportunity to go into more detail on how our government invested in various funding. I can tell members right now that we have spent over \$72 billion in supporting Canadians through the pandemic, and we will continue.

● (1400)

The Deputy Speaker: The member will have four and a half minutes remaining when we return to debate.

*Statements by Members***STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS***[English]***DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PREVENTION**

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to recognize a unique and effective approach to domestic violence prevention and education that is happening in my community and reaching people throughout North America.

She Is Your Neighbour is a powerful awareness project and storytelling series created by the incredible team at Women's Crisis Services of Waterloo Region. The podcast explores the realities and complexities of domestic violence. The stories talk about the many types of abuse. They address myths about victims and survivors. They discuss the role of men and more.

Throughout the series, they emphasize that we all have a role to play in ending domestic violence. Their third season comes out in May and features some amazing guests, including Anna Maria Tremonti.

I invite all colleagues in the House, and in fact all Canadians, to listen in for themselves. They can find She Is Your Neighbour wherever they download podcasts or online at sheisyourneighbour.com.

* * *

KAMALAMBIKAI KANDASAMY

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Scarborough—Rouge Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Mrs. Kamalambikai Kandasamy, a brave mother of the Tamil nation. Throughout 2008 and until May 2009, Mrs. Kandasamy worked day and night as a pharmacist embedded with the Tamil medical team in Mullivaikal. As makeshift hospitals were targeted and bombed by the Sri Lankan armed forces, she fearlessly helped thousands of survivors.

The world ignored her pleas in 2009 but heard her loud and clear as she became a critical witness and voice to the war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide of her people. She campaigned for accountability and justice, seeking to end impunity for Sri Lankan officials by speaking at the United Nations Human Rights Council and advocating to our Minister of Foreign Affairs and many other world leaders.

Until her last breath, she supported the mothers of the disappeared, raised money to support survivors and ensured that those who made the ultimate sacrifice were never forgotten, including her only son, Thivaharen.

* * *

WALTER “WALLY” PHILIPS

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I rise to commemorate the life of my friend Walter “Wally” Philips. The son of Ukrainian immigrants, Wally was born in Saskatchewan before moving to B.C., where he began several careers in his life. He was a fixture in the White Rock community, a fellow Rotarian, former president of the Richmond Chamber of Commerce and a dedicated champion of medical reha-

bilitation programs, mental health and the like. Wally was a passionate community leader and volunteer. He often reached out to me with welcome and wise advice and will be greatly missed by many.

Above all else, Wally was a family man. When his delightful wife Kay passed away, he said it felt like he had lost his right arm. Sadly, his son Alan passed away six days after him.

Wally's legacy will live on through his remaining children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren while he rests peacefully with his brother, sister, son and Kay. He believed they would all be together on the other side, and I have no doubt they are.

* * *

*[Translation]***NATALIE PAULINE AGUSTIN**

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an incredible young woman from my community who passed away far too soon on Tuesday.

[English]

Natalie Pauline Agustin, or Nalie, as she was known to her loving parents Tess and Jess; her partner Vee; her wonderful, large Filipino family; and her many, many friends and followers, faced life with cancer with courage, creativity and humour as she shared her daily challenges on social and public media, as well as in her beautiful book of poetry and observations, *The Diary of Nalie*.

Today we mourn Natalie, but as she said in her own words, “I want to be remembered by how I made you feel in my presence...I want to be remembered for always giving it my best and, despite how I felt or what was said, I never stopped believing in me—and you...I don't want to be admired, I want you to feel inspired. Through you and your inspired-living is how I wish to leave my legacy.”

* * *

*[Translation]***PURPLE DAY**

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is with emotion, appreciation and conviction that I rise in the House today to mark Purple Day for epilepsy.

It is with emotion, because I have an extraordinary four-year-old son named Ulysse who has suffered from the neurological disorder of epilepsy since he was barely ten months old.

It is with appreciation, because the 100,000 or so Quebecers living with this disorder can count on health professionals, organizations like Épilepsie Québec, and people like us to support them.

It is with conviction, because I know that all the support we provide, whether it be in the form of concrete gestures to support epilepsy organizations or symbolic ones such as wearing purple, improves the lives of people living with epilepsy.

On my own behalf and that of the Bloc Québécois, I want to thank everyone for showing such goodwill and solidarity on March 26 by wearing purple for all the Ulysses of this world.

* * *

● (1405)

OUTAOUAIS COMMUNITY INTEGRATION ASSOCIATION

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Gatineau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this week is Quebec Intellectual Disability Week, and I would like to take this opportunity to highlight the work that dedicated organizations are doing in the Outaouais.

For example, this year, the Association pour l'intégration communautaire de l'Outaouais is celebrating its 65th year of serving our community. The association provides services to people with intellectual disabilities and their families to help them integrate into the community both socially and professionally. I am thinking about Marie-Ève, who has visited us here in Parliament. During my visits to APICO, I have witnessed the positive impact that this organization, its employees and its volunteers clearly have on the people they serve.

I thank the entire team, the families and the precious volunteers for the tremendous work they do for people with intellectual disabilities. I wish APICO a happy 65th anniversary and continued success in the future.

* * *

[English]

AGNES MACPHAIL DAY

Mr. Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today 30% of the seats in the House of Commons are held by women. March 24 is Agnes Macphail Day, in celebration of her birthday and honouring her as the first woman elected to this chamber just over 100 years ago. Agnes was first elected to federal politics to represent the riding of Grey Southeast and would later represent the Grey—Bruce riding, part of the riding I have the honour of representing.

Last night I had the privilege of listening to the winning speeches at the 76th annual Grey County Federation of Agriculture public speaking contest. What stood out to me was that the overwhelming majority of the student participants were young women. I am confident in saying that many of them will be future leaders in my riding and across Canada, especially in the cultural, political and agricultural fields.

I hope all members will join me in recognizing the historic and inspiring contributions Agnes made to Canada and in honouring her as a pioneer who inspired and continues to inspire women across this country to take their place in the House of Commons.

Statements by Members

[Translation]

GREEK INDEPENDENCE

Ms. Annie Koutrakis (Vimy, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow, March 25, marks the 201st anniversary of the Greek war of independence. This day is important not only to Canadians of Hellenic origin, but also to people all over the world.

[English]

I remind everyone that this day is dedicated to all those who love liberty and freedom, and I warn all who would deny them these human values. This is a moment for Greeks to celebrate and an invitation for all to follow the spirit of the Greek revolution and fighting oppression.

In light of the threat of Russian aggression in Ukraine, I would like to acknowledge the struggle of the countless Ukrainian men, women and children who have been displaced, killed or wounded, and the millions fighting for their sovereignty, identity and freedom. As long as there are heroes ready to sacrifice for justice and liberty, the Greek spirit of freedom and democracy will live on.

Slava Ukraini.

[Member spoke in Greek]

[Translation]

Long live Canada.

* * *

[English]

ÉCOLE RIVER HEIGHTS SCHOOL

Hon. Jim Carr (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the grade 7 and 8 students at École River Heights School wrote to me asking for support in assisting Ukrainian refugees to find safe harbour in Canada quickly. All 449 students at the school signed the letter and it was hand delivered to my office.

I visited students at the school to hear more about how they feel about the conflict, the role of economic sanctions, humanitarian aid and how Canada will help Ukraine rebuild after the war. Their questions and comments reveal the depth of intelligence and thoughtfulness reflective of what I know to be true about young people: They are insightful and passionate and want to talk about topics that are challenging, complex and even unsettling.

I left the students with this message. I said to get engaged and to take their ambitions and aspirations as citizens and members of family and community and put them to work for our nation. They are our future and our future is bright.

Statements by Members

● (1410)

AIR TRANSPORTATION

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, earlier today I tabled legislation that would mandate operational collision avoidance systems for gliding clubs in Canada. Bill C-259 is the result of a commitment I made to Martina and Bradley Leinweber of Calgary, who lost their son Adam in a 2019 crash.

The tow plane's anti-collision system, which significantly reduces the risk of mid-air collisions, was not working at the time, and there is actually no requirement that they be used in Canada. Members should be aware that there have been 30 confirmed incidents or near misses involving gliders since 2010, nine involving commercial aircraft. The Leinwebers have been trying to change that, and I hope the House will support them.

This is not a partisan issue. It is an issue of safety for all Canadians, and we must take the necessary steps to ensure another life is not lost.

* * *

MIKE SHARP AND CAROLINE HELBIG

Mr. Patrick Weiler (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this January, my community lost two local icons when a tree tragically fell through their West Vancouver home in a windstorm. Mike Sharp and Caroline Helbig contributed immeasurably to the fabric of the community of West Vancouver and Horseshoe Bay.

Caroline's deep connection to nature led her to be one of the founding members of the Coalition to Save Eagleridge Bluffs. Her husband Mike, known as "Sharpie" to his friends, coached and was president of the West Vancouver Minor Hockey Association and was an integral part of the local pickup hockey scene. Together they helped raise over \$300,000 for the Feed the Need program in West Vancouver to provide food for vulnerable seniors at the onset of the pandemic.

The community has come together to set up two memorial scholarships in their honour: one in environmental stewardship and the other to help kids who want to play hockey, which has raised over \$30,000 in just a few short weeks. While the loss of these two incredible people will be acutely felt, their legacies will live on and continue to reverberate around the community they loved so much.

* * *

NUCLEAR ENERGY

Mr. Corey Tochor (Saskatoon—University, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is time that we get serious about green energy in Canada. That means getting serious about nuclear energy. The IPCC has called for an increase of nuclear energy, as much as 500%, for the environment.

Nuclear provided 90% of the power needed to phase out coal in Ontario. It was not wind or solar but nuclear that did it. This represented North America's largest greenhouse gas reduction. If not for nuclear, it would not have happened. Nuclear energy is not a sin stock; it is our only hope.

It is incredibly disappointing that the government's green bond framework treats it like a sin stock, insulting the men and women who work hard every day to create zero-carbon electricity and life-saving medical isotopes. The unscientific, anti-nuclear bias of the Canadian green bond framework must change today.

* * *

WORLD TUBERCULOSIS DAY

Mr. Gary Vidal (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today is World Tuberculosis Day. More than 4,000 people die every day from TB. Today we stand in solidarity with people who suffer from TB and the millions who have lost their lives. Before COVID-19, TB was the deadliest infectious disease, claiming the lives of 1.4 million people every year despite being both preventable and curable.

Over the past several months, the communities of Black Lake, Fond du Lac and Pelican Narrows in my riding have announced TB outbreaks. We have dozens of outbreaks, over 100 cases and many of them are children. These outbreaks underscore the need for the government to step up and act on its previous commitments to TB elimination.

Indigenous Services Canada admitted that the development of a TB reduction action plan for first nations was not completed as promised. Canada must reaffirm its commitment to address the health inequities that allow TB to persist in northern Saskatchewan and all of Canada.

* * *

[Translation]

QUEBEC MEALS ON WHEELS WEEK

Mr. Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, from March 20 to 27, we celebrate meals on wheels, which provides support to those who need it by preparing and delivering healthy meals to their homes.

This is an essential part of aging in place that provides some respite for family caregivers. The last two years have been particularly difficult, but meals on wheels organizations, which rely heavily on volunteers, have continued to step up.

In Alfred-Pellan, meals on wheels organizations receive federal support through New Horizons for Seniors and Canada summer jobs. I am also working on connecting businesses that give generously and organizations that really need their help.

I want to thank the following meals on wheels organizations and volunteers in Alfred-Pellan: Service bénévole d'entraide de Vimont-Auteuil, the Maison de la famille de St-François, Bonjour Aujourd'hui et Après, the Popote roulante Saint-Noël Chabanel and the St. Vincent De Paul Society.

* * *

● (1415)

[English]

HOUSING

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there is a critical shortage of affordable housing in my community. Many people have given up on the idea of ever owning a home, but even finding an affordable place to rent is getting further and further out of reach. B.C. has not been getting its fair share of federal funding under the rapid housing initiative.

Worse still, the supply of older rental stock is being bought up by REITs, real estate income trusts, that use tactics like renovictions to jack up rent, pushing people out of their homes and removing affordable units from the market. Housing advocates and the City of Victoria are calling for a federal acquisition fund to give local governments and non-profits the quick capital to buy properties at risk of being bought up by these predatory REITs.

We must preserve our existing affordable housing stock. It is time for the federal government to return to the table as a true partner with municipalities, indigenous governments and co-operatives to stop treating housing as an investment and start treating housing as a human right.

* * *

[Translation]

SALABERRY-DE-VALLEYFIELD MEALS ON WHEELS

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as this is Meals on Wheels Week in Quebec, I want to take a moment to highlight the 50th anniversary of Popote roulante de Salaberry-de-Valleyfield.

The organization was created on March 7, 1972, to support seniors who wish to remain at home as long as possible. The Sœurs de Notre-Dame du Bon-Conseil congregation, with the help of volunteers, was responsible for the very first home-delivered meal in our community.

These days, the Popote roulante de Salaberry-de-Valleyfield delivers 1,200 meals every week. Some 300 meals on wheels programs across Quebec are a daily reflection of the strength of solidarity. They form a mutual support network that is driven by the dedication of the 10,000 volunteers who are always there to cook and deliver healthy, balanced meals. These teams visit more than 30,000 seniors, who often live alone, providing them with gentle, caring attention.

It is an honour to sincerely thank all the dedicated volunteers and teams who are making a real difference in the lives of seniors in Salaberry—Suroît.

Statements by Members

[English]

JUNO BEACH

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is wonderful to be joined today by my family here in Ottawa.

Juno Beach is one of the most sacred places in Canadian military history. The bravery of 14,000 Canadians who landed there on D-Day continues to inspire generations of Canadians and led directly to the liberation of Europe from tyranny and fascism.

A condo development threatens not only the beach but the operations of the Juno Beach Centre, a museum and memorial that educates hundreds of thousands of visitors on the role that Canada played in bringing freedom to Europe. Simply put, this development should not go forward. In an increasingly polarized world, few truly sacred places remain. In the hearts and minds of Canadians, Juno Beach transcends and represents all that we take pride in as a nation: that we will make a larger impact than our size commands, that we will stand firmly alongside our friends and allies and that no matter the difficulty, we will fight beyond just convening all that is good and right in the world.

I have one ask of the government. It should do everything in its power to save Juno Beach.

* * *

● (1420)

WHITBY

Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Whitby, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all across Canada, and especially in my riding of Whitby, small businesses are the backbone of our economy. After two challenging years, it is time for good news.

That is why I was happy to join the Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario to announce funding for the revitalization of downtown Whitby and downtown Brooklin through the My Main Street local business accelerator program. Downtown Whitby and Brooklin will be supported with three dedicated main street ambassadors, customized market research, data analysis and non-repayable funding contributions for new and existing small businesses. This will support our community by assisting our existing businesses to bounce back from the pandemic and enhance the ability of our new start-ups to rapidly grow.

The entrepreneurial spirit in Whitby is strong, and I look forward to seeing our unique, resilient and diverse small business community thrive all along our main streets.

*Oral Questions***ORAL QUESTIONS***[English]***HEALTH**

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, according to the Minister of Health, there are many different factors to consider before lifting mandates. He said, “It’s quite complicated.”

Health officers across Canada have worked through these complications and have ended their mandates. If it is not complicated for the provinces, why is it complicated for the minister?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know this might sound a bit complicated, so let me make this very simple.

It is 8,000 and 25,000. Eight thousand is the number of people who will be receiving either their first or second dose today, and 25,000 is the number of people who will be receiving their booster dose today. We are very grateful to them, not only for protecting their health but for protecting the health of those they love.

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on Monday I asked the health minister what the national vaccination target would need to be and for Canada to achieve before the government lifted the mandates. His response was that the booster uptake was too low. Next week it could be that case counts are off, or the following week it could be that waste-water surveillance numbers are askew. The goalposts will keep on moving.

What numbers do Canadians have to hit before the minister agrees to lift the mandates?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me again thank not only my colleague, whose company and work I enjoy, but also all Canadians.

Let me say the vaccination mandates that opposition Conservative MPs opposed during the campaign have saved not only hundreds of lives but thousands of lives. Estimates are about 1,600 people in the last few months have had their lives saved by vaccination mandates.

Obviously, had we not had vaccination mandates in the last year in Canada, we would not currently be meeting in this room. We would be locked down, and we would be closing schools, shops, stores and factories.

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the vaccine mandates that the government imposed at the time have served their purpose according to the top experts in every province across this country. Ten out of 10 chief medical officers of health have said it is time to end the mandates and lift the mask mandates.

What are the metrics that this federal health minister is going to follow so that he will catch up to all of the provinces and our allies who have accepted the science and ended the mandates?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to the member for his work and for admitting, and I think he knew that already, many weeks ago, that vaccination

mandates did work. They not only saved lives. I spoke about the 1,600 Canadians who are currently alive because of those vaccination mandates, having not been infected, sent to a hospital and then dying because of not being vaccinated.

Also there is the large number of dollars. In fact, \$4 billion is the estimate that we saved collectively, in household income and small business income, because of vaccination mandates.

[Translation]

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian provinces and our international allies have eliminated many of their restrictions.

The NDP-Liberal government is faster at signing secret agreements than at lifting restrictions on domestic flights. It does not realize that Canadians have had enough.

When will the NDP-Liberal government look at what is happening in other G7 countries and eliminate the federal restrictions?

• (1425)

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am trying to be non-partisan, but the hon. member was not here before the last election, so she may not know that, roughly 13 months ago, her party said that Canadians would be the last in the world to be vaccinated, that they would not be vaccinated until 2030.

Canadians have been vaccinated in large numbers and, in most cases, before other countries. It is a gift that we received from science and scientists, a gift that we must all take special care of and take advantage of while we have it.

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am here and I know what is happening.

Science has not been the NDP-Liberal government's main concern for a long time. It used the pandemic for political gain, and Canadians are not fools. They realize it and even the member for Louis-Hébert has condemned it.

Will the Minister of Health finally stop playing political games and immediately lift the federal restrictions?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is not about politics. It is about responsibility. When one is in government, one must be responsible. I believe that everyone in the House of Commons, not just the government members, must be responsible. I look around and see that members of the Conservative Party are suddenly declaring that COVID-19 is over and that masks are no longer necessary. COVID-19 is still with us. We will soon see the BA.2 subvariant in many provinces. The numbers are already high in Quebec. We must continue to protect ourselves and those around us.

ELECTORAL REPRESENTATION

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, three weeks ago, the Liberals and the NDP voted in favour of a Bloc motion stating that the Quebec nation must not lose any political weight in terms of the number of members in Ottawa. Today, they introduced Bill C-14, which ensures that we will not lose any seats, but they are adding so many more seats elsewhere that we will end up losing some of our political weight anyway. They may not be holding us under water, but they are letting the water rise very slowly. That is what they are doing.

Why does the government want to reduce Quebec's political weight?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this morning, we introduced a realistic and practical bill that will protect Quebec's seats. Quebec would retain 78 seats instead of dropping to 77. The Bloc Québécois wants to reopen the Constitution, because their bill will require support from seven provinces representing 50% of the population. They want to enter into constitutional discussions, but we want to address the problem now, right away, to guarantee Quebec's political weight.

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, clearly the government does not know how to count. What matters to Quebec is not the number of seats but our nation's weight relative to the total number of seats. If we keep 78 seats but the total number of seats goes up to 343, 350 or 400, that does not work. One does not need an honorary degree to understand that. They are not taking away one of our seats, which would be an overt act of aggression against Quebec, but neither are they protecting our political weight, which is a roundabout way of breaking their promise.

The Liberals and the NDP voted to recognize the Quebec nation. Why diminish its political weight here?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have 35 Liberal members for Quebec who are proud to be Quebecers and who are here to stand up for Quebec. Today we introduced a bill that guarantees Quebec's 78 seats, but all the Bloc Québécois wants is to open up the Constitution and start a fight.

The only people that is good for are those who hope to win points by raising a hue and cry, but we, on the other hand, are here for all Quebecers.

[English]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today marks 30 days of the war in Ukraine, and President Zelenskyy has asked the world to reflect on what that means. When he spoke here in the House of Commons, he asked us to imagine what the war means and what it would mean to Canadians, and he asked for help.

One of the most important ways that we can help, and are helping, is by welcoming people from Ukraine, but recent reports are showing that people who come here from Ukraine are not getting the help that they need. What is the government going to do to en-

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sure that Ukrainians fleeing a humanitarian crisis get refuge in Canada and the support and help that they need?

• (1430)

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, certainly, Canada will provide a safe haven for those fleeing Russia's large-scale invasion of Ukraine. Since January, Canada has welcomed more than 10,000 Ukrainians. Last week, as members know, we launched our new Canada-Ukraine emergency travel authorization, which will make it easier, faster and safer for Ukrainians to come to Canada.

We are working with our partners, including provinces and territories, the business community, the Ukrainian Canadian community and settlement organizations on how best to support people arriving from Ukraine. We will continue—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Burnaby South.

[Translation]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we have spoken with people. There are reports that Ukrainians coming to Canada are not getting the support they need. We are asking the government to recognize that this is the 30th day of war. Ukrainians still need help, and one important way we can help them is to welcome them here and make sure they are supported.

What does the government plan to do to ensure that Ukrainians who come to Canada get the help and support they need to have a good life here in Canada?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his question.

We completely agree that we need to help. That is why we launched the new Canada-Ukraine authorization for emergency travel last week, which will allow Ukrainians to come in.

We are working with our partners, including the provinces and territories, the business community, the Ukrainian Canadian community and settlement agencies, on how best to support those arriving from Ukraine.

We continue to closely monitor travel volumes and needs, and we will take appropriate action.

[English]

HEALTH

Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC): Mr. Speaker, all 10 provinces and most G7 countries around the world are lifting the mandates. Despite this, federal mandates around vaccines for employment and travel persist. At the health committee, we already heard the Minister of Health talk specifically about the plan to end federal mandates, but he did not quite make it. He talked about this complicated science and did not elaborate further.

Oral Questions

We, on this side of the House, would like to know. What is this complicated science the NDP-Liberal government is not sharing and when will the minister make it available to all Canadians?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me try again to make it very simple. I will use one number this time, instead of two, which is 135,000. That is the number of Americans whose deaths were avoidable. If the U.S. had been vaccinated to the extent we have in Canada, in part due to vaccination mandates, they would not have died. Those lives had a value. How much it is in dollars very few people would know I suppose, but they had personal, health, human, social and family values.

Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for his non-answer reply to that question.

We know there are countless federal employees who are off work who sadly perhaps have not been immunized. What about Douglas, who is a federal scientist? He has a unique story. He has had COVID twice and is also in an antibody study at the Ottawa Health Research Institute. Interestingly enough, and shockingly, he works from home and is still not allowed to go to work. How can this happen?

When will the current federal government stop politicizing this and discriminating against hard-working Canadians and provide a date they can go back to work?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we spoke about being responsible and being kind to each other. I will try to make it even more simple. Instead of 135,000, I will use three, which is a simple number. Three times is how many more deaths we would have had in Canada if we had followed the example of the United States when it came to public health measures and vaccination rates. Three times more people dying would be 60,000 more people in Canada who would have died.

• (1435)

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, many Canadians cannot travel. They cannot leave this country. Many have been terminated and have been othered by the current government for long enough. Its top doctor stated that vaccine mandates are not effective anymore, yet the health minister will not discuss any timelines, benchmarks or plans for ending them. He is not taking hints from provinces. He is not taking cues from our international allies. He is not listening to his own experts.

On what day, in what year, will the health minister end the federal mandates that nobody is telling him to keep?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we would all like to be able to declare the date when COVID-19 will disappear from the earth. That would be marvellous. I would certainly be the happiest man on earth, and in this Parliament, to be able to tell the House on what day COVID-19 will disappear. Unfortunately, I do not know.

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, things would be better if the minister cared about workers even half as much as he does about optics. Employers in air transportation are experiencing worker shortages. They are terminating experienced workers because of the federal mandates. The very workers who were mandated to work through the pandemic are the same workers

who are now on the verge of losing their livelihoods for good. The transportation minister can end the interim order on mandates before he strips workers of their pensions, their benefits and their years of service. That is before April 16.

Why is the Minister of Health saying no?

Hon. Omar Alghabra (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I really want to ask my colleague to remind Canadians that vaccination is not a punishment. Vaccines have saved lives, communities, our economy and jobs.

I understand there are questions about when these mandates will be lifted. We will continue to follow science and advice, and I ask the hon. member to avoid partisanship in the face of vaccination and science.

Hon. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the health minister talks a lot about numbers.

I am wondering if he can tell us whether mental health, particularly the mental health of Canadians who still today cannot work or travel to see loved ones because of the mandates, is one of the metrics being considered in regard to lifting the mandates.

If so, what specifically are those mental health metrics?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is true the mental health of Canadians has been deeply affected the last two years. We estimate that about one Canadian out of two has seen his or her mental health deteriorate over the last few months. For health care workers, it is about three quarters. Now, health care workers have been at the front lines of this crisis—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

I will let the minister restart.

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Mr. Speaker, I was going to point to health care workers. Obviously, we are deeply thankful to them, but thankfulness is not enough. We need to think of them and we need to act in a way that protects them if we want them to protect us.

Hon. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, CPC): Mr. Speaker, even after the imposition of vaccine mandates, some Canadians chose to remain unvaccinated. Many of them sacrificed jobs and their ability to travel to see loved ones because of their authentic anxiety about COVID vaccines.

The Prime Minister's response was to go on television and proclaim that many of those Canadians were "racists" and "misogynists".

What does the minister have to say about the mental health impact of a Prime Minister publicly shaming Canadians who experienced genuine anxiety that has undeniably caused them legitimate hardship?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, hardship is the right word. I was speaking yesterday with the Canadian Pharmacists Association, which represents another group of health care workers who have been at the front line and living very difficult times. Their personal mental stress has been heightened by COVID, as has the stress of their families when they go home after a day at work, the stress of their staff and the stress of the patients they have cared for, now for more than two years. This is an example of the hardship we have gone through. That is why we need to keep caring for each other.

* * *

● (1440)

[Translation]

INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in the agreement with the NDP there is so much encroachment that they are trampling all over Quebec's jurisdictions with full force.

Housing, pharmacare, child care, health care, long-term care: encroachment from coast to coast to coast, to use the Liberals' expression.

There is a much more effective way to help people get services. The government can transfer the money that Quebec and the provinces need and give them a right to opt out with full compensation in any areas that fall under their jurisdictions.

Will the government agree to a right to opt out with full compensation and without conditions, yes or no?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc is referring to an agreement that focuses on, for example, fighting climate change, which is good for Quebecers.

Help for workers is good for Quebecers. More social housing is good for Quebecers. Working together on health is good for Quebecers.

When all of that is good for Quebecers, it is not good for the Bloc Québécois, and they do not like that.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, let us discuss the fight against climate change.

When we read the Liberal and NDP marriage document, it is very clear that there are no jurisdictions. It is crystal clear.

What is not so clear, however, is the will to stop producing dirty oil. They will be “developing a plan to phase-out public financing of the fossil fuel sector”. There really is no sense of urgency.

Did the Liberal Party or the NDP decide to continue financing oil companies in the midst of the climate crisis?

Oral Questions

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for the question.

I would like to remind him that we promised to eliminate fossil fuel subsidies two years before our G20 partners did. That is what we are going to do, and we will definitely work with our NDP colleagues, and our Bloc Québécois colleagues if they are interested, to advance this file.

* * *

HEALTH

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in their agreement, the great experts in the NDP and the Liberal Party chose to tell Quebec and the provinces what they need, specifically how many nurses and doctors should be hired, where the money should go, and how their networks should be managed.

However, the real experts are not on this side of the House, they are not across the way, nor are they sitting next to us. Quebec and the provinces know what they need. As we are on the verge of a sixth wave, will the government finally increase health transfers to 35% with no conditions?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has already said that health transfers would be increased.

The Bloc Québécois has known that for a long time, but that does not allow for any bickering, which is what the Bloc needs. However, the kind of constitutional bickering that the Bloc is looking for does not create jobs for anyone. Bickering does not get hospitals new doctors or nurses. It does not help people heal. All that bickering does is help the Bloc Québécois find more to bicker about and be more adversarial.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez: Mr. Speaker, as you can hear, they love it when I talk about bickering.

[English]

Mrs. Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on Monday in the health committee, the Minister of Health said, “We want to apply the least disruptive measures in order to protect the health and safety of Canadians, and the conversation will evolve as the situation evolves.” The situation has evolved. We are asking the federal government to follow the science and remove federal mandates, as has been done throughout Canada in our provinces.

Does the health minister believe that all 10 provincial chief medical officers of health are wrong?

Oral Questions

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that question gives me the opportunity to continue speaking about the hardships and stress many Canadians feel, including health care workers and obviously patients. We have seen, over the last two years, a backlog of surgeries approximately equal to 700,000 patients. Their families, friends and communities are affected by that backlog. Today, we still have about 4,000 people hospitalized. Those hospital beds are not available for other patients.

• (1445)

Mrs. Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately that was a complete non-answer. The risks have changed as this pandemic has evolved. Canada has the most restrictive domestic travel mandates in the world. This is having a very real impact on families. I have been contacted by families in my riding who want to visit relatives who are in palliative care and who want to attend funerals. Vaccine mandates on travel have limited the ability of families to gather.

When will the health minister show some humanity and finally allow the transportation minister to remove domestic travel restrictions?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we all agree and are all thankful for humanity. Humanity means thinking about others and caring for others. I will mention the fact that, on average, in the last week we have had about 50 to 60 additional deaths. Those are not just numbers: those are people whose families obviously are very much impacted. We have 4,000 people who are hospitalized. That is a large number of people. Humanity demands that we look after them while we repair and prepare the health care system for the future challenges we will be seeing.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, according to the health minister, there is no end in sight for the federal COVID mandates. The Liberals have destroyed lives and careers. Many have lost mortgages. Others have had to leave the country altogether, but a Canadian is a Canadian, regardless of a medical condition or choice. Workers and families deserve respect, not abuse. They deserve basic accommodation and accessibility.

When will the health minister drop the federal mandates, so the mass firings in April will not happen?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Conservatives have to choose between vaccination, which is not punishment but protection, and lockdown. We cannot have no vaccination and no lockdown.

The fact that the Conservatives do not seem to believe in vaccination, in March 2022, is very serious. If we did not have vaccination, and if we did not keep insisting on vaccination, we would be closing schools, shops, stores and factories and we would be overloading hospitals with patients. We would not be meeting in this room today.

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HOUSING

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Qujannamiik, Uqaqtittiji.*

On this day, World Tuberculosis Day, I rise to ask a question about housing. An MLA for Nunavut has identified that approxi-

mately 3,000 to 5,000 new housing units are urgently needed for people living in my territory. However, the government's housing announcement in Nunavut a couple of weeks ago included just 101 new units.

What rationale does the federal government have for promising only 100 housing units when thousands are desperately needed? *Qujannamiik.*

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the program that the hon. member referred to is just one of many programs in the national housing strategy and federal investments in Nunavut housing, including the Canada housing benefit, the bilateral housing agreement between Canada and Nunavut, and over \$400 million in distinctions-based funding for Inuit-led housing in Inuit Nunangat. By working together with territorial and indigenous partners, we will address the housing needs of Nunavummiut.

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IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Putin's horrific actions are killing children, women and elders and forcing millions to leave Ukraine. Even with the special immigration measures, people are still having a hard time getting to safety. People with older identity documents are stuck in the system, which is further delaying their ability to get an emergency travel visa. Biometric centres are being overwhelmed, and in some centres the wait is a month or longer. This wait is putting lives in danger.

The most efficient way to get people out of harm's way remains visa-free travel. When will the Liberals lift visa requirements for Ukrainians?

• (1450)

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, Canada will welcome Ukrainians fleeing Putin's war. We have announced this new program that will cut through red tape and expedite the arrival of Ukrainians to safe harbour for up to three years. This is the fastest, safest and most efficient way for Ukrainians to come to Canada. It eliminates most of the travel requirements for all Ukrainian nationals, with the exception of background security checks. Canada stands with Ukrainians in their time of need, and we welcome them with open arms.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Han Dong (Don Valley North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last year, Canada saw record levels of international trade. Our government continues to open new opportunities for Canadian businesses to export and to expand. The United Kingdom is one of our closest friends and largest trading partners. I know the minister for international trade has been working hard on strengthening our trade ties with the U.K.

Can the minister update us on her recent activities in diversifying our trade relations with the United Kingdom?

Hon. Mary Ng (Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was very pleased to welcome the hon. secretary of trade, Anne-Marie Trevelyan, for her first official visit to Canada this week, celebrating the long-standing relationship between Canada and the United Kingdom.

Today, Canada and the United Kingdom officially launched negotiations toward a new high-standard and progressive free trade agreement. Canada looks forward to negotiating an agreement that will benefit our people and our economies. It will help businesses of all sizes and entrepreneurs on both sides of the Atlantic reach new export markets.

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HEALTH

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, I asked whether the NDP-Liberal government would provide Canadians who are unable to use ArriveCAN with an easier alternative to allow them to visit their families outside of Canada. Instead of answering the question, the Minister of Health, sadly and predictably, responded with the same tired old talking points.

Will this minister clearly tell Canadians on what date the government will drop its mandates so that we can all travel freely?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will speak to something I think is extremely important for us to understand, which is long COVID. Among all those infected by COVID, whether it be severe or mild, the estimate is that between 10% and 30% will suffer from long COVID.

This has dramatic impacts on their lives in the short and longer term. Thirty per cent of them will need to consult more than 10 times after that. Thirty per cent of them will need to stop working. This has very significant health, personal and economic costs. The way to protect against that is to protect against transmission and to do that through vaccination.

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, four months ago, Donna McCall was denied the opportunity to see her children, who are located in the U.S., while she was at home dying waiting for a liver transplant. That transplant never came. Her husband held up his phone for Donna so they could say their last goodbyes to their mother while she died.

Oral Questions

What happened to John, Donna and their children is devastating. When will this government show some compassion for suffering families like the McCalls and please lift the federal mandates?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, compassion is the key word. We need to have each other's backs. We need to protect each other's health. That is best done by following public health measures, as most of us are doing today, but not all of us. It is also done by being vaccinated, which protects our health and that of those we love.

It also protects against long COVID. By the way, long COVID affects all vital organs with hundreds of symptoms through the brain, heart, lungs and liver. This is serious and demands responsibility on the part of the government.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I come from the Quebec City area, the most beautiful tourist city in North America. The city has suffered enormously over the past two years, economically speaking. Everyone is talking about our businesses, restaurants and hotels.

How can the Minister of Health, who is the member for Quebec, justify to the hotels, restaurants and tourism industry in his riding that he is maintaining health measures at the border?

• (1455)

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there are two things I assume my hon. colleague already knows.

The first is that I am indeed the member for Quebec, which is probably the most beautiful city in the country and I am very proud of it. I represent this area along with other distinguished members of the House.

The second thing he probably knows is that on April 1, so in a just a few days, pre-arrival tests will no longer be required. This means that more people will be able to come to Canada to enjoy our attractions. We hope that many of them will come to Quebec City and the Quebec City region.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, exactly two years ago, I was the first MP to ask the government to close the border. It was taking too long. It took too long. People in Quebec died because it took too long.

Now the situation has changed, and it is taking too long to re-open the border and lift the senseless restrictions. If tourists want to visit Quebec City to, say, go to the summer festival in the minister's riding, they cannot understand the Canadian system. They do not understand what they are supposed to do.

Oral Questions

Will the government end all the complicated measures and give the tourism industry a chance to make a comeback?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are going to do exactly as my colleague suggests on April 1.

On April 1, pre-entry testing requirements will go away. That will simplify everyone's life and encourage more people to come see my colleagues and me in wonderful Quebec City and the beautiful surrounding area.

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IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as we speak, more than half the children in Ukraine have fled the war. In all, 4.3 million children have left their homes. They are either elsewhere in Ukraine, hoping the Russian troops will not catch up with them, or they are in refugee camps.

Today we do not want to hear about how Canada has welcomed 10,000 Ukrainians since January. We want the government to tell us what it is doing right now for the millions of fleeing children.

When will the government charter planes to go and get them?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question and certainly for his collaboration since the beginning of the war in Ukraine.

I would say to him that we are working with our partners, including the airlines. What is more, I would like to point out to the House the exceptional work that has been done with the SickKids hospital and the departments here to welcome Ukrainian children, who can now continue their treatment here in Canada.

We will take the necessary measures to welcome the Ukrainians who are fleeing Putin's war.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the government's refusal to airlift people out is problematic in two ways.

On the European side, millions of refugees are stuck in camps because there is no room for them on planes or because they simply cannot afford flights. On our side, in Montreal alone, 40 tonnes of humanitarian aid is sitting in warehouses because we cannot send it to Ukraine.

At the moment, the only thing we can move between Canada and eastern Europe is the Prime Minister. When will the government start chartering flights?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I really want to thank my colleague for his question.

As he mentioned, the government is certainly looking hard, and as aggressively as possible, at how to get as many people as possible here as quickly as we can. This is what we have been doing from the beginning. More than 10,000 Ukrainians have arrived in Canada. We will continue to work with our partners.

I would also like to point out to the House that the province of Quebec has not only guaranteed to help us, but has already stepped up by providing asylum, health care and child care.

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[English]

HEALTH

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the health minister has been asked about 15 questions today, but he has not answered a single one, so I hope he can answer this one from a young woman named Nancy from my riding. Nancy is an indigenous single mother. She works for the federal government, 100% from home. She is vaccine hesitant for personal reasons. Like members of our armed forces, she is now being told that she cannot go to work and is essentially being fired for her beliefs.

Nancy and others are running out of options. Will the minister show some compassion and end the mandate for people such as Nancy so they can work from home?

● (1500)

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to receive this question because it enables me to add one more piece of information, this time from the United States. One million is the number of deaths that were avoided because of Americans were vaccinated. It was mentioned earlier that they could have avoided many more deaths with more vaccinations, as we did in Canada.

When we speak to people who may be either concerned or sometimes not just informed about the benefits of vaccination, it is important to talk to them, reassure them, care for them and just encourage them in a very benevolent manner so that everyone, in the end, is protected, including those who perhaps had initially had misgivings around vaccination.

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in Canada and around the world, governments have ended their vaccine mandates and restrictions. Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario and Nova Scotia have all ended their vaccine passport systems. However this government is doubling down and spending \$30 million for domestic travel vaccine passports in the next two years.

Since the provinces have already dropped these passports, will the Minister of Health return this \$30 million to the taxpayers?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I mentioned earlier the amount of \$4 billion. That is a lot of money, which the federal government and other governments have saved because of high vaccination rates, in part due to vaccination mandates, but most importantly, that is a lot of household income, family income, income to look after children, to care for seniors, to look after those who may not often find it easy to make ends meet. That is a lot of dollars.

This is not only about dollars, obviously. It is about lives, but dollars are also impacted by the fact that we have high vaccination rates and that in Ontario we have more people being vaccinated every day.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there have been a lot of replies today and not very many answers.

Since the pandemic started, only 1% of all cases of COVID-19 in Canada have been related to travel, yet it has been portrayed and perceived as an unsafe thing to do. To put this into perspective, 2021 was supposed to be a year of recovery, but we have reached only 13% of the total number of international visitors compared to 2019, and 2021 was worse than 2020.

When will the health minister tell his colleagues to fully open the border and remove federal vaccine mandates?

Hon. Omar Alhabra (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, COVID-19 has undoubtedly had a devastating impact on the industry. I want to stand here to thank all those who work in the aviation sector, and all those who work in the tourism sector, who stepped up, cared for each other and did the right thing, which was to get vaccinated and follow public health advice.

Everybody knows that COVID-19 has been unpredictable. We are working together with our scientists to do the right thing, protect Canadians and protect those who work in the aviation sector.

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[Translation]

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg (Bourassa, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, intimate partner violence needs to end, and it needs to end now. This matters to everyone because intimate partner violence destroys families and causes serious harm in our society.

I salute community organizations for the important work they do to help women and children fleeing violence perpetrated by violent partners.

I announced a \$4.5-million investment to help an organization called Nouvelle-Étape create new spaces.

Could the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion tell us more about the reason for these investments?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

Oral Questions

During the pandemic, the most vulnerable members of our community were in greater need of housing. We know we need to act fast.

Our government created nine new affordable housing units in the member's riding for women and children fleeing violence.

We will not stop working until every Canadian has a safe, affordable place to live.

* * *

• (1505)

HEALTH

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, from the beginning of this question period I have wanted to ask the Minister of Health some questions I had previously prepared. Unfortunately, I am going to change them a bit.

I would like the Minister of Health to look me in the eye and tell me truthfully right now that it was the federal vaccine mandate that saved so many lives and prevented so many hospitalizations in Canada from the start of the pandemic; that this was not due to the vaccine passports of the various provinces; and that the provinces that are lifting these vaccine passports have data that is rather more credible than his to justify doing so.

When will the federal government lift federal mandates?

When will the federal minister listen to the science across Canada and not just the political science?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to see and hear my colleague speak about science.

If he would like to see the studies I mentioned, I can have people from my department brief him. They would be very happy to show him the statistics, methods, data, the various techniques used, the standard deviations, the confidence intervals and everything that goes with this type of study.

The 1,600 deaths were prevented as a result of the combination of various vaccine requirements. Nevertheless, the Canadian government's vaccine mandate also played a role.

The Conservatives opposed vaccination at the time. This means that their policy would have been responsible for hundreds, if not thousands, of additional deaths.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives were the first in the House to put pressure on the government to procure and supply vaccines for all Canadians.

We were the first, while they were slow to act. I do not need any lectures from the government's chief health lecture-giver. All he gave us today was a bunch of numbers, such as 8,000; 25,000; 700,000; 135,000; 3; 400,000; 10; 30%; 100; 1.1 million; and 4 billion. That is a lot of numbers, but he did not answer the question at all.

When will he join the provinces and announce that the federal government is lifting the health measures?

Oral Questions

It is a simple question and we want an answer.

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I apologize if I disrespected my colleague. That was not my intention.

I respectfully offer the assistance and support he needs and deserves as a member of Parliament. He has a very important role in the House.

I think he is entitled to ask for all of the information whenever he wants if he is to continue doing his job properly, as he is already doing within the Conservative caucus.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like him to table that here in the House. He offered to. I would like him to table every study showing that scientific experts called for federal vaccine mandates.

Dr. Njoo and the National Advisory Committee on Immunization said that a vaccine mandate was not necessary and that voluntary vaccination should be encouraged. Those are the facts and figures.

The Minister of Health keeps telling us there are studies proving his vaccine mandate was justified by science. We want to see those studies now, and we want an answer. When will he end the vaccine mandate?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member asked two questions, one I cannot answer and the other I will.

When will the COVID-19 pandemic end? Unfortunately, I do not think we can answer that today.

However, if my colleague wants access to more information in addition to what I have already provided, I would be happy to provide it in the most appropriate way possible. I tried to be as clear as possible, but maybe I was not clear enough.

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[English]

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Yemen is undergoing the world's worst humanitarian crisis and its people deserve decisive action, especially women and girls who are disproportionately affected. Canadians are deeply concerned by the raging conflict and the deteriorating food security situation.

What is the Minister of International Development doing to help the people of Yemen?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of International Development and Minister responsible for the Pacific Economic Development Agency of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle for this question and for her hard work. The conflict in Yemen continues to impact almost 20 million people who need help, especially women and children. This is why last week I announced an additional \$62.5 million in funding to help with urgent humanitarian needs. By providing food assistance, clean water, sanitation, protection and health care, this aid will help the Yemeni people whose lives have been impacted by this.

• (1510)

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in December, the government announced the reallocation of crab fishing licences in my riding in an effort to reconcile the loss of constitutionally protected indigenous fishing rights. It is absolutely essential to correct historical wrongs in the allocation and management of this fishery. The government has failed to properly consult the impacted fishers or first nations. As a result, many fishers will lose the income their families need.

Will the government do the right thing and fully compensate these crab fishers?

Hon. Joyce Murray (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for pointing out the importance of including indigenous communities who have a right to fish in the fisheries. We are having those discussions with the crab harvesters who had those licences. This takes some time, but we are doing that. Those discussions have not concluded yet, but we will respect both the prior fish harvesters and the indigenous right to fish.

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NATURAL RESOURCES

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, despite misguided calls for Canada to build pipelines to join a global effort to shut off Russian oil, the international experts at the International Energy Agency have not recommended that. In fact, they have been very clear that it is not boosting production that the world's nations need to do; it is cutting consumption. The International Energy Agency has published a 10-point plan.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, I am having difficulty finishing my question.

The Deputy Speaker: Order. Let us show a little decorum. We are on the last question.

The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, I will not start over, but I will summarize. There have been calls that are misguided and not based on evidence to increase production or take another decade to build more pipelines in Canada.

The experts at the International Energy Agency have published a 10-point plan that they want industrialized countries to pursue and that will cut consumption by 2.7 million barrels of oil a day. The International Energy Agency's 10-point plan calls for such things as cutting speed limits by 10 kilometres an hour in industrialized countries, cutting down traffic in our city centres and boosting public transit. Will Canada join the IEA 10-point plan?

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in fact, the 10-point plan is under discussion right now with the Minister of Natural Resources in Paris. In the face of the emerging global energy crisis created by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the 10-point plan to cut oil use proposes actions that can be used to reduce demand with immediate impact. As discussed in the plan, the IEA and its members are committed to reducing emissions and creating a more sustainable path for the longer term. From using public transit and biking to working from home, those are all actions we can take, as per the IEA, to reduce our carbon footprint and collectively reduce our emissions. We are working in partnership here at home and abroad to reduce emissions and increase the use of renewable energy.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold: Mr. Speaker, I would like to follow up on an exchange that took place during question period with the Minister of Health, in which he promised to table documents in the House. I invite him to table all the documents that have anything to do with all the numbers he mentioned, including 8,000, 25,000, 700,000, 735,000, 300,000 and 400,000, and especially the 10% to 30% of patients he told us will suffer from long COVID.

I would also invite the Minister of Health to table the documents that justify the federal vaccine mandate.

The Deputy Speaker: I believe that is a matter of debate, but at the same time, it is good to have the numbers.

[English]

Mr. Gord Johns: Mr. Speaker, I just now observed my good friend and colleague from Saanich—Gulf Islands trying to get through a question in this House and the amount of heckling that came from this side is completely unacceptable.

We have had huge challenges in attracting women, not just to run for politics but to actually stay in politics. I want to remind men in this House of the important role they play when it comes to their conduct in any violence against women and attacks on women in this place. What I just heard happen is unacceptable.

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

* * *

• (1515)

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, before I get to the Thursday question, today is my youngest son's 18th birthday, and Liane and I would like to wish Mitch a happy birthday.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, it has been a heck of a week around here. I would like to ask the usual Thursday question of the new NDP-Liberal government House leader. What will the business of the House be over the next week?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wish a very happy birthday to Mitch. I hope he has the time to celebrate with his family over the weekend.

Points of Order

Tomorrow we will call Bill C-8, the economic and fiscal update, for the third day of debate at report stage, and we will continue on Monday, if that is necessary. Tuesday we will resume debate at second reading of Bill C-11, the online streaming act. Wednesday we will continue with debate on Bill C-5, which is mandatory minimum legislation, at second reading.

I would also inform the House that Thursday, March 31, will be an allotted day and next Friday, a week tomorrow, it is our intention to begin consideration of the second reading of Bill C-13, the official languages bill.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

STATUS OF OPPOSITION PARTY

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am rising on a point of order. I am rising to add to my point of order of Tuesday afternoon and further to the intervention by the member for La Prairie yesterday concerning the coalition agreement between the Liberal and New Democratic parties.

Firstly, a timely ruling is essential and today is the last day of the supply period, which means that a new one starts tomorrow. That means we need to know how the eight opposition days this spring will be distributed. Of course, we have question period every day where ministers now receive eight lob questions from two government parties, instead of the typical three lob questions daily. Then there is the matter of the Liberals' coalition partner being stationed in the opposition lobby behind me right in between the Conservative and Bloc sections. This all needs to be addressed, and I say that respectfully.

The Speaker is recovering from surgery and I did hear from him today. It sounds like he is doing well and we are all thankful for that.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mr. John Brassard: I know the House is unanimous in wishing him a complete and speedy recovery, but we cannot wait for his return for a ruling, nor would we wish to stress or tax him with these matters.

Subsection 43(1) of the Parliament of Canada Act vests you, Mr. Speaker, with full and adequate authority to address this matter. It states:

Whenever the House of Commons is informed of the unavoidable absence of the Speaker thereof by the Clerk at the table, the Chairman of Committees, if present, shall take the chair and perform the duties and exercise the authority of Speaker in relation to all the proceedings of the House, as Deputy Speaker

Secondly, there is the matter of full disclosure of this agreement. My counterpart from the Bloc Québécois put it bluntly yesterday, saying, "The news releases bore the same titles and were identical."

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Was it pure fluke and coincidence that both parties each managed to issue identical-looking press releases at the same time of day? We both know the answer to that, Mr. Speaker. It is obvious that there were a lot of emails, text messages and the like flying around about this agreement to coordinate that much. It would not shock me to hear that there may even be some emails or memos that demonstrate how both sides interpret and understand the terms of their backroom deal.

Would you be able to indicate whether it would be helpful for you in approaching your ruling, Mr. Speaker, to know whether there are any signed versions of this agreement or additional side deals? I expect that you would and I expect that to be so.

This was a government that claimed to believe in the principle of “open by default”. If ever there was a time to show that it means it, it is when it has entered into an unprecedented power grab arrangement to govern Canada. Transparency and openness used to be watchwords for the NDP. I hope that they still are.

Therefore, in the interests of transparency and openness, I am calling upon the government to make full disclosure to the House and to all Canadians by tabling all relevant documents concerning the negotiation of this unprecedented agreement and, in the meantime and in closing, I would ask for unanimous consent to table, in both official languages, copies of the press releases issued Tuesday morning by the Prime Minister's Office and the New Democratic Party, so that you formally have before you, Mr. Speaker, the versions those parties have chosen to let Canadians see.

• (1520)

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise on that point of order. It is surprising to me that the House leader of the official opposition is doubling down on something that he knows is fundamentally incorrect. For him to come into the House and pretend that this is a coalition government when, as a new member of Parliament, he received the information that clearly identifies what a coalition government is and what things like “confidence and supply” mean.

As we know, earlier today we outlined the many cases in Canada and worldwide where confidence and supply agreements have been put into place. At no point have we had parties actually trying to punish other parties for doing the right thing, and this is indeed what the House leader of the official opposition is attempting to do. He should be thanking us, as 30,000 people in Barrie—Innisfil will have access to dental care because of this agreement.

The reality is that what we are doing is in the interests of his constituents as well. He does not need to thank the NDP, but what he does need to do is acknowledge the fact that this is a confidence and supply agreement that has no impact at all on the Standing Orders and the regular processes under which we operate.

He has asked for information on the agreement. It is freely available online, as we know. I offered, earlier today, to send him a copy. He has not asked me for that. This is a frivolous and really vexa-

tious attempt to take away time from the House of Commons. I think it is very clear that this holds no water whatsoever.

The Deputy Speaker: We will of course consider that information and try to get back to the House as soon as we possibly can.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—FEDERAL VACCINE MANDATES

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. Darrell Samson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to continue my important speech on vaccination and the work that our government has been able to do.

I want to start again by thanking Canadians. Canadians have been doing what they have to do to ensure that the health and security of others are top priorities. I want to thank Nova Scotians as well, because we were the envy of the world for a long time because we had no numbers. Again, this was because of the high number of vaccinations. It was also because of—

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. parliamentary secretary, but there is a point of order because there is no interpretation.

The problem has been resolved.

[English]

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs has the floor.

[Translation]

Mr. Darrell Samson: Mr. Speaker, thank you. I will speak in French, so there is no need for interpretation.

I was saying that I wanted to take a moment to thank Canadians for their efforts and the work they have done to help us ensure the health and safety of all Canadians. It is extremely important to point that out. I also want to thank our frontline health care workers, the people who had to go out during the pandemic when it was extremely dangerous.

[English]

As I said in my speech earlier, eight dollars out of \$10 spent by governments was spent by the federal government to support Canadians right across the country. We saw this in vaccination and PPE investments, and we saw Canadian companies come forward as well to provide supports. Let us not forget that we invested \$72 billion in health care and education to support the provinces and territories. Another \$45 billion will be coming forward in the next few days through the health accord, which is also essential.

Throughout the pandemic, we have also seen some of the challenges with the health care system and hospitals. Our government, in our platform, indicated clearly that we would invest more in doctors, nurses and assistants to help the provinces with health care and in any other way we could. Long-term care was another area.

Let us talk about how many lives were saved, which is very important to note. In the United States, some studies are showing that 1.1 million people were saved because of vaccinations. That is a very high number and it is a good indicator for us. In Canada, the numbers from some studies indicate that over 400,000 Canadians were saved. The minister talked today about 1,600 being saved in the last few months alone, which is another very important number. In Europe, over 500,000 people over 60 were saved because of taking the vaccine. The answers are pretty clear on that front.

On easing the restrictions, I know the opposition has been talking about that, but let us look at what has been done. We have already said that as of April 1, which is in a few days, a test will not be required before boarding a plane to Canada. People coming by air or water will not need one either. We also talked about cruise ships. People only need an antigen test one day prior, and when people get off a ship, they will not need a test.

Let us also talk about quarantine. Today there is no quarantine needed while waiting for results. Last February, I was here for three weeks and then I went to Nova Scotia. I had to quarantine for 14 days. We are easing restrictions. We are moving in the right direction. The Speaker is indicating he had to sit out 14 days twice or three times, and he was in his trailer. He knows as well I know that we have been easing restrictions, and we will continue to do so as the information we get indicates we can.

• (1525)

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my animated colleague's stories when he gets up and speaks in the House. He talked about how many American lives he was saving. The Canadian government should be giving us Canadian statistics, so I am wondering if he can talk about how many Canadians were fired because of the mandates. That is a really important number too. I also really want to know how many Canadians who used to work in health care were fired. Before there were vaccines they were heroes, and now under the Liberals they are zeros.

Mr. Darrell Samson: Mr. Speaker, those health care workers do not work for us; they work for the provincial governments. The restrictions were placed by the provincial governments.

Let us talk about numbers, as the member said, in Canada. The minister just indicated today that over 1,600 lives were saved in the

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last few months. Families can celebrate with other individuals. Over 400,000 have been saved since COVID started. Those are Canadian numbers. They are not my numbers; they are numbers from studies.

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we are talking about possibly lifting a number of health measures. We are all hoping for just that, and we agree it needs to be done. However, we do not feel that there is a clear path forward. What probably upsets people the most is not having any predictability or a plan with benchmarks. This would give us some hope that health measures will be lifted if a certain result or number of hospitalizations is achieved.

Would it not help to depoliticize the issue if we had a little more predictability from the government?

Mr. Darrell Samson: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question. I always like having the opportunity to answer questions, especially in French.

As the Minister of Health explained today, we have no control over what is happening. We can only make decisions based on the results we are receiving. There is no doubt that this situation is complicated, but we are already seeing that the government is in the process of lifting restrictions.

The situation is progressing and will continue to do so as we become comfortable with the numbers. However, let us not forget that hospital capacity also leads to more difficult situations in the provinces.

This is complex, but our government has repeatedly shown, through straightforward processes, that it is lifting restrictions. It will continue to do so.

• (1530)

[English]

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I served on the veterans affairs committee with this colleague. I respect him and thank him.

The government always talks about science and evidence-based decision-making, but that also has to come with transparency. Canada's chief public health officer, Dr. Tam, has indicated that the government is currently engaged in a broad interdepartmental approach to reviewing all vaccine mandates under federal jurisdiction.

Does my colleague not agree that the government needs to provide Canadians with a timeline for this review and needs to do it soon, and that there needs to be transparency in its decision-making?

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Mr. Darrell Samson: Mr. Speaker, the work my colleague has done on veterans affairs is very much appreciated.

As he indicated, people need to know that we were set up from the beginning to review decisions every six months depending on what was happening. That review is taking place as we speak. As Dr. Tam said, we will continue to take advice based on science, but we are moving forward on a review as we speak, so we should get some results very soon on that.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I think this is the first time I have gotten in on today's opposition day debate on mask mandates, so I will ask my hon colleague from Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook a question.

He and I are from coastal ridings with a lot of tourism, which we love, and I have heard a number of members opposite say that mask mandates in the federal civil service are blocking tourism. I wonder if the hon. member would agree with me that it would have been much more fruitful today to spend a whole day talking about what the tourism sector really needs. It needs financial support now. It needs to know that as we move out of the COVID restrictions, we will give help to businesses that are going under. I do not think a mask mandate debate for an entire day is what the tourism sector would have wanted.

Mr. Darrell Samson: Mr. Speaker, my colleague always has good questions, and I appreciate this question. We could have had a much better progressive discussion. However, this does give me the opportunity to share that our government has announced a mainstream program that will help tourism right across the country and help various organizations. We are on the right track on that front.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is great to see all my hon. colleagues here in the House and to be speaking to today's opposition motion.

Before I begin my formal remarks, I want to say a few things.

First off, with respect to the residents of my riding of Vaughan—Woodbridge and the residents of the York region, where I live, we have achieved about 85% coverage for two doses of vaccination, which I think is incredible. I thank all of the residents who have done the right thing, or what I call the collective responsibility, and gotten vaccinated and who are doing that continually.

When the pandemic started, we asked much from Canadians. We asked them to stay home and we asked businesses to shut down. During that time, our government had the backs of Canadians, whether through the CERB, the CEWS or the number of other programs we put in place. We have done things prudently. We asked Canadians to do these things because we wanted to protect their health and safety first and foremost.

Every government knows that. If we read Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* and a number of those books, we see the government's job, fundamentally, is to protect the health and safety of its citizens. That is what we have done as the federal government in all of our measures. We asked Canadians to wear a mask and socially distance. We ensured that we had capacity in our health care system. We helped out the provinces by sending the army into long-term care facilities. Also, we put in place restrictions, including mandates, for the health and safety of Canadians.

Obviously we have been evaluating the data, as it comes in, on how we are doing against COVID. Thankfully, we can see a light and we continue to see more light as we go along. We have seen changes to the restrictions that are in place, including the removal on April 1 of the requirement to do antigen or PCR testing when returning to our beautiful country after taking a vacation or going somewhere for business. We continue to see progress, and that is very important.

As a government, it is important to highlight prudence and responsibility, because we must have responsible leadership. When we talk about governing a country or province or being a mayor, we must demonstrate responsible leadership. I would say it is irresponsible leadership on the part of the official opposition for it to say we can just magically turn a switch and COVID-19 will vanish. That cannot happen. Rather, we must follow the advice of medical practitioners.

Today, I am pleased to speak about the federal government's ongoing commitment to the well-being of Canadians and our economic recovery as we collectively transition from stringent lockdowns and restrictions to a stage where each of us is assuming more personal responsibility. Ensuring that all Canadians have what they need to be safe during this critical time is a responsibility that our government takes very seriously. We are committed to continuing to work hand in hand with the provinces and territories on these efforts and have done so since the beginning.

Unfortunately, COVID-19 continues to have a significant impact on the lives of Canadians. Despite Canada's high vaccination rate, COVID-19 continues to challenge our health, social and economy well-being. We need to ensure that Canadians have the tools they need to keep themselves and their loved ones safe as we enter this new phase.

Over the past few weeks, many jurisdictions have begun to ease some or all public health measures that were put in place to diminish the spread of COVID-19, including limited occupancy in bars, restaurants and gyms, the use of vaccine passports and the use of masks indoors. In this phase, it is important that individual residents are equipped with information and the tools that will empower them to manage their own risk, including making decisions surrounding their own care and health.

This shift has heightened the urgency for the government to continue to procure and distribute COVID-19 rapid tests. Equitable access to tests across and within jurisdictions is just as critical as procuring and distributing the tests themselves. Canadians will be relying on these tests to inform their own decision-making, whether it is to assess if they are able to visit a loved one in a long-term care facility or send their children to school.

Canada has been a leader in vaccine uptake, with over 80% of the entire population having received two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine. As members know, the primary objective of the vaccine is to reduce hospitalizations and deaths, and it has been suggested that COVID-19 vaccines have been very effective in this regard. They have worked. Thanks to scientists and health practitioners, vaccines are doing their job and continue to do their job. Recently, a number of provinces and territories have moved to the general public distribution of tests and are leveraging the retail sector to make COVID-19 rapid tests available free of charge.

• (1535)

To support provinces and territories, Health Canada sought and received authority through Bill C-10 to distribute tests to provinces and territories, organizations, and individuals. With this authority, Health Canada is distributing directly to entities that have experience receiving medical equipment, such as pharmacies and the Canadian Red Cross, as well as to provinces and territories.

The omicron variant changed the landscape of the virus for countries around the world. The rapid spread of the virus among vaccinated individuals, even today, led many countries to move to re-focus lab-based PCR testing and scale up COVID-19 rapid tests as a key testing method. As a result of the global resurgence of COVID-19 and the increased adoption of rapid tests, an already scarce resource became even more limited in supply, leading to a very competitive market. I would like to commend the Minister of Public Services and Procurement on her job in procuring rapid tests for this country and the ability to get that done.

Fortunately, Canada was an early adopter of COVID-19 rapid tests and had contracting vehicles already in place to quickly procure additional tests from last fall into this winter. Furthermore, to assist with transporting inventory from Asia, the government has secured international logistics support that suppliers can access in the event that they cannot secure their own airlifts.

In addition, Health Canada has prioritized applications that seek regulatory approval of COVID-19 rapid tests. Just last week, another point-of-care rapid antigen test was approved, bringing the total number of approved COVID-19 rapid tests to 29, plus 11 self-tests.

Given the globally competitive market, the government is putting in place additional contracts to secure a critical supply of tests for the coming months. The reality is that not every Canadian finds help readily available or easy to access. Keeping these realities in mind, our government is taking important steps to ensure equitable access to COVID-19 rapid tests.

As provinces and territories, as well as the federal government, started to roll out workplace screening in spring 2021, the government partnered with the Canadian Red Cross to support the non-profit sector. Through this partnership, non-profit organizations

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were provided with guidance materials, support and COVID-19 rapid tests free of charge directly from the Canadian Red Cross.

Given the success of this initiative and the standing that the Canadian Red Cross has in communities, this partnership has recently expanded to support broader distribution of tests, with a focus on individuals who have been hesitant to access services and supports. Working with food banks, YMCAs and YWCAs, and Boys and Girls Clubs, the government, through the partnership with the Canadian Red Cross, is taking steps to ensure equitable access of COVID-19 rapid tests.

The ongoing commitment to ensure access to COVID-19 rapid tests is an important enabler for the economy. Vaccines, along with rapid tests, are allowing the economy to function to its fullest extent. Ready access will allow Canadian businesses to continue with their voluntary workplace screening, thus diminishing the possibility of outbreaks. In addition, ongoing general population testing will provide a level of comfort to those travelling both internationally and domestically that they are not putting close contacts at risk during or after their travel.

As I said, on April 1 we will lift the antigen or PCR test requirements for Canadians returning to this country. I know many Canadians have asked for this, and over the last few months I have said to my constituents and many other friends that we would do this when it was prudent and safe to do so. We have done so. We have followed the signs. I have great faith and confidence in the Minister of Health, a great colleague and a dear friend. I know full well he is following the science and advice of medical professionals here in Canada who are doing a great job, day in and day out, and who have been asked and tasked to do a lot over the last two years.

This will further enable Canadians to travel unimpeded and will support the recovery of the Canadian travel and tourism sectors. As the members of this House are aware, Canadians' health and safety is this government's main priority during this difficult and unprecedented time. As we have stated throughout the pandemic, this government will be there for every Canadian. The first priority of government should be protecting the health and safety of its citizens, and that has been our primary job over the last two years.

It goes without saying that the months ahead of us will continue to be full of challenges as we transition from having numerous public health measures in place to supporting tools to empower Canadians to make risk-informed choices and decisions on how to manage the risks of COVID-19.

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I look forward to questions and comments. I would like to extend well wishes to the Speaker of the House, who is recovering from his operation.

• (1540)

The Deputy Speaker: Today we have had a lot of people wishing the Speaker well. Nobody wants him back more than I do.

The hon. member for Kelowna—Lake Country.

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, of course we are debating the federal vaccine mandates today. The government has not been listening to its own health experts. We know that all of the provinces are removing mandates and restrictions. The federal government has not put forth any plan and it has not disclosed any metrics that it is using to make the decisions that it is making, so my question is this: What do these federal Liberal politicians know? What access to information do they have that the provincial medical health officers do not?

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Mr. Speaker, setting a date to lift mandates and restrictions, as we have seen in the past, is very irresponsible. We saw the premier of Alberta say we were going to have a summer free of COVID, and then, during the past federal election, have to shut everything down because COVID exploded.

What I have been saying and what I say to my residents is very clear: We will follow the science. We will do things on a prudent and safe basis. We are removing the requirement on testing for people coming back into this country. We will continue to follow the science.

As the Minister of Health stated, I too will be happy when all mandates and restrictions are lifted in a safe manner throughout this country.

[Translation]

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the provinces have plans in place to lift the health restrictions. However, the Conservatives' motion calls on the government to do so "immediately".

To me, that is not necessarily reasonable, and I think this is worth discussing. I would like to know if my colleague agrees with us. What is causing anger and anxiety among the public is the lack of predictability.

• (1545)

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her very important question.

[English]

We continue to explain that the measures are in place to maintain public confidence in following the measures. We have largely done that over the last two years.

Our government has acted with great prudence and with great faith in health professionals to ensure we protect public health and the safety of Canadians. That is what I define as responsible leadership. What I would define as irresponsible leadership is the members of the official opposition saying that on a certain date COVID-19 will magically disappear for some reason that they cannot even explain themselves.

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to echo the comments of some of my colleagues who talked about the need to ensure Canada's tourism industry recovers. There are a lot of other ways that we can do that. One part of it is that the tourism and hospitality recovery program funding will be cut by 50% and will end in May. Also, many seasonal tourism operators were excluded altogether because of the 40% revenue loss requirement for each month, and I am sure the member knows that many tourism businesses are seasonal.

What is the government going to do to ensure that these businesses are not left behind?

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Madam Speaker, it is nice to see you this afternoon.

For my hon. colleague from Victoria, let me be as direct as I can. Our family took our first vacation, even with our five-month-old, to Quebec City for three days over the March break. I encourage all Canadians to get out and start travelling when they can and if they can. That is why we are opening up. That is why we are removing restrictions for Canadian travellers who are coming back internationally.

Victoria is a wonderful place to visit, so I encourage all Canadians to do so. We have had the backs of business owners. There are a number of programs in place for tourism operators. I would be more than glad to send the links on that front. Let us get back to travelling and, if we can, stay domestically for a period of time before we wander off to other places.

Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a great honour to rise before the House, so I am going to split my time today with the member for Niagara Falls.

The requirement for federal employees to be immunized with two shots against COVID-19 has been in existence now for six months or so, and the other mandates, of course, for much longer. Quite sadly and ominously, we have now passed the two-year mark of this COVID-19 pandemic here in Canada. During this time, many questions have been answered—at least in part, perhaps—but there are many questions left with respect to COVID-19 on which we have received only partial or incomplete replies, but no answers.

Importantly, one of the questions that remains without an answer, despite significant and perhaps even heroic attempts to obtain an answer from the NDP-Liberal government, is the plan to end federal mandates. We are asking for a plan.

Let us be clear. I would like for the government today to announce that COVID is over. I know that this is not possible. I am a physician, after all. However, I will even make it simpler for the coalition government, in the sense that all I am asking for is a plan. Today I ask for a plan on behalf of Lyndy.

What does Lyndy want? Lyndy would like to visit her ailing and aging mother in British Columbia. It is almost impossible for her, because she is unvaccinated and she lives in Nova Scotia. Certainly she could drive to British Columbia if she wanted to; however, it would be way more expeditious for her to fly, but we all know that she is not able to fly because she remains unvaccinated.

That was something that she was very willing to accept over the past two years. She was willing to accept the consequences of her decision. However, two years into the pandemic, she sees both vaccinated and unvaccinated friends who are testing positive for COVID-19. That makes her wonder what the point is of continuing this particular mandate. Also, if she were to test positive for COVID-19, which we all know would afford her some degree of protection, should she not be allowed to travel to visit her ailing mother?

I also ask on behalf of Tom. Tom's mother-in-law is from Kazakhstan. Sadly, she is unvaccinated as well, and she is ill and hospitalized. Many out there will think she has COVID. She does not have COVID, but because of her vaccine status, Tom's mother-in-law is of course unable to travel to Canada. Tom's wife, who grew up in Kazakhstan in a dictatorship that is mostly aligned with Russia, is distrustful of any government program, and rightfully so, and of course she has chosen to be unimmunized as well. This means that she is unable to travel to Kazakhstan to be with her ailing mother or to potentially bring her mother to Canada.

I also ask on behalf of Ryan and Sarah, constituents of mine. Both are federal government employees. One has served in the RCMP for 17 or so years, and the other has served as a postal worker for approximately the same amount of time. They have asked multiple health care providers for the long-term effects related to mRNA vaccines. As everyone knows, this data simply does not exist, as we have used these vaccines on a large scale for a very, very short period of time. One might ask, "Well, you're a doctor. What do you think? Do you believe in these vaccines, and are they safe in the long term?" The answer to this question is simply, "Yes, I believe in them and I believe in that science." Of course, that has informed my personal decision to be fully immunized.

We can easily understand, though, that if someone has their own personal choice, as they should, and requires long-term data for their personal choice and personal decision, we simply cannot give them an honest answer because the data does not exist.

That leads us to the concept of informed consent. As a physician of 26 years, I am personally very familiar with the process of informed consent. Let me lead us through some of this.

As per the Canadian Medical Protective Association, the consent "must be voluntary", "the patient must have the mental capacity to consent" and "the patient must be properly informed".

With respect to the voluntary aspect, the CMPA handbook for Canadian physicians goes on to say:

Patients must always be free to consent to or refuse treatment, and be free of any suggestion of duress or coercion. Consent obtained under any suggestion of compulsion either by the actions or words of the physician or others may be no consent at all and therefore may be successfully repudiated.

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• (1550)

This is important, so I am glad everyone is paying close attention. It goes on to say, "In this context physicians must keep clearly in mind there may be circumstances when the initiative to consult a physician was not the patient's, but was rather that of a third party, a friend, an employer, or even a police officer." Perhaps it could be the government. It then continues:

Under such circumstances the physician may be well aware that the patient is only very reluctantly following the course of action suggested or insisted upon by a third person. Then, physicians should be more than usually careful to assure themselves patients are in full agreement with what has been suggested, that there has been no coercion and that the will of other persons has not been imposed on the patient.

Despite all of this, there are still many here who believe that, during an unprecedented pandemic, vaccines could be mandated, people could be coerced, there could be duress, and that would be a fine and dandy situation. For some, that is an easy leap of faith to make. Others, of course, are vaccine hesitant. What has this meant for those who have refused? It has meant the inability to access services, have meaningful employment and be able to travel freely, both domestically and internationally.

Two years into this pandemic, the question that begs to be asked on behalf of many Canadians is when the mandate will end. More important, it needs to just give them a plan. Give me a break. Interestingly enough, just this week this very question, and I know we have spoken about this previously, was brought forward in the health committee and asked of the Minister of Health. Obviously I could read through the entire Hansard. However, I believe that a summary of several questions that were asked would be more germane. Members can review the Hansard in their spare time, should they decide to do so.

My hon. colleague began asking questions of the Minister of Health and this resulted in answers suggesting that the answer to this simple question was too complicated to be given. I do not want to stand here and sound all haughty and whatnot, but there are three medical doctors on the committee, two of whom are my colleagues across the aisle, who actually have master's degrees in public health. I suspect they could probably understand the answer.

Indeed, the chief public health officer went on to say that the situation is unstable and that because borders were involved, the international and domestic situation must be considered. She also said that, at the current time, without any benchmarks, and this part is great, the government and its adviser are just waiting to see what happens. Wow, that is a great plan.

I asked the Minister of Health to give us a plan for the domestic part of lifting COVID-19 mandates for Canadians. I asked for the metrics, the benchmarks, what other words we could possibly use to describe it to make it as simple as possible, and the minister then gave us a lecture on post-acute COVID-19 syndrome, long haul syndrome, or long COVID, whatever we wish to call it.

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I then asked the minister if he was suggesting that long COVID was the reason to continue federal mandates and to keep federal employees off work. The reply to that, which again was a non-answer, was that 59 people died of COVID yesterday. He refused to answer the number of federal employees off work due to COVID mandates. From my research, I would say it is countless. It is over 1,000 at least, perhaps. That is a lot of people who are now potentially missing out on their pensions and meaningful work.

Once again, very pointedly, I asked the Minister of Health if there is a plan for the ending of federal mandates. He asked me which mandates, which is mind-boggling. I said all of them. Sadly, this exchange ended with the hon. Minister of Health saying it would be irresponsible to say yes or no to that question. That is absolutely mind-boggling to me and incomprehensible.

In conclusion, this concept is not only important for today, but it is important because it sets a precedent in its scope and longevity. It would perhaps help to apply it to other situations in the future. We have seen from the beginning of the pandemic that the government has not given answers and has not given us replies. This is the type of action that is uncharacteristic of a Canadian way of behaving. This state of affairs needs to end, a plan for ending mandates needs to be formulated and communicated expeditiously to all Canadians. If this job remains too complicated for the hon. minister and his advisers, I know many people on this side of the aisle who would be more than happy to help with that task.

• (1555)

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his presentation.

We are talking about lifting health measures. I am a bit apprehensive about this, because we are currently experiencing a significant rise in cases of the notorious subvariant of omicron. It is not only happening in Quebec. It is very much the case in Europe, as well as in Canada. I am concerned for this reason, but also because the National Institute of Excellence in Health and Social Services is forecasting a relatively significant increase in hospitalizations.

My colleague has studied in the medical field, so I am hoping he can reassure me. It seems to me that we need to exercise caution and act wisely right now.

Mr. Stephen Ellis: Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his question.

At this point in time, what the motion suggests is not immediate; it is only a plan. It is an important suggestion for Canadians to maintain hope for a plan for the future. It is not immediate or for tomorrow; it is only a plan. The operative word here is “plan”.

[English]

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, I really enjoyed listening to my colleague's speech and his expertise on this. I do appreciate that my colleague also supports and agrees that COVID-19 vaccines do provide strong protection against severe illness, hospitalization and deaths.

Does my colleague agree Canada should support the TRIPS waiver at the WTO to expand global vaccine production, especially for middle and lower-income countries?

• (1600)

Mr. Stephen Ellis: Madam Speaker, the shameful behaviour of the NDP-Liberal coalition government taking vaccines from the COVAX program has led to vaccine inequity around this world. Certainly, that is the kind of thing we do not want to be associated with as Canadians, and as Conservatives, we do not support that style of governance.

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have not spent my life in medicine, as this member has. I have spent it in business, and I have a lot of business planning and strategies. There is a famous saying, “If you do not know where you are going, any road will get you there”, and this strikes me as the Minister of Health's motto. He does not seem to know where he is going, and he spouts statistics, as we saw today, unrelated to the questions.

Does the hon. member think the government's road is to get us to 100% vaccination before it will raise these mandates? Does he have any sense, from what the minister said today, of where it is going?

Mr. Stephen Ellis: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his friendship through our time here in the House, as well as his good guidance. The fearful part of me, being a new member, is the fact that I believe, and this makes me very sad and sometimes angry, that the government wants to punish those who do not agree with its ideological agenda.

It has now made these people who had had good-paying jobs, in a sad and insane twist of fate, beholden to the government for their income. They do not have jobs anymore, so they are going to have to access the social system. That is the sad road map I see for the government and for Canadians.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, we knew exactly where we wanted to go. We wanted to be among the countries in the world that had the highest vaccination rates, and we got there.

Mr. Stephen Ellis: Madam Speaker, there is no doubt.

Interestingly enough, at the Standing Committee on Health, we had some psychologists there this week. When asked very pointedly if they thought that bullying and name-calling was a great way to get people to change their minds, they reminded all of us very clearly that is an absolutely unacceptable way to go about any type of business, and certainly well within those confines of coercion I spoke about.

Mr. Tony Baldinelli (Niagara Falls, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is an honour for me to rise in this place to speak to our Conservative opposition day motion, introduced by my colleague from Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes.

The motion reads:

That, given that Canada has one of the world's highest vaccination rates and every province across Canada has lifted or has a plan to lift vaccine mandates, the House call on the government to immediately lift all federal vaccine mandates in order to:

- (a) protect the jobs of federally regulated employees;
- (b) enable Canadians to travel unimpeded;
- (c) ensure Canada's tourism industry recovery; and
- (d) allow for the free flow of goods across the Canadian border.

This is a motion that I agree with, and it is a motion that is particularly relevant for constituents in my beautiful riding of Niagara Falls, which includes the city of Niagara Falls and the towns of Niagara-on-the-Lake and Fort Erie.

As members of the House may know, my riding is Canada's top leisure tourism destination in all of Canada. It is also home to four international bridge crossings that connect Canada to the United States. Before the pandemic, tourism generated \$2.4 billion in receipts in Niagara alone, and the local tourism sector employed 40,000 Niagara residents. These numbers were record highs in 2019, and they were followed by record lows a year later, as the world entered lockdown in 2020 to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic.

As we all know, the Canadian travel and tourism industry was hit first, was hit the hardest and will take the longest to recover from this pandemic. Before COVID, Canada's national tourism industry employed one in 10 Canadians and was a \$105-billion industry. Today, we are at just 50% of where we were in 2019, and forecasting does not see recovery being achieved until at least the end of 2025.

For the sake of supporting Canada's travel and tourism industry, we need to get back to the days of 2019, and we need to do so in a safe and responsible way, following what the data and the science is now telling us. That is why I have been encouraged by the remarks of some of Canada's top doctors in this regard.

On February 18 of this year, CTV News reported Dr. Theresa Tam, Canada's chief public health officer, saying, "We should be able to manage the pandemic going into the future without, I think, some of the more stringent or restrictive public health measures". Meanwhile, the day before Dr. Tam's statement, Global News reported Dr. Kieran Moore saying, "We do think the highest risk is behind us, that we're heading into a lower risk environment, and that the need for vaccination policies across Ontario sectors, whether it's health, or in colleges and universities, is no longer necessary".

Many of my constituents cannot afford to lose a third consecutive summer tourism season, whether they own and operate a tourism-related business or they are workers whose jobs depend on tourism visitation to our region. We are more than two years into this pandemic, and Canadians simply want a return to their normal lives.

For many months now, Canada's Conservatives, myself included, have been calling on the federal government to present a plan on how we get out of this pandemic and achieve recovery. While provinces and territories are beginning to reverse their policies and expect to have all of their policies fully reversed by the end of April, we continue to see reluctance and hesitation from the federal government to do the same in areas of its jurisdiction.

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For a long time, Canada's Conservatives have called on this federal government to eliminate all predeparture testing requirements for fully vaccinated travellers. That is why we welcomed the news when the federal government finally made its recent announcement to do just that. However, it is not enough to leave it at that. We need the federal government to do more and to do so more quickly if we are going to have a strong summer tourism season in Niagara. At this delicate and critical time, international travellers are planning their summer vacations. Our jobs as a Parliament and the job of this government is to make it easy for international travellers to choose Canada as their summer tourism destination.

This year, the ArriveCAN app has been anything but easy for travellers since its implementation. Just today, I received correspondence from the general manager of the Buffalo and Fort Erie Peace Bridge Authority who wrote, "The continued mandatory use of the ArriveCAN app will result in much longer processing times and very lengthy border wait times, which will significantly depress cross-border traffic at a time when we are moving into the 2022 summer tourist season." He further indicated, "Border delays discourage cross-border travel, and that will continue to adversely impact hard-hit tourism industries in the Niagara region that are trying to recover from two years of pandemic-related border restrictions."

• (1605)

These continued federal barriers harm Canada's reputation as a travel destination, and our country continues to be perceived by international travellers as a destination that is too complicated to travel to. We need the federal government to be an international champion for Canadian travel and tourism again.

Our motion today is asking the federal government to lift all federal vaccine mandates so our country can fully reopen. This would not only benefit trade, travel and tourism, but would also address federally regulated workers who may or may not be vaccinated for whatever their personal reasons.

The government's job, and our job as parliamentarians, is to give Canadians the tools they need so they can make decisions about their own health care choices and well-being. Tools create choice, and I believe in giving Canadians a choice on this important matter. Given the high vaccination rates, millions upon millions of Canadians have chosen to get vaccinated. It is an approach that I and many of my parliamentary colleagues have encouraged since the early days of this pandemic.

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My support for vaccines remains steadfast. I am triple-vaccinated. My wife is a public health nurse, and she has worked at our local vaccination clinics. Having said that, the government has no right to decide an individual's health choice. Federally regulated workers, including frontline workers such as our Canadian Armed Forces members, CBSA officers and health care workers, should never have been forced into an ultimatum by the Liberal government of having to choose between getting vaccinated and getting fired, nor should Canadians have been denied the right to travel freely in their own country to visit loved ones who, for example, may have lived in other provinces.

Tools exist to give Canadians choices about their health care and to help us adapt to living with COVID. For example, rapid testing is one such tool. Why is it that the House only recently authorized the spending of \$2.5 billion on rapid tests? We should have done that a year and a half ago, as Canada's Conservatives have been calling for the use of these important tools.

All Canadians deserve a federal government that is here to serve and protect its citizens and our national best interests. That means it does not matter what our political party is, where we live in this country, what faith we follow or what our vaccination status is. The duty of government and of everyone here is to work so that we bring people together to find solutions that are in the best interests of all Canadians.

Our economy should be fully reopened and recovered from this pandemic by now. For two years, Canadians have done their part. It is now time for the current federal government to hold up its end of the bargain and lift all federal vaccine mandates in Canada. I will be supporting this motion, and I hope my parliamentary colleagues will do so as well.

• (1610)

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to follow up on a question from my colleague for Courtenay—Alberni, because the Conservative member he asked did not answer the question. I am curious if this member will answer.

Do the Conservatives support the TRIPS waiver? Do they support temporarily waiving intellectual property rights, so that low-income countries can produce their own vaccines and we can protect the whole world?

Mr. Tony Baldinelli: Madam Speaker, what should be disturbing to this new NDP-Liberal coalition government is the funding that is required through the COVAX program. The federal government should be ashamed that it actually took money and vaccines from that program that should be going to those countries that need it most, so that they can get vaccinated, so that we can provide assistance to them and so that we can avoid situations with continued growth of variants that continue to emerge throughout the world.

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, I remember that on February 10, we were debating a Conservative motion calling for a plan to lift the public health measures.

Every Conservative who spoke told us they wanted all public health measures lifted. Here we have a proposal to lift all public health measures, but they are telling us that there has to be a plan.

Could someone please clarify?

[English]

Mr. Tony Baldinelli: Madam Speaker, we have asked consistently. Last year, we had a motion before the House asking for a plan to be put forward to end the restrictions and the mandates. We have done so again, and we continue to be told no by the government and its supporters in its coalition.

We need a plan to get out of COVID. The people of Niagara Falls, those tourism workers, simply want to go back to work. They want to get back to their jobs. They want to welcome those millions of visitors who come to our community and make it the vibrant tourism community that it is. That is being denied by COVID, and we need to get back to those days.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, to my hon. colleague for Niagara Falls, we have a lot in common. Both of our ridings are really beautiful and both rely on a lot of tourists.

I am going to go back to the question from the hon. member for Victoria and the hon. member for Courtenay—Alberni. It is not because I do not think that the hon. members have not answered this, but perhaps it was not clear enough. Many of us on the opposition benches, and I hope Conservatives will join us, are pressing the Liberal government to do an obvious thing that so far it has refused to do. We have asked the government to do it for two years. Under the World Trade Organization, there is something called trade-related intellectual property rights. These protect the rights of big pharma to protect its vaccines.

What we are asking is that Canada join with South Africa and India and use an exemption that is already in the treaty. It says that in an emergency, when we need to produce vaccines or drugs of some kind in other countries, we can get a waiver so that big pharma does not control all the intellectual property and vaccines can be produced in the developing world.

Speaking for himself, does the hon. member for Niagara Falls agree that is a good idea?

• (1615)

Mr. Tony Baldinelli: Madam Speaker, I would like to say the member's riding is just as wonderful and beautiful as mine from a tourism perspective, but mine is the number one tourism destination in all of Canada. Let us not forget that.

I would like to reiterate that the government has taken vaccines from that COVAX program, and that is something that is abhorrent. What we need to be doing is supporting those countries in order to prevent variants from coming forward again, so people can get vaccinated and so we can prevent the spread of COVID-19. What the government did was deny that from happening. That is my response to that question.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, in the motion, the Conservative Party is saying it wants to stop the mandates completely, as in it would have no mandates effective today.

Can the member tell the House whether he believes that the political science the Conservative Party is using by making that statement is right and fair in terms of the health and well-being of Canadians?

Mr. Tony Baldinelli: Madam Speaker, I will just reiterate the comments of Canada's chief public health officer, Dr. Tam. On February 18, she said, "We should be able to manage the pandemic going into the future without, I think, some of the more stringent or restrictive public health measures."

[Translation]

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will share my time with the member for London North Centre.

There is no overstating the fact that the past two years have not been easy. As individuals and as a society, we are all worn out. The pandemic truly was a tragedy, and it had many and varied impacts on all aspects of society. Businesses had to close their doors either temporarily or, in some cases, permanently because they went bankrupt. Seniors were affected. In some residences, the death rate was utterly unacceptable. Some residents could not leave their rooms for weeks. They were totally isolated. We also know the pandemic had a terrible impact on everyone's mental health, especially those in isolation, such as seniors who had to stay in their rooms, as well as frontline workers who were so brave and did such amazing work to keep us safe. It also harmed young people, students who could not get the kind of educational experience they normally would. Basically, it was very hard for everyone.

The fact is that Canada chose a more careful approach. We were much more careful than many other countries. That is why we had a lower mortality rate than many other countries, including our neighbour to the south. Our mortality rate was roughly one-third of that in the United States. I think we should be proud of that. The Minister of Health has repeated many times that if the vaccination rate in the United States had been the same as in Canada, they would have saved 135,000 lives. That is a lot. We do not think about that so much these days. We no longer think about the lives that were saved. We only think about making life a bit easier by lifting all sorts of restrictions and mandates, even though we have lifted many so far and life has returned more or less to normal.

Our success in saving lives is a result of the wisdom and sacrifices of Canadians who have shown exemplary solidarity by following the health rules. It is also the result of the leadership shown by the federal and provincial governments. That leadership was crucial. In this crisis, the governments had to lead by example by working together. In other words, the governments were able to get on the same page.

The same cannot be said for the United States, where each state followed its own course. Sometimes the states worked against the current. In Florida, they wanted nothing to do with masks or vaccines. I even heard that in Florida, if someone went into a restaurant

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wearing a mask, they were kicked out for scaring the customers. California's approach, however, was similar to Canada's and the governor was nearly thrown out of office.

• (1620)

[English]

In a crisis, we cannot underestimate the vital importance of Canadians maintaining faith in their institutions. That is when it is most important for citizens to have faith in their institutions.

Institutions, in order to keep that faith, have to be consistent. They have to be judicious in the decisions that they are making. Any signs of inconsistency or arbitrariness can be fatal in terms of creating a loss of faith and confidence on the part of the people. If that happens, then no one is going to follow anything the government is suggesting. If that had happened in Canada, we would have had many more deaths than we experienced.

It is important also for governments to show leadership. That is why we have a vaccination mandate for federal employees. We are showing leadership. We got the support of the Canadian people to do that in an election where the Canadian people gave the Government of Canada a mandate to show the example across the country. That was very important in terms of saving lives and helping us to get out of the worst of the crisis sooner rather than later.

Canadians responded to the leadership that their governments showed. They obliged and the proof is in the fact that as of March 13, if we are looking at people five years old and older, 85% of the population has been fully vaccinated. If we look at the age group 18 and over, 56% have been fully vaccinated plus have obtained a booster.

An hon. member: One of the best in the world.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Yes.

Why is it important for the most people possible to be vaccinated? As André Picard said in *The Globe and Mail*, the pandemic playing field is not level. What did Mr. Picard mean by that? An 85-year-old is 340 times more likely to die from COVID than a 20-year-old. A 75-year-old is 140 times more likely to die from COVID than a 20-year-old. A 65-year-old is 65 times more likely.

André Picard is an expert in public health. His columns are consistently dealing with that issue. To quote him in *The Globe and Mail* recently, he wrote, "Now, by abandoning all mitigation measures at once...we're shifting the pandemic burden entirely [to older Canadians] onto the immunocompromised, the unboosted". That is very important to keep in mind. When we argue that we should just drop everything, we are doing harm to the most vulnerable in our society.

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The other point I would like to make is that all pandemic-related decisions are extremely complex. Not only are they a function of many factors, but these factors are dynamic and constantly changing. The Minister of Health mentioned some of these factors in question period in his wonderful responses to the questions he received. Here are some of the factors that public health has to consider and the government has to consider when deciding when to remove restrictions: the vaccination rate, hospital capacity, domestic epidemiology, international epidemiology and social impacts. This is a very long list of complicated factors that have to be looked at.

We are making comparisons that are a little too facile. We say that if the provinces do this then the federal government should do this. This seems to be the rhetoric that is coming from the other side, creating this kind of equivalency that is confusing if one is not listening closely. However, it is important to distinguish between the federal and provincial contexts. Federal measures focus on international transmissions. Provincial restrictions do not. There is a big difference between a crowded conveyance like an airplane or a train and movie theatres, gyms, shopping malls, grocery stores and the like. We have to use our wisdom to make distinctions that are important, especially in times of crisis.

I will conclude by quoting Mr. Picard one more time. He says, “We should not, after two years of solid effort and no small amount of sacrifice, be so foolish as to abandon prevention.” We must remain vigilant, responsible and wise.

• (1625)

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Speaker, the situation in Ukraine has deteriorated by the hour. NATO's refusal to provide a safe humanitarian no-fly zone has weighed heavily on me and my constituents. The news is inundated with images of young women and children at border crossings in Poland as they flee the tyranny of Herr Putin.

The Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship has issued a class-based national interest exemption to allow unvaccinated Ukrainians to enter Canada, and I commend him highly for this. However, does it not seem hypocritical in light of the debate we are having here today? Would it not make more sense to listen to the science and end the mandates so that everyone could travel freely?

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Madam Speaker, again, the opposition is simplifying things. There are very few absolutes in anything, whether it be environmental protection or public health. We work with a risk management approach. That is what governments have been doing all along.

We cannot just have blanket statements or blanket policies that overlook certain exceptions that have merit. I am sure that for anyone coming over here from the crisis overseas, there will be public health officers helping them along the way. I do not think we can just paint everything with one brush. We have to be a little more nuanced than that.

[Translation]

Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, in my riding, Shefford, I attend the meetings of an economic and strategic watch committee established by the Haute-Yamaska RCM that brings together players from the economic and tourism sectors,

as well as municipal elected officials and Quebec MNAs. Everyone agrees on one thing. We need predictability to keep many sectors of our economy going, including tourism, which is so important to the riding of Shefford.

It is therefore a cautious yes, as Quebec and the other provinces are saying. The federal government, however, has no timeline and no predictability when it comes to reopening measures, even though that would help us plan for next steps and ensure a better recovery. It is important that the federal government act within a specific time frame to be able to clarify all this.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Madam Speaker, the biggest obstacle in the tourism sector, in my opinion, was the pre-arrival test needed to enter Canada. Now that those tests will no longer be required as of April 1, I think that will mean fewer barriers to tourism, especially within Canada.

I am sure there are many Canadians who would like to visit my colleague's beautiful region. What I heard from my constituents, however, was that they were more concerned about the required tests that were so expensive.

• (1630)

[English]

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his amazing work chairing our environment and sustainable development committee.

I would like to ask the hon. member about his government's decision not to support the TRIPS waiver. We know that vaccination is key around the world to keeping people in low-income countries safe but also to keeping people here in Canada safe. I am curious if the member agrees that we need to temporarily waive intellectual property rights so that low-income countries could produce vaccines and save lives.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Madam Speaker, that is a good question. As someone said, we will not be safe until everyone in the world is safe.

I am not particularly ideological about how we ensure that everyone is vaccinated. Whatever approach is most efficient in terms of getting the rest of the world vaccinated is the one we should go with. Intellectual property is, of course, a very complex field. We want to ensure that whatever measures we take actually result, at the end of day, in greater production and greater distribution of the vaccines.

Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will try to make my question as short as possible, but I have to throw something else in first. It is my granddaughter Sara's seventh birthday today, and I want to wish her a happy birthday from the House of Commons. I hope she is watching at home. I do not know if she is.

I wonder if my hon. colleague could tell the House how we compare to the rest of the G7 countries when it comes to vaccinations.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Madam Speaker, first of all, I wish a happy birthday to Sara. She is very fortunate to have such a wonderful grandfather, whom I am sure she is extremely proud of.

The last time I looked, I think we were second or third in the G20. I know it tends to change over time, but all I know is that we were very much near the top and that is something we as Canadians can be very proud of.

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is nice to see you in the chair again, and I hope you are doing well today.

It is always an honour to rise in the House to speak on matters. Today we are speaking on the opposition motion of our colleagues in the Conservative Party. Reading directly from the motion, it calls for the lifting of “all federal vaccine mandates”. It offers a few rationales for that point of view. Namely, because the provinces and territories have either put in place a plan to do so or have already done so, the federal government should act accordingly.

The issue this ignores entirely is one of jurisdiction. Provinces and territories should continue and will continue to take decisions that are within their jurisdiction based on the local health situation. Of course, public health agencies at a local level will inform that process with their engagement with the chief medical officer of every respective province or territory. That is the system. That is how it works. That is how it should work in a federation.

The federal government, for its part, will operate, as I say, in its jurisdiction on the question of mandates and on the advice of the public health experts at the Public Health Agency of Canada. I am not sure if members have noted this for Hansard, but I will. I want to thank public officials at PHAC. Throughout this pandemic, they have stood up in ways that are immeasurable and in ways that history will recognize as a true contribution to Canadian public policy and to an emergency response.

Where I want to focus my attention today is not so much on the politics of those questions. I want to take a step back, if I could, and ask a fundamental question. It is a surprise to me that this issue keeps coming up. My colleagues in the Bloc have not raised it, and my colleagues in the NDP have not raised it. They may have raised it when the opportunity posed itself, but they have not made it a motion. They have not decided to devote an entire opposition day to it.

My friends in the Conservative Party have, and they continue to devote themselves to this issue. Today's question period, for example, is a case in point. Almost the entire duration of question period was taken up by focusing on this one issue. There are so many other things happening in Canada, and internationally too, that they could have raised, but they kept going back to this.

I am not sure why. I have some thoughts on the matter. I think it has everything to do with the fact that, at some point in the history of the Conservative Party, it became a libertarian party. What is at the core of the philosophy of libertarianism? I know I only have a few minutes, but there are a few insights that need to be put on the record.

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Philosopher Robert Nozick is perhaps the most noted libertarian. He said, “There are only individual people, different individual people, with their own individual lives. Using one of these people for the benefit of others, uses him and benefits the others. Nothing more.”

I offer that. I am not a Conservative, but I have Conservative friends and frequently they will resort to arguments about individualism. We need to understand a philosophic rationale for libertarianism, which Robert Nozick provides. It is about the individual for him and nothing more.

In political terms, we can look to Ronald Reagan, but especially to Margaret Thatcher. The transition in the Conservative Party started modestly in the 1980s but especially continued in the nineties and continues into the modern day, and Margaret Thatcher was absolutely instrumental in that change. She said:

...who is society? There is no such thing! There are individual men and women and there are families and no government can do anything except through people and people look to themselves first. It is our duty to look after ourselves and then also to help look after our neighbour and life is a reciprocal business....

Here is another point of view that emphasizes the individual. It is all about self-reliance. The state's job is to get out of the way. The state can provide for a few basic things such as police, a military and basic taxation. Apart from that, apart from offering this idea of what Nozick called the “night-watchman” state, it is about individuals being left alone to pursue their interests as they see fit.

• (1635)

Particularly, as it relates to mandates, when Nozick said, “Using one of these people for the benefit of others, uses him and benefits the others”, I think that is what provides the Conservatives with so much concern about mandates, that it represents state overreach. It represents the state interfering in the lives of individuals and trampling on their individual rights to pursue their interests as they see fit. It is an interesting idea.

Much has been written about libertarianism, but its weakness has become clear during emergencies and crises, particularly public health crises like COVID. So much so that an ardent disciple of former prime minister Margaret Thatcher, the current Prime Minister of the United Kingdom Boris Johnson, said that in fact there is “such a thing as society.” There are individuals, yes, but they live and exist within a society, and those individuals have a duty to one another. That is where I think, as a point of departure, we have to begin the discussion on mandates.

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It is not as if we and those who support the introduction and maintenance of federal vaccine mandates do not recognize the importance of individuals. Of course, we do, as well as individual rights. That philosophy is also core to the Liberal Party of Canada, but mandates in the context of COVID-19, which is still with us and is global, which is what a pandemic is by definition, are key and they are not forced vaccination. Mandates reflect a public health duty. Mandates have saved thousands of lives. In Canada, taken with vaccinations, mandates have helped to save the lives of no less than 400,000 people according to the estimates of experts. Epidemiologists and other public health experts have put that number forward. In the United States, the number is even higher obviously. Over a million lives were saved there. In Europe, the same sort of narrative follows.

Another way to understand the value of mandates is to follow what the philosopher T.M. Scanlon said, "If we can prevent something very bad from happening to someone by making a slight or even moderate sacrifice, it would be wrong not to do so." Therefore, mandates ask all of us to make a moderate sacrifice. That much is sure. Only the state has the ability to implement such a system, a vaccine mandate system, but that moderate sacrifice is absolutely worth it when we understand that the result of that leads to lives being saved.

Our colleague who just spoke cited the very well-known and well-respected commentator on Canadian public affairs, who is also the public health specialist for The Globe and Mail. When André Picard talks about, for instance, the elderly and those who are immunocompromised still facing a heightened risk, even though we see declining rates of hospitalization and infection rates, we have to remain vigilant and the federal government needs to maintain a broad perspective as part of the calculus as to whether or not vaccine mandates still have a place in Canada.

As we just heard, it is important for the Public Health Agency of Canada to, among other things, assess the international epidemiology. Of course, COVID-19 remains a pandemic. For that reason, operating in its area of jurisdiction, understanding the international situation, not just the domestic one, the advice given to the federal government is that vaccine mandates still have a role to play.

For the Conservatives, this apparently represents a limitation of individual freedom and state overreach, but it should not. Vaccine mandates are about saving lives and that is a duty that we should all live up to. We are individuals who live in a society. Without adhering to a duty to one another, a collective responsibility, individuals cannot thrive, so what I call for, as a final point here, is to recognize the importance of duty in our politics and not just individualism.

I thank you for the opportunity to speak and look forward to questions.

● (1640)

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise on behalf of the people of Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo.

I agree with some of what the member talked about with respect to principles, but where we part company is when we discuss the principles underlying libertarianism and individuality. I am going to

put the question that I put to the health minister today to him. He talked about the efficacy of mandates when it comes to helping out the whole.

Nancy, an indigenous single woman, can work 100% from home. Why is the current government, the NDP-Liberal government, not accommodating her?

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos: Madam Speaker, as I understand it, my colleague's constituent is a public servant. The federal government has engaged with public servants throughout. Accommodations have been given where possible, and it continues to engage on that basis and other bases. I will say that more ought to be done by all governments, at every level, to work with individuals who are still vaccine-hesitant.

There is a difference between anti-vaxxers and those who are vaccine-hesitant, and perhaps there needs to be more engagement with individuals who fall into the hesitancy category. The media have a responsibility in that regard, public health experts have a responsibility in that regard, so too do governments. I do not know the individual circumstances of the constituent, but that is what I would put to my colleague.

[Translation]

Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his fine speech.

We know that measures for travellers will be relaxed on April 1. That is good news, but it is a little late. Once again, the government is slow to act.

It is important that the government provide a timetable for lifting health measures in order to maintain social cohesion. We know full well that everyone is tired of the pandemic, tired of wearing a mask and tired of following health restrictions. However, we are hopeful and moving forward.

We must not lift all the restrictions immediately. We must apply the lessons learned from the previous waves, because there may be a sixth wave. I am asking my colleague what he thinks of presenting a timetable for lifting health measures in order to maintain social cohesion.

● (1645)

[English]

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos: Madam Speaker, it is not unreasonable to suggest this. However, one also has to do so while keeping in mind the nature of the pandemic and the fact that it is constantly a fluid situation. It is a constantly ever-evolving situation.

I think that, when we look at the pandemic, we cannot look at it in isolation. We have to look at it domestically. We have to look at the international situation. We have to be mindful of those things. We have to take public health advice. It is very difficult to come up with a timetable when the pandemic is constantly evolving and constantly in flux.

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, first, I would like to start out by indicating that I have always been in strong support of mandates and I do not believe it is my job as an elected official to make public health decisions. I think that is up to public health experts.

One of the things that I have been concerned about and certainly have raised in the House before is that I feel that the pandemic and mandates have been used to divide, in the way that this government has utilized very divisive language, which has resulted in families turning against family members and colleagues turning against colleagues. Even now, we see people who are choosing to wear masks being attacked for choosing to do so.

I want to ask my hon. colleague if he agrees with his colleague from Louis-Hébert that this Liberal government has made a deliberate decision to politicize Canada's vaccine strategy on the eve of and during the last election.

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos: Madam Speaker, I have a respect, a friendship and a great affinity for the colleague that was just mentioned, the MP for Louis-Hébert. I was elected with him in 2015. On that matter, we simply disagree. I do not believe that there has been a politicization of the pandemic. Certainly, there has been division in Canadian society; there is no question.

However, there is nothing wrong with encouraging people who can get vaccinated, where it does not pose a health challenge or some other challenge to their physical well-being, to get vaccinated. That is—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The time is up.

[Translation]

It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Victoria, The Environment; the hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot, Government Appointments; the hon. member for Bow River, The Economy.

[English]

Mrs. Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Madam Speaker, I just want to start by letting you know that I will be sharing my time with the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent.

Vaccine mandates have had a very real impact on the lives of Canadians. As the situation has evolved, governments have had to change. We have seen that as the case for governments across Canada, as well as governments all across the world. Sadly, what we have seen from the Liberal-NDP coalition government is that it has been slow to act. It was initially slow to close the borders. Then it was slow to get vaccines, slow to get rapid tests, slow to reopen the borders and now slow to end federal mandates.

On Monday, the health minister said at health committee, “We want to apply the least disruptive measures in order to protect the health and safety of Canadians, and the conversation will evolve as the situation evolves.” The situation has evolved significantly since the vaccine mandates on domestic travel were initially applied. It is worth noting that, when domestic travel vaccine mandates were first imposed, they were based on an idea that those who were vac-

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inated were much less likely to contract and therefore spread COVID. However, this changed as the omicron variant took over. As far as I can see, it no longer serves the original policy goal of preventing the spread of COVID. It just serves to needlessly divide Canadians.

Last week, I was contacted by a constituent. She was really devastated and she was really having a hard time. She is a nurse and she has worked throughout the pandemic, serving vulnerable Albertans as a registered nurse. She has been unable to be vaccinated because she has a medical exemption. She actually has an allergy to vaccines, and not just this vaccine but many vaccines. It is an anaphylactic allergy. It is something that is literally a life and death situation for her. All because of this, her employer, Alberta Health Services, has given her reasonable accommodations, so she has been able to continue serving as one of our frontline health care heroes throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Despite having medical exemptions, the process to be able to get on an airplane was not simple or straightforward, nor was it very timely. While I understand that many members in this chamber do not understand the vastness that is the country of Canada, my constituent is from Ontario, which was 3,600 kilometres away. Driving was not really a feasible option. Her father, who was in Ontario, had just passed away sadly, and she really wanted to be there with her family at this really difficult time, to be able to mourn with her mother and attend the celebration of life for her father.

However, this is the problem with any kind of really strict rule. There will inevitably be people who are stuck in the margins and for whom those rules do not necessarily make sense. Those rules cause undue and unnecessary hardship. That was the case with these rules. I was able to help this constituent navigate through the bureaucratic nightmare and the red tape so that she could get on a plane in a timely fashion and make it in time for her dad's funeral.

However, as I was helping this constituent, it really made me stop and wonder about all the constituents who are not vaccinated, have a sudden death in their family and do not have a medical exemption. What are those constituents supposed to do? Why are we continuing to needlessly divide Canadians? Why are we continuing to stigmatize Canadians who are vaccine-hesitant, who are unable to be vaccinated or who, for any number of reasons, whether they be religious or otherwise, might choose not to be vaccinated?

● (1650)

I had another constituent contact me about a month ago. Her sister was really not doing well. She was in palliative care. She also had to fly. She had one vaccine, but had to wait 28 days before she could get her second vaccine and then another 14 days after that before she could get on a plane. She was not anti-vax; she just had not gotten around to it for a number of reasons. We need to show compassion. We need to understand that there is humanity. There are human cases here, and it is very real throughout most of rural Canada. We really need to do better.

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We have among the strictest rules on vaccine mandates and restrictions, when it comes to domestic travel, in the entire world. I am not saying that they did not at some point serve some kind of purpose, but right now they do not serve the original policy goal that they set out to. I do not believe that bullying and name-calling are effective methods to get one's way. My mom used to tell us all the time that sticks and stones may break our bones, but words would never hurt us. However, it was not okay to hurt somebody by name-calling. It did not really matter that it would not physically hurt them, because it would still hurt them.

Yesterday, at the health committee, Dr. Cohen, the CEO of the Canadian Psychological Association, appeared. When we asked her about this, and whether a productive way to get more Canadians vaccinated was to stigmatize them, bully them and call them names, she said there was behavioural science that showed that it was actually a very ineffective way. I am paraphrasing. This goes to a point. Why are we making people jump through these hoops at this point in time? Why can we not just treat people like people?

We have among the highest vaccination rates in the world. We have complied for the last two years. Canadians have stayed home when they were asked to stay home. At this point, they need to see a path out of this. The federal mandates regarding travel restrictions are very much imposing on constituents in my riding. That is just one small example. Men and women who have served our country are being threatened with the loss of their jobs and benefits because, for some reason, they have chosen not to get vaccinated. I am not even sure what the reason is, but it does not really matter to me what the reason is. We need to think, deep in our hearts and souls, about whether we want our legacy to be that, when given the opportunity to do the right thing, we chose to sit idly by and let Canadians continue to be divided.

One of the things that has been brought to my attention on so many occasions in my constituency through correspondence is why we continue to divide. Why do we not just allow hope, and why do we not have a plan? Provinces have ended their mandates and our G7 allies have ended their mandates. They are following the emerging science, and I understand that the science has changed substantially. What we know now about COVID is much different from what we knew originally. When we know better, we have an opportunity to do better.

I am asking all members in this assembly to keep in mind that many of us represent large rural ridings on which these travel mandates have a very direct impact. It is really complicated. I implore all members to please do the right thing and end the travel mandates and all federal mandates for the best of our country.

• (1655)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the motion states, “the House call on the government to immediately lift all federal vaccine mandates”. I asked one of the member's colleagues who the medical experts were who were saying the federal government should lift every mandate effective immediately. The member came back by saying that it was Dr. Tam.

Dr. Tam is Canada's public health officer. Dr. Tam indicated that the federal government was examining all of the vaccine mandates

when she stated, “I think the federal government has taken a very precautionary, thoughtful approach. They're looking at a phased approach of removing some of these policies. I know these policies are being reviewed and re-examined as we speak.” Not all provinces have ended mandates. It is false to make that statement.

Why do the Conservatives stand alone in the House demanding that the mandates end today? Who are the health experts they are listening to?

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Madam Speaker, I am not a scientist. I am not a doctor, but I do follow the advice of doctors and I think that the countries around the world that have been dropping their mandates and restrictions when it comes to travel cannot all be wrong. I asked the Minister of Health today if he thought that all the chief medical officers of health across the country were wrong, as they have been ending mandates and restrictions.

A month ago we asked simply for a plan to end the mandates and restrictions, and the members opposite voted against it. Today, we ask for the mandates to simply end, and I am sure they are probably going to vote against it, but I would implore them not to.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, I agree with the member's comment around our understanding of COVID-19 continuing to evolve. We know that this is a global pandemic, and until we increase access to vaccinations around the world, we will continue to see new variants right here at home.

Does the member agree that Canada needs to support the TRIPS waiver at the WTO to expand global vaccine production, particularly for middle- and low-income countries?

• (1700)

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Madam Speaker, one of the things we saw early in this pandemic was that rather than having domestic production of vaccines, the Liberal-NDP coalition decided to raid the COVAX group and take away from countries that desperately needed it. What I would like to see, and what members on this side of the House would like to see, is an improvement in being able to produce more vaccines domestically so that we have a little more protection when it comes to the future of Canada's health.

[Translation]

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Fort McMurray—Cold Lake for her speech.

The pandemic is constantly evolving and the sixth wave is under way, although it has not quite hit Canada yet. I think it is a little simplistic to say that, because there is no plan or a vote on a plan, all the restrictions should just be lifted.

Would the Conservative motion also presume that there is some flexibility and options if the situation were to evolve? I agree that there should be a plan, even though we have not seen one yet.

What does my colleague think? I would rather see some nuance, rather than getting caught up in stereotypes.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Madam Speaker, I think my colleague raised some important points. We do not know everything about the pandemic and do not know what will happen tomorrow. That is true of life in general.

I do not think that there is any real justification for federal restrictions and mandates right now. These mandates should be lifted today.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to be participating in this debate and also to be speaking after the member for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake. As Quebecers and other francophones just heard, the member from Alberta, who represents one of the most oil-rich ridings in the country, speaks impeccable French.

It is late in the day, and we are gathered here to ask the Government of Canada to do what all the other Canadian governments have done and that is to lift the COVID-19 mandates for Canadians. When I say all the other Canadian governments, I am not referring to previous governments, but to the current governments of the 10 Canadian provinces. Ours is a big and beautiful country. We have British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador. Ten out of ten provinces have decided to lift COVID-19 mandates.

Some provinces, like Saskatchewan, lifted them some time ago. Others, such as Quebec, are moving in that direction and will lift all measures by April 15. It is coming. Other provinces also have plans. Thus, all 10 provinces are on the same page. It is now time to lift vaccine mandates. All governments agree except for the central, federal NDP-Liberal government. That is unfortunate.

These people keep saying that we need to listen to and follow the science. I would say that they were following the political science when they called an election at the beginning of the fourth wave of the pandemic. They ignored everything that Dr. Tam had said on the Wednesday and then called an election on the Sunday. What happened to those people who were crowing about the principle of science? Why did they then call an election? What principle was behind that idea? They were operating on the principle that public servants absolutely had to be vaccinated. There was not a single scientific study proving that this was necessary. The same thing happened after the election, when the mandate was extended to truckers. There was no scientific evidence for this.

However, 10 public health officials in the 10 provinces have each decided that the restrictions could be lifted in their province. All 10 of them did. Not nine, not eight, not six out of 10, but every single one of them, from coast to coast. The NDP-Liberal government refuses to recognize what the provinces are doing and, most importantly, refuses to do what all of the provinces have done. It is unfortunate.

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I want to be clear. Canadians have suffered a lot over the past two years. We have all suffered as a result of COVID-19. Some people lost family members or loved ones, and our thoughts are with them. Others have faced serious mental health challenges. We all know someone who experienced setbacks, challenges and upheaval when confronted with isolation.

Other people missed out on some of the best experiences life has to offer. I will not go into detail, but suffice it to say I experienced the joy of becoming a grandparent during COVID-19 not once but twice. I got to see my granddaughters, but my parents did not get to see them as much as they would have liked. My parents are 97 and 98 years old, and they did not get to see their great-granddaughters, who will soon be 23 months old and seven weeks old, respectively, as much as they wanted. COVID-19 caused all Canadian families to suffer, some a lot and some less so, but we have all had to live with COVID-19.

When the time comes to lift restrictions, obviously that has to be informed by science. That is why the provinces did it. That is why I do not understand why this federal Liberal-NDP government is refusing to do what scientists in 10 out of 10 provinces agreed to do on the basis of science.

• (1705)

[English]

Let me be clear. I am a Conservative and a Canadian, and I am proud of that. My party was the first to raise the issue of COVID in January 2020. I remember the hon. member for Edmonton Riverbend was the first to raise the issue here in the House, in January two years ago. Ours was the first party to raise the issue of restricting the border to address this. We were the first. We were the first to ask for a vaccination system and to provide vaccines to Canadians. We were the first to talk about rapid tests.

As a Conservative, I am very proud to fight for that. As a Conservative, I am very proud to have followed all the rules.

[Translation]

I am a Conservative, and I got not one, not two but three doses. As a Canadian, I am proud to have my vaccine passport with me at all times. Did I enjoy having to show it every time? Of course not, but we got through it.

I was also very proud to wear a mask, which I still wear today, by the way. There is nothing to be ashamed of; on the contrary. I am very proud to wash my hands 25 times a day. I was already doing that anyway, but that is another story. Finally, I am very proud, in a way, to respect social distancing.

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We all learned these words during the pandemic. However, the time has come to move on. That is where we are right now.

I mentioned earlier that the current government has made several big mistakes, such as calling an election in the middle of a pandemic, forcing public servants to be vaccinated without scientific evidence and other things like that.

However, what this government has lacked the most is respect. Unfortunately, there is no vaccine to correct this government's lack of respect, especially the lack of respect shown by the head of state.

[English]

The Prime Minister is our Prime Minister especially when we have to address a crisis like the one we have had in the last two years. The first responsibility of our Prime Minister is to let people work together, to unite us and to face and address the situation. However, what did the Prime Minister do? He fought Canadians, he divided Canadians and he wedged Canadians. That is exactly what the Prime Minister should never do, but that is exactly what he has done in the last two years.

[Translation]

That is why we are quite saddened to see that, two years into the pandemic, while leaders around the world and in our 10 provinces have decided to set aside the health measures, the federal government is alone in refusing to follow the science and the recommendations.

It was sad today to see our party put more than 20 questions to the Minister of Health, a man for whom I have a great deal of respect and esteem. He is the member for Québec, which makes him one of my neighbours, as is the member for Louis-Hébert.

I have to say that over the past few months, I have appreciated the observations and comments of my colleague from Louis-Hébert. Unfortunately, it does not seem to be having much influence on his neighbour, the member for Québec. He should have paid more attention to the comments of the member for Louis-Hébert, who said that the Prime Minister had unfortunately decided to divide Canadians and call an election on the principle of mandatory vaccination.

What was the response we got today from the Minister of Health, whom I respect and hold in high regard?

The minister came out with all sorts of numbers, as the deputy leader of the official opposition and member for Mégantic—L'Érable said. The minister cited an unending slew of numbers.

Speaking of numbers, let us talk about the number 10. In Canada, 10 out of 10 provinces believe the same thing: It is time to lift the health measures. Why is the Minister of Health not listening? Why does he not realize what is happening?

People are saying that the situation is not the same in Europe and they are quite right. Every country has its own reality and its own challenges. Every country is faced with the fact that people can travel from one country to another and spread COVID-19 to some extent.

However, Canada has 10 provinces, 10 health ministers and 10 public health officers. Ten governments have decided to lift restrictions and mandates. We hope that the current federal government will follow the lead of the 10 Canadian provinces, do the right thing and let Canadians lead a better life in the current situation.

• (1710)

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is always a great pleasure to listen to my colleague. He is a great orator here in the House. I think he has already been recognized as the best new MP in the House.

I would like to ask him the following question. Does my colleague believe that someone who arrives from overseas who is not vaccinated or who received a less effective vaccine than Pfizer or Moderna is a greater threat to the Canadian community than a traveller who enters the country and is fully vaccinated with recognized vaccines such as Pfizer or Moderna?

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Madam Speaker, I am very happy to hear from my colleague from Lac-Saint-Louis. I have a lot of respect for him and had the opportunity to get to know him when we worked together on electoral reform. Who knows what happened with that, but he was a very good chair.

As a Canadian, I am very proud that our country has one of the highest vaccination rates in the world. I am proud to go out with my vaccine passport and to have gotten three shots. I have no problem with that and am very proud of it. I am very proud that Canadians are among the most vaccinated and that our country was among the best at following the rules. We should be boasting about this achievement, not using it to divide the country, like this government is doing.

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, these health restrictions exist in large part because the health care system is in shambles and cannot keep up with demand.

I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge those who work in health care, and, in particular, my best friend Stéphanie, who is a special education instructor. By day, she works with people who have lost their independence, such as seniors and people with cognitive problems. She does a good job and has very difficult, busy days. By night, she puts on her personal support worker hat and works another full shift for the health care system because it is in shambles and there is not enough staff. I truly admire her.

We would not be in this position if the health care system had had proper funding, and I would like to hear—

• (1715)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Order. I am very sorry, but unfortunately we have to stop there because we are out of time.

It being 5:15 p.m. and the last allotted day for the supply period ending March 26, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question to dispose of the business of supply.

The question is on the motion.

[English]

May I dispense?

Some hon. members: No.

[Chair read text of motion to House]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): If a member of a recognized party present in the House wishes to request a recorded division or that the motion be adopted on division, I would invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

The hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Madam Speaker, I request a recorded division, please.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Call in the members.

• (1800)

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

(Division No. 41)

YEAS

Members

Aboultayf	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Arnold	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Benzen	Bergen
Berthold	Bezan
Block	Bragdon
Brassard	Brock
Calkins	Caputo
Carrie	Chambers
Chong	Cooper
Dalton	Dancho
Davidson	Deltell
Doherty	Dowdall
Dreeshen	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Ellis	Epp
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Fast	Ferreri
Findlay	Gallant
Généreux	Genuis
Gladu	Godin
Goodridge	Gourde
Gray	Hallan
Hoback	Jeneroux
Kelly	Kitchen
Kmieć	Kram
Kramp-Neuman	Kurek
Kusie	Lake
Lantsman	Lawrence
Lehoux	Lewis (Essex)
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Liepert
Lightbound	Lloyd
Lobb	MacKenzie
Maguire	Martel
Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
Melillo	Moore
Morantz	Morrison
Motz	Muys
Nater	O'Toole
Patzer	Paul-Hus
Perkins	Poilievre
Rayes	Redekopp

Reid
Roberts
Ruff
Schmale
Shields
Small
Steinley
Strahl
Thomas
Tolmie
Van Popta
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Viersen
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Waugh
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Richards
Rood
Scheer
Seeback
Shipley
Soroka
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Stubbs
Tochor
Uppal
Vecchio
Vien
Vis
Warkentin
Webber
Williamson

NAYS

Members

Aldag
Ali
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Arseneault
Ashton
Bachrach
Bains
Barron
Battiste
Beech
Bennett
Bibeau
Blaikie
Blanchet
Blaney
Boissonnault
Bradford
Brunelle-Duceppe
Carr
Chabot
Chahal
Champoux
Chen
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Cormier
Dabrusin
Davies
Desbiens
Desjarlais
Dhillon
Dong
Dubourg
Duguid
Dzerowicz
El-Khoury
Fergus
Fisher
Fortier
Fragiskatos
Freeland
Garneau
Garrison
Gazan
Gill
Green
Hajdu
Hardie
Holland
Hughes
Hutchings
Idlout
Jaczek
Alghabra
Anand
Angus
Arya
Atwin
Badawey
Baker
Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu
Bendayan
Bérubé
Bittle
Blair
Blanchette-Joncas
Blois
Boulerice
Brière
Cannings
Casey
Chagger
Champagne
Chatel
Chiang
Collins (Victoria)
Coteau
Damoff
DeBellefeuille
Desilets
Dhaliwal
Diab
Drouin
Duclos
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Ehsassi
Erskine-Smith
Fillmore
Fonseca
Fortin
Fraser
Gaheer
Garon
Gaudreau
Gerretsen
Gould
Guilbeault
Hanley
Hepfner
Housefather
Hussen
Iacono
Ien
Johns

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Joly	Jowhari
Julian	Kayabaga
Kelloway	Khalid
Khera	Koutrakis
Kusmierczyk	Kwan
Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Larouche
Lattanzio	Lauzon
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lemire	Long
Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacGregor	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney	Martinez Ferrada
Masse	Mathysen
May (Cambridge)	May (Saarich—Gulf Islands)
McDonald (Avalon)	McGuinty
McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod	McPherson
Mendès	Mendicino
Miao	Michaud
Miller	Morrice
Morrissey	Murray
Naqvi	Ng
Noormohamed	Normandin
O'Connell	Oliphant
O'Regan	Pauzé
Perron	Petitpas Taylor
Plamondon	Powlowski
Qualtrough	Robillard
Rodriguez	Rogers
Romanado	Sahota
Sajjan	Saks
Samson	Sarai
Savard-Tremblay	Scarpaleggia
Schiefke	Serré
Sgro	Shanahan
Sheehan	Sidhu (Brampton East)
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Simard
Sinclair-Desgagné	Singh
Sorbara	Spengemann
Ste-Marie	St-Onge
Sudds	Tassi
Taylor Roy	Thériault
Therrien	Thompson
Trudel	Turnbull
Valdez	Van Bynen
van Koeverden	Vandal
Vandenbeld	Vignola
Villemure	Virani
Vuong	Weiler
Yip	Zahid
Zarrillo	Zuberi — 212

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

* * *

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (C), 2021-22

Hon. Mona Fortier (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.)
moved:

That the Supplementary Estimates (C) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2022, be concurred in.

The Deputy Speaker: If a member of a recognized party present in the House wishes to request a recorded division or that the mo-

tion be adopted on division, I invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

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

• (1815)

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

(Division No. 42)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Barron	Barsalou-Duval
Battiste	Beech
Bendayan	Bennett
Bergeron	Bérubé
Bibeau	Bittle
Blaikie	Blair
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Blaney	Blois
Boissonnault	Boulerice
Bradford	Brière
Brunelle-Duceppe	Cannings
Casey	Chabot
Chagger	Chahal
Champagne	Champoux
Chatel	Chen
Chiang	Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Collins (Victoria)	Cormier
Coteau	Dabrusin
Damoff	Davies
DeBellefeuille	Desbiens
Desilets	Desjarlais
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Diab	Dong
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dzerowicz
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Ersikine-Smith	Fergus
Fillmore	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fortin	Fragiskatos
Fraser	Freeland
Gaheer	Garneau
Garon	Garrison
Gaudreau	Gazan
Gerretsen	Gill
Gould	Green
Guilbeault	Hajdu
Hanley	Hardie
Hepfner	Holland
Housefather	Hughes
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Idlout
Ien	Jaczek
Johns	Joly
Jones	Jowhari
Julian	Kayabaga
Kelloway	Khalid
Khera	Koutrakis
Kusmierczyk	Kwan
Lalonde	Lambropoulos

Lametti
 Lapointe
 Lattanzio
 LeBlanc
 Lemire
 Long
 Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
 MacDonald (Malpeque)
 MacKinnon (Gatineau)
 Martinez Ferrada
 Mathysen
 May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
 McGuinty
 McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
 McPherson
 Mendicino
 Michaud
 Morrice
 Murray
 Ng
 Normandin
 Oliphant
 Paupé
 Petitpas Taylor
 Powlowski
 Robillard
 Rogers
 Sahota
 Saks
 Sarai
 Scarpaleggia
 Serré
 Shanahan
 Sidhu (Brampton East)
 Simard
 Sorbara
 Ste-Marie
 Suds
 Taylor Roy
 Therrien
 Trudel
 Valdez
 van Koeverden
 Vandenbeld
 Villemure
 Vuong
 Yip
 Zarrillo

Lamoureux
 Larouche
 Lauzon
 Leboutillier
 Lightbound
 Longfield
 MacAulay (Cardigan)
 MacGregor
 Maloney
 Masse
 May (Cambridge)
 McDonald (Avalon)
 McKay
 McLeod
 Mendès
 Miao
 Miller
 Morrissey
 Naqvi
 Noormohamed
 O'Connell
 O'Regan
 Perron
 Plamondon
 Qualtrough
 Rodriguez
 Romanado
 Sajjan
 Samson
 Savard-Tremblay
 Schiefke
 Sgro
 Sheehan
 Sidhu (Brampton South)
 Sinclair-Desgagné
 Spengemann
 St-Onge
 Tassi
 Thériault
 Thompson
 Turnbull
 Van Bynen
 Vandal
 Vignola
 Virani
 Weiler
 Zahid
 Zuberi— 212

NAYS

Members

Aboultayf
 Albas
 Arnold
 Barlow
 Benzen
 Berthold
 Block
 Brassard
 Calkins
 Carrie
 Chong
 Dalton
 Davidson
 Doherty
 Dreeshen
 Ellis
 Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
 Fast
 Findlay
 Gagné
 Gladu

Aitchison
 Allison
 Baldinelli
 Barrett
 Bergen
 Bezan
 Bragdon
 Brock
 Caputo
 Chambers
 Cooper
 Dancho
 Deltell
 Dowdall
 Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
 Epp
 Falk (Provencher)
 Ferreri
 Gallant
 Genuis
 Godin

Business of Supply

Goodridge
 Gray
 Hoback
 Kelly
 Kmiec
 Kramp-Neuman
 Kusie
 Lantsman
 Lehoux
 Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
 Lloyd
 MacKenzie
 Martel
 McCauley (Edmonton West)
 Moore
 Morrison
 Muys
 O'Toole
 Paul-Hus
 Poilievre
 Redekopp
 Richards
 Rood
 Scheer
 Seeback
 Shipley
 Soroka
 Stewart
 Stubbs
 Tochor
 Uppal
 Vecchio
 Vien
 Vis
 Warkentin
 Webber
 Williamson

Gourde
 Hallan
 Jeneroux
 Kitchen
 Kram
 Kurek
 Lake
 Lawrence
 Lewis (Essex)
 Liepert
 Lobb
 Maguire
 Mazier
 Melillo
 Morantz
 Motz
 Nater
 Patzer
 Perkins
 Rayes
 Reid
 Roberts
 Ruff
 Schmale
 Shields
 Small
 Steinley
 Strahl
 Thomas
 Tolmie
 Van Popta
 Vidal
 Viersen
 Wagantall
 Waugh
 Williams
 Zimmer— 116

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Hon. Mona Fortier moved that Bill C-15, An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2022, be now read the first time and printed.

(Motion deemed adopted and bill read the first time)

Hon. Mona Fortier moved that the bill be read the second time and referred to a committee of the whole.

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

The hon. member for Gatineau.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven MacKinnon: Mr. Speaker, this being the start of spring, I think you will find unanimous consent to apply the results from the previous vote to this vote with Liberal members voting yes.

[*English*]

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives agree to apply and we will be voting nay.

Business of Supply

[Translation]

Mrs. Marilène Gill: Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois agrees to apply the results from the previous vote to this vote with our members voting in favour of the motion.

[English]

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Mr. Speaker, the NDP are willing to apply and will be voting yea.

[Translation]

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, the Green Party agrees to apply the results of the previous vote to this vote, and we vote yes.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Vuong: Mr. Speaker, I agree to apply the results of the previous vote and am voting in favour.

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

(Division No. 43)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Barron	Barsalou-Duval
Battiste	Beech
Bendayan	Bennett
Bergeron	Bérubé
Bibeau	Bittle
Blaikie	Blair
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Blaney	Blois
Boissonnault	Boulerice
Bradford	Brière
Brunelle-Duceppe	Cannings
Casey	Chabot
Chagger	Chahal
Champagne	Champoux
Chatel	Chen
Chiang	Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Collins (Victoria)	Cormier
Coteau	Dabrusin
Damoff	Davies
DeBellefeuille	Desbiens
Desilets	Desjarlais
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Diab	Dong
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dzerowicz
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith	Fergus
Fillmore	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fortin	Fragiskatos
Fraser	Freeland
Gaheer	Garneau
Garon	Garrison
Gaudreau	Gazan
Gerretsen	Gill
Gould	Green
Guilbeault	Hajdu
Hanley	Hardie

Hepfner	Holland
Housefather	Hughes
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Idlout
Ien	Jaczek
Johns	Joly
Jones	Jowhari
Julian	Kayabaga
Kelloway	Khalid
Khera	Koutrakis
Kusmierczyk	Kwan
Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Larouche
Lattanzio	Lauzon
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lemire	Lightbound
Long	Longfield
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacGregor
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney
Martinez Ferrada	Masse
Mathysen	May (Cambridge)
May (Saarnich—Gulf Islands)	McDonald (Avalon)
McGuinty	McKay
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod
McPherson	Mendès
Mendicino	Miao
Michaud	Miller
Morrice	Morrissey
Murray	Naqvi
Ng	Noormohamed
Normandin	O'Connell
Oliphant	O'Regan
Paupé	Perron
Petitpas Taylor	Plamondon
Powlowski	Qualtrough
Robillard	Rodriguez
Rogers	Romanado
Sahota	Sajjan
Saks	Samson
Sarai	Savard-Tremblay
Scarpaleggia	Schiefke
Serré	Sgro
Shanahan	Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simard	Sinclair-Desgagné
Sorbara	Spengemann
Ste-Marie	St-Onge
Sudds	Tassi
Taylor Roy	Thériault
Therrien	Thompson
Trudel	Turnbull
Valdez	Van Bynen
van Koeverden	Vandal
Vandenbeld	Vignola
Villemure	Virani
Vuong	Weiler
Yip	Zahid
Zarrillo	Zuberi— 212

NAYS

Members

Aboultatif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Arnold	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Benzen	Bergen
Berthold	Bezan
Block	Bragdon
Brassard	Brock
Calkins	Caputo

Carrie	Chambers
Chong	Cooper
Dalton	Dancho
Davidson	Deltell
Doherty	Dowdall
Dreeshen	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Ellis	Epp
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Fast	Ferreri
Findlay	Gallant
Généreux	Genuis
Gladu	Godin
Goodridge	Gourde
Gray	Hallan
Hoback	Jeneroux
Kelly	Kitchen
Kmieć	Kram
Kramp-Neuman	Kurek
Kusie	Lake
Lantsman	Lawrence
Lehoux	Lewis (Essex)
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Liepert
Lloyd	Lobb
MacKenzie	Maguire
Martel	Mazier
McCauley (Edmonton West)	Melillo
Moore	Morantz
Morrison	Motz
Muys	Nater
O'Toole	Patzer
Paul-Hus	Perkins
Poilievre	Rayes
Redekopp	Reid
Richards	Roberts
Rood	Ruff
Scheer	Schmale
Seebach	Shields
Shipley	Small
Soroka	Steinley
Stewart	Strahl
Stubbs	Thomas
Tochor	Tolmie
Uppal	Van Popta
Vecchio	Vidal
Vien	Viersen
Vis	Wagantall
Warkentin	Waugh
Webber	Williams
Williamson	Zimmer — 116

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, this bill stands referred to a committee of the whole.

(Bill read the second time and the House went into committee of the whole thereon, Mrs. Alexandra Mendès in the chair)

(On clause 2)

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Chair, would the President of the Treasury Board please assure the House that the bill is in its usual form.

[Translation]

Hon. Mona Fortier (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Madam Chair, the presentation of this bill is identical to that used during the previous supply period.

[English]

The Assistant Deputy Chair: Shall clause 2 carry?

Business of Supply

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause 2 agreed to)

The Assistant Deputy Chair: Shall clause 3 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause 3 agreed to)

The Assistant Deputy Chair: Shall clause 4 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause 4 agreed to)

The Assistant Deputy Chair: Shall clause 5 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause 5 agreed to)

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker: Shall clause 6 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause 6 agreed to)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker: Shall schedule 1 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Schedule 1 agreed to)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker: Shall schedule 2 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Schedule 2 agreed to)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker: Shall clause 1 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause 1 agreed to)

● (1820)

[English]

The Assistant Deputy Chair: Shall the preamble carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Preamble agreed to)

The Assistant Deputy Chair: Shall the title carry?

Business of Supply

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Title agreed to)

The Assistant Deputy Chair: Shall the bill carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Bill agreed to)

The Assistant Deputy Chair: Shall I rise and report the bill?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Bill reported)

Hon. Mona Fortier moved that the bill be concurred in.

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

The hon. government whip.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven MacKinnon: Mr. Speaker, once again I believe you will find unanimous consent to apply the results from the previous vote to this vote with Liberal members voting yes.

[*English*]

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives agree to apply and will be voting nay.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Marilène Gill: Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois agrees to apply the results of the previous vote to this one, and we will vote in favour of the motion.

[*English*]

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Mr. Speaker, the NDP agrees to apply and will be voting yea.

Mr. Mike Morrice: Mr. Speaker, the Greens agree to apply the vote and will be voting yea.

Mr. Kevin Vuong: Mr. Speaker, I agree to apply the results of the previous vote and vote in favour.

[*Translation*]

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

(Division No. 44)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bains	Baker

Barron	Barsalou-Duval
Battiste	Beech
Bendayan	Bennett
Bergeron	Bérubé
Bibeau	Bittle
Blaikie	Blair
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Blaney	Blois
Boissonnault	Boulerice
Bradford	Brière
Brunelle-Duceppe	Cannings
Casey	Chabot
Chagger	Chahal
Champagne	Champoux
Chatel	Chen
Chiang	Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Collins (Victoria)	Cormier
Coteau	Dabrusin
Damoff	Davies
DeBellefeuille	Desbiens
Desilets	Desjarlais
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Diab	Dong
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dzerowicz
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith	Fergus
Fillmore	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fortin	Fragiskatos
Fraser	Freeland
Gaheer	Garneau
Garon	Garrison
Gaudreau	Gazan
Gerretsen	Gill
Gould	Green
Guilbeault	Hajdu
Hanley	Hardie
Hepfner	Holland
Housefather	Hughes
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Idlout
Ien	Jaczek
Johns	Joly
Jones	Jowhari
Julian	Kayabaga
Kelloway	Khalid
Khera	Koutrakis
Kusmierczyk	Kwan
Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Larouche
Lattanzio	Lauzon
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lemire	Lightbound
Long	Longfield
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacGregor
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney
Martinez Ferrada	Masse
Mathysen	May (Cambridge)
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	McDonald (Avalon)
McGuinty	McKay
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod
McPherson	Mendès
Mendicino	Miao
Michaud	Miller
Morrice	Morrissey
Murray	Naqvi
Ng	Noormohamed
Normandin	O'Connell
Oliphant	O'Regan

Business of Supply

Pauzé
 Petitpas Taylor
 Powlowski
 Robillard
 Rogers
 Sahota
 Saks
 Sarai
 Scarpaleggia
 Serré
 Shanahan
 Sidhu (Brampton East)
 Simard
 Sorbara
 Ste-Marie
 Suds
 Taylor Roy
 Therrien
 Trudel
 Valdez
 van Koeverden
 Vandenbeld
 Villemure
 Vuong
 Yip
 Zarrillo

Perron
 Plamondon
 Qualtrough
 Rodriguez
 Romanado
 Sajjan
 Samson
 Savard-Tremblay
 Schiefke
 Sgro
 Sheehan
 Sidhu (Brampton South)
 Sinclair-Desgagné
 Spengemann
 St-Onge
 Tassi
 Thériault
 Thompson
 Turnbull
 Van Bynen
 Vandal
 Vignola
 Virani
 Weiler
 Zahid
 Zuberi — 212

Rood
 Scheer
 Seeback
 Shipley
 Soroka
 Stewart
 Stubbs
 Tochor
 Uppal
 Vecchio
 Vien
 Vis
 Warkentin
 Webber
 Williamson

Ruff
 Schmale
 Shields
 Small
 Steinley
 Strahl
 Thomas
 Tolmie
 Van Popta
 Vidal
 Viersen
 Wagantall
 Waugh
 Williams
 Zimmer — 116

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

[*English*]

When shall the bill be read a third time? By leave, now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Mona Fortier moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

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

The hon. government whip.

Hon. Steven MacKinnon: Mr. Speaker, once again, I believe that if you seek it, you will find agreement to apply the results from the previous vote to this vote, with Liberal members voting yes.

[*English*]

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives agree to apply and will be voting nay.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Marilène Gill: Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois agrees to apply the results of the previous vote to this one, and we will vote in favour of the motion.

[*English*]

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Mr. Speaker, the NDP agrees to apply and will be voting yea.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, the Greens agree to apply and will be voting yes.

Mr. Kevin Vuong: Mr. Speaker, I agree to apply the result of the previous vote and will be voting in favour.

[*Translation*]

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

NAYS

Members

Aboultiaf
 Albas
 Arnold
 Barlow
 Benzen
 Berthold
 Block
 Brassard
 Calkins
 Carrie
 Chong
 Dalton
 Davidson
 Doherty
 Dreeschen
 Ellis
 Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
 Fast
 Findlay
 Gèneux
 Gladu
 Goodridge
 Gray
 Hoback
 Kelly
 Kmiec
 Kramp-Neuman
 Kusie
 Lantsman
 Lehoux
 Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
 Lloyd
 MacKenzie
 Martel
 McCauley (Edmonton West)
 Moore
 Morrison
 Muys
 O'Toole
 Paul-Hus
 Poilievre
 Redekopp
 Richards

Aitchison
 Allison
 Baldinelli
 Barrett
 Bergen
 Bezan
 Bragdon
 Brock
 Caputo
 Chambers
 Cooper
 Dancho
 Deltell
 Dowdall
 Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
 Epp
 Falk (Provencher)
 Ferreri
 Gallant
 Genuis
 Godin
 Gourde
 Hallan
 Jeneroux
 Kitchen
 Kram
 Kurek
 Lake
 Lawrence
 Lewis (Essex)
 Liepert
 Lobb
 Maguire
 Mazier
 Melillo
 Morantz
 Motz
 Nater
 Patzer
 Perkins
 Rayes
 Reid
 Roberts

*Business of Supply**(Division No. 45)*

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Barron	Barsalou-Duval
Battiste	Beech
Bendayan	Bennett
Bergeron	Bérubé
Bibeau	Bittle
Blaikie	Blair
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Blaney	Blois
Boissonnault	Boulerice
Bradford	Brière
Brunelle-Duceppe	Cannings
Casey	Chabot
Chagger	Chahal
Champagne	Champoux
Chatel	Chen
Chiang	Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Collins (Victoria)	Cormier
Coteau	Dabrusin
Damoff	Davies
DeBellefeuille	Desbiens
Desilets	Desjarlais
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Diab	Dong
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dzerowicz
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith	Fergus
Fillmore	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fortin	Fragiskatos
Fraser	Freeland
Gaheer	Garneau
Garon	Garrison
Gaudreau	Gazan
Gerretsen	Gill
Gould	Green
Guilbeault	Hajdu
Hanley	Hardie
Hepfner	Holland
Housefather	Hughes
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Idlout
Ien	Jaczek
Johns	Joly
Jones	Jowhari
Julian	Kayabaga
Kelloway	Khalid
Khera	Koutrakis
Kusmierczyk	Kwan
Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Larouche
Lattanzio	Lauzon
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lemire	Lightbound
Long	Longfield
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacGregor
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney
Martinez Ferrada	Masse

Mathysen	May (Cambridge)
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	McDonald (Avalon)
McGuinty	McKay
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod
McPherson	Mendès
Mendicino	Miao
Michaud	Miller
Morrice	Morrissey
Murray	Naqvi
Ng	Noormohamed
Normandin	O'Connell
Oliphant	O'Regan
Pauzé	Perron
Petitpas Taylor	Plamondon
Powlowski	Qualtrough
Robillard	Rodriguez
Rogers	Romanado
Sahota	Sajjan
Saks	Samson
Sarai	Savard-Tremblay
Scarpaleggia	Schiefke
Serré	Sgro
Shanahan	Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simard	Sinclair-Desgagné
Sorbara	Spengemann
Ste-Marie	St-Onge
Sudds	Tassi
Taylor Roy	Thériault
Therrien	Thompson
Trudel	Turnbull
Valdez	Van Bynen
van Koeverden	Vandal
Vandenbeld	Vignola
Villemure	Virani
Vuong	Weiler
Yip	Zahid
Zarillo	Zuberi— 212

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Arnold	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Benzen	Bergen
Berthold	Bezan
Block	Bragdon
Brassard	Brock
Calkins	Caputo
Carrie	Chambers
Chong	Cooper
Dalton	Dancho
Davidson	Deltell
Doherty	Dowdall
Dreeshen	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Ellis	Epp
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Fast	Ferreri
Findlay	Gallant
Généreux	Genuis
Gladu	Godin
Goodridge	Gourde
Gray	Hallan
Hoback	Jeneroux
Kelly	Kitchen
Kmiec	Kram
Kramp-Neuman	Kurek
Kusie	Lake
Lantsman	Lawrence
Lehoux	Lewis (Essex)
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Liepert

Business of Supply

Lloyd	Lobb
MacKenzie	Maguire
Martel	Mazier
McCauley (Edmonton West)	Melillo
Moore	Morantz
Morrison	Motz
Muys	Nater
O'Toole	Patzer
Paul-Hus	Perkins
Poilievre	Rayes
Redekopp	Reid
Richards	Roberts
Rood	Ruff
Scheer	Schmale
Seebach	Shields
Shipley	Small
Soroka	Steinley
Stewart	Strahl
Stubbs	Thomas
Tochor	Tolmie
Uppal	Van Popta
Vecchio	Vidal
Vien	Viersen
Vis	Wagantall
Warkentin	Waugh
Webber	Williams
Williamson	Zimmer — 116

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.
(Bill read the third time and passed.)

* * *

[English]

INTERIM SUPPLY

Hon. Mona Fortier (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.) moved:

That the House do concur in interim supply as follows:

That a sum not exceeding \$75,483,404,546 being composed of the following amounts, each item rounded up to the next dollar:

(1) three twelfths (\$28,652,262,606) of the total of the amounts of the items set forth in the Proposed Schedule 1 and Schedule 2 of the Main Estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2023, except for those items below:

(2) twelve twelfths of the total of the amounts of Department of Finance Votes 5 and L10, Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Votes 20 and L25, and Department of Public Works and Government Services Vote L10, of the said estimates, \$5;

(3) eleven twelfths of the total of the amounts of Canadian Accessibility Standards Development Organization Vote 5, Department of Health Votes 1 and 10, Department of Indigenous Services Vote 5, Marine Atlantic Inc. Vote 1, Office of Infrastructure of Canada Vote 5, Public Health Agency of Canada Votes 1, 5 and 10, and Treasury Board Secretariat Vote 5, of the said estimates, \$11,854,012,428;

(4) nine twelfths of the total of the amounts of Department for Women and Gender Equality Vote 5, Department of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Votes 1 and 10, Department of Indigenous Services Vote 10, and Department of Justice Vote 1, of the said estimates, \$15,780,903,903;

(5) eight twelfths of the total of the amounts of Department of Employment and Social Development Vote 5, and Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Vote L30, of the said estimates, \$7,013,564,682;

(6) seven twelfths of the total of the amounts of Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety Vote 1, and Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission Vote 1, of the said estimates, \$26,864,132;

(7) six twelfths of the total of the amounts of Administrative Tribunals Support Service of Canada Vote 1, Department of Canadian Heritage Vote 5, Department of Citizenship and Immigration Vote 10, Federal Economic Development Agency for

Southern Ontario Vote 5, Library and Archives of Canada Vote 5, and Parks Canada Agency Vote 5, of the said estimates, \$2,499,738,866;

(8) five twelfths of the total of the amounts of Canada Council for the Arts Vote 1, Canadian Air Transport Security Authority Vote 1, Canadian High Arctic Research Station Vote 1, Department of Finance Vote 1, Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Vote 5, Department of Veterans Affairs Vote 5, Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer Vote 1, Royal Canadian Mounted Police Votes 1 and 10, Statistics Canada Vote 1, and Treasury Board Secretariat Vote 1, of the said estimates, \$4,292,782,114;

(9) four twelfths of the total of the amounts of Canadian Space Agency Votes 5 and 10, Canadian Transportation Agency Vote 1, Department of Industry Votes 1 and 10, Department of Public Works and Government Services Vote 1, Department of Transport Vote 1, National Security and Intelligence Review Agency Secretariat Vote 1, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council Vote 5, Parks Canada Agency Vote 1, Privy Council Office Vote 1, Public Service Commission Vote 1, Shared Services Canada Votes 1 and 5, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Vote 5, Telefilm Canada Vote 1, and VIA Rail Canada Inc. Vote 1, of the said estimates, \$5,363,275,810;

be granted to Her Majesty on account of the fiscal year ending March 31, 2023.

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

• (1825)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, it is with a great deal of enthusiasm that I request a recorded vote.

• (1835)

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

(Division No. 46)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Barron	Barsalou-Duval
Battiste	Beaulieu
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	Bergeron
Bérubé	Bibeau
Bittle	Blaikie
Blair	Blanchet
Blanchette-Joncas	Blaney
Blois	Boissonnault
Boulerice	Bradford
Brière	Brunelle-Duceppe
Cannings	Casey
Chabot	Chagger
Chahal	Champagne
Champoux	Chatel
Chen	Chiang
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Collins (Victoria)
Cormier	Coteau
Dabrusin	Damoff
Davies	DeBellefeuille
Desbiens	Desilets
Desjarlais	Dhillon
Diab	Dong
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dzerowicz

Business of Supply

Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith	Fergus
Fillmore	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fortin	Fragiskatos
Fraser	Freeland
Gaheer	Garneau
Garon	Garrison
Gaudreau	Gazan
Gerretsen	Gill
Gould	Green
Guilbeault	Hajdu
Hanley	Hardie
Hepfner	Holland
Housefather	Hughes
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Idlout
Ien	Jaczek
Johns	Joly
Jones	Jowhari
Julian	Kayabaga
Kelloway	Khalid
Khera	Koutrakis
Kusmierczyk	Kwan
Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Larouche
Lattanzio	Lauson
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lemire	Lightbound
Long	Longfield
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacGregor
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney
Martinez Ferrada	Masse
Mathysen	May (Cambridge)
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	McDonald (Avalon)
McGuinty	McKay
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod
McPherson	Mendès
Mendicino	Miao
Michaud	Miller
Morrice	Morrissey
Murray	Naqvi
Ng	Noormohamed
Normandin	O'Connell
Oliphant	O'Regan
Pauzé	Perron
Petitpas Taylor	Plamondon
Powlowski	Qualtrough
Robillard	Rodriguez
Rogers	Romanado
Sahota	Sajjan
Saks	Samson
Sarai	Savard-Tremblay
Scarpaleggia	Schiefke
Serré	Sgro
Shanahan	Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simard	Sinclair-Desgagné
Singh	Sorbara
Spengemann	Ste-Marie
St-Onge	Sudds
Tassi	Taylor Roy
Thériault	Therrien
Thompson	Trudel
Turnbull	Valdez
Van Bynen	van Koeverden
Vandal	Vandenbeld
Vignola	Villemure
Virani	Vuong
Weiler	Yip
Zahid	Zarrillo

Zuberi— 213

Aboutaif
 Albas
 Arnold
 Barlow
 Benzen
 Berthold
 Block
 Brassard
 Calkins
 Carrie
 Chong
 Dalton
 Davidson
 Doherty
 Dreeschen
 Ellis
 Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
 Fast
 Findlay
 Gagné
 Gladu
 Goodridge
 Gray
 Hoback
 Kelly
 Kmiec
 Kramp-Neuman
 Kusie
 Lantsman
 Lehoux
 Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
 Lloyd
 MacKenzie
 Martel
 McCauley (Edmonton West)
 Moore
 Morrison
 Muys
 O'Toole
 Paul-Hus
 Poilievre
 Redekopp
 Richards
 Rood
 Scheer
 Seebach
 Shipley
 Soroka
 Stewart
 Stubbs
 Tochor
 Uppal
 Vecchio
 Vien
 Vis
 Warkentin
 Webber
 Williamson

NAYS

Members

Aitchison
 Allison
 Baldinelli
 Barrett
 Bergen
 Bezan
 Bragdon
 Brock
 Caputo
 Chambers
 Cooper
 Dancho
 Deltell
 Dowdall
 Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
 Epp
 Falk (Provencher)
 Ferreri
 Gallant
 Genuis
 Godin
 Gourde
 Hallan
 Jeneroux
 Kitchen
 Kram
 Kurek
 Lake
 Lawrence
 Lewis (Essex)
 Liepert
 Lobb
 Maguire
 Mazier
 Melillo
 Morantz
 Motz
 Nater
 Patzer
 Perkins
 Rayes
 Reid
 Roberts
 Ruff
 Schmale
 Shields
 Small
 Steinley
 Strahl
 Thomas
 Tolmie
 Van Popta
 Vidal
 Viersen
 Wagantall
 Waugh
 Williams
 Zimmer— 116

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Hon. Mona Fortier moved that Bill C-16, An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2023, be read the first time.

Business of Supply

(Motion deemed adopted and bill read the first time)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Mona Fortier moved that the bill be read the second time and referred to a committee of the whole.

[*English*]

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

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven MacKinnon: Mr. Speaker, I believe that if you seek it, you will find once again that there is unanimous consent for the result of the previous vote to apply to this vote, with the Liberals voting yes.

[*English*]

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Mr. Speaker, Conservatives agree to apply the vote and will be voting against the motion.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Marilène Gill: Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois agrees to apply the vote and will vote in favour of the motion.

[*English*]

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Mr. Speaker, the NDP agree to apply the vote and will be voting yea.

Mr. Mike Morrice: Mr. Speaker, the Greens agree to apply the vote and will be voting in favour.

Mr. Kevin Vuong: Mr. Speaker, I agree to apply the results of the previous vote and I am voting in favour.

[*Translation*]

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

(*Division No. 47*)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Barron	Barsalou-Duval
Battiste	Beaulieu
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	Bergeron
Bérubé	Bibeau
Bittle	Blaikie
Blair	Blanchet
Blanchette-Joncas	Blaney
Blois	Boissonnault
Boulerice	Bradford
Brière	Brunelle-Duceppe
Cannings	Casey
Chabot	Chagger
Chahal	Champagne
Champoux	Chatel
Chen	Chiang

Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Collins (Victoria)
Cormier	Coteau
Dabrusin	Damoff
Davies	DeBellefeuille
Desbiens	Desilets
Desjarlais	Dhillon
Diab	Dong
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dzerowicz
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith	Fergus
Fillmore	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fortin	Fragiskatos
Fraser	Freeland
Gaheer	Garneau
Garon	Garrison
Gaudreau	Gazan
Gerretsen	Gill
Gould	Green
Guilbeault	Hajdu
Hanley	Hardie
Hepfner	Holland
Housefather	Hughes
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Idlout
Ien	Jaczek
Johns	Joly
Jones	Jowhari
Julian	Kayabaga
Kelloway	Khalid
Khera	Koutrakis
Kusmierczyk	Kwan
Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Larouche
Lattanzio	Lauzon
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lemire	Lightbound
Long	Longfield
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacGregor
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney
Martinez Ferrada	Masse
Mathysen	May (Cambridge)
May (Saarnich—Gulf Islands)	McDonald (Avalon)
McGuinty	McKay
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod
McPherson	Mendès
Mendicino	Miao
Michaud	Miller
Morrice	Morrissey
Murray	Naqvi
Ng	Noormohamed
Normandin	O'Connell
Oliphant	O'Regan
Pauzé	Perron
Petitpas Taylor	Plamondon
Powlowski	Qualtrough
Robillard	Rodriguez
Rogers	Romanado
Sahota	Sajjan
Saks	Samson
Sarai	Savard-Tremblay
Scarpaleggia	Schiefke
Serré	Sgro
Shanahan	Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simard	Sinclair-Desgagné
Singh	Sorbara
Spengemann	Ste-Marie
St-Onge	Sudds

Business of Supply

Tassi
Thériault
Thompson
Turnbull
Van Bynen
Vandal
Vignola
Virani
Weiler
Zahid
Zuberi — 213

Taylor Roy
Therrien
Trudel
Valdez
van Koeverden
Vandenbeld
Villemure
Vuong
Yip
Zarrillo

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif
Albas
Arnold
Barlow
Benzen
Berthold
Block
Brassard
Calkins
Carrie
Chong
Dalton
Davidson
Doherty
Dreeschen
Ellis
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Fast
Findlay
Généreux
Gladu
Goodridge
Gray
Hoback
Kelly
Kmieć
Kramp-Neuman
Kusie
Lantsman
Lehoux
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Lloyd
MacKenzie
Martel
McCauley (Edmonton West)
Moore
Morrison
Muys
O'Toole
Paul-Hus
Poilievre
Redekopp
Richards
Rood
Scheer
Seebach
Shipley
Soroka
Stewart
Stubbs
Tochor
Uppal
Vecchio
Vien
Vis
Warkentin
Webber
Williamson

Aitchison
Allison
Baldinelli
Barrett
Bergen
Bezan
Bragdon
Brock
Caputo
Chambers
Cooper
Dancho
Deltell
Dowdall
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Epp
Falk (Provencher)
Ferrerri
Gallant
Genuis
Godin
Gourde
Hallan
Jeneroux
Kitchen
Kram
Kurek
Lake
Lawrence
Lewis (Essex)
Liepert
Lobb
Maguire
Mazier
Melillo
Morantz
Motz
Nater
Patzner
Perkins
Rayes
Reid
Roberts
Ruff
Schmale
Shields
Small
Steinley
Strahl
Thomas
Tolmie
Van Popta
Vidal
Viersen
Wagantall
Waugh
Williams
Zimmer — 116

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

(Bill read the second time and the House went into committee of the whole thereon, Mrs. Alexandra Mendès in the chair)

[*English*]

(On clause 2)

• (1840)

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Chair, would the President of the Treasury Board assure the House that this bill as well is in its usual form?

Hon. Mona Fortier (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Madam Chair, I am very glad to report that the form of this bill is the same as that passed in the previous supply period.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Chair: Shall clause 2 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause 2 agreed to)

The Assistant Deputy Chair: Shall clause 3 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause 3 agreed to)

The Assistant Deputy Chair: Shall clause 4 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause 4 agreed to)

The Assistant Deputy Chair: Shall clause 5 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause 5 agreed to)

[*English*]

The Assistant Deputy Chair: Shall schedule 1.1 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Schedule 1.1 agreed to)

The Assistant Deputy Chair: Shall schedule 1.2 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Schedule 1.2 agreed to)

The Assistant Deputy Chair: Shall schedule 1.3 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Business of Supply

Some hon. members: On division.

(Schedule 1.3 agreed to)

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker: Shall schedule 1.4 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Schedule 1.4 agreed to)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker: Shall schedule 1.5 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Schedule 1.5 agreed to)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker: Shall schedule 1.6 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Schedule 1.6 agreed to)

[*English*]

The Assistant Deputy Chair: Shall schedule 1.7 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Schedule 1.7 agreed to)

The Assistant Deputy Chair: Shall schedule 1.8 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Schedule 1.8 agreed to)

The Assistant Deputy Chair: Shall schedule 2 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Schedule 2 agreed to)

The Assistant Deputy Chair: Shall clause 1, the short title, carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause 1 agreed to)

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker: Shall the preamble carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Preamble agreed to)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker: Shall the title carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Title agreed to)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker: Shall the bill carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Bill agreed to)

(Bill reported)

[*English*]

Hon. Mona Fortier moved that the bill be concurred in.

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

Hon. Steven MacKinnon: Mr. Speaker, I am going to push my luck. I believe that, if you seek it, you will find agreement to apply the result from the previous vote to this vote with Liberal members voting yes.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Mr. Speaker, Conservatives agree to apply the vote and we will be voting against the motion.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Marilène Gill: Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois agrees to apply the vote and will be voting in favour.

[*English*]

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Mr. Speaker, the NDP agree to apply and will be voting yea.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, the Green Party agrees to apply the vote and will be voting in favour.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Vuong: Mr. Speaker, I agree to apply the results of the previous vote, and I will be voting in favour.

● (1845)

[*Translation*]

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

(*Division No. 48*)

YEAS

Members

Aldag
Ali
Anandasangaree
Arseneault
Ashton
Bachrach
Bains
Barron
Battiste
Beech
Bennett
Bérubé

Alghabra
Anand
Angus
Arya
Atwin
Badawey
Baker
Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu
Bendayan
Bergeron
Bibeau

Business of Supply

Bittle
Blair
Blanchette-Joncas
Blois
Boulerice
Brière
Cannings
Chabot
Chahal
Champoux
Chen
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Cormier
Dabrusin
Davies
Desbiens
Desjarlais
Dhillon
Dong
Dubourg
Duguid
Dzerowicz
El-Khoury
Fergus
Fisher
Fortier
Fragiskatos
Freeland
Garneau
Garrison
Gazan
Gill
Green
Hajdu
Hardie
Holland
Hughes
Hutchings
Idlout
Jaczek
Joly
Jowhari
Kayabaga
Khalid
Koutrakis
Kwan
Lambropoulos
Lamoureux
Larouche
Lauzon
Lebouthillier
Lightbound
Longfield
MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacGregor
Maloney
Masse
May (Cambridge)
McDonald (Avalon)
McKay
McLeod
Mendès
Miao
Miller
Morrissey
Naqvi
Noormohamed
O'Connell
O'Regan
Perron
Plamondon
Qualtrough
Rodriguez

Blaikie
Blanchet
Blaney
Boissonnault
Bradford
Brunelle-Duceppe
Casey
Chagger
Champagne
Chatel
Chiang
Collins (Victoria)
Coteau
Damoff
DeBellefeuille
Desilets
Dhaliwal
Diab
Drouin
Duclos
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Ehsassi
Erskine-Smith
Fillmore
Fonseca
Fortin
Fraser
Gaheer
Garon
Gaudreau
Gerretsen
Gould
Guilbeault
Hanley
Hepfner
Housefather
Hussen
Iacono
Ien
Johns
Jones
Julian
Kelloway
Khera
Kusmierczyk
Lalonde
Lametti
Lapointe
Lattanzio
LeBlanc
Lemire
Long
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Martinez Ferrada
Mathysen
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McGuinty
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McPherson
Mendicino
Michaud
Morrice
Murray
Ng
Normandin
Oliphant
Pauzé
Petitpas Taylor
Powlowski
Robillard
Rogers

Romanado
Sajjan
Samson
Savard-Tremblay
Schieffe
Sgro
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sinclair-Desgagné
Sorbara
Ste-Marie
Sudds
Taylor Roy
Therrien
Trudel
Valdez
van Koeverden
Vandenbeld
Villemure
Vuong
Yip
Zarrillo

Sahota
Saks
Sarai
Scarpaleggia
Serré
Shanahan
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Simard
Singh
Spengemann
St-Onge
Tassi
Thériault
Thompson
Turnbull
Van Bynen
Vandal
Vignola
Virani
Weiler
Zahid
Zuberi— 214

NAYS**Members**

Aboultaif
Albas
Arnold
Barlow
Benzen
Berthold
Block
Brassard
Calkins
Carrie
Chong
Dalton
Davidson
Doherty
Dreeshen
Ellis
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Fast
Findlay
Généreux
Gladu
Goodridge
Gray
Hoback
Kelly
Kmieć
Kramp-Neuman
Kusie
Lantsman
Lehoux
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Lloyd
MacKenzie
Martel
McCauley (Edmonton West)
Moore
Morrison
Muys
O'Toole
Paul-Hus
Poilievre
Redekopp
Richards
Rood
Scheer
Seebach
Shipley

Aitchison
Allison
Baldinelli
Barrett
Bergen
Bezan
Bragdon
Brock
Caputo
Chambers
Cooper
Dancho
Deltell
Dowdall
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Epp
Falk (Provencher)
Ferreri
Gallant
Genuis
Godin
Gourde
Hallan
Jeneroux
Kitchen
Kram
Kurek
Lake
Lawrence
Lewis (Essex)
Liepert
Lobb
Maguire
Mazier
Melillo
Morantz
Motz
Nater
Patzner
Perkins
Rayes
Reid
Roberts
Ruff
Schmale
Shields
Small

Business of Supply

Soroka
Stewart
Stubbs
Tochor
Uppal
Vecchio
Vien
Vis
Warkentin
Webber
Williamson

Steinley
Strahl
Thomas
Tolmie
Van Popta
Vidal
Viersen
Wagantall
Waugh
Williams
Zimmer — 116

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried. When shall the bill be read the third time?

Some hon. members: Now.

[English]

Hon. Mona Fortier moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

[Translation]

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

The hon. government whip.

Hon. Steven MacKinnon: Mr. Speaker, I will try my luck one last time. I believe you will find unanimous consent for the results of the previous vote to apply to this vote with Liberal members voting yes.

[English]

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Mr. Speaker, Conservatives agree to apply the vote and will be voting against this motion.

[Translation]

Mrs. Marilène Gill: Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois agrees to apply the results of the previous vote to this vote, and we vote in favour.

[English]

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Mr. Speaker, the NDP agree to apply the vote and will be voting yea.

Mr. Mike Morrice: Mr. Speaker, the Greens agree to apply the vote and will be voting in favour.

Mr. Kevin Vuong: Mr. Speaker, I agree to apply the results of the previous vote, voting in favour.

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

(Division No. 49)

YEAS

Members

Aldag
Ali
Anandasangaree
Arseneault
Ashton

Alghabra
Anand
Angus
Arya
Atwin

Bachrach
Bains
Barron
Battiste
Beech
Bennett
Bérubé
Bittle
Blair
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Lightbound
Longfield
MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacGregor
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Qualtrough	Robillard
Rodriguez	Rogers
Romanado	Sahota
Sajjan	Saks
Samson	Sarai
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Sheehan	Sidhu (Brampton East)
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Davidson	Deltell
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Dreeshen	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
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Lloyd	Lobb
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PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

(Bill read the third time and passed)

The Deputy Speaker: It being 6:47 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS*[Translation]***CONSTITUTION ACT, 1867**

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ) moved that Bill C-246, An Act to amend the Constitution Act, 1867, regarding representation in the House of Commons, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking you for the thoughtful consideration you have given me by allowing the House to dissolve and those members who wish to do so to go about their business, thus enabling me to make a speech in a quieter setting.

I am honoured to rise this evening to speak to Bill C-246, an act to amend the Constitution Act, 1867, regarding representation in the House of Commons, which I am sponsoring.

Despite what many Canadians and perhaps Canada would like, there are fundamental differences and some deep incompatibilities, I would even say, between Quebecers and Canadians. There are fundamental differences in how Canadians see their future and how Quebecers see theirs.

I am not saying that is a bad thing. Let me provide some context. I think it is important to put this in context because every time there are discussions around demands with respect to the status of Quebec within the federation, or about its culture, the values that are unique to the Quebec nation or its language—French is the only official and common language of Quebecers—words always get twisted and the conversation turns into bickering, if I may borrow the word of the day, with claims that this is coming from a tiresome minority of Quebecers who refuse to kowtow, drop their pants and hide their pride behind a maple leaf.

Those people know that by cleverly spreading misinformation, they are stoking the fire and stirring up hateful comments by certain fanatics who would like to see Quebec get crushed, give up its identity and join the melting pot of Canadian multiculturalism. I am not generalizing, but those people do exist. There is no shortage of them on social media. All one has to do is post a comment about the French language on Twitter to see the flood of hateful comments that follow.

I would like to give some context on the history of the people of Quebec. For decades, in the 19th and 20th centuries, honest French-Canadian workers suffered silently. The Catholic Church required them to populate Quebec by having eight, 12, 15 or 20 children, and to earn their place in heaven by bowing their heads whenever the boss came by. That was Quebec up until the second half of the 20th century.

Slowly, gradually, word got out that Quebecers were more than just quaint characters, more than just people who got rowdy every night, that there was more to us than arrowhead sashes and fiddle playing, and that Quebec was rich in culture and talent. Little by little, Quebec stepped out of the darkness, not just the shadows, but out of the deep darkness, and Quebecers started to rediscover who we are.

At that point, voices started to emerge, urging Quebecers to stand up, respect themselves and demand the respect of others. This was the golden age of great leaders, orators and personalities who inspired past generations and who continue to inspire generation now.

There were great trade unionists, because we needed union leaders at a time when Quebec was a working-class nation, people like Pepin, Marchand, Charbonneau. There were also some great women, like Laure Gaudreault and Madeleine Parent, not to mention one of Quebec's golden couples, Michel Chartrand and Simone Monet-Chartrand, one of the most adored, respected and celebrated couples in Quebec history.

• (1850)

I have an amusing story about this. In Longueuil, on the south shore facing Montreal, there is a park named after Michel Chartrand that is overrun with deer. My young daughter, who will turn 11 next week, was talking about Michel Chartrand park. I told her about the union leader Michel Chartrand, and she thought he was the deer guy. That is why education is important. It is important to talk about Quebec's history so that my daughter's generation will know that Michel Chartrand is not just the deer guy.

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All these men and women inspired Quebec's workers back then through passionate speeches. Chartrand was a passionate man, if ever there was one. We could listen to his speeches again and watch the movie where he was portrayed so well by Luc Picard. These people inspired others with their passionate speeches and unifying actions. It should be inspiring for this government, because passionate speeches and words must be followed up with action. Those people took action.

With their actions, they made Quebecers realize what another great Quebecer would put into words years later: “We are not a little people. We are closer to something like a great people.”

In the meantime, along came the Quiet Revolution, bringing with it new ideas and inspiring new leaders who proposed social reforms that were more in line with our values. As I often say, our values are neither better nor worse than Canada's. They are just different in many ways.

That led to Quebecers choosing a secular society because, for us, the only way to respect all religions is to ensure the state has no religion. That is an important nuance to grasp. That is what Quebec secularism means. In Quebec, religion is something personal practised privately that should neither interfere in nor influence the decisions made by the state. Contrary to what many Canadians think, including many of my House of Commons colleagues, Quebecers welcome and respect people of all origins and all faiths. However, we want to integrate our newcomers while respecting their beliefs but without betraying our fundamental values. I admit there is a major conflict between Quebec state secularism and the idea of multiculturalism that is so dear to Liberals and Canadians.

Following our awakening, we witnessed the growth of a new movement in favour of an option that is appealing enough to have lasted to this day: Quebec independence.

As an aside, and this may not be news to anyone, but I will just say that my colleagues and I do not just carry this idea of becoming a country in our daily work; it permeates our lives. It inhabits us, much like oil inhabits our Conservative friends. We all hope that one day our project will become a reality. We try to discuss it at every opportunity, trying each time to break down prejudices, to avoid smear campaigns that get in the way of sound judgment and healthy conversation.

The idea of an independent Quebec has been around for a while now, so much so that in 1976 the Parti Québécois came to power with the great leader I mentioned earlier, René Lévesque. He is probably my number one idol. This too should come as no great surprise.

I think what happened next is fairly well known to most people here. There was the 1980 referendum, the patriation of the Constitution, the “beau risque”, the Meech Lake accord and the Charlotte-town accord.

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The Charlottetown accord contained a proposal that was written in black and white. Resolution 21, on the composition of the House of Commons, stated: "The composition of the House of Commons should be adjusted to better reflect the principle of representation by population." Further on, it mentions a redistribution following the 1996 census aimed at ensuring that, in the next election, "no province will have fewer than 95% of the House of Commons seats it would receive under strict representation-by-population". It goes on to state that "Quebec would be assigned no fewer than 25 percent of the seats in the House of Commons".

• (1855)

I think it is very important to say so, because it is fundamental in Bill C-246, which I am introducing today. It is fundamental because what we are proposing is to include a nation clause in the Constitution Act, 1982, so that Quebec does not have to keep standing up for its representation in the House of Commons, whether today, in 10 years, after the next census, or in 20 years, and so forth.

As I alluded to earlier, ideally, we would be having these discussions because Quebec would have made the choice, in the meantime, to fully take matters into its own hands and patriate to Quebec City, in our only national legislature, 100% of the seats we have here.

This morning, by extraordinary coincidence, the government introduced Bill C-14, probably in response to the Bloc Québécois motion unanimously adopted on March 2, worded as follows:

That, in the opinion of the House:

- (a) any scenario for redrawing the federal electoral map that would result in Quebec losing one or more electoral districts or that would reduce Quebec's political weight in the House of Commons must be rejected; and
- (b) the formula for apportioning seats in the House must be amended and the House call on the government to act accordingly.

This motion was put to a vote and passed unanimously. Now, three weeks later, we have a bill whose only goal is to maintain Quebec's number of seats at 78. That is not bad, but it is a bit like agreeing to give a friend a ride from Montreal to Quebec City but then making him get out in Saint-Hyacinthe, not even in Drummondville.

I want to draw members' attention to the fact that Bill C-14, which the Liberals introduced this morning, is nothing but a watered-down version of what Quebec, Quebecers and the Bloc Québécois are calling for. Bill C-246, however, addresses the urgent need to protect Quebec's political weight. Since Quebec is a nation, it should have the resources it needs to be represented so long as it decides to remain here in the House of Commons.

• (1900)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is the second opportunity for the Bloc party to raise this particular issue, albeit through an individual member this time. The first time was with an opposition day motion. I hope to be able to speak a bit more on this. I wonder if the member could explain why he feels so passionately about having an opposition day motion, knowing that we were having this particular debate today and that the government was bringing forward legislation.

He made reference to the Constitution. It seems to me he wants to talk about the Constitution. Why is the Constitution so important, from his perspective?

[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux: Mr. Speaker, in response to the first part of my colleague's question, I will say that yes, we did move a motion on our opposition day. It was debated and then adopted on March 2. That was our way of testing the waters. I also knew that we would have the opportunity to debate this bill in more depth and then send it to be properly studied in committee.

We have no intention of talking about the Constitution itself. In fact, if it were up to us, we would amend the Constitution to permanently guarantee that Quebec would always have 25% of the seats in the House of Commons. That is no secret.

Mr. Tom Kniec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to be here for this debate.

Our country was founded in 1867 on the principle of the linguistic duality of two groups: anglophones and francophones. Of course, francophones do not exist only in the province of Quebec. We exist across Canada, and I am one of them.

I would like to know what my Bloc colleague thinks of our country's linguistic duality. Does he think his bill preserves the principle and the idea of our country's francophile reality outside Quebec?

• (1905)

Mr. Martin Champoux: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Calgary Shepard.

I wish he had asked me that question before I started my speech, because I could have spent 15 minutes answering it and I would have done so with passion.

Quebec itself has a duty to protect the French fact in North America. Quebec is a francophone island in an anglophone sea. There are francophones in the United States too. I think Quebec has a responsibility to stay strong in order to protect such francophone communities outside Quebec.

I would suggest that a quick look at the work we are doing in committee, specifically on the broadcasting bill, will make it clear that the Bloc Québécois does take the reality of francophone communities outside Quebec to heart.

This is a subject I find extremely interesting. I could go on talking about it for some time, as I said, but I will give other people a chance.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Drummond for his speech and for introducing this bill.

I really enjoyed his historical references and the fact that he talked about people from Quebec's history who are close to my heart, particularly Simonne Monet-Chartrand and the film he talked about.

I also liked his rather appealing notion of adding a “nation clause” to recognize the fact that Quebec becoming a nation has consequences.

However, in wanting to reopen the Constitution, why does my colleague from Drummond not also see the possibility of recognizing and making room for other nations, specifically first nations, who were here before the arrival of the French and the English? Why did he not include this in his bill?

Mr. Martin Champoux: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie for his question.

The bill we have introduced is about Quebec's representation in the House of Commons. It is about the fact that Quebec is at risk of losing seats or weight in the House of Commons as the Canadian population increases. We know that demographic growth in Quebec does not necessarily follow the curve, so this bill is in that spirit.

Would we be open to adding clauses dealing with first nations? I am always open to discussing things nation to nation with first nations. If there were any submissions in that regard, I would be delighted to hear them.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in looking at this particular piece of legislation, one can only ask why the Bloc has chosen to bring it forward knowing full well the government had intentions of bringing in legislation. I would attempt to answer that question by indicating that, from what I have witnessed over the years of the participation of Bloc members, their interest primarily seems to be that of playing a destructive force for Canada as a nation. I can already see some hints of that in some of the comments being made.

I say, “a destructive force,” because I am a very proud Canadian. I recognize the wonders that Canada has to offer in all of its regions, and I am very proud of that. I have made reference in the past to my own ancestral heritage in the province of Quebec, to the number of generations that lived in the province of Quebec and to the expansion into the prairie provinces and so forth, as well as to how Canada as a nation is bilingual and to how important it is to recognize the province of Quebec, its uniqueness and the role it plays in society.

I know we currently have 35 incredible members of Parliament who advocate for the province of Quebec, along with other national interests, on a daily basis. In fact, earlier today we got a sense of that in the passionate delivery of the Minister of Canadian Heritage. My former boss, when he was the government House leader, would often talk with a great deal of passion about the people of Quebec and how important the French dynamic was to our country. I also go to my colleague for Mount Royal and other colleagues I have had who have spoken so eloquently about the important role Quebec plays not only here in Canada, but internationally.

I like to think that the legislation we brought in today, Bill C-14, deals with the concerns my colleagues have been raising within the government. It would ensure that the province of Quebec would never lose a seat in the future. I see that as a very strong positive, as

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we have made changes to the Constitution in the past and we have seen guarantees in the past.

Once again, through advocacy, we now see a very strong commitment to the number of 78 seats well into the future, and that would not limit it to 78. That would establish a floor. There are many in this chamber, including me, who believe that the province of Quebec will continue to grow. Ultimately, its population could even dictate a larger number than 78, so we are not saying it has to be 78 into the future. It would have the potential to go beyond that.

Why not recognize the value of Bill C-14? What is the need for Bill C-246, which is being proposed? The member already knows that members on the government side are committed to it, because we had the debate earlier this month, which the member even made reference to, where Liberal members from all regions of our country came forward saying that we need to ensure Quebec has that minimum number of seats going forward.

If somehow the Bloc was able to convince a majority of the people in this chamber to do what they are asking for, it would entail a constitutional change that would require the support of 50% of the population and seven of the 10 provinces in order to be approved.

• (1910)

I have been around for constitutional debates. I was a member of the Manitoba legislature for votes related to the Meech Lake accord and for the Charlottetown accord. I do not believe for a moment that the people of Canada, whether they are citizens of Quebec or citizens of my home province of Manitoba, want the House of Commons to be dealing with constitutional matters of this nature, which is what this bill is actually proposing. It would require approval under the 7/50 formula.

There are so many other issues that are out there today, yet the Bloc want to insist on having a constitutional change that would invoke the 7/50 formula. I would hazard a guess that, even if just the constituents of the members that are proposing this were canvassed, they might find that their constituents would not necessarily support a constitutional debate on this issue alone.

I do not say that lightly. That is what I truly believe. When I have canvassed constituents in the past, a number of years ago, on the issue of electoral reform, and the whole issue of numbers, I was very clearly told that this was not something that they want.

As a parliamentarian, we often have a sense of what the pulse of our community is like. I would challenge any member to clearly demonstrate where the political will is matched by the enthusiasm of their constituents for constitutional debates at this point in time, as that is what would be required under the legislation that is being proposed.

We could talk about issues. My friends in the Bloc often talk, for example, about health care and how important it is that the federal government be at the table when it comes to a wide variety of issues in regard to health care. The federal government is at the table. We have the Canada Health Act, which ensures that no matter where Canadians live or in whatever region, they will have a certain quality of health care delivered, based on the five fundamental principles of our Canada Health Act.

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Given the pandemic, and the response we received from Canadians in regard to issues such as long-term care, the costs of medication and the issue of mental health, I believe that no matter where one lives in Canada, the debates and concerns of those issues alone would supersede and exceed the need for what is being suggested by members of the Bloc party today.

It is not to be insensitive, in recognizing the importance of the 78 seats. As I said, I personally voted in favour of that earlier this month. I know, as I said earlier, that not only the 35 members of the Liberal caucus who represent Quebec ridings, but also the entire Liberal caucus recognizes the importance of Quebec having those 78 seats, with the potential, as I explained earlier, for growth.

I really believe, and I would encourage other members of other political parties to believe, that there really is no need to even see this bill go to committee because, quite frankly, we would hope that the government's bill, Bill C-14, will make it to committee, at which point in time there will be even more opportunities for the public and stakeholders to provide direct input.

● (1915)

[Translation]

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to join this debate as a francophone from western Canada to speak to Bill C-246, which the Bloc Québécois member has introduced. He certainly has the right to have a debate.

During his speech I heard him say that a nation clause would be added to our Constitution. It is always interesting to see a Bloc Québécois member make an amendment to the Canadian Constitution. I know that for several decades now it has been difficult for members of that party to be convinced that Quebec, as a province, is part of a united Canada. We are certainly united.

I would like to be perfectly clear that this country was founded on two cultures and two languages: French and English. That was the topic of great debate in colonial Parliament for 20 to 30 years before our country was founded. It is that linguistic and cultural duality that our country has been trying, for more than 150 years, to put into practice in the everyday lives of our constituents.

Quebeckers form a nation within a united Canada. A motion to that effect was adopted in a previous Parliament. I completely agree with that. I support that idea. I have said it many times in the House. I know that my Bloc colleagues have heard me say it. I know that they have also heard me say that Albertans form a distinct society within a united Canada.

There have been many debates with my Quebec colleagues in the House, in my party and in our caucus. When the British North America Act, which gave us our Constitution, was passed by the Parliament of the United Kingdom in 1867, section 40 stated that the Province of Quebec would have 65 seats upon the founding of our nation. Since then, and on the basis of demographics, we have slowly increased the number of seats in our Parliament to ensure that representation by population would be the guiding principle for the number of seats in our Parliament.

Representation by population was the subject of great debate by the country's responsible government. It was the great debate in the

colonial Parliament before our country was founded. Representation by population in every region of our country had to be ensured. The reality of our country is that there are francophones outside Quebec. There is a linguistic duality. Acadians in Nova Scotia are part of our country. Their identity is different from that of Quebeckers, the Métis, Franco-Manitobans and Franco-Albertans. In my caucus, I have colleagues from out west, such as the member for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake and the member for Calgary Midnapore, who speak French. They can hold a conversation in our country's other language, and they often use it.

● (1920)

[English]

There are three major issues with this private member's bill, three ideas that this chamber needs to seriously consider.

First of all, this matter has been debated before in a previous Parliament. Jean Rousseau, who was an NDP member of Parliament for Compton—Stanstead in 2012, moved a similar private member's bill, but it came to the same goal in a different manner. It added a different redistribution rule at the end. In that Parliament, members chose to vote against it, and it did not make it into law, obviously.

The Charlottetown accord in 1992 was rejected by Canadians. In the Charlottetown accord, one of the proposals citizens were asked to weigh in on, after politicians had debated it, was whether Quebec as a province should receive 25% of all House of Commons seats. That was rejected by the Canadian population. In fact, 58% of Quebec voters rejected that in the Charlottetown accord.

I was too young to vote, and members might be surprised by that. I was too young to vote in the Quebec referendum as well, but my parents were not, and as I remember, they did vote no in that referendum in 1995.

Another thing to consider is the Fair Representation Act of 2011 that was passed by a previous Parliament and ensured redistribution. It is part of Stephen Harper's legacy to this Parliament. He brought us back, as close as reasonably possible, to ensuring that we have representation by population.

It is part of the legacy that he tried to restore some greater representation to western Canadians, who have very large ridings. Most of us do. I represent the second-largest riding in Canada by population size. My colleague from Edmonton—Wetaskiwin has over 200,000 citizens residing in his riding, which is a huge number of people to represent. It is basically double what the average, the quotient, calls for.

The Fair Representation Act also created a rule, the representation rule, that ensured that any province that would lose a seat in a redistribution would then be made whole by having its number of seats made proportional to its demographic weight within Canada. That rule, at the time, applied to the Province of Quebec and ensured that Quebec was represented in proportion to its demographic weight within Canada. That was a new rule that was created. At the time, it added three seats, resulting in the 78 seats that the Province of Quebec enjoys today.

Lastly, I want to bring up this fact, because we Conservatives and our deputy leader, the member of Parliament for Mégantic—L'Érable, moved in this House a unanimous consent motion that was rejected. I want to read it back into the record, because it forms the position of the Conservatives.

The motion was “That the House oppose any federal electoral redistribution scenario that would cause Quebec or any other province or territory to lose one or more electoral districts in the future, and that the House call on the government to act accordingly.”

That is the foundation of the Conservative position. We believe, and I think it is a perfectly reasonable position to take, that no province should lose a seat in redistribution. It should not go backward when we are looking at this issue. There are smaller provinces that might face this situation if that was ever changed in the future.

I also recognize, as the parliamentary secretary on the Liberal benches mentioned, that the government has tabled Bill C-14 today as well, which I was combing through as we were voting to try to better understand the contents of that bill. If we look at it, we see that a majority of the content is our unanimous consent motion that was rejected by the House. That is our position: that no province in this country should lose seats in a redistribution.

We have a chamber of 338 members. This chamber used to house 308 members in our old building. I still see a lot of space where we could put more members if it was absolutely needed. I see the Speaker is looking at both sides of the House. There is, indeed, space in this House. Maybe we have to be a bit closer. We cannot do the social distancing rule. The pandemic will eventually be over, and we can do these things in a redistribution bill, so I will be looking forward to receiving a briefing and more information on exactly how Bill C-14 would work.

To return to the private member's bill, I think the mechanics of it are quite important in terms of how such a bill would function and how such a bill would work. Amending the Constitution through a private member's bill is unique, but this House has amended the Constitution. In this Parliament, we amended the Saskatchewan Act to make sure that one of the railway companies would pay its share of taxation in that particular province, so it is not unusual to be doing it in this manner. I know that other members in this House have amended the Constitution in the past, such as to make sure the Speaker's election would be done by preferential secret ballot. That was not the case over 25 years ago. This can be done in this particular situation.

Those are the three concerns I mentioned: the Charlottetown accord vote back in 1992; the history of the Fair Representation Act of 2011, which was part of Stephen Harper's legacy as our prime

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minister; and the unanimous consent motion that Conservatives pushed that was rejected. That forms the foundation of our position, and I hope to return to the House at some late point and have other members of our caucus join in this debate on this private member's bill.

● (1925)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to participate in this discussion, this debate, this conversation, on an important bill, Bill C-246, which has to do with Quebec's place, democracy, history and the recognition of the Quebec nation.

I do need to point out that the agreement that the NDP negotiated with the Liberal government includes the condition that Quebec's 78 seats be protected. That was one of our demands and one of the conditions we managed to secure, and I think that is a real victory.

Today, we saw a concrete result from that, in the form of a government bill introduced in response to the threat that Quebec could lose a riding and a seat. This gives substance to our efforts. We managed to secure this win for Quebec, and we are confident that it will be implemented.

That was not the only gain we secured for Quebec. We will hear a lot about Quebec this evening, but I want to talk about Quebecers and about our work to improve their lives. We are using politics to improve people's lives and to create a fairer and more just society in which promises are kept and real action is taken.

I really must say that, for Quebecers, dental insurance, the notion of being able to pay for dental care when one is poor and struggling—

The Deputy Speaker: I must interrupt the hon. member, because the hon. member for Manicouagan is rising on a point of order.

Mrs. Marilène Gill: Mr. Speaker, I respectfully question whether the speech by the member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie is relevant, given the topic currently before the House.

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. member for her intervention, but the member only began his speech about two minutes ago.

I invite the hon. member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie to continue his speech.

● (1930)

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Mr. Speaker, I think I am totally on the topic of Quebec and what this might mean for Quebecers. I will speak quickly. I would like to point out that, earlier, the hon. member for Drummond spoke for about eight minutes before he mentioned his bill, Bill C-246. He first outlined the entire history and digressed quite a bit. I think I am entitled to a little leeway, too.

Private Members' Business

The fact that the NDP has negotiated pharmacare, that there will be legislation in 2023 and this will help people in a concrete way, all this responds to a demand that comes largely from Quebec civil society. I am talking about the Union des consommateurs, the Confédération des syndicats nationaux, the Centrale des syndicats du Québec and the Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec, which all want a universal public pharmacare plan.

When we talk about Quebec, we have to talk about its place. I think it is important to talk about Quebecers, workers and tenants who are facing challenges, which we are trying to address as parliamentarians, with the tools we have to help them—

The Deputy Speaker: I am sorry to have to interrupt the member once again, but the hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, I very much appreciate both the form and content of the member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie's remarks. However, he has now been talking for five minutes. I know prescription drugs are important, but I do not think they vote. The subject we are talking about right now is the number of members in the House of Commons.

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent for his comment. The member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie has been speaking for three minutes and has five minutes left. I hope he will talk about the bill we are debating and I invite him to continue his speech.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to the bill being studied this evening. However, I get the impression that it makes my colleagues from the Bloc Québécois and the Conservative Party a little nervous when we talk about the victories secured by the NDP.

That being said, the NDP has long recognized that Quebec is a nation. The NDP already recognized that by adopting the Sherbrooke declaration, thanks to the work of people like Jack Layton and Thomas Mulcair. It truly marked a major turning point in the history of our leftist, progressive movement.

The Parliament of Canada also adopted a motion recognizing that Quebec is a nation. Symbolic acknowledgements are good, but I think tangible action is better. That brings me back to the beginning of my speech, when I was talking about the concrete effects of parliamentarians' work, including the NDP's recent efforts.

What makes Quebec a nation?

It is not because that province is better or worse than the others, but because it is different from the others. We have to recognize that, and that recognition needs to come with consequences.

As my colleagues mentioned in previous speeches, I think we must always bear in mind the idea of the two founding peoples, the linguistic and cultural duality that has long kept us talking and that has fuelled debate throughout Quebec and Canadian history.

However, I must point out that this notion of two founding peoples makes me and my political party very uncomfortable, because it implies that the French, who came first, and the English, who came later, arrived on virgin land that was uninhabited.

This excludes first nations, indigenous peoples and the Inuit from the discussion. I think we must take this into consideration. This notion of two founding peoples is true but seriously incomplete, and we must consider this when discussing democracy, representation and nation-to-nation dialogue.

The basic democratic rule is simple: All citizens are equal. Everyone is equal before the law, and everyone has a vote. Through natural sovereignty, it is the people who decide who will be their leaders and whether they will oust them when they are no longer satisfied with them. This notion of the equality of citizens is the basis for the distribution of seats and representation in the House.

As the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent knows, I would love to discuss respect for every person's right to vote. If we had a proportional voting system, the government could not be elected with a minority of the votes, meaning a minority of popular and national support. This is a discussion I have had on several occasions, and I believe that proportional voting would greatly improve the quality of our democratic life.

Elections Canada decides on the riding boundaries and distribution of seats, but there are many exceptions. In fact, we have a system that functions by exception. We could almost say that the exception is the norm.

Three major clauses govern how seats are distributed in the federation. First is the senatorial clause, which states that no province can have fewer MPs than it has senators, regardless of its demographic weight and the number of voters in the ridings.

Next is the territorial clause. Obviously the large expanses of Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut do not necessarily have the critical mass to justify a riding and an MP. However, we all recognize that Nunavut absolutely has to be represented and that it makes sense to have these territorial clauses, resulting in these three ridings.

Last is the grandfather clause, which states that a province cannot have fewer MPs than it had before. The provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland all negotiated a certain number of seats upon entering Confederation. That has real-life consequences.

● (1935)

If we look at the three territories and 10 provinces, that means seven provinces are overrepresented thanks to different standards or special clauses, in addition to the three territories.

I think it is worth considering whether the Quebec nation could also benefit from a special clause of its own, given that we have all recognized Quebec as a nation. We can therefore say that what is good for others can also be applied to Quebec the exact same way and that this would be a way to recognize the Quebec nation. It may not be the best or only way, but it already came up in past talks, so we are not reinventing the wheel.

As my colleague from Drummond pointed out, this was included in the Charlottetown accord. It was already part of the negotiations to convince Quebec to ratify the Constitution after the lamentable and unpleasant events of 1982. The Charlottetown accord proposed setting the minimum at 25% for Quebec. This was agreed to by the Conservative Party, the Liberal Party of Quebec and, at the time, by the federal NDP, which also supported the Charlottetown accord.

I think this is a principle that is worth discussing and studying in committee so that we can debate Quebec's place in the Canadian federation and in our democratic process.

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my father always told me that history is extremely important. My colleague talked about history when he talked about the current situation, because history helps us understand where we are and where we are going. I too will share a bit of historical background, with all due respect to the member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie.

In his 1840 report, Lord Durham said that the francophone people had no future, no culture and no history. That was not a very good start. In 1840, after the Patriotes rebellion, this person was telling us that the salvation of francophones lay in assimilation. By reading what happened next, we see this was the moment that the tragic destiny of Quebec and francophones in Canada was decided.

From 1840 to 1867, there was a Parliament representing eastern Canada, in other words Quebec, and western Canada, meaning Ontario. The catch was that even though Quebec had a larger population, eastern Canada and western Canada got the same number of members. Even though there were more Quebecers, they did not get more members, but no one took offence to that.

After a while, it became clear that the status of francophones in North America was diminishing because of the influx of immigrants. They became a minority. In 1867, it was announced that representation would henceforth be proportional. That year, the first Parliament opened, but instead of Quebec having 50% of the seats, it dropped to 36%, even though it had had a much larger population for quite some time.

That was the beginning, or rather the continuation, of the decline. To get us to lower our guard, they told us that it was an agreement between two founding peoples, an agreement that would later be broken. They gave us 50% of the seats at first to lull us into a false sense of security.

Yes, there are francophones in the rest of Canada, but they are merely surviving, not thriving. Despite their resilience and their daily struggle to ensure their language reaches their schools, they will never be able to ensure their continued survival. They will decline across Canada.

Just look at the situation today in Manitoba, which is supposed to be a bilingual province. In New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, the rest of Canada, in Ontario, francophones will literally disappear. The only thing stopping francophones outside Quebec from losing the ability to utter the words of Félix Leclerc, to keep speaking the language we hold dear, is their extraordinary courage. It will take a lot of courage.

Private Members' Business

You are one of the courageous ones, Mr. Speaker. You know what I am talking about.

Quebec was saddled with minority status with respect to economic decisions and everything else until the end of the 1950s. Two things saved Quebec.

The first was the cradle. Quebecers made babies. They set a world record for baby-making, one for every fence post. We survived because of sheer numbers.

The second came in 1960 with the creation of a Quebec state that finally protected us. It was the Quebec state that allowed us to strengthen the position of the French language in Quebec, which had an impact on the rest of Canada and even Louisiana. Zachary Richard would agree, it is a fact. Quebec, with the Quebec state, protects us. That is a fact.

After being one of the founding peoples, we were confined to the rank of a province, a province like any other. In federal-provincial conferences, we became one of ten in 1949, going from one for one to one for ten. Then multiculturalism was introduced in 1982, which put us on a par with all other cultures. I like other cultures, but the Quebec nation is here, it is present, and it must maintain its place because it deserves to survive.

● (1940)

I will not go into the details of all the numbers, but we are at 23% representation in Parliament. Do people see what the problem is with the Parliament of Canada?

We keep repeating that this Parliament is eroding the power of our legislature. This is a fundamental problem. When we say that Ottawa must not interfere in Quebec's jurisdictions, it is because the Government of Quebec protects us best and knows us best. It was not the Quebec government that said the London attack was caused by Bill 21, but the Prime Minister of Canada. It was not the Premier of Quebec who said that.

The Prime Minister of Canada is not the one protecting us. It is the federal government that has now decided to apply for leave to appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada. British Columbia's francophones, who demanded that education be of the same quality as that of anglophones, won their case before the Federal Court of Appeal, but this Liberal government wants to reverse the court's decisions.

People in the House are saying that Quebec is a nation. This Parliament even agreed with us and adopted a motion saying that Quebec is a nation with French as the common language. However, those words need to be backed up by action.

We put to the vote a two-part motion seeking to ensure that Quebec does not lose a seat in the House of Commons, and that motion was adopted by the majority. The government understood and acknowledged this with its Bill C-14. However, what about the second part of the motion?

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When we vote on a motion, we vote on the entire motion. The second part of the motion said that Quebec's political weight must not be diminished. It does not take a Ph.D. in math to understand that if we have 78 seats out of a total of 338, when that total eventually goes up to 343, 350, 400 or 500 members, our political power will be diminished. I explained this to my golden retriever and he understood. The government does not seem to understand. Seriously?

What we are asking for is that we use a ratio expressed as a percentage. It is obvious if we want to avoid this decline. It is just that simple. Why are we asking for 25%? It is because that is what was negotiated in the Charlottetown accord. That is where we got it from.

Can this be done without reopening Canada's Constitution? I know that reopening the Constitution is about as easy as eating an apple through a tennis racket. I know that, but we do not need to do it. We can do it in the House with legislative tools. That is where we stand today: We have to use percentages to avoid this slow but steady decline that is undermining our people.

I will quote Claude Pélouin, who said, "Aren't you tired of dying, you idiots?" Sometimes, I think we are dying. Unfortunately, we do not even know it. We are here because half of our taxes are administered by this Parliament, and as long as we are in Canada, we must defend Quebec.

Our dream is not to account for 25% of this Parliament, but 100% of the parliament of our future country.

• (1945)

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

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[*English*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the recent IPCC report is a dire warning about the climate crisis and the consequences of empty Liberal promises. The UN Secretary-General called the report an "atlas of human suffering and a damning indictment of failed climate leadership".

Canadians have already been dealing with the devastating impacts of the climate crisis. It is threatening everything that we value. The report warns that half of the global population lives in areas considered highly vulnerable to the changing climate. Millions of people are already facing floods and water shortages. There are mass die-offs of species. Key ecosystems are losing their ability to act as carbon sinks. We know that racialized communities, indigenous communities and marginalized communities are disproportionately impacted. It is one of the reasons we need an office of environmental justice.

Climate breakdown is rapidly accelerating and many climate impacts will be more severe than previously predicted. The brief window to ensure a livable future is rapidly closing. Despite years of warnings from experts, the Prime Minister is not showing the climate leadership that people in Canada are looking for. This report is a call to stop making empty promises. We must take urgent action now.

Instead of acting with the urgency that is needed, the Liberals continue to subsidize the largest polluters in the oil and gas industry. They have purchased a pipeline, and they are delaying climate goals at the peril of Canadians and their communities. Canada has missed every single climate target, and we have the worst record on climate of any G7 country.

The Canadian Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act, passed in the last Parliament, requires that the government publish an emissions reduction plan to show how it plans to meet its 2030 target of a 40% to 45% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. That this is an inadequate target when the IPCC report says that we need to cut our emissions by at least 50%, and we should be going farther for our fair share.

That plan is due next week, and this week the net-zero advisory body published its first round of advice on what the government should include in that plan. That body has told the government to set and implement legally binding oil and gas sector emissions targets without delay, but the government still has not decided what its promised oil and gas emissions cap will be. The net-zero advisory body has also told the government that carbon removals and offsets should only be used as a last resort.

The IPCC also points to the uncertainty in the future deployment of carbon capture and storage, and cautions against reliance on this technology, but the government is pushing forward with a tax credit for carbon capture and utilization storage. This is another subsidy to the oil and gas companies at a time when they are making record profits and Canadians are being gouged at the pump. Canadians are struggling to pay for food, medication and housing. If carbon capture and utilization storage is critical to these companies' plans, and they are making record profits, then there is no reason that they cannot pay for these investments themselves.

The Liberals have promised to meet Canada's G20 commitment to phase out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies two years early by 2023, but Environment and Climate Change Canada recently confirmed that it does not have a concrete definition for what an inefficient fossil fuel subsidy is or a complete list of the subsidies to review. How do they expect Canadians to trust that they are on track to end inefficient fossil fuel subsidies when they cannot even define what it is that they are phasing out? Canada should be using internationally agreed upon definitions of fossil fuel subsidies that align with our climate commitments to eliminate all fossil fuel subsidies by the end of 2022 and ensure that we are in line with keeping global warming—

● (1950)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I agree with the hon. member for Victoria that the recent IPCC report is a stark reminder of the impacts of climate change and that Canada needs to move faster and go deeper on its decarbonization efforts.

In 2016, we worked with provinces and territories and sought input from indigenous peoples to develop and adopt the pan-Canadian framework on clean growth and climate change. Unlike many of our peer countries, in 2016, Canada's emissions were on a steady upward climb before the pan-Canadian framework was adopted. National emissions were projected to continue to increase to about 12% above 2005 levels by 2030. The measures adopted in the pan-Canadian framework reversed that trajectory, and we are projected to reduce national emissions to 19% below 2005 levels by 2030. This represents the single largest projected drop in emissions in Canadian history.

In the pan-Canadian framework, the government committed to meet and exceed Canada's previous 2030 goal. The government delivered on that commitment in December 2020 through Canada's strengthened climate plan: "A Healthy Environment and a Healthy Economy". The measures in that plan were projected to reduce emissions by at least 31% below 2005 levels. In mid-2021, the government announced Canada's enhanced greenhouse gas emissions target of a 40% to 45% reduction below 2005 levels by 2030.

Science has indicated that countries, including Canada, need to reach net-zero emissions by 2050. We listened. In 2021, we worked across party lines to pass the Canadian Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act, to enshrine Canada's commitment to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, to establish Canada's 2030 emissions target at 40% to 45% below 2005 levels as the first key milestone for this path, and to ensure a transparent and accountable process in meeting our climate objectives. The first requirement under the act, the 2030 emissions reduction plan, will be established by March 29 of this year, as the hon. member mentioned.

Meeting our climate objective requires close collaboration with partners. The year ahead of us will be an eventful one with the release of the 2030 emissions reduction plan, Canada's first national adaptation strategy, and continued implementation of initiatives such as the strategic innovative fund, the net-zero accelerator and the Canada greener homes grant. We are also working on numerous

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additional measures. We have already launched consultations on regulating 100% zero-emission vehicle sales by 2035, achieving net-zero electricity by 2035 and regulating landfill and oil and gas methane. We have also launched initial consultations on oil and gas caps, and we will release a discussion paper this spring and invite Canadians to share their views on the design of the cap.

At the same time, our government is working to ensure that the oil and gas sector makes a meaningful contribution towards Canada's climate targets. At COP26, Canada announced it would take additional steps to significantly reduce GHG emissions from the oil and gas sector by setting emissions caps.

I have run out of time, but I am happy to answer the next question from the hon. member.

● (1955)

Ms. Laurel Collins: Mr. Speaker, the IPCC is clear: All levels of government have only a narrow window to implement key climate change mitigation and adaptation measures to secure a livable future. However, while Canadians are struggling with the cost of living, the government continues to give handouts to oil and gas companies that are making record profits.

Canada is one of the biggest funders of the oil and gas sector in the G20, and Export Development Canada is the worst offender. Under this Prime Minister, Canada has given more than 14 times the financial support to fossil fuels than it has to renewables. We need to make sure that EDC financing is in line with Canada's commitments to hold global warming to 1.5°C.

Will the minister and the parliamentary secretary commit to telling Export Development Canada to clean up its act and stop financing fossil fuels?

Mr. Terry Duguid: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her comments.

I would remind the member, and all those who are listening, that in addition to taking action to reduce emissions, we also recognize that we must be prepared for the climate risks that are now upon us, as historical trends are no longer our climate normal. That is why, this year, we will release a national adaptation strategy. Building on our strong foundations, the strategy will bring together different levels of government, indigenous groups, the private sector, civil society and all of us in Canada to develop a common blueprint for action.

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GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as always, it is an honour to be able to stand in this place to address the important issues facing my constituents, Albertans and all Canadians.

I stand today to talk about the Senate, and specifically the question that I asked back in December related to the Senate election that the Province of Alberta held last October. This is something that is unique to Alberta admittedly, but I appreciate the opportunity to talk a bit more about it here today.

On October 18, Albertans made a choice. They elected three, what we consider, senators in waiting. They are, by name, Pam Davidson, Erika Barootes and Mykhailo Martyniuk. Significant precedent suggests that Albertans are able to make that choice. However, in the response given by the minister who responded this past December, I was once again incredibly disappointed by the ignorance, arrogance and how out of touch the Liberals are when it comes to the issues that western Canada faces.

The response basically said that the Liberals do it better, that they have all the answers, that they blame Stephen Harper for all the problems our country faces and, therefore, it is actually the Conservatives' fault. That is not acceptable. My constituents share often how frustrated they are with the status of the federation. They share often how they feel like Canada has failed Albertans. They share often how they feel there is little our country can offer them and that it may not even be worth our federation sticking together.

I am a proud Canadian. I am also a proud Albertan. I find it a travesty that there are those, and a growing number under the leadership of the current Liberal government and Prime Minister, now an NDP-Liberal coalition, who have made it so that more Albertans all the time are deciding that they would be more willing to give up on our country than fight for it.

These are serious issues that, unfortunately, the Liberals seem to dismiss, not only issues like appointing democratically elected senators to Canada's upper chamber in our bicameral legislature known as the Senate, but issues each and every day, whether it be the energy industry, the Ottawa knows best mentality or the imposition of the carbon tax on Albertans when Albertans made it very clear they did not want it. The list goes on and on. There is such a host of challenges that the province of Alberta faces, there are even more people today. In fact, since the announcement Monday evening where the NDP-Liberal socialist eco-left coalition was announced, I have heard from many more constituents who are asking, "What is the point in fighting?"

When it comes to the specific question I asked back in December, Albertans deserve this, Albertans need this and, for the sake of our country, Alberta needs to be respected. I would simply ask the minister this. Will he take a moment and recommend to the Liberal Prime Minister to put his partisanship aside and understand that Alberta has a unique status within our federation and appoint to the vacant seat for Alberta in the Senate one of Canada's democratically elected senators?

• (2000)

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak tonight on the matter of Senate appointments from the province of Alberta.

Let me start by saying that this government strives to appoint outstanding people who represent the diversity of this country. We are committed to vibrant and inclusive representation in the Senate. The Independent Advisory Board for Senate Appointments, established in 2016, plays an important role in ensuring representation by providing the Prime Minister with non-binding, non-partisan, merit-based recommendations for Senate appointments that meet a high standard of integrity and collaboration.

As members know, under Canada's Constitution, senators are appointed by the Governor General. By convention, the Governor General's power is exercised on the advice of the Prime Minister. One of the Senate's fundamental roles is to serve as a chamber for the representation of regional interests. This government believes that a less partisan Senate would be able to fulfill this role and other roles more effectively.

That is why, in 2016, the government introduced the Independent Advisory Board for Senate Appointments to provide non-partisan, merit-based recommendations for Senate appointments for the Prime Minister's consideration. Moreover, in recognition of the important role the Senate plays in regional representation, the advisory board provides unprecedented and equal opportunity for all provinces and territories to participate by recommending individuals from their jurisdictions to serve. In fact, two of the five advisory board members are selected from the province or territory in which a vacancy arises. The provinces and territories are given an opportunity to engage in the process by providing a list of individuals for consideration as provincial or territorial members of the advisory board.

The advisory board for Alberta may consider the Senate election nominees against the established criteria for current or future vacancies. However, these individuals, the ones the hon. member spoke about tonight, like all others, would still need to formally apply through the online application process to be considered by the board as a potential candidate for an appointment to the Senate.

Canadians may also nominate an individual for a Senate appointment, though nominees would still need to submit their own application to be considered. This process is the same for everyone and everywhere across Canada, including Alberta. All applications are reviewed using the same assessment criteria, which are publicly available online. These include constitutional eligibility requirements, a range of merit-based criteria established by the government and additional considerations, such as gender, indigenous and minority representation and bilingualism, to ensure the Senate increasingly reflects Canada's diversity.

The government remains committed to the non-partisan and merit-based Senate appointment process in place, and we are confident this process will continue to result in a less partisan and more effective institution to serve Canadians. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Independent Advisory Board for Senate Appointments for its continued work in the service of parliamentary democracy on behalf of all Canadians.

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● (2005)

Mr. Damien Kurek: Mr. Speaker, there are a couple of things I suggest the member takes seriously.

First, there is very little that is equal about our Senate. She is right in the sense that it was meant to be a regional balance in the country, as intended when the Fathers of Confederation and those involved with the foundations of our country created a structure to ensure there was regional representation. It does not exist today.

Second, as the member referred to an independent advisory committee, I note there was a very clear process, called a democratic election, that selected those individuals who deserved to be in the Senate representing Alberta, and they have applied through the Prime Minister's process. It is absolutely essential for the sake of the unity of our country that they be appointed to our Senate to make clear that Albertans' voices matter.

When it comes to the issues that our country faces, the government talks big but unfortunately has failed to deliver each and every time, and it is tearing our country apart.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Mr. Speaker, I am going to stress again that the Senate plays its intended role of sober second thought.

The independent Senate advisory board provides advice to the Prime Minister on candidates for Senate appointments. I would remind the hon. member that senators are not democratically elected according to our Constitution. The advisory board reviews applications in provinces and territories where there are planned or current vacancies. Canadians have the opportunity to apply directly for a Senate appointment on a year-round basis through an open application process based on merit-based criteria and requirements under the Constitution. This is important because the Senate is critical in representing regional and minority interests. Also, all nominees for a Senate appointment must submit an online application.

Our government remains committed to restoring public trust in the Senate by moving toward a less partisan and more independent Senate.

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to speak in the House, and tonight I am speaking about something I asked in question period and statements I made in the House. It has to do with the RCMP.

Outside of Ontario and Quebec, many municipalities have the RCMP with a municipal contract. We respect the RCMP, and I have worked with it as a municipal leader and a mayor in my community. It is a fantastic community force within our municipal structures.

However, it had been without a contract for almost five years, and then the federal government settled the contract, which means it had a huge retroactive piece to it. The municipalities were not part of that negotiation. The federal government was. This is a huge retroactive settlement that the RCMP deserves. It deserves this settlement.

However, the municipalities that contract with the police were not part of this. I had somebody remind me it was sort of like something that happened in the Boston Harbor in 1774 or 1775, the Boston Tea Party, where the people living in Boston were upset

about taxation without representation. That is what the municipalities feel like.

I heard from the mayor and city council in Brooks, Strathmore, Acme, Kneehill County and many more who have spoken to me. St. Mary's in Nova Scotia is also very concerned, so this is country-wide.

How would this affect the taxpayers? We are talking about a 5% to 10% tax increase. The St. Mary's community said 11% is what it would cost as a tax increase. We are talking about property tax and business property tax. It is one of the most regressive taxes we have.

We have communities that have been suffering with COVID and businesses that have endured lockdowns and supply disruptions. Now business and property owners are facing anywhere from a 5% to an 11% tax increase. This is brutal on our small businesses. This is an extreme challenge for homeowners. We talk about the number of economic challenges we have in our communities coming out of COVID, and they are facing a retroactive pay increase that was negotiated by the federal government.

The federal government negotiated this agreement. That is great. It is deserved, but the federal government should pay for this retroactive pay. It should not come back to the municipalities that were not involved in this negotiation. It should not come back to the property owners and the small business owners at this extremely frustrating time to be in a small business and survive. The federal government negotiated it. The municipalities were not part of that process. They should not get the bill for this.

● (2010)

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we recognize we are all facing challenging times with increased costs of policing across Canada and operational pressures on our officers to keep our communities safe.

As the member is aware, under our Constitution, provinces are responsible for the administration of justice, including policing matters. The Government of Canada is collaborating closely with more than 150 municipal contract jurisdictions and with all provinces and territories to support them in addressing the many challenges facing police service.

Policing services are delivered by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police under a contracted cost-sharing arrangement between the Government of Canada and each jurisdiction that has opted to have the RCMP as their police of jurisdiction.

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The historic first collective agreement between the Government of Canada and the National Police Federation, the bargaining agent for RCMP members, went into effect on August 6, 2021. It marks the first time RCMP members have received a pay increase since 2017. The agreement provided a reasonable economic increase and market adjustments to address wage differences that existed between RCMP members and reservists and other police services across Canada.

As a result of the agreement, RCMP salaries are now consistent with other police services across Canada. We know that policing costs are significant for all communities, including municipalities that contract RCMP police services. That is why federal officials kept partners informed throughout the collective bargaining process starting in 2017, including on anticipated salary increases to help them plan accordingly.

Our government has committed to meeting with contract policing partners, including municipalities, in the coming weeks to discuss the implementation of the collective agreement, including their specific situations and needs. Our government will continue to work with contract police and jurisdictions on the impacts of the agreement.

In closing, I want to emphasize that ensuring the safety and security of our communities is paramount. The Government of Canada will continue to support the RCMP and all jurisdictions to meet this objective. This is a goal we all share collectively and continues to be one of the highest priorities of our government.

Mr. Martin Shields: Mr. Speaker, there are many parts of what I heard from the parliamentary secretary that I absolutely agree with. It is a tremendous force, and the negotiations for the settlement needed to happen. It was deserved, absolutely.

The part that I would disagree with was the piece about communication with partners. When I talked to municipality leaders, may-

ors and reeves in my area, they said they were not part of it. The organizations that represent the municipalities in Alberta, which I used to be the vice president of, were not involved in the process or in communication with the federal government. Municipalities were saying they were not part of this organization in the sense of communication. If the federal government was communicating, it was not to the organizations in the province of Alberta and other provinces. It was not the municipalities themselves. We look to the federal government to deal with this retroactive pay and pay for it.

• (2015)

Ms. Pam Damoff: Mr. Speaker, we appreciate the financial planning challenges and the complexities of the implementation of the collective agreement, and we are mindful of the significant costs it represents for municipalities, provinces and territories.

We continue to collaborate extensively with officials at all levels in contract policing jurisdictions throughout this process. I want to make it clear that the Government of Canada remains committed to the public safety of all Canadians across the country and remains proud of the services that the RCMP provides to our contract jurisdiction partners. We remain steadfast in our commitment to continue our collaboration with our contract partners and will begin meeting with them in the coming weeks to discuss further their respective financial situations.

Our objective is clear: We will meet with jurisdictions in a meaningful way to enable open dialogue with the aim of supporting their ability to meet their financial obligations under the contracts.

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

(The House adjourned at 8:16 p.m.)

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