



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

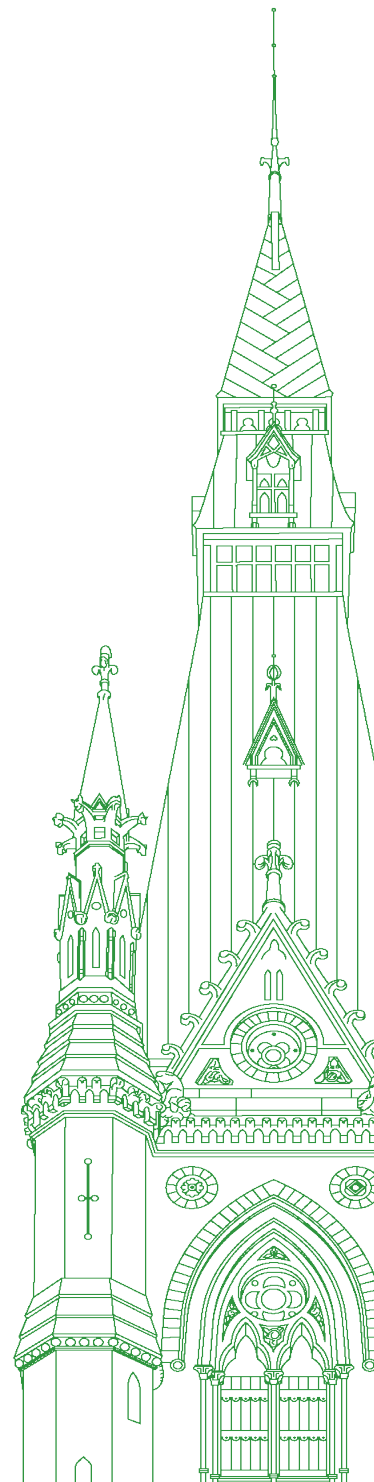
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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, September 20, 2022

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

● (1005)
[English]

ORDER PAPER

The Speaker: I wish to inform the House that, in accordance with the representation made by the government, pursuant to Standing Order 55(1), I have caused to be published a special Order Paper giving notice of two government bills.

[Translation]

I therefore lay the relevant document upon the table.

* * *

[English]

STATEMENT CONCERNING THE SIMILARITIES BETWEEN BILL C-250 AND BILL C-19—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I would like to provide a short update regarding a statement I made on May 11, 2022, concerning similarities between two bills that were before the House at that time. They were Bill C-250, an act to amend the Criminal Code (prohibition—promotion of antisemitism), standing in the name of the member for Saskatchewan—Grasswood, and Bill C-19, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 7, 2022, and other measures.

[Translation]

As members will recall, clause 332 of Bill C-19 contained near identical text to Bill C-250. To be more specific, the two bills sought to amend section 319 of the Criminal Code pertaining to hate propaganda, for similar purposes. Both made it an offence to wilfully promote antisemitism by condoning, denying or downplaying the Holocaust through statements communicated other than in private conversation. There was only a minor difference in the wording of one of the acceptable defences.

[English]

As indicated in my earlier statement on this matter, there is a long-standing principle to keep or avoid having the same question from being decided twice within the same session. On May 11, 2022, the Chair had therefore ordered that, pending the fate of Bill

C-19, Bill C-250 may not be called for its second hour of debate at second reading.

Bill C-19 received royal assent on June 23, 2022. Accordingly, I am ordering that the order for the second reading of Bill C-250 be discharged and that the bill be dropped from the Order Paper.

I thank all the members for their attention.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table, in both official languages, a detailed plan from my colleague, the hon. member for Surrey Centre, namely Motion No. 44, concerning permanent residency for temporary foreign workers, under Private Members' Business.

[English]

This document includes plans to expand pathways to permanent residency for temporary foreign workers and international students with significant Canadian work experience in sectors with persistent labour shortages.

* * *

[Translation]

HEALTH

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table the report on the procurement and distribution of COVID-19 rapid tests.

I would like to take a moment to welcome the new cohort of pages for 2022-23. The hon. member for Hull—Aylmer and I were also pages here in the House of Commons, many, many years ago. We have very fond memories of the happy moments, but also the responsibilities, that come with this position. We hope they have an excellent parliamentary year.

Routine Proceedings

● (1010)

*[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 87 petitions. These returns will be tabled in an electronic format.

* * *

COST OF LIVING RELIEF ACT, NO. 1

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (for the Minister of Finance) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-30, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (temporary enhancement to the Goods and Services Tax/Harmonized Sales Tax credit).

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

* * *

*[Translation]***COST OF LIVING RELIEF ACT, NO. 2**

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-31, An Act respecting cost of living relief measures related to dental care and rental housing.

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

* * *

*[English]***TRAGEDY IN SASKATCHEWAN**

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Indigenous Services and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, like many members of this House, the people of James Smith Cree Nation have been on my mind since the horrific and heartbreaking acts of violence on September 4.

Early that morning, a community already living with the effects of intergenerational trauma faced an unthinkable situation. By the afternoon, the community was left reeling with the deaths of 10 loved ones and 18 others injured from acts of violence that were too terrible to contemplate. No one was left untouched. Each person lost a family member: a father or mother, an aunt or uncle, a brother or sister, or a friend. These are their names: Thomas Burns, Carol Burns, Gregory Burns, Lydia Gloria Burns, Bonnie Burns, Earl Burns, Lana Head, Christian Head, Robert Sanderson and Wesley Petterson.

As the community grieves an unfathomable loss, it has been moving to see the outpouring of compassion from across the country and indeed around the world. In this tight-knit place of only 1,900, everyone is connected and many people outside of James Smith Cree Nation are too. Friends, colleagues, family from other parts of the country or world have all been left to ask, "How could something like this happen?"

Last week, I went to the community to meet with members and listen to the stories of loved ones. I was honoured to attend the funeral of Lydia Gloria Burns, known as Gloria. It was clear that Glo-

ria was a pillar of her community. Indeed, many considered her a dear friend, a person to turn to in times of trouble and a role model.

Gloria was the mother of two, a crisis worker and a pillar of support. She regularly counselled young people and she was clearly beloved. She was a first responder, and in performing her duty, something so dear to her heart, her life was taken. It is hard to imagine how a community navigates the loss of someone like Gloria. At her funeral, her brother remarked, "Resilience means walking through anger, walking through pain, walking through grief."

The families of James Smith Cree Nation have long suffered from the trauma of colonization, including residential schools, and too often they have not had a reliable or fair partner in the federal government to improve things for the next generations. In meetings with the leaders of this community, we discussed the importance of forgiveness and healing and the equally important role of action to truly walk together. Chief Wally Burns said, "We all have to come together, as a community, as Canadians, as a whole."

Right now, the community is gripped with burying their dead, helping their injured family members heal and recovering from the shock of this life-changing event. I have stressed that the federal government will be with them as a strong and reliable partner as they chart a path forward in their healing journey.

I go back to the idea of resilience. Of course, we all have to learn to weather the unpredictability of life, but nobody should have to be as resilient as the people of James Smith Cree Nation. We must do better together to help people heal and to see a future that works for everyone.

The children of Brian Burns, left behind without their mother and their brother, and the many other children in James Smith Cree Nation facing life without a parent, are depending on us. We owe it to those children and to all of the families suffering to make sense of these tragic losses and to ensure that they have the tools and supports they need to heal.

I will end on this. The people of James Smith Cree Nation are hurting, but they are also very proud. As they told me, they are "James Smith Cree Nation strong". I stand with them, and I know that this entire House does as well.

● (1015)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am here today to honour the victims of the recent violence in southern Saskatchewan and particularly the James Smith Cree Nation: 10 lives lost, 18 lives changed forever, a community shattered, and a province and country in shock. We are here to honour the victims by remembering them, supporting their community in their grief and committing ourselves to doing whatever is necessary to make sure this kind of outrage never happens again.

Routine Proceedings

No death is solitary. Every death leaves a hole in the hearts of a family and a void in a community. This is especially true in rural and remote regions, where people rely on each other to survive and where so many people are related through blood and marriage. As Mark Arcand, whose sister was among the victims, put it, “This is how it is in our country.... It's all about relationships. It's all about family.”

The violence two weeks ago took the lives of mothers and fathers, sons and daughters, aunts and uncles, neighbours, friends and familiar faces. Each one of them was known and loved.

Let us pause to honour them by offering our respect to each of them by name: Bonnie Goodvoice-Burns, aged 48, a mother, grandmother and foster mother who died trying to protect her son, Gregory “Jonesy” Burns, who was also killed; Lydia Gloria Burns, a first responder who was attacked while responding to a call to help Bonnie and Gregory Burns; Carol Burns, who was visiting her two children, one of whom, Thomas Burns, also died; Earl Burns Sr., a veteran who had already survived an attempted stabbing by the same perpetrator seven years earlier; Lana Head and her partner Christian Head, who together leave behind 10 children and more grandchildren; Robert Sanderson, a father whose son was also injured in the attack; and Wesley Petterson, a 78-year-old widower from nearby Weldon, Saskatchewan. There are 10 enormous holes in the James Smith Cree Nation and surrounding communities. As one headline put it, “everyone lost someone”.

Healing takes time. It is a journey. The families and friends left behind have a long journey ahead of them, but I have faith that strength will carry the James Smith Cree Nation through. It is the same strength that has helped that community survive and work through the immense trauma of history over many years. The reason I have faith and hope is that while evil is real and strong, faith, hope and love are stronger. Where we can help, we will.

I know the federal government is working with local community leaders. I note that the minister has been to visit and I thank her for that. I offer my party's full support for any government actions that bring healing to the community, especially for the children who have seen what no child should ever see, and for those struggling with mental illness or addiction problems, who will find these times especially trying.

We can honour the victims and survivors by providing more effective recovery services to more people to help them get out of the cycle of violence and toward hope and healing. That is the least that compassion and respect demand of us. However, we must not allow our compassion to tempt us into complacency and stop us from asking the hard questions about our criminal justice system.

This tragedy was not a random act of fate. It was the result of a string of failings stretching back more than a decade. The question that Chief Wally Burns asked when he learned about the perpetrator's criminal history should be ringing in the ears of everyone in the House: “Why was this guy released when he was dangerous?” I also agree with Brian Burns, whose wife and son were killed, when he said, “There needs to be some kind of an inquiry. The families need answers.”

• (1020)

As a husband and a father, I can only imagine the sense of deep betrayal he must feel when he thinks about the callous negligence of our criminal justice system, which let this violent criminal out to recommit offences again and again, not just in this case, but for more than a decade. The perpetrator, who I am deliberately not naming, had been charged with over 120 crimes in 47 cases over the last 14 years. He had been convicted 59 times. There are likely more, but his youth record is sealed.

At least two of those previous victims were also victims of the most recent violence: his in-laws Earl Burns, who died, and Joyce Burns, who was wounded. The first time, back in 2015, he was charged with attempted murder, but he was allowed to plead guilty to a lesser offence and was only sentenced to two years less a day in prison. It has also been reported that he assaulted the mother of his children five times between 2011 and 2018. He never received more than a two-month sentence for any of those assaults. Each time, he was set free to attack again.

What happened in northern Saskatchewan two weeks ago should be a national wake-up call. The James Smith Cree Nation was not only the victim of a violent criminal, but also the victim of a broken criminal justice system. We all agree in the possibility of redemption and in rehabilitation. We believe that, if someone makes a mistake and does their time, they should have a second chance at being part of society, but when someone commits one violent offence after another so that they number in the dozens, at some point they must stay behind bars for the protection of the public and out of respect for their victims. A system that allows a violent criminal to reoffend over and over again with impunity does not deserve to be called a justice system. Leaving victims vulnerable to repeat attacks by a violent felon is not criminal justice. It is criminal negligence.

I agree with Brian Burns. I want to know how this could have happened, and most importantly, I want to know how we can make sure it never happens again. We will not honour the victims and the community if we do not listen to them. We must listen, and then we must act. There must be a top-to-bottom review. We need to know why criminal charges against this violent felon were so often stayed or withdrawn; why the parole boards repeatedly recommended his release despite deeming him a threat; why his sentences were so short, even after third and fourth violent convictions; and why Correctional Service Canada did not deem him sufficiently likely to reoffend, even after more than 50 convictions in 14 years, and failed to recommend against his statutory release.

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A thorough review is important because the devastation experienced by this community was not an isolated incident. Since 2015, violent crime has increased in Canada by 32%. The violent crime severity index is up 18 points, and there were more than 124,000 violent crimes last year than there were in 2015. The violent crime rate is up in all 13 provinces and territories. Clearly, something is wrong and getting worse. We need to know what it is, and we need to fix it.

There are no words that can adequately capture the devastation that the James Smith Cree Nation has suffered and, indeed, the pain all Canadians felt at the stories of this unthinkable horror. The stories were of violence and an ongoing manhunt, but soon after the stories changed and we began to hear stories of the lives of the victims. These are the stories that had been previously filled with laughter, often amid personal struggle, and stories of a community bound together by bonds of love and support, now united by grief. They are the stories of people who are, in Mark Arcand's words, "broken but not defeated."

Today we offer our respect to the departed and the survivors. In words that can only imperfectly convey sorrow, we offer our sympathy, but if we have only words, then we will have failed the James Smith Cree Nation again. It is time for these failures to end. It is time for our words to transform into actions, and it is time for all of us to rally in support of this wonderful community and its beautiful members as they heal and recover from these terrible events.

• (1025)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on a more sombre note, I would like, on behalf of all Bloc Québécois members, to offer my sincerest condolences to the victims of the horrific mass killings on the territory of the James Smith Cree Nation, in Weldon, in early September, as well as to their friends and family. Ten people were killed, 18 were wounded, and an entire community is now suffering and beginning a long healing process.

Our thoughts also go out to the members of the community, at a time when the words "truth" and "reconciliation" often elicit painful memories. I can find no better way to express all of the compassion and sympathy such a traumatizing event deserves.

However, words and good wishes are not enough. As members of Parliament, our duty is to see that events like this one never happen again.

On that, a number of questions have been raised about the tragedy in the past few weeks, and they deserve answers. I sincerely hope that the House will have the wisdom and determination to find these answers in a bipartisan manner, without ulterior motives, for the benefit of the indigenous communities and the people we represent.

A few hours after one of the two suspects was arrested, we learned that one was a repeat offender who had violated his parole conditions. According to an article in *La Presse* on September 7, last November, the suspect, whose name I will not mention, breached his parole conditions. In February the Parole Board of

Canada, in its decision to maintain his release on parole, stated that the suspect did not represent "an undue risk to society", after serving two-thirds of his sentence.

The person convicted of no fewer than 59 criminal charges, including assault, assault with a weapon, assaulting a police officer and theft, did not pose an undue risk to society, according to the Parole Board of Canada.

The suspect's unsavoury record raises questions about his release on parole. Here is a question that is certainly worthwhile asking: After how many criminal charges does the Parole Board of Canada believe that a person poses a risk to society?

Please do not misunderstand me: I respect the Parole Board of Canada. This is the kind of institution that is essential for Canadians' safety. Having discussed the issue with officers, I understand that the means available to them are not always the most effective. In fact, they are often far from effective.

This seems illogical in light of the societal impact of a decision to release an offender before the end of their sentence. In this case, it is difficult not to ask questions considering what appeared on the criminal record of one of the suspects.

One question it is normal to ask after such an event is whether the support and means needed to monitor inmates and their rehabilitation are available. I know that this is a lot of work for officers and that there can be elements that are hard to prove to convince the board that an offender could truly represent a risk to society, particularly at a time when officers are overloaded.

Perhaps the time has come for institutional reform. We could suggest that the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security investigate to determine whether adjustments are necessary.

We know that, in June, the Minister of Public Safety launched the federal framework to reduce recidivism. I would like to point that out. On the other hand, since this is the government's first step in the development of a plan to identify the determining factors that influence recidivism and the appropriate means of supporting successful social reintegration, given the recent events at the James Smith Cree Nation, the committee should look into the question, if only to make adjustments to the framework.

There is also the issue of mental health services for individuals known to police, such as the suspects in the tragedy.

That was one of the suggestions made by the Office of the Correctional Investigator, which, in its 48th report, recommended that Correctional Service Canada "develop a reliable method for administratively tracking individuals with mental health concerns".

An appalling, horrifying and unspeakable event such as this one demands that we reflect on issues beyond the prison system. How can two individuals stab so many people in so little time in such cold blood?

Should we be looking at other administrations that have a better track record than the federal organizations concerned?

Ought we not look at Norway, which has the lowest recidivism rate in the world at 16%?

We could look at Quebec, which, according to a 2019 study by the Centre interuniversitaire de recherche en analyse des organisations, has programs aimed at facilitating the social reintegration of inmates of prisons under provincial management that not only reduce recidivism but do so in a way that is “far better” than elsewhere in the world.

With all due respect and sympathy to the victims, we need to raise awareness, offer suggestions and find solutions.

• (1030)

The government can obviously count on the Bloc Québécois to find common and well-documented solutions to ensure that Canadians can feel completely safe. I sincerely hope that this appeal for collaboration will be heard and accepted and that it will lead to honest and necessary discussions that will benefit everyone.

We could say that this was an isolated and very rare incident, ignore it and move on as though nothing had happened, and then turn away to not see the horror. However, I sincerely believe that we have a moral obligation to say to the people we represent, especially the community of James Smith Cree Nation, never again.

[English]

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, today, we recognize and mourn the loss of the victims in James Smith Cree Nation, the tragedy that occurred on September 4, 2022. My thoughts are with the many others wounded and with the community, which has been wounded by this event. The impacts of intergenerational trauma continue to be exposed through such acts of violence. My thoughts are with the community of James Smith Cree Nation, how strong they are and how strong they are being forced to be right now.

Healing is the path forward and that cannot be done without recognizing that the ongoing process of colonialism has shaped this tragedy. We need to make sure that this tragedy does not go unrecognized by the government. This shows that true reconciliation is still necessary for our communities to move forward.

We must begin the conversation to discuss the prevention of intergenerational trauma going forward. The impact of the tragedy is felt throughout Canada, and as a country, we mourn the loss of those who are no longer with us.

I would like to acknowledge the victims and families of the Saskatchewan stabbings who lost their lives: Thomas Burns, Carol Burns, Gregory Burns, Lydia Gloria Burns, Bonnie Burns, Earl Burns, Lana Head, Christian Head, Robert Sanderson and Wesley Petterson.

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We, as a country, must ask for more to be done to support these individuals and their families. They are victims of crime, and this will have an ongoing impact on the families and friends within the community. We must recognize the impact of colonialism and its aftermath, which is related to the criminal justice system's impact on these communities. The New Democrats will fight to ensure that these families get the supports they deserve.

As parliamentarians, we must ensure that reconciliation is forged by investing in the well-being of indigenous peoples. We must be the parliamentarians who focus our efforts on recognizing the strengths that indigenous peoples must realize in themselves. We must be the parliamentarians who invest in reconciliation, to ensure that tragedies such as these, as what happened in James Smith Cree Nation, do not happen again.

We must ensure that we honour the memory of the victims and their families so that it never happens again. We must ensure that we do our best to talk about reconciliation in terms of justice, healing and making sure that we are the ones who will ensure real reconciliation with indigenous peoples, so we can see indigenous peoples contributing to society in a positive and proud Canada, which we must see and realize is so important. We must be the parliamentarians who focus on the strengths of what we see in indigenous peoples.

• (1035)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order to request of my dear colleagues unanimous consent to allow the Green Party to put some words on the record about this dreadful tragedy.

The Speaker: Is is agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge that today, as on every day in this place, we stand on the territories of the Algonquin nation and want to express our gratitude to them. *Meegwetch*.

I also want to express gratitude to someone else. This may be somewhat unusual for starting this morning, but I cannot say another word without expressing my deep gratitude to the Conservative caucus for allowing me to speak.

I then extend my congratulations to the new leader of the official opposition. Not to complain, but some who pay close attention to this place may know that it has been since the 2021 election that Greens have been allowed to speak in moments of tribute and sadness. I am deeply grateful to the hon. member for Carleton for this change in policy. I appreciate it enormously.

I also want to say that we can all agree with every word that has been spoken. I want to thank the hon. member and Minister of Indigenous Services, the new leader of the official opposition, my friend from Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia for her words, and the hon. member for Nunavut. There is not one of us whose heart is not broken.

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I thought about taking off my black ribbon of mourning for Her Majesty the Queen this morning, but then I thought that I am still in mourning. Yes, Her Majesty the Queen has departed this earth, but so have members of the James Smith Cree Nation. Ten people, much loved in their communities and much loved by their families, are no longer with us, and they died in horrific circumstances. I will leave my ribbon of mourning on, for today at least, for the James Smith Cree Nation, the families of the victims and the families of the perpetrators, all of whom are in a period of deep suffering.

There is much that has been said, and I will not trespass on the time for long, but I just want to say that there must be more than words. We speak words in this place of reconciliation, of a cry for justice and of a prayer for healing, and we say that we will do better. In this circumstance, what we must do is what I am so grateful to so many Canadians for, because in the words of so many members of James Smith Cree Nation, they express gratitude and almost surprise at how many Canadians are grieving with them. We grieve together. That is the very root of the word “compassion”, which is to suffer together. Compassion. We share it across indigenous and settler cultures. We grieve together, just as, in another horrific circumstance, we grieved with the people of Nova Scotia in Portapique.

We need to look to all the calls I have heard across the room today for inquiry and for consideration. What must we do better? James Smith Cree Nation is saying maybe it would be better off if it had indigenous police services. The chiefs in Manitoba are saying the same thing. They do not feel secure in a situation like this. They have the policing that is needed to protect people. We have Gloria and others, like Bonnie, who were first responders and raced into the scene. That circumstance of dying while protecting one's family should not occur. We should have the police services that are needed and at the ready, and local, in my view, may be a solution that is better, whether it is in Portapique or James Smith Cree Nation. We need to examine policing and we need to examine, as the hon. leader of the official opposition said, release procedures when people are dangerous and should not be released into our population.

I will not prescribe solutions at this point. We need to commit to listening, investigating and particularly supporting the people of James Smith Cree Nation and other places that are still wounded and suffering from events of violence.

We can do better. We must do better, and to everybody touched by the tragedy at James Smith Cree Nation, we send our prayers, our love and our words, and we also say clearly that we know words are not enough. We will do more. We will do better. We are with them and their dear children as they process things that no child should ever see and no family should ever experience. I thank members for their time. *Meegwetch.*

● (1040)

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Orders 104 and 114, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 13th report of the

Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding the membership of committees of the House.

If the House gives its consent, I move that the 13th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs be concurred in.

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

Hearing none, it is agreed.

[Translation]

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

(Motion agreed to)

[English]

PETITIONS

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition from numerous constituents who are concerned about the climate emergency. They call on the government to reduce emissions to levels proposed by the international scientific body, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the leading global authority. They ask that Canada's emissions reduction target be increased to at least 60% below 2005 levels by 2030 and that Canada create good green jobs that include the workforce to ensure that effective workers and communities are protected in the transition away from fossil fuels. They ask that this transition be assisted through increasing taxes on the wealthiest and corporations, as well as financing through a national public bank.

● (1045)

CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, I table a petition expressing concern that the Liberal Party of Canada promised in its 2021 platform to deny the charitable status of organizations that have different views. The signatories are concerned this could jeopardize the charitable status of hospitals, houses of worship, schools, homeless shelters and other charitable organizations that do not agree with the Liberal Party for reasons of conscience. They are calling on the House of Commons to protect and preserve the application of charitable status rules on a politically and ideologically neutral basis, without discrimination on the basis of political or religious values or the imposition of another values test, and to affirm the right of Canadians to freedom of expression.

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is great to be back in the House with my colleagues. The petition I am tabling today is quite timely, given that the House is going to debate Bill C-22. The petition, which was started by Jeff Leggat, a constituent of mine in Duncan, refers to the fact that far too many Canadians with disabilities are living below the poverty line. There are about 1.5 million Canadians who are living in a state of legislated poverty. The petitioners who have taken the time to sign this e-petition are calling upon the government to end this current practice and ensure that Canadians living with disabilities have a federal disability benefit of \$2,200 per month.

CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, as always, it is an honour to be able to stand in this place. Today, I am presenting a petition to draw the attention of Canadians to the fact that the Liberals promised in their 2021 election platform to weaponize charitable status to discriminate against particular charities within Canada. The undersigned citizens of this petition call upon the House of Commons to protect and preserve the application of charitable status rules on a politically and ideologically neutral basis, without discrimination on the basis of political or religious values or the imposition of another “values test”, and to affirm the rights of Canadians to freedom of expression.

It is an honour to present this petition in the House today.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to rise today and present a petition on behalf of Canadians across this country.

The petitioners are concerned about the possibility of the government imposing another values test on charitable organizations. The petitioners are asking that the government protect and preserve the application of charitable status rules on a politically and ideologically neutral basis without discrimination on the basis of political or religious values or the imposition of another “values test”, and that it affirm the right of Canadians to the freedom of expression.

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is good to be back in this House after the summer recess.

I am rising to present two petitions. The first petition is in support of Senate Bill S-223, which seeks to combat the practice of forced organ harvesting, which is still going around the world. It is the practice of harvesting organs from healthy, living human beings without their consent, and the bill would combat this practice. The families of the victims of forced organ harvesting and trafficking have now waited almost 15 years for Canada to pass this legislation. It is time to end the delays, and the petitioners are calling on the House and on Parliament to now get this done.

• (1050)

CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Madam Speaker, my second petition calls attention to the fact that the current government, in its 2021 platform, proposes to deny charitable status to organizations

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that have deeply held, genuine convictions about protecting life in the womb.

The Liberal Party considers these views to be dishonest, and this may jeopardize the charitable status of hospitals, houses of worship, schools, homeless shelters and other charitable organizations that do not agree with the Liberal Party of Canada.

The petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to do two things: to protect and preserve the application of charitable status rules on a politically and ideologically neutral basis and to affirm the right of Canadians to freedom of expression.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am not sure if the word “dishonest” was in that petition, but I would just ask members to make sure they are reading what is in the petition.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am rising to present this petition on behalf of Canadians who feel that the Liberal Party of Canada promised in its 2021 platform to deny the charitable status of organizations that have convictions about abortion that the Liberal government views as dishonest. This jeopardizes the charitable status of hospitals, places of worship, schools, homeless shelters and so many charitable organizations that do incredible work in this country and would leave a huge void under these circumstances. Canadians depend upon and benefit from these charities.

The government had previously denied funding, tax dollars, to any organization that was not willing to check a box endorsing the political positions of the governing party. These petitioners believe that charities and non-profit organizations should not be discriminated against on the basis of their political views or religious values. They comment that all Canadians have a right to freedom of expression without discrimination under the Canadian Charter of Rights of Freedoms.

The petitioners are calling on the government to protect and preserve the application of charitable status rules on a politically and ideologically neutral basis and to affirm the rights of Canadians to freedom of expression.

Routine Proceedings

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, I, too, am standing to present a petition in the House of Commons today. The petitioners are concerned about the values test that the Liberals have promised to impose on charitable status organizations across the country. The government has previously used a values test to discriminate against worthy applicants in the Canada summer jobs program, to deny funding to any organization that was not willing to check a box endorsing the political positions of the governing party.

As such, the petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada and the House of Commons to protect and preserve the application of charitable status rules on a politically and ideologically neutral basis and to affirm Canadians' freedom of expression.

Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is good to be back in the House.

I am standing with countless Canadians who oppose this Prime Minister's values test. They call upon the House of Commons to protect and preserve the application of charitable status rules on a politically and ideologically neutral basis without discrimination on the basis of political or religious values and without the imposition of another values test. They also ask Parliament to affirm the right of Canadians to freedom of expression.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, when members stand up on a petition, they are supposed to be capturing the essence of the petition itself and not necessarily endorsing the petition. The member stood in his place saying, "I am standing with", implying that he is fully endorsing the petition. That is something members know they are not supposed to do.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I appreciate the hon. parliamentary secretary's point of order. I do want to remind members that they cannot endorse petitions; they can be pleased to present petitions. Therefore, I will leave it at that.

I will allow the hon. member to speak to the point of order, but I do want to remind members again that they are to speak to the petition and not in support of the petition.

The hon. member for Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies.

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Madam Speaker, just in response to that comment, the petition actually calls for a signature of endorsement of my own to endorse this petition in this House. I would just say—

• (1055)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. The hon. member cannot endorse the petitions. Those are the rules that the clerks give us as well: that we should not sign petitions.

Presenting petitions, the hon. member for Brantford—Brant.

Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to be back in the House. I am pleased to present a petition signed by Canadians across this great country who are concerned about the government's values test. Charities and other non-profit organizations should not be discriminated against on the basis of their political views or religious values and should not be subjected to a politicized values test. All Canadians have a right,

under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, to expression without discrimination.

Therefore, the petitioners ask the government two things: to protect and preserve the application of the charitable status rules on a politically and ideologically neutral basis without discrimination on the basis of political or religious values and without the imposition of another values test; and to affirm the right of Canadians to freedom of expression.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Madam Speaker, we know the Liberal government has previously used a values test to discriminate against worthy applicants to the Canada summer jobs program, and did so by denying funding to any organization that was not willing to check a box endorsing the political positions of the governing party of the day.

Therefore, I am presenting this petition. The undersigned citizens and residents of Canada call upon this House of Commons to protect and preserve the application of charitable status rules on a politically and ideologically neutral basis without discrimination on the basis of political or religious values and without the imposition of another values test; and to affirm the right of Canadians to freedom of expression.

Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Madam Speaker, I present a petition signed by Canadians across the country who are concerned about a Liberal Party platform promise in 2021 to deny charitable status to certain organizations. The petitioners are calling on the House of Commons to protect and preserve the application of charitable status rules on a politically and ideologically neutral basis. They are calling on this Parliament to affirm the rights of Canadians to freedom of expression.

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have a second petition signed by a number of Canadians across the country who are in support of Senate Bill S-223, a bill that seeks to combat forced organ harvesting and trafficking.

CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am honoured to rise today and present a petition on behalf of Canadians across the country who are deeply concerned by a policy put forward in the Liberal Party's platform in 2021 to deny charitable status to charitable organizations whose strongly held convictions the Liberals disagree with.

More specifically, the petitioners call upon the House of Commons to protect and preserve the application of charitable status rules on a politically and ideologically neutral basis without discrimination on the basis of political or religious values and without the imposition of another values test; and to affirm the right of Canadians to freedom of expression.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, the first petition I am tabling today is with respect to violent clashes between Azerbaijan and Armenia. It is timely in light of recent further aggression across the border from the Azeri side. Petitioners want to see peace, and they want to see a negotiated settlement.

Petitioners are calling on the government to act specifically around the issue of the continuing detention of Armenian prisoners of war. Petitioners ask the government to condemn the continuing illegal detention of Armenian prisoners of war, to call for their immediate release, to use all diplomatic tools to support this objective, to denounce state-sponsored hateful rhetoric and aggressive attacks from Turkey and Azerbaijan against Armenia and Artsakh, and to provide the necessary humanitarian assistance to ensure the safety and viability of the population of Artsakh.

• (1100)

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, the second petition I am tabling is similar to that tabled by a number of colleagues. It is to support Bill S-223, a bill to combat forced organ harvesting and trafficking. This bill has passed the Senate twice and the House once in its current form. It is now stalled at the foreign affairs committee, and petitioners want to see this bill passed as soon as possible. Families of victims have been waiting 15 years, and hopefully these delays will end.

CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, finally, I am tabling a petition that raises the concern of citizens about a Liberal plan to apply a political values test to charitable status determination. It is raising significant concern throughout the charitable sector that the Liberal plan to politicize charitable status will jeopardize the status of hospitals, houses of worship, schools, homeless shelters and other charitable organizations just because they do not agree with the Liberal Party of Canada.

Petitioners want to see the government protect and preserve the application of charitable status rules on a politically and ideologically neutral basis without discrimination, and they also want to see the government substantively affirm the right of Canadians to freedom of expression whether or not the Liberal Party agrees with them.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Questions Nos. 568, 570, 571, 576 to 578, 580 to 584, 587, 590 to 592, 594, 596, 599, 601, 603, 606, 608, 612, 613, 616, 617, 619, 620, 622, 626, 627, 629, 631, 634, 638, 641, 642, 644, 646, 647, 651, 658, 663, 668, 670, 684 to 687, 690, 695, 701, 704, 708 to 710, 713, 715, 717, 720, 726, 728, 733, 734, 739, 740, 742, 745, 751, 753 to 755 and 759.

Routine Proceedings

[Text]

Question No. 568—**Mr. Pat Kelly:**

With regard to the Canada Revenue Agency's (CRA) instruction to tax preparation software providers to include changes proposed in Bill C-8 in 2021 tax returns while the bill was still under debate: (a) how many returns included invalid claims as a result; (b) what is the average processing time for cases of CRA employees assisting taxpayers to correct invalid claims; and (c) what was the total value of refunds owed to taxpayers delayed by invalid claims on returns?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government has always had the backs of Canadians in their time of need, and Bill C-8 is another example of how we're making life more affordable for Canadians. The CRA was unable to administer the tax credits in question without Bill C-8 achieving royal assent. Royal assent for Bill C-8 was delayed because of procedural delays during the bill's various stages of study.

With regard to (a), regarding impacts of the aforementioned procedural delays, approximately 140,000 returns have been received with claims for the eligible educator school supply tax credit and the return of fuel charge proceeds to farmers tax credit pending royal assent.

With regard to (b), as of May 11, 2022, all tax returns are being held in abeyance within CRA systems. Once royal assent is received, it is expected that all of the 140,000 returns would be processed within a few days, with the exception of a very small percentage that might require further upfront validation.

With regard to part (c), as of May 11, 2022, as the returns have not been assessed, the CRA is unable to provide an answer in the manner requested. Once Bill C-8 for the eligible educator school supply tax credit and the return of fuel charge proceeds to farmers tax credit receives royal assent, the returns will be processed.

The CRA has a long-standing practice to encourage taxpayers and registrant taxpayers to comply with the introduction of proposed tax measures on the assumption that the legislation for these tax measures will be enacted. This practice is consistent with parliamentary convention, helps provide consistency and fairness in the tax treatment of taxpayers, and eases both the compliance burden on taxpayers and the administrative burden on the CRA.

When proposed legislation results in an increase to refundable credits or benefits such as the Canada child benefit, or CCB, the Canada workers benefit, or if a GST/HST rebate to the taxpayer or a significant rebate or refund is at stake, the CRA's practice is to wait until the legislation for that specific measure has been enacted before making any of these types of payments.

Routine Proceedings

This cautious approach recognizes that although parliamentary convention dictates that taxation proposals are effective as soon as a Notice of Ways and Means Motion is tabled, there is no clear authority for the CRA to make these increased payments out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

The term “invalid claim”, which appears in the question, is not a term used by the CRA in this context. Therefore, for the purposes of this question, the CRA has responded in respect of “returns received”.

Question No. 570—Mr. Dan Albas:

With regard to the government’s divestiture of the Summerland Research and Development Centre: (a) what is the purpose for the divestiture; (b) what are the lot numbers; (c) what is the estimated date for divestiture; (d) is there a map outlining the boundaries of those lots, and, if so, what is the map and outline description; and (e) has an entity been indemnified to divest the lots to, and, if so, what entity?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, AAFC, is not currently divesting the Summerland Research and Development Centre property in whole or in part. Furthermore, this property has not been declared surplus by AAFC.

AAFC is bound by the Treasury Board directive on the management of real property to demonstrate sound stewardship by reviewing our real property holdings on a cyclical basis to identify real property that is underutilized, inefficient or no longer needed to support departmental programs, and by disposing of surplus real property in a manner that minimizes liability and ensures best value to the Crown. Should lands become surplus and formally declared as such, divestiture would follow the prescribed process.

Question No. 571—Mr. Taylor Bachrach:

With regard to the Canadian Transportation Agency, since July 15, 2019: (a) how many notices of violation, within the meaning of Part VI of the Canada Transportation Act, have been issued for sections 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22 and 23 of the Air Passenger Protection Regulations, broken down by (i) section, (ii) year; and (b) of the violations in (a), how many administrative monetary penalties have been issued to air carriers, broken down by (i) year, (ii) amount, (iii) violation?

Hon. Omar Alghabra (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, information regarding the two Canadian Transportation Agency enforcement actions pertaining to the air passenger protection regulations linked to sections mentioned in the question, are available on the following webpages: <https://otc-cta.gc.ca/eng/enforcement-action/westjet-2> and <https://otc-cta.gc.ca/eng/enforcement-action/air-transat-at>.

Question No. 576—Mr. Richard Bragdon:

With regard to completed access to information requests, broken down by each entity subject to the Access to Information Act and the Privacy Act: (a) how many release packages contained redactions, broken down by year, since 2019; and (b) what is the breakdown of (a) by type of exemption and section of the act used to justify the redaction?

Hon. Greg Fergus (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, each fiscal year, Treasury Board Secretariat, TBS, collects data on the number of requests received, completed, closed and responded to according to legislative timelines, 30 days, extensions taken, and exemptions and exclusions invoked.

In response to (a), TBS collects data on the volume of requests closed during the reporting period, including information on the

disposition of each request, including disclosed in part, all exempted and all excluded.

In response to (b), TBS also collects data on the number of requests to which particular exemptions were applied.

TBS publishes a summary of this information annually in the access to information and privacy statistical report, as well as datasets that contain all the statistical data reported by all institutions, broken down by institution, at <https://www.canada.ca/en/treasury-board-secretariat/services/access-information-privacy/statistics-atip.html>. The information requested can be calculated based on the published datasets.

The “Access to Information and Privacy Statistical Report for the 2021 to 2022 Fiscal Year” will be published by December 31, 2022.

All data presented in the access to information and privacy statistical report, as well as the statistical data that is available in an open format, is based on fiscal years. As such, data since 2019 would include the 2018-19 fiscal year.

Question No. 577—Mr. Clifford Small:

With regard to cod fishery policy and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO): (a) what are DFO’s estimates or projections on the number of cod that will be eaten by harp seals in Canadian waters in 2022; and (b) what is the total number of cod that can be legally caught by commercial fishermen in Canada in 2022?

Mr. Mike Kelloway (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to growing Canada’s fish and seafood sector, and we know that seals eat fish. We established the Atlantic seal science task team to bridge the gap between our existing science, and what harvesters were seeing out on the water. This fall, Fisheries and Oceans Canada will be hosting a Seal Summit as per the task team’s recommendations, which will bring scientists, harvesters, indigenous peoples and communities together on this critical issue.

The total number of cod that can be legally caught by all commercial means, directed and bycatch, in 2022 is 2,370 tonnes. This does not include two cod stocks that await ministerial decision for 2022. However, in 2021 the total amount that can be caught legally by commercial fishermen was 13,640 tonnes for the two stocks.

Question No. 578—Mrs. Rachael Thomas:

With regard to actions taken by the Clerk of the Privy Council in response to statements made in public by the Prime Minister or any other minister, broken down by year since January 1, 2016: (a) how many times did the clerk (i) consider, (ii) inform the Office of the Prime Minister, that a statement made by the Prime Minister or another minister in public was false or misleading; and (b) what are the details of each instance in (a), including (i) the date, (ii) the false or misleading statement, (iii) who made the statement, (iv) the summary of any action taken to correct the false or misleading information?

Hon. Greg Fergus (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Clerk of the Privy Council advises the Prime Minister and elected government officials from an objective, non-partisan, public policy perspective. In this capacity, she discusses a wide range of issues with the Prime Minister, his office, and other ministers on a regular basis. Further information on the clerk's role and any announcements can be found at <https://www.canada.ca/en/privy-council.html>.

Question No. 580—**Mrs. Rachael Thomas:**

With regard to performance audits or similar types of assessments related to passport processing times which were ongoing, or have been conducted since January 1, 2022: what are the details of each audit or assessment, including for each the (i) start and end date of the time period audited or assessed, (ii) summary and scope of the audit or assessment, (iii) findings, (iv) recommended changes to improve processing times, if applicable, (v) changes actually implemented, (vi) entity responsible for conducting the audit or assessment?

Ms. Ya'ara Saks (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Internal Audit Services at ESDC has not completed a performance audit related to passport processing times since January 1, 2022.

Question No. 581—**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:**

With regard to the government's reaction to plans made by the United Kingdom to mandate computed tomography (CT) scanning equipment in all of their airports by 2024: (a) what is the timeline for when CT or similar 3D scanners will be installed into each Canadian airport; and (b) what is the timeline for when the restrictions on liquids in carry-on items by passengers can be modified as a result of such equipment being installed?

Hon. Omar Alhabra (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), computed tomography, CT, X-ray technology is an enhanced means to mitigate threats to aviation security. Through the screening authority, the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority, CATSA, Canada has leveraged CT X-ray technology for screening checked baggage for over 15 years and it is currently deployed at all major airports in Canada. Transport Canada is working closely with CATSA to further expand the use of CT X-ray technology to enhance screening.

Transport Canada recently reached out to security partners such as the United Kingdom and the United States to gather information on CT X-ray technology and to align security requirements.

Planning and coordination are under way by CATSA to trial a next generation CT X-ray technology at a passenger pre-board screening checkpoint during the summer of 2022.

Transport Canada will assess CT X-ray technology during the upcoming trial to evaluate its performance on security effectiveness and operational efficiency.

Following the trial, Transport Canada will assess findings and determine possible deployment of CT X-ray technology at passenger pre-board screening checkpoints.

Canada's timelines on the deployment of CT X-ray technology to enhance passenger screening shall be based on trial results and further consultation with security partners such as the United States and the United Kingdom.

With regard to part (b), any modifications to Canada's volumetric restrictions on liquids, gels and aerosols shall be determined

Routine Proceedings

based on threat risks and strategic alignment of program requirements.

Question No. 582—**Mr. Tony Baldinelli:**

With regard to the government's ArriveCAN application: (a) since January 1, 2022, how many individuals have been exempted from the requirement to submit the information required by the application prior to arriving in Canada; and (b) what is the breakdown of (a) by circumstance or reason for exemption (professional sports team, humanitarian refugee, no access to electronic device, etc.)?

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since January 1, 2022, there have been no exemptions to submitting the required information in ArriveCAN.

Question No. 583—**Mr. Philip Lawrence:**

With regard to Via Rail's morning commuter service: when will train 651 between Kingston and Toronto (including stops in Coburg and Port Hope), be reinstated and begin operating again?

Hon. Omar Alhabra (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Via Rail's ridership decreased 95% at the peak of the pandemic and demand is coming back.

Via Rail's objective has always been the safe resumption of services when conditions allowed it, and the corporation is pleased to offer its passengers more options this summer with the return of most of its services across the country by the end of June 2022. This was announced on April 14, 2022, and is available at the following web address: <https://media.viarail.ca/en/press-releases/2022/back-track-rail-increases-services-across-canada-time-summer>.

Throughout the pandemic, Via Rail's decision to add frequencies has been based on various factors, including demand and continuing to employ a balanced approach in order to fulfill Via Rail's important public service mandate and manage financial impacts.

Via Rail is therefore constantly evaluating its services, and after two years of the pandemic, Via Rail is looking at the impact of the changes in travel habits on its operations, for example the new work-from-home reality.

While train 651 is not slated to return in June 2022, Via Rail continues to evaluate this route and several others. The corporation expects to complete an analysis of the impact of telecommuting and other business recovery considerations in the coming months.

Question No. 584—**Mr. Philip Lawrence:**

With regard to Royal Canadian Air Force flights, including training flights which flew over downtown Ottawa between January 1, 2022, and May 1, 2022: what are the details of each such flight, including (i) the date, (ii) the type of aircraft, (iii) the origin, (iv) the destination, (v) the number of individuals on board, (vi) the purpose of the flight, including the type of training, if applicable, (vii) whether there was any equipment on board that could be used for any type of surveillance, and, if so, the type of equipment on board, (viii) whether any surveillance was conducted, or equipment that conducts surveillance was used, even if as part of a training exercise, and, if so, the details of what was used and how it was used?

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Mr. Bryan May (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Royal Canadian Air Force, RCAF, operates multiple fleets of aircraft across Canada. On a daily basis, these aircraft conduct routine operations, including search and rescue activities, transportation of cargo, pilot training, medical transportation, the secure transportation of VIPs and deployment of personnel for operations in Canada and abroad.

As part of routine operations and training, the RCAF may fly over downtown Ottawa depending on air traffic, the runway required to depart or arrive at the Ottawa or Gatineau airports and the routings issued by the air traffic controller. Additionally, RCAF aircraft may fly over downtown Ottawa as part of public relations events and ceremonial activities, including Remembrance Day.

Providing the requested details would require a manual search of data for over 115 RCAF flights that used the Ottawa or Gatineau airports between January 1, 2022, and May 1, 2022, which could not be completed in the allotted time.

While not in the scope of this Order Paper question, National Defence previously shared information on this matter. The training was planned prior to, and was unrelated to, the domestic event that was taking place at the time. These flights are conducted in order to maintain essential qualifications and currency on airborne ISR-related equipment. The training was planned as part of annual training requirements, and the capabilities were booked in advance. Cancelling such training would have been costly and would have had a negative impact on maintaining required certifications and qualifications and thus on Canadian Armed Forces operational readiness.

Question No. 587—Mr. John Nater:

With regard to the sum of \$68,820,713 issued in remissions from the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission to broadcasters that was listed on page 13 of the President of the Treasury Board's Fees Report for the 2020-21 fiscal year: what is the breakdown of this sum for each broadcaster, media outlet, or company?

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in processing parliamentary returns, the government applies the principles set out in the Access to Information Act and the Privacy Act. Information has been withheld on the grounds that it constitutes financial information that is confidential information supplied to the commission by a third party and is treated consistently in a confidential manner by the third party.

Question No. 590—Mr. Adam Chambers:

With regard to the tariff on fertilizer originating from Russia: how much revenue money has been collected as a result of the tariff on purchase orders which were made (i) prior to March 2, 2022, (ii) on or since March 2, 2022, (iii) in total?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, customs duties and taxes are assessed based on the time of importation of goods, as opposed to the date of when they are purchased. This includes products subject to the general tariff of 35% that now applies to virtually all goods from Russia and Belarus pursuant to the Most-Favoured-Nation Tariff Withdrawal Order (2022-1) P.C. 2022-0182, which came into force on March 2, 2022. This order also specifies that it does not apply to goods that were in transit to Canada on or before March 2, 2022.

From the time the order took effect until June 30, 2022, fertilizer importations with a value for duty of \$75.5 million were subject to the in-transit exclusion, and no customs duties applied. Importations with a value for duty of \$97.5 million were subject to the general tariff, with a total value of customs duties collected of \$34.1 million.

On June 27, at the G7 leaders' summit in Elmau, Germany, Canada and other G7 members committed to explore possible pathways to use these tariff revenues to assist Ukraine.

Effective June 20, 2022, the government also provided additional interest-free relief under the advance payment program. This change is forecast to save producers \$61 million over two program years to offset the rising costs of inputs, including fertilizers.

Question No. 591—Mr. Eric Melillo:

With regard to individuals requiring an urgent passport for travel commencing within two business days or less being turned away or told to return to passport offices another day, since March 1, 2022: (a) on how many days, broken down by month and by passport office location, were individuals turned away due to (i) lack of capacity, (ii) other reasons, broken down by reason; and (b) does the government have estimates on the number of individuals who were turned away in (a), and, if so, what are they?

Ms. Ya'ara Saks (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, passport applicants with proof of travel within two business days are not turned away from passport sites. In large urban centers, Service Canada has implemented triage measures to provide a more intensive, client-specific approach. Across the country, managers and executives are speaking directly with clients in order to triage line-ups at specialized passport sites. This ensures that clients are prioritized by date of travel and, while wait times may be lengthy, are provided the service required.

Clients travelling within two business days are instructed to visit a specialized passport site that offers urgent pickup service, while those travelling within 45 business days are encouraged to make an appointment and apply in person at one of the 35 passport sites across the country. Clients travelling beyond 45 business days can make an appointment and apply in person at a Service Canada centre or by mail. We do not track the number of individuals who do not receive service at passport offices.

The service standard for processing the in-person passport applications done at one of the Service Canada specialized passport sites is 10 days. Service Canada has been continuously meeting the performance target for this service standard. For the week ending July 31, 96% of those who applied in person at a specialized passport office received their passports in under 10 business days, and 81% of Canadians currently receive their passports in under 40 business days.

Question No. 592—**Mr. Ryan Williams:**

With regard to the Canada Border Services Agency and the current backlog of 295,133 Nexus applications: (a) what is the government's projected timeframe for clearing the backlog; (b) what is the government's projection for what the backlog will be as of (i) October 1, 2022, (ii) January 1, 2023, (iii) April 1, 2023, (iv) July 1, 2023; (c) when will the Canadian enrolment centres open for applicant interviews, broken down by each location; and (d) what is the government's explanation for why the United States was able to open Nexus enrolment centres for applicant interviews in April 2022, yet the Canadian centres remain closed?

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), CBSA jointly administers the Nexus trusted traveller program with United States Customs and Border Protection, or CBP. All initial applicants, along with approximately 30% of renewing members, require an interview for the purposes of identity or document verification and the collection of biometrics

It is difficult to project future application numbers, as a number of factors contribute to interview demand, including travel intentions and the U.S. exchange rate. The CBSA is working closely with CBP to increase the capacity of existing enrolment centres, to return CBP officers to Canadian enrolment centres and to expand opportunities for applicants, such as the use of virtual interviews using video conferencing technologies. Given variability in demand and capacity, the CBSA cannot commit to a timeline to clear the interview backlog.

With regard to part (b), the CBSA is working to address the interview capacity and is not able to provide a projection at this time.

With regard to part (c), a date has not yet been determined regarding the reopening of Canadian enrolment centres. Canada and the U.S. are currently discussing the timing of the resumption of interviews at Canadian enrolment centres. CBSA has always taken a national approach to reopening all enrolment centres at the same time, and the agency plans on adopting the same approach once a decision is made to reopen enrolment centres.

With regard to part (d), the Nexus program is jointly administered by Canada and the U.S. Canada and the U.S. are in discussions about the timing of the reopening of Canadian enrolment centres. Until that time, enrolment centres in Canada will continue to be closed.

Question No. 594—**Mr. Rob Morrison:**

With regard to the government's decision to allow the possession of up to 2.5 grams of hard drugs, including fentanyl, to be decriminalized in British Columbia: (a) does Health Canada consider a 2.5 gram dose of fentanyl to be potentially lethal; (b) does Health Canada still consider the statement on its website in reference to fentanyl that "A few grains can be enough to kill you" to be accurate; (c) if the response to (b) is negative, when did the position change and why; and (d) what does Health Canada consider to be a safe amount of fentanyl that may be consumed without causing death?

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of

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Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a lethal dose can vary from person to person. The composition and purity of the illegal drug supply varies, including strong opioids such as fentanyl. In particular, the illegal drug supply remains contaminated by potent drugs like fentanyl and its analogues and has the potential to pose harm to people who use drugs. Health Canada recognizes that fentanyl is a dangerous drug due to its potency and risk of overdose, in particular if used in ways that increase risk of harm, such as using alone or mixed with other substances. For this reason, fentanyl and its analogues are controlled under Schedule I of the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act. Activities with fentanyl such as possession and production are illegal, unless authorized through the Act's regulations or an exemption under the Act.

With regard to 100% pure fentanyl, not to the illegal drug supply, the lethal dose of fentanyl has never been determined in humans. From a precautionary approach, it is generally considered that fentanyl has the potential to be lethal at doses over 2 milligrams.

Substance use and its harms are shaped by several complex factors. A number of factors contribute to overdose fatalities, including mixing substances, as when taking opioids with alcohol or sedatives; method of use; level of tolerance, as someone with a higher tolerance may use more of a drug than someone else; unknown purity or potency as a result of contaminants in the illegal drug supply; or other health conditions, such as liver or kidney disease or breathing problems. Anyone who uses illegal drugs, including fentanyl, should continue to engage in harm reduction measures to reduce the risk of overdose and death.

In response to a request from the Province of British Columbia, from January 31, 2023, to January 31, 2026, adults 18 and over in B.C. will not be subject to criminal charges for the possession of up to 2.5 grams of certain illegal drugs for personal use. More information on the exemption can be found at the Health Canada website.

In assessing this exemption request, the dual objectives of the CDSA—to protect public health and maintain public safety—were considered. The inclusion of fentanyl in this exemption and the associated threshold should not be misconstrued as a statement on its safety. Anyone who uses illegal drugs, including fentanyl, should continue to engage in harm reduction measures to reduce the risk of overdose and death.

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With respect to B.C.'s exemption, it is important to note that the amount of the listed illegal drugs that a person may possess does not necessarily equate to the amount they will use at one time. Someone who uses drugs may be in possession of more than they plan to use at one time for a number of reasons, such as limited local availability of drugs for purchase; transportation/geographic considerations, such as living in rural or remote locations; or buying in bulk to reduce interaction with the illegal market.

This exemption only relates to possession for personal use. Trafficking, as well as unauthorized possession for the purposes of trafficking, remain illegal regardless of the amount of controlled substances involved. Further, it is also important to note that law enforcement can still arrest and seize drugs at any amount, even under the 2.5-gram threshold, for other offences, such as trafficking. Above the threshold, law enforcement will continue to use their discretion to determine intent, and prosecutors will need to consider the Public Prosecution Service of Canada's guidance on possession charges.

Several sources of data were carefully considered with respect to the threshold in B.C.'s exemption, including purchasing and use patterns, public health data and law enforcement data such as drug seizures.

As this is the first exemption of its kind in Canada, its implementation will be rigorously monitored to measure progress toward established objectives and intended outcomes, and to identify unintended consequences and other potential risks. Ongoing evaluation will take place throughout the duration of the exemption, including independent, peer-reviewed, third party evaluation.

This exemption is one additional tool to support B.C.'s comprehensive response to this public health crisis. The Government of Canada's approach to addressing the overdose crisis also aims to reduce stigma and harm associated with substance use and reduce the trafficking of illegal drugs. This includes increasing access to pharmaceutical-grade alternatives to the toxic drug supply to provide a safer supply, border enforcement of precursor chemical imports, investing in a robust system of care that includes mental health, and monitoring and evaluating efforts to inform an evidence base and identify best practices.

Question No. 596—Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:

With regard to the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) and its College of Reviewers: (a) what specific conflict of interest prohibitions, if any, are placed on the reviewers; (b) what specific prohibitions, if any, are placed on the reviewers' current or past activities related to conducting work, (including any previous employment), by a firm or organization that applied for funding through the CIHR; (c) since 2016, broken down by year, how many reviewers have been removed from their position due to conflict of interest prohibitions; and (d) what are the details or summary of each instance in (c)?

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), all participants of the peer review process, including peer reviewers, are subject to the conflict of interest and confidentiality policy of the federal research funding organizations, which defines conditions under which an individual cannot be a peer reviewer, in particular sections 6.2.1 and 6.2.2. Those conditions are further detailed in the Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Agreement for Peer Reviewers and Peer Review Ob-

servers, the signing of which is a condition of participation in peer review.

The agreement states that there may be a real, perceived or potential conflict of interest when the peer reviewer or observer would receive professional or personal benefit resulting from the funding opportunity or application being reviewed; has a professional or personal relationship with an applicant or the applicant's institution; has a direct or indirect financial interest in a funding opportunity or application being reviewed; or is currently under investigation for an alleged breach of funding organization policies.

A conflict of interest may be deemed to exist or perceived as such when peer reviewers or observers are applicants within the competition and have ability to bias or influence the process to the benefit of their application; are a relative or close friend, or have a personal relationship with an applicant; are in a position to gain or lose financially/materially from the funding of an application; have had long-standing scientific or personal differences with an applicant; are currently affiliated with an applicant's institution, organization or company, including research hospitals and research institutes; or are closely professionally affiliated with an applicant because of having in the last six years frequent and regular interactions with an applicant in the course of their duties at their department, institution, organization or company; been a supervisor or a trainee of an applicant; collaborated, published, or shared funding with an applicant, or have plans to do so in the immediate future; or been employed by the institution when an institution is the applicant; and/or feel for any reason unable to provide an impartial review of the application.

With regard to (b), as outlined above, there are numerous conditions defining a conflict of interest and which may prevent a fair review from proceeding, most notably when reviewers are closely professionally affiliated with an applicant, as a result of having in the last six years frequent and regular interactions with an applicant in the course of their duties at their department, institution, organization or company. Together with the list of other conditions, this is intended to mitigate against any conflict of interest situations.

With regard to (c) and (d), CIHR does not “remove” members from their position as a member of the peer review committee; rather, their self-declared conflicts are used by CIHR to manage and avoid conflicts of interest during the peer review meetings. Practically speaking, this means that during peer review meetings, a member will be asked to leave the discussions for an application on which they declared a conflict of interest. That member is also not given access to any material related to that same application. Members in a conflict-of-interest situation are returned to the discussion once deliberations on the application in conflict have ended. This approach avoids conflict of interest situations in the scientific peer review process at the core of the CIHR mandate.

Question No. 599—Mr. Jeremy Patzer:

With regard to the government's claim that its decision to keep various pandemic-related restrictions in place, such as mask mandates and mandatory vaccination requirements, is based on science: (a) is it based on medical science or political science; (b) for each restriction still in place as of June 3, 2022, is there any specific scientific evidence to support the restriction, and, if so, what is the evidence; (c) is the scientific evidence in Canada different than the evidence used by governments in the European Union, the United States, and other parts of the world that have eliminated such restrictions; and (d) if the scientific evidence in (c) is different, how is it different?

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as of June 3, 2022, the in-force Order in Council, or OIC, regarding COVID-19 is OIC 2022-0567, “Minimizing the Risk of Exposure to COVID-19 in Canada Order”. OIC 2022-0567 came into force on May 31, 2022. The OIC was repealed and replaced by “OIC 2022-0836 Minimizing the Risk of Exposure to COVID-19 in Canada Order” on June 27 and remains in effect until September 30, 2022.

With regard to (a), the Government of Canada's decision with respect to COVID-19 border measures continue to be based on epidemiological scientific evidence.

The government's top priority is the health and safety of Canadians. To limit the introduction and spread of COVID-19 in Canada, the government has taken unprecedented action to implement a comprehensive strategy with layers of precautionary measures.

SARS-CoV-2 was first detected in Wuhan, China, in December 2019, and was a new strain of virus that had never before been seen in humans. SARS-CoV-2 causes the disease COVID-19. Canada's first case of the disease was confirmed on January 27, 2020. Originally seen to be a local outbreak, COVID-19 spread rapidly, and on March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization, WHO, declared a COVID-19 pandemic. Five days later, Canada had 401 confirmed cases, and the chief public health officer, or CPHO, of Canada stated that COVID-19 posed a serious health risk. COVID-19 has now affected the majority of countries around the world. As of June 13, 2022, over two years after the WHO declared a pandemic, the WHO COVID-19 dashboard was reporting more than 533 million global cases and more than 6.3 million global deaths.

Between February 3, 2020, and May 31, 2022, 79 emergency OICs were made under the Quarantine Act to minimize the risk of exposure to COVID-19 in Canada, to reduce the risk of importation from other countries, to repatriate Canadians and to strengthen measures at the border to reduce the impact of COVID-19 in

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Canada. Combined, these measures have been effective in significantly reducing the number of travel-related cases.

Any changes to international travel restrictions and advice are based on national and international evidence-based risk assessments. With the COVID-19 vaccines assisting in pandemic control measures, the government has used a phased approach to easing border measures for fully vaccinated travellers and maintaining requirements for unvaccinated travellers. These decisions are grounded in meeting specific public health criteria, and based on scientific evidence and the epidemiological situation in Canada and globally.

With regard to (b), epidemiological scientific evidence underpinned the government's COVID-19 border measures, including those that remain in place as of June 3, 2022.

As of June 3, 2022 under “OIC 2022-0567 Minimizing the Risk of Exposure to COVID-19 in Canada Order”, foreign nationals intending to enter Canada must meet the specified vaccination requirements. In addition, travellers permitted entry into Canada are subject to requirements for tests, quarantine and other post-border measures, as applicable, in Canada.

With regard to (c), the Government of Canada engages its international partners, and leverages the WHO's unique convening role to bring together expertise and resources from nearly 200 member states via initiatives such as the technical advisory group on SARS-CoV-2 virus evolution and the WHO hub for pandemic and epidemic intelligence to monitor and evaluate the evolution of COVID-19 and other infectious diseases.

The scientific evidence used to inform Canada's international border measures was based on the epidemiological situation in Canada, the global body of epidemiological evidence on COVID-19, and the effectiveness of related public health measures and global trends. Canadian measures are implemented in the interest of the health and safety of the Canadian public.

Likewise, Canada's high vaccination rates and epidemiological situation supported the lifting of pre-arrival testing for fully vaccinated travellers as of April 1, 2022. Pre-arrival testing requirements remain in place for unvaccinated travellers five years of age or older, except for children under the age of 12 if they are accompanying a fully vaccinated adult. To protect against the introduction and spread of COVID-19 and its variants in Canada and to reduce the potential burden on the health care system, the Government of Canada continues to take a precautionary approach by maintaining current quarantine and testing requirements for unvaccinated travellers and limiting entry to fully vaccinated foreign nationals and persons with right of entry into Canada, with limited exceptions.

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With regard to (d), the scientific evidence used to inform Canada's international border measures was based on the epidemiological situation in Canada, the global body of epidemiological evidence on COVID-19, and the effectiveness of related public health measures and global trends. Canadian measures are implemented in the interest of the health and safety of the Canadian public.

Question No. 601—Mr. John Nater:

With regard to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC): (a) have the shows (i) *Keep Your Head Up, Kid: The Don Cherry Story*, (ii) *Wrath of Grapes: The Don Cherry Story II*, (iii) *Trudeau*, (iv) *Trudeau II: Maverick in the Making*, (v) *Prairie Giant: The Tommy Douglas Story*, been removed from CBC Gem and other online CBC platforms; and (b) if the answer to (a) is affirmative, what are the details of the removal of each show, including, for each, (i) why it was removed, (ii) what steps the CBC has taken to preserve the content, (iii) the dates on which it was removed, (iv) who made the decision to remove the content, (v) the date on which the Minister of Canadian Heritage became aware of the shows' removal, (vi) the actions taken by the Minister of Canadian Heritage, if any, to ensure that these and other heritage shows were preserved?

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the requested titles, all were created by independent producers. CBC purchases the rights to broadcast and stream each show for a set period of time from the independent producer, who maintains ownership of the program.

In response to (a), CBC did not take online viewing rights for *Trudeau*, *Trudeau II: Maverick in the Making*, and *Prairie Giant: The Tommy Douglas Story*, as these programs were produced before online streaming. Those shows were therefore never on CBC Gem or any other online CBC platforms.

In response to (b)(i), (b)(iii) and (b)(iv), CBC licensed online rights from the independent producer for *Keep Your Head Up, Kid: The Don Cherry Story* and *Wrath of Grapes: The Don Cherry Story II*. Those programs were available for online viewing by audiences until the expiry of those agreements in January 2016 and March 2019 respectively.

In response to (b)(ii), the titles enumerated in (b)(i) were funded by the former Canadian Television Fund, CTF, or the current Canada Media Fund, CMF. Pursuant to the independent producers' agreement with the CTF/CMF, copies of these programs may have been provided to Library and Archives Canada.

In response to (b)(v) and (b)(vi), CBC/Radio-Canada is an arm's-length Crown corporation established by the Broadcasting Act that has full freedom of expression and journalistic, creative and programming independence. We do not inform the Minister of Canadian Heritage about specific programming decisions.

Question No. 603—Mr. Jeremy Patzer:

With regard to the government's decision to keep COVID-19 related travel and employment restrictions in place months longer than the United States, the European Union, and other countries around the world: (a) is the Prime Minister making this decision based on what scientists are telling him and, if so, what are the names and the titles of the scientists who the Prime Minister is actually listening to; and (b) what specific rationale did each scientist in (a) use to justify why Canada should maintain these restrictions despite the decision of other countries to drop them?

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in regard to part (a) of the question, since the onset of the pandemic, the Public Health Agency of Canada, or PHAC, has provided guidance and advice on public health measures at both the in-

dividual and community level to help reduce the spread of COVID-19 and protect the health and safety of people living in Canada. PHAC's guidance is informed by scientific evidence, expert opinion and established public health practices. The implementation of vaccine mandates in the fall of 2021 was a decision of the Government of Canada informed by public health advice.

The vaccine mandate was introduced in recognition of the public health situation in Canada, specifically, to ensure the safety and security of the transportation system, passengers and transportation employees, and the public, delivering immediate protection from infection and severity of illness in workplaces and for travellers.

Canada's vaccination mandate for the transport sector was informed by scientific evidence and information on the efficacy, availability and uptake of vaccines; the evolving domestic and international epidemiological situation; and the effectiveness of public health and other measures.

Since then, the epidemiological context has changed considerably, including regional trends, availability of health care system capacity, long-range modelling and evidence concerning vaccine effectiveness, specifically against infection and transmission of circulating variants. With regard to the easing of measures and suspending of mandates, the Minister of Health and the Government of Canada carefully considered the emerging evidence regarding the impact of omicron, as well as other relevant factors, including vaccination rates in Canada of those with two doses and boosted. The government administered necessary measures to keep Canadians safe from public health threats.

In response to part (b), as announced on June 14, 2022, the government suspended the federal vaccine mandates effective June 20, 2022, for the federal public service and the federally regulated transportation sector. The Government of Canada's decision to suspend the mandatory vaccination requirements was informed by key indicators, including the evolution of the virus; the epidemiologic situation and modelling, that is stabilization of infection and hospitalizations across the country; vaccine science; and high levels of vaccination in Canada against COVID-19.

With higher levels of immunity, either through vaccination or infection, greater availability of anti-viral drugs and lower hospitalization rates, Canada is better equipped to effectively manage the COVID-19 pandemic and reduce pressure on the health care system. The government will continue to closely monitor domestic and international scientific evidence and evaluate the new public health measures, particularly as we approach the fall.

Similarly, the scientific evidence used to inform Canada's international border measures was based on the epidemiological situation in Canada, the global body of epidemiological evidence on COVID-19 and the effectiveness of related public health measures and global trends. Canadian measures are implemented in the interest of the health and safety of the Canadian public.

Any changes to international travel restrictions and advice are based on national and international evidence-based risk assessments. Consequently, as the COVID-19 virus continues to evolve and circulate in Canada and around the world, and with the COVID-19 vaccines assisting in pandemic control measures, the government has used a phased approach to easing border measures for fully vaccinated travellers and maintaining requirements for unvaccinated travellers.

It is important to note that effectiveness varies depending on the COVID-19 vaccine product received, and that effectiveness decreases over time following vaccination. However, COVID-19 vaccines are effective at preventing severe illness, hospitalization and death from COVID-19. Further, Canada recognizes that, against omicron and its sublineages, a primary vaccine series is less effective at decreasing symptomatic or asymptomatic infection, but still offers reasonable protection against severe disease.

To protect against the introduction and spread of COVID-19 and its variants in Canada and to reduce the potential burden on the health care system, the Government of Canada continues to take a precautionary approach by maintaining current quarantine and testing requirements for unvaccinated travellers and limiting entry to fully vaccinated foreign nationals and persons with right of entry into Canada, with limited exceptions.

Question No. 606—Mrs. Tracy Gray:

With regard to the Canada Digital Adoption Program: (a) what is the number of businesses which have applied, as of June 7, 2022, to the (i) "Grow Your Business Online" stream, (ii) "Boost Your Business Technology" stream; (b) what is the number of students hired, as of June 7, 2022, via the (i) "Grow Your Business Online" stream, (ii) "Boost Your Business Technology" stream, broken down by week since April 6, 2022; and (c) of the \$ 47,122,734 value of the contracts allocated to Magnet to administer the "Boost Your Business Technology" stream for the 2022-23 fiscal year, what (i) is the dollar amount that has so far been provided to Magnet, broken down by week since April 1, 2022, (ii) are the thresholds or criteria which Magnet is required to meet under the contract to receive allocated funding?

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a)(i), 23070 businesses have registered their interest with Grow Your Business Online, GYBO, intermediaries as of May 31, 2022. In addition, 632 of these businesses submitted a completed application to the intermediaries. Data is reported on a monthly basis and cannot be broken down by a specific day or week; so the number of businesses that have applied is reported as of May 31.

With regard to (a)(ii), as of June 7, 2022, 2,579 businesses have applied to the Boost Your Business Technology stream.

With regard to (b)(i), as of June 7, 2022, 263 e-commerce advisers have been hired via the GYBO stream. Following April 6, 2022, 109 e-commerce advisors were hired in April and 154 in May. Intermediaries provide monthly reports, which do not include a breakdown of data by week.

With regard to (b)(ii) and (c), as of June 7, 2022, no students or recent graduates have yet been hired by eligible business for the CDAP – Boost Your Business Technology Stream-funded work placement. Eligible businesses must first obtain a digital adoption plan and receive their grant, or be approved through the fast-track process, before they are able to hire students to assist them with their digital transformation. It takes about three months for a digital

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adviser to develop a digital adoption plan for a business. Given that the program was launched in early March 2022, Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, ISED, anticipates the first clients requesting the funded work placement wage subsidy in late June. The youth placement subsidy will be paid by Magnet at a cost of up to \$7,300 as reimbursement upon production of proof of wage payment by the business. ISED will reimburse Magnet for the full costs of the wage subsidies to eligible small and medium enterprises. Under the contribution agreement, ISED also will disburse funding to Magnet based on administration costs incurred, up to a maximum of 12% of the total program funding budgeted for the funded youth work placements.

Question No. 608—Mr. Warren Steinley:

With regard to the findings in the Parliamentary Budget Officer's (PBO) report from March 24, 2022, that "Most households in provinces under the backstop will see a net loss resulting from federal carbon pricing": (a) why has the Minister of Environment and Climate Change continued to promote the government's talking point that 8 out of 10 families are better off under the carbon tax, even after the PBO's report shows that such a claim is either misinformation or disinformation; and (b) does the government have any policies against the promotion of misinformation or disinformation, and, if so, why are such policies not being implemented in this matter?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there has been some confusion about the report of the Parliamentary Budget Officer, or PBO, and the details are important.

The PBO report broadly consists of two main parts. The first part looks at direct costs like increased fuel prices, and the revenue that is returned to households. This first part is straightforward and underscores how carbon pricing works. By gradually increasing the cost of fossil fuels and returning proceeds to Canadians, carbon pricing delivers an incentive to choose greener options while keeping the policy affordable. Importantly, the PBO's report confirms that, under the federal carbon pricing system, the average household receives more in climate action incentive, or CAI, payments than they face in direct costs due to carbon pricing. Most households come out ahead, and low-income households, in particular, do much better. This is because CAI payments are based on the average amount paid in the province, and high-income households tend to use more energy for larger and more vehicles and larger houses, but everyone gets the same amount of money back.

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The second part of the PBO report is where the confusion arises. The report claims that, in addition to paying the carbon price, each household also “pays” in the form of slower gross domestic product, or GDP, growth. The problem with this conclusion is that the PBO report compares GDP growth in a scenario with carbon pricing to GDP growth in a scenario in which there is no action of any kind to address climate change. This approach highlights the costs of one policy without considering real alternatives. This is not a valid comparison. Inaction on climate change is not an option. It would lead to massive costs in the future.

An appropriate comparison would include a scenario with carbon pricing and a scenario in which climate change is addressed by measures other than carbon pricing. Compared to alternatives, such as more regulations or bigger spending, experts agree that carbon pricing is the least expensive of all the policies to address climate change. In that comparison, the carbon pricing scenario comes out ahead.

The PBO report also acknowledges that its assessment of the impacts of carbon pricing does not account for the benefits of carbon pricing. Further, the study does not quantify the avoided climate damages associated with the greenhouse gas emissions reduced by carbon pricing. Without accounting for these, and other complementary policies and investments, including the numerous expected economic benefits of pricing, the report’s GDP projections likely overestimate the impact of carbon pricing on GDP growth. Finally, by presenting the difference between scenarios as a cost, a scenario where we put a price on pollution and one where we do nothing, the analysis contributes to a misconception that carbon pricing causes GDP to decline, when in fact, according to the PBO’s analysis, GDP and incomes rise in both scenarios, only at different rates. Carbon pricing drives innovation and new technologies, and this creates jobs and economic growth. When you compare carbon pricing with other options, study after study confirms the benefits of carbon pricing.

Although the Government of Canada does not currently have any policies that specifically mention misinformation or disinformation, the policy on communications and federal identity requires all government communications to be “objective, factual, non-partisan, clear, and written in plain language.”

Question No. 612—Mr. Dan Albas:

With regard to the statement, in June 2022, at the Senate Standing Committee on National Finance that the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority (CATSA) is currently operating with approximately 600 fewer screening agents compared to pre-pandemic staffing levels: (a) why is CATSA operating with fewer screeners; (b) when will CATSA meet or exceed its pre-pandemic staffing levels; (c) what action, if any, did the Minister of Transport take in early 2022 to ensure that CATSA had enough screening agents, and why did such action still result in CATSA having 600 fewer screening agents; (d) on what specific date did the Minister of Transport first become aware that there would be a shortage of CATSA screening agents; and (e) on the date in (d), what were the projections regarding the shortage, including the number of screeners CATSA would be short by and the resulting wait times at airports as a result of the shortage?

Hon. Omar Alghabara (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (c), Transport Canada has been collaborating closely with the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority, CATSA, throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, including on the matter of helping to ensure sufficient screening agents to support air sector recovery.

A key component of CATSA’s ability to secure sufficient screening officers is making sure that CATSA is sufficiently funded. CATSA typically seeks an annual funding supplement to cover its full year operations, and in early 2022, Transport Canada was working to secure funding for fiscal year 2022-23 of \$330 million, which was subsequently secured via the supplementary estimates (A), 2022-23. The majority of these additional funds is intended for CATSA’s screening contactors and is based on CATSA’s projections for air traffic volumes and related requirements for sufficient screening agents and screening hours.

Transport Canada also, working closely with CATSA, implemented a plan that facilitated the expedited hiring and training of new screening officers without compromising security. This measure proved effective at increasing the number of screening officers at passenger screening checkpoints.

With regard to part (d), Transport Canada has been collaborating with CATSA throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. CATSA began planning for postpandemic recovery in 2020. From the outset of the pandemic, CATSA retained 75% of its workforce as a means to be positioned to support the recovery of air traffic volumes. CATSA began the process of recalling its screening officers in 2021 in preparation for a recovery and kept Transport Canada apprised of the situation. A resurgence of the virus with the delta and omicron variants delayed the start of that recovery. As the air sector began to recover, CATSA worked closely with Transport Canada, airports and air carriers to forecast the demand for a busy summer period.

With regard to part (e), demand for air travel was originally anticipated to return to pre-COVID-19 air traffic levels in 2023-24. CATSA had forecast screening 59.6 million passengers in 2022-23 and 69.8 million passengers in 2023-24. The current recovery began with air traffic levels increasing materially in April and May 2022.

According to its initial projections, CATSA was planning to have 7,100 screening officers on strength to meet demand in July 2022. The actual demand in spring 2022 was above CATSA’s forecast at a time when CATSA was ramping up its operations and navigating through a difficult labor market characterized by laid-off screening officers not returning to work, attrition and absenteeism due to illness, and COVID-19 isolation protocols. In April 2022, CATSA already had 6,500 screening officers on strength. However, by July 26, 2022, it had hired over 1,600 new security screening officers, bringing its target for officers required to manage summer volumes from 93% to 102%.

Transport Canada acted quickly when it became clear that volumes were increasing to the point that they were challenging the capacity of the system. In addition to the expedited hiring and training measures noted in response (c), Transport Canada formed the airport recovery operations committee, which developed, jointly with industry representatives, concrete solutions to address the delays at the large airports during peak periods.

With regard to part (a), in May 2021, CATSA and the authority's screening contractors began recalling screening officers in anticipation of an increase in passenger traffic for 2022-23. At the same time, CATSA's screening contractors began recruiting new screening officer candidates. The aviation industry as a whole has been affected by a number of challenges, including labour markets and the speed at which passenger traffic increased in April and May.

With regard to part (b), CATSA continues to work with the authority's screening contractors to increase the number of active screening officers at security screening checkpoints across the country, with a greater focus on the busiest airports.

There is no specific target to meet or exceed prepandemic staffing levels. CATSA aims to increase the number of screening officers by 1,000 in fiscal year 2022-23 to address updated passenger volumes. As of June 8, 2022, screening officer staffing levels already meet or exceed prepandemic levels at several airports, including Toronto Pearson International Airport.

Question No. 613—Mr. Dave MacKenzie:

With regard to the government's invocation of the Emergencies Act earlier this year: did any police force make a request for the Act to be invoked, and, if so, what are the specific details of any such requests, including which police forces submitted a request, and on what date each such request was received by the government?

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to Public Safety Canada, PS, the reasons for issuing the declaration of a public order emergency were set in the public document of explanation pursuant to subsection 58(1) of the Emergencies Act, as well as a public document outlining the consultations that occurred around the invocation of the act. These documents highlight that between the end of January and February 14, 2022, the escalation of the threat across the country was regularly communicated by provinces and territories, PTs, and police of jurisdiction, POJs, to the federal government. They requested the federal government's action in supporting POJs to address the threat.

Testifying before the Special Joint Committee on the Declaration of Emergency on May 10, 2022, the commissioner of the RCMP, Brenda Lucki, explained that the RCMP did not request for the act to be invoked and that "[t]he measures enacted under the Emergencies Act provided all police officers across the country—not just the RCMP—with the ability to deal with blockades and unlawful public assemblies." She testified that it was her belief "that the act provided [law enforcement agencies] with the tools to resolve the crisis swiftly and peacefully".

During the events of January and February 2022, federal ministers and senior officials continuously engaged provinces and territories, municipalities, and law enforcement agencies to assess the situation and to offer the support and assistance of the Government of Canada. Testifying before the House of Commons Standing Com-

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mittee on Procedure and House Affairs, on Tuesday, May 17, the interim chief of the Ottawa Police Service, OPS, Steve Bell, confirmed that the OPS was "involved in conversations with our partners and the political ministries." Interim Chief Bell also informed Parliament in his testimony before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, on March 24, 2022, that, "[f]rom a policing perspective, the legislation provided the OPS with the ability to prevent people from participating in this unlawful protest." He referred to the invocation of the act as "a critical piece of [their] efforts".

With regard to the RCMP, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police did not make a request for the act to be invoked.

Question No. 616—Ms. Michelle Ferreri:

With regard to the daily Changing of the Guard Ceremony on Parliament Hill during the summer: (a) why did the government cancel the event for the summer of 2022; (b) which minister is responsible for the decision to cancel the event, and on what date did the minister either make or sign off on the decision; (c) what are the government's estimates on the amount of economic activity and benefits that the event brings to Ottawa each year; and (d) on what dates will the ceremony take place in 2023?

Mr. Bryan May (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to parts (a) and (b), National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces, CAF, have been taking unprecedented measures to protect the health and well-being of members, prevent the spread of COVID-19, and continue essential military operations, including in contributing to the national response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the CAF has been unable to train to the same scale and levels due to essential force health protection measures, which, as a result, have stretched CAF operational resources both domestically and abroad. The chief of the defence staff, as the responsible authority for the command, control, and administration of the CAF, made the decision to cancel the changing of the guard in both Ottawa and Quebec. The decision to cancel these large-scale ceremonial events was not taken lightly and was part of a deliberate effort to ensure capacity for essential activities to regenerate the force and prioritize the defence of Canada.

The ceremonial guard, who normally mount the changing of the guard, will support efforts to regenerate Canadian Army Reserve soldiers. They will focus their summer training on basic military qualification courses, which will enable them to train new recruits.

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Although the changing of the guard will not take place this summer, the national sentry program has resumed for 2022. Barring changes in health postures by the City of Ottawa or the CAF, sentries will be posted at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier seven days a week from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. until November 10, 2022.

Further information about the sentry program can be found at the following link: <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/programs/national-sentry-program.html>.

In response to part (c), National Defence does not create estimates of this nature. The decision was based on CAF operational requirements.

In response to part (d), at this time, a decision has yet to be made for the 2023 season.

Question No. 617—Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:

With regard to the June 7, 2022, testimony of the Deputy Minister of Public Safety to the Special Joint Committee on the Declaration of Emergency during which he stated that the Minister of Public Safety was “misunderstood”: (a) in relation to the minister’s comments, in the House of Commons, on May 2, 2022, that “at the recommendation of police, we invoked the Emergencies Act to protect Canadians”, (i) is the minister’s claim accurate and true, (ii) what information was the minister relying upon in making that claim, and who provided it to him, (iii) was the minister “misunderstood”, and, if so, what is the nature of the “misunderstanding”, (iv) what are the details of the actions taken by the deputy minister or other officials in the Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness to correct the minister’s “misunderstanding”, (v) has the minister corrected the “misunderstanding” in the House, and, if so, what are the details of that correction, (vi) did the deputy minister notify the Clerk of the Privy Council of the minister’s “misunderstood” comments, and, if so, what are the details of that notification, (vii) was the Prime Minister notified of the minister’s “misunderstood” comments, and, if so, what are the details of that notification; (b) in relation to the minister’s comments, in the House of Commons, on April 28, 2022, that “the invocation of the Emergencies Act was only put forward after police officials told us they needed this special power”, (i) is the minister’s claim accurate and true, (ii) what information was the minister relying upon in making that claim, and who provided it to him, (iii) was the minister “misunderstood”, and, if so, what are the details of the “misunderstanding”, (iv) what are the details of the actions taken by the deputy minister or other officials in the Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness to correct the minister’s “misunderstanding”, (v) has the minister corrected the “misunderstanding” in the House, and, if so, what are the details of that correction, (vi) did the deputy minister notify the Clerk of the Privy Council of the minister’s “misunderstood” comments, and, if so, what are the details of that notification, (vii) was the Prime Minister notified of the minister’s “misunderstood” comments, and, if so, what are the details of that notification; (c) are there any further comments made by the minister in the House of Commons or elsewhere, concerning the February 2022 public order emergency, which the deputy minister believes have been “misunderstood”, and, if so, what are the details of those comments and the nature of the “misunderstanding”; and (d) which of the minister’s “misunderstood” comments does the government believe constitute (i) misinformation, (ii) disinformation?

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the reasons for issuing the declaration of a public order emergency were set out in the public document of explanation pursuant to subsection 58(1) of the Emergencies Act, as well as a public document outlining the consultations that occurred around the invocation of the act. These documents highlight that between the end of January and February 14, 2022, the escalation of the threat across the country was regularly communicated by provinces and territories, PTs, and police of jurisdiction, POJs, to the federal government. They requested the federal government’s action in supporting POJs to address the threat. During the events of January and February 2022, federal ministers and senior officials continuously engaged provinces and territories, municipalities, and law enforcement agencies to assess the situation

and to offer the support and assistance of the Government of Canada.

Testifying before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, on March 24, 2022, the interim chief of the Ottawa Police Service, OPS, Steve Bell said, “From a policing perspective, the legislation provided the OPS with the ability to prevent people from participating in this unlawful protest”. He referred to the invocation of the act as “a critical piece of [their] efforts”.

The minister’s comments on May 2, 2022, and April 28, 2022, were reflective of the requests by law enforcement for additional tools, not for use of a specific legislative vehicle, that in turn necessitated the invocation of the Emergencies Act, which was a decision of the government and clearly explained in the documents filed in the House.

Question No. 619—Mr. Glen Motz:

With regard to the June 7, 2022, evidence of the Deputy Minister of Public Safety to the Special Joint Committee on the Declaration of Emergency that the Government of the United States of America offered tow trucks to the Government of Canada to address vehicle-based protests in February 2022: (a) by whom was the offer made; (b) to whom was the offer made; (c) on what date was the offer made; (d) how many tow trucks were offered; (e) who owned the tow trucks offered; (f) on what dates were tow trucks offered to be available; (g) in what locations were the tow trucks offered to be available; (h) was the offer accepted by the Government of Canada; (i) concerning the decision referred to in (h), (i) who made it, (ii) when was it made, (iii) when and by whom was it communicated to the United States government, (iv) to whom in the United States government was it communicated; (j) if the answer to (h) is affirmative, how many tow trucks were provided by the United States government, broken down by (i) locations in which they were deployed, (ii) dates on which they were deployed, (iii) who owned the tow trucks deployed; and (k) if the answer to (h) is negative, (i) why was the offer not accepted, (ii) how does this reconcile with the Government of Canada’s claims that a lack of available tow trucks, among other claims, required the proclamation of a national emergency?

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada works closely with a range of partners, including provinces, territories and municipalities, to ensure the safety and security of our ports of entry. We also engage with our U.S. counterparts on points of mutual interest regarding the safety and security of our shared border. These dialogues continued throughout the public order emergency in winter 2022, and touched upon the potential sharing of towing resources as a way of ending the blockades peacefully.

Question No. 620—Mr. Michael D. Chong:

With regard to the Indo-Pacific Advisory Committee announced by the Minister of Foreign Affairs on June 9, 2022: (a) what is the committee’s total budget; (b) what portion of the budget is allocated for travel; (c) what portion of the budget is allocated for hospitality; (d) what, if any, ethical screens have been established for each co-chair and member; (e) when was it determined that current staffing resources at Global Affairs Canada were inadequate to develop Canada’s Indo-Pacific strategy; (f) when does the government anticipate it will release Canada’s Indo-Pacific strategy; and (g) has the anticipated timeline for the release of Canada’s Indo-Pacific strategy changed in any way since October 26, 2021, and, if so, how?

Routine Proceedings

Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), (b) and (c), the Indo-Pacific Advisory Committee will pursue its mandate in a cost-effective manner. In light of ongoing COVID-related considerations and the geographic diversity of committee members, a majority of committee engagements are expected to be pursued on a virtual basis. Indo-Pacific Advisory Committee members are participating on the committee in a personal and voluntary capacity and will not be compensated for their work. Travel and hospitality costs incurred by the committee members will be undertaken in a manner consistent with Government of Canada expense guidelines, including the Treasury Board “Directive on Travel, Hospitality, Conference and Event Expenditures” and the provisions of the National Joint Council travel directive and the Special Travel Authorities policy. and the special travel authorities policy.

With regard to d), Global Affairs Canada and the members of the Indo-Pacific Advisory Committee are committed to upholding the highest standards of values and ethics. Global Affairs Canada consulted the office of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner and advised committee members that they are expected to provide advice exclusively in a personal capacity, and are required to recuse themselves from committee discussions or activities if potential, perceived or real conflicts of interest arise.

With regard to (e), developments in the Indo-Pacific region will have profound impacts on the lives of Canadians from coast to coast. Finalizing and releasing an Indo-Pacific strategy is a priority for the Government of Canada, including the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and commensurate resources have been dedicated to supporting its development. The Advisory Committee, which includes representatives from the private sector, civil society and government, and of indigenous peoples in Canada, will complement the work of the Government of Canada by ensuring that the Indo-Pacific strategy benefits from the diverse perspectives of Canadians.

With regard to (f) and (g), the Government of Canada will take into consideration the views of the advisory committee as a basis to support the timely development and release of a made-in-Canada Indo-Pacific strategy that positions Canada for long-term success in this critical region, while supporting a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific area.

Question No. 622—Mrs. Laila Goodridge:

With regard to fire control plans for each of Canada’s national parks, and broken down by individual park: (a) what are the specific parks’ current fire control plans, including any plans for controlled burns; (b) what are the details of any agreements signed related to the plans, such as those for water bombers, mutual aid, or fire-fighting services; and (c) what are the details of all signed contracts which are currently in place related to the plans, including, for each, (i) the amount, (ii) the vendor, (iii) the start date, (iv) the end date, (v) the description of the goods or services, (vi) the list of the parks acquiring the goods or services, (vii) whether the contract was sole-sourced or awarded through a competitive bid process, (viii) the file number?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Parks Canada concluded that producing and validating a comprehensive response to this question would require a significant amount of time and effort, which is not possible in the time allotted and could lead to the disclosure of incomplete and misleading information.

The information requested in part (a) related to fire plans and controlled burns is specific to individual national parks and is therefore located in various business units across the agency. All national parks with fire-prone vegetation are required to have a fire management plan in place as per the Parks Canada agency wildland fire management directive. These plans provide strategic direction on fire management activities and provide planning and operational priorities for implementing the park/site fire management program. These plans include the following core fire program elements: prevention, risk reduction, preparedness, wildfire management and response, and prescribed fire implementation. Parks/sites that implement controlled burns, prescribed fires, are required to develop specific prescribed fire plans for each prescribed fire project. In any given year, there are several of those plans ready for implementation across the agency.

The information pertaining to agreements and contracts for fire plans requested in parts (b) and (c) is not publicly available nor easily accessible. Overall, this request for all the plans, agreements and contracts would yield thousands of pages. Parks Canada has many wildfire mutual aid resource-sharing agreements in place at local, provincial and territorial levels, such as bilateral border zone agreements with most provinces and territories; nationally, such as the Canadian Interagency Mutual Aid Resources Sharing Agreement; and internationally, with the United States, Australia, New Zealand, Mexico, and South Africa. Parks Canada uses contracts, supply arrangements, and standing offers for additional wildfire resources such as contract fire crews; structure protection specialists; aircraft; wildfire equipment, such as pumps and hoses; camps; catering services; and aircraft fuel.

Question No. 626—Ms. Heather McPherson:

With regard to sanctions imposed by Canada under the United Nations Act, the Special Economic Measures Act and the Justice for Victims of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act, broken down by year, type of asset (e.g. property, finances) and assessed value, where available, notwithstanding that it may not reflect the entirety of sanctions enforced by other institutions: how many assets have Global Affairs Canada reported to the RCMP since 2014 concerning sanctions that are in relation to (i) Russia, (ii) Belarus, (iii) Ukraine (linked to Russia’s ongoing violations of Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity)?

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Foreign Affairs is responsible for the administration and enforcement of the Special Economic Measures Act, or SEMA, as well as its regulations. Every person in Canada and all Canadians outside of Canada must disclose to the RCMP the existence of property in their possession or control that is believed to be owned or controlled by a designated person.

Global Affairs Canada has not reported any assets to the RCMP concerning sanctions in relation to Russia, Belarus or the Ukraine conflict. The RCMP’s role under SEMA consists of collecting information on assets owned or controlled by a designated person from financial institutions, entities and individuals.

Routine Proceedings

From February 24, 2022, to June 7, 2022, the RCMP reports that a total approximate equivalent of \$123,031,866.85 Canadian in assets in Canada have been effectively frozen and a total approximate equivalent of \$289,090,090.74 Canadian in transactions have been blocked as a result of the prohibitions in the SEMA Russia regulations.

Given restrictions under the Privacy Act, no further information can be provided on these figures at this time.

Question No. 627—Mr. James Bezan:

With regard to the initial statement released by Global Affairs Canada (GAC) on June 10, 2022, to the Globe and Mail defending the presence of government officials at Russia Day festivities: (a) did the Office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs become aware of the statement that GAC gave to the Globe and Mail; (b) did the minister or her exempt staff approve the statement, or similar media lines, in any way, before GAC gave it to the Globe and Mail, and, if so, what are the details of what happened; (c) what was the highest level of official at GAC that approved the initial statement; and (d) did anyone in the Privy Council Office contact anyone at GAC regarding the statement between Friday, June 10, 2022, and the evening of Sunday, June 12, 2022, when the minister issued a statement with a different position, and, if so, what are the details of each contact, including the (i) direction communicated or the purpose of the communication, (ii) sender, (iii) recipient, (iv) date and time, (v) method of communication (email, text, chat group, phone, etc.)?

Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to parts (a) to (c), Canada is unwavering in its support of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Canada has also led in the international efforts to support Ukraine and will continue to be there for them.

The decision to send a protocol officer to the Russia Day event hosted at the Russian embassy was made by Global Affairs Canada.

No Canadian representative should have attended the event hosted at the Russian embassy, and no Canadian representative will attend this kind of event in the future.

Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Russian officials have not been and will not be invited to diplomatic events hosted by Canada, including events organized by the department's office of protocol.

Canada will continue to do everything in its power to hold Putin and his enablers accountable as we support Ukraine in the face of his illegal invasion.

In response to part (d), based on the records available, the Privy Council Office did not contact anyone at Global Affairs Canada regarding the statement between Friday, June 10, 2022, and the evening of Sunday, June 12, 2022.

Question No. 629—Mrs. Anna Roberts:

With regard to Veterans Affairs Canada providing service dogs to certain veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder: (a) since January 2020, how many dogs have been provided to veterans; (b) is there currently a backlog of requests for dogs, and, if so, how many requests are backlogged; (c) what is the average time between when a request is received and when the veterans receive the dogs; and (d) does the government have any plans to implement national standards for service dogs, and, if so, what are the details, including the timeline, of when such standards will be implemented?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Veterans Affairs Canada recognizes that there is interest in using service dogs to assist veterans with mental health conditions. At this time, Veterans Affairs Canada does not directly provide any cover-

age for service dogs used for mental health conditions. However, Veterans Affairs Canada continues to review new studies and research to determine its future approach to mental health service dogs. Veterans Affairs Canada is always looking at ways to improve support for veterans based on evidence, while ensuring the health and safety of veterans.

In 2015, Veterans Affairs Canada contracted with the Canadian General Standards Board to establish a set of national standards for mental health service dogs. In 2018, the board notified the technical committee members that it had withdrawn its intent to produce a national standard of Canada for service dogs, as there was no consensus among the committee members that the standard could be achieved. As a result, the initiative to develop a national standard was discontinued. Starting in 2019-20 through funding from Veterans Affairs Canada's veteran and family well-being fund, Wounded Warriors Canada is establishing and implementing national standards for all post-traumatic stress disorder service dog providers, and clinically informed prescriber guidelines applicable to all applicants for a post-traumatic stress disorder service dog.

The technical committee has 55 voting and non-voting members. The voting members include representatives from the Canadian Transportation Agency; Transport Canada, the Canadian Armed Forces directorate of mental health; Veterans Affairs Canada; the Government of Alberta; Brasseur, Paws Fur Thought; Dogs with Wings Assistance Dog Society; the National Service Dog Training Centre Inc.; MSAR Elite Service Dogs; Maritime Specialty Service Dogs Society; Citadel Canine Society; Courageous Companions Inc.; Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind; British Columbia Guide Dog Services; Lions Foundation of Canada, Dog Guides Canada; Assistance Dogs International; International Guide Dog Federation; Kristine Aanderson Counselling; Asista Foundation; the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association; the Canadian Centre on Disability Studies; the National Airline Council of Canada; the Canadian Foundation for Animal Assisted Support Services; Canadian Service Dog Foundation; Guide Dog Users of Canada; Canadian Heritage; the Council of Canadians with Disabilities; the Alberta Service Dog Community; Vision Impaired Resource Network Inc.; and Wounded Warriors.

The non-voting members include representatives from Employment and Social Development Canada; the Government of Ontario, Ministry of Community and Social Services; Vancouver Island Compassion Dogs Society; Thames Centre Service Dogs; an independent trainer; Canadian Veteran Service Dog Unit; Indiana Canine Assistant Network; Audeamus; COPE Service Dogs; Dog Friendship Inc.; an independent trainer; Dominion Assistance Dogs; a psychologist; the Royal Canadian Legion, Dominion Command; Senator Carolyn Stewart Olsen's office; York University, critical disability studies department; Nova Scotia Department of Justice; the Université Laval; Simcoe Trauma Recovery Clinic; and six independent individuals.

Question No. 631—Mr. John Barlow:

With regard to the government's financial and other participation in the Canadian Food Policy Advisory Council: (a) what is the total amount of funding given to the members of the council to date; (b) who are the current and past members of the council; (c) what, if any, trackable metrics have been met by the council; and (d) which, if any, of the council's proposals have led, or will lead, to government legislation?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), to date no funding has been provided to the members of the Canadian Food Policy Advisory Council, CFPAC. The CFPAC terms of reference indicate that AAFC will reimburse proper and reasonably incurred travel, accommodation and meal expenses that are directly related to a member's participation in a council meeting, in accordance with Treasury Board policies and directives. Since the council was launched in February 2021, all meetings have been held virtually, and travel, accommodation and meal expenses have not been incurred.

CFPAC members bring together diverse expertise, experience and perspectives from across the food system, including the agriculture and food sector, health professionals, academics, and non-profit organizations. Members also represent Canada's geographic and demographic diversity. In the first year of the CFPAC's mandate, it became apparent that some members lacked organizational support and were devoting significant personal time to advance the council's work plan.

At the April 25, 2022, CFPAC meeting, in recognition of the important insights council members have raised on systemic barriers to participation and the significant personal time devoted by members to advance an ambitious work plan, the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food offered a one-time honorarium to those who faced barriers in participating on the council, as a token of appreciation. In order to disburse funds, AAFC is in the process of communicating with council members who are interested in receiving the one-time \$4,000 payment.

Information about the council, including records of proceedings for all council meetings, is available on the council's webpage.

With regard to (b), the CFPAC launched with 23 members in February 2021, and over the past 16 months, the following three members have resigned: Rosie Mensah, Chris Hatch and Gisèle Yasmeen.

The 20 current members of the CFPAC are listed as follows in alphabetical order, and biographical information is available on the CFPAC web page: Jean-François Archambault; Sylvie Cloutier, co-

chair; Heather Deck; Julie Dickson Olmstead; Evan Fraser, co-chair; Sonny Gray; Marcel Groleau; Lynda Kuhn; Elizabeth Kwan; Joseph LeBlanc; Catherine L. Mah; Larry McIntosh; Lori Nikkel; Denise Philippe; Melana Roberts; Mary Robinson; Brenda Schoepp; Wendy Smith; Avni Soma; and Connor Williamson.

With regard to (c), since its launch, the CFPAC has held six virtual meetings, those being in March 2021, April 2021, May 2021, November 2021, January 2022, and April 2022. Records of proceedings of each meeting are posted on the CFPAC webpage.

The CFPAC has established four working groups and presented preliminary recommendations to the Minister on school nutrition, reducing food insecurity, reducing food loss and waste, and supporting sustainable agriculture. Each working group has met multiple times, conducted independent research and provided analysis as part of its recommendations.

With regard to (d), working group leads presented advice to the minister at the January and April 2022 council meetings. AAFC is in the process of putting the advice from the four working groups into a consistent package and obtaining all members' endorsement of the recommendations prior to formally submitting the package to the minister. The minister and government will consider the council's advice in the context of advancing the food policy for Canada vision and delivering on the minister's mandate letter commitments.

Question No. 634—Ms. Leslyn Lewis:

With regard to the Known Traveller Digital Identity (KTDI) prototype or pilot project announced by the government in January 2018: (a) what were the start and end dates of the pilot project; (b) how many Canadian travellers opted into the pilot project, or have opted-in to date if the project is still ongoing; (c) were travellers able to withdraw their consent to participate in the pilot project, and, if so, how many withdrew their participation; (d) for travellers who participated in the project, what type of data was shared with (i) the government, (ii) third parties; (e) what third parties received the data in (d)(ii); (f) what specific technologies of the KTDI is the government testing and what are the parameters around that testing; (g) what (i) benefits, (ii) problems, of the KTDI have been identified to date by the project; (h) have any government officials warned the government of risks related to participating in the KTDI, and, if so, what are the details; (i) what are the total expenditures related to the KTDI since 2018, broken down by type of item and type of expenditure; (j) what metrics are being used to evaluate the project, and how has the project performed to date in relation to those metrics; and (k) what are the details of documents related to, or which refer to, the KTDI in any way, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) sender, (iii) recipient, (iv) title, (v) subject matter, (vi) summary of contents, (vii) file number, (viii) type of document (memorandum, correspondence, etc.)?

Hon. Omar Alghabra (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the known traveller digital identity project, or KTDI, was officially announced in January 2018. However, the pilot project has not been launched. The pandemic has also meant a shutdown of non-essential travel and, as such, project planning and implementation delays.

With regard to part (a), there is currently no identified launch date.

Routine Proceedings

With regard to part (b), this information is not available. However, the volume of participants would be decided by participating air carriers.

With regard to part (c), this information is not available. However, by design, the pilot would be completely voluntary for eligible travellers. The traveller remains in control of their data throughout the journey and can opt out at any time, and manual processes would remain in place for travellers choosing not to participate.

With regard to part (d), this information is not available. However, proposed information to be shared will include elements derived from the ePassport used for the pilot.

With regard to part (e), as the pilot project was not launched, this information is not available.

With regard to part (f), this information is not available. However, prior to the deferral of the pilot, the proposed technologies to be used included distributed ledger technology, biometric technology and cryptography.

With regard to part (g)(i), verifying travel documents and traveller identity is integral to aviation security and service delivery. The current practice of manually verifying various pieces of traveller identification, including passports and boarding passes, at multiple points throughout the air travel journey can be resource-intensive, unsanitary and subject to human error. The envisioned benefits to participating travellers depend on their ability to use touchless technologies in this project.

Part (g)(ii) is not applicable as the pilot was deferred due to the pandemic.

With regard to part (h), neither the department nor any project partners have been warned of any risks related to participating in the pilot.

With regard to part (i), this project is based on voluntary contributions from project partners. All project partners are responsible for their respective costs associated with participation. Project partners include the Government of Canada, the Government of the Netherlands, Air Canada, Royal Dutch Airlines, the Toronto, Montreal and Schiphol international airports, and the World Economic Forum.

Transport Canada has to date spent \$428,671 on salaries and \$220,830 on non-salaries. With respect to non-salaries, the breakdown of the amount is as follows: travel, \$38,650; IT consultants for informatics, \$177,351; and software licenses, \$7,902.

Budget 2021 proposed \$105.3 million over five years starting in 2021-22, with \$28.7 million in remaining amortization and \$10.2 million per year ongoing, to Transport Canada to collaborate with international partners to further advance the KTDI pilot project.

Part (j) is not applicable as the pilot was deferred due to the pandemic. However, the proposed implementation and performance framework included metrics related to technical performance, traveller experience and traveller processing time.

With regard to part (k), Transport Canada undertook an extensive preliminary search to determine the amount of information that

would fall within the scope of the question and the amount of time that would be required to prepare a comprehensive response. Transport Canada concluded that producing and validating a comprehensive response to this question is not possible in the time allotted and could lead to the disclosure of incomplete and misleading information.

Question No. 638—Ms. Rachel Blaney:

With regard to the conclusion pilot at Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC): (a) how is this pilot structured; (b) who is responsible for making decisions; (c) what are the criteria used in making determinations of whether or not to remove veterans from direct case management; (d) is the current or assigned case manager asked to provide input on the veteran's file before a decision is made whether or not to remove the veteran from direct case management; (e) is there a review process and how does it work; (f) how are veterans informed of any decision regarding their file; (g) if the veteran disagrees with the decision is there a process to appeal; (h) what process is followed if a veteran services agent wants to challenge the movement of the veteran's file from case management to guided support as part of this pilot; and (i) is there an option for the veteran to move back to case management if guided support through the conclusion pilot is not working for them?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, case management is a part of the continuum of service at Veterans Affairs Canada.

Veterans Affairs Canada provides service based on the needs, risks and complexity of each individual veteran.

Case management is a service offered to support veterans with complex unmet needs who are also facing multiple challenges. There is no need to make an application to access case management services. A screening tool is used to determine veterans' level of needs, risks and complexity to ensure the appropriate level of service. If a veteran's needs are complex, they are assigned a case manager following the screening.

Case-managed veterans are assessed using a holistic assessment rooted in the seven domains of well-being, health, purpose, finances, social integration, life skills, housing and physical environment, and culture and social environment, at the beginning of their case management services to identify their current needs. They work collaboratively with their assigned case manager to set goals and achieve their highest level of independence, health and well-being. As part of the case management process, veterans' needs are continually assessed in collaboration between veterans with their case manager.

Through ongoing monitoring and evaluation of progress, the veteran's case-managed needs and goals are addressed. Case managers discuss the eventual conclusion of case management services with their veteran clients and the decision is mutually agreed upon by both the veteran and the case manager. The case manager discusses the continuum of service, which includes the voluntary guided support service delivered by veterans service agents, or VSA, following the conclusion of case management.

As veterans are receiving guided support services, VSAs review their progress and identify unmet needs that would require case management support and can refer them back to case management once the VSA and the veteran have determined that is the appropriate level of service.

Veterans can, at any time, return to case management services to address their unmet needs. There is no application or appeal process for which level of service veterans receive. It is based on their needs; level of risk, if there are indicators of risk that suggest the need for case management; and their complexity. When veterans no longer have complex needs and no longer require the support of case management services, veterans can transition to the next level of service, which is guided support or targeted assistance managed by VSAs.

The conclusion pilot was conducted from July 2, 2021, to September 30, 2021. The pilot allowed Veterans Affairs Canada to review the administrative process and barriers that needed to be streamlined to allow veterans to transition to the appropriate level of service when case management services are no longer the required or most appropriate service to meet their needs. This approach focused on streamlining the administrative process so case managers would have more time working with the most complex and vulnerable veterans to improve their well-being, while offering veterans who no longer required this level of service to transition to guided support or targeted assistance once the case manager and the veteran had agreed that case management services were no longer the required level of service.

Question No. 641—Mr. Rick Perkins:

With regard to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) and the Eastern Canyons Marine Refuge: (a) has DFO conducted any research activities showing that halibut fishing in the Eastern Canyons marine refuge is negatively impacting gorgonian coral, and, if so, what are the details, including the findings, of any such research; and (b) prior to announcing the Eastern Canyons Marine Refuge area, did DFO examine the potential impact of climate change and storms on this particular ecosystem, and, if so, what are the details, including the findings, of any such analysis?

Mr. Mike Kelloway (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), the Eastern Canyons Marine Refuge, ECMR, is unique in that it hosts one of the largest known aggregations of large gorgonian cold-water corals in Atlantic Canada, as well as a series of adjacent submarine canyons that connect the shallow waters of the continental shelf to the deep waters of the abyssal plain. The ECMR also hosts the only known living *Lophelia pertusa* coral reef in Atlantic Canada, as the *Lophelia* Coral Conservation Area, LCCA, was subsumed into the ECMR boundary.

There is a body of science literature demonstrating impacts of bottom contact fisheries on sensitive benthic areas, including cold-

water corals. The literature demonstrates that bottom longline gear has negative impacts on cold-water corals. Longline gear impacts on cold-water coral can be significant, especially during deployment and retrieval or as a result of lost gear. Through extensive consultation, DFO has been able to address the concerns of industry and a level of consensus was achieved, which includes a relatively small groundfish bottom longline-only fishing zone that requires 100% at-sea observer coverage and a commitment to further work to address gear drift for harvesters operating adjacent to closed areas. The upper slope area with small and large gorgonian coral in the ECMR overlapped with Atlantic halibut longline landings between 2008 and 2017. Bottom longline fishing is able to operate in rocky outcrops that are normally inaccessible to trawls. These outcrops represent important habitat of most of the cold-water corals present in the ECMR.

In 1999, DFO added cold-water coral to the list of bycatch species recorded by fishery at-sea observers working on vessels fishing in the offshore of Nova Scotia. From 2000 to 2021, coral bycatch was reported on bottom longline trips within areas of known coral presence on the Scotian Shelf, that is, the Eastern Canyons area, Northeast Channel area, and Gully canyon area. The occurrence of coral bycatch on bottom longline trips in the Eastern Canyons area is 1%, and when scaled to the ECMR working boundary of July 27, 2021, the occurrence of bycatch in the area increased to 1.3%.

The science literature, as well as direct observations of coral habitat on the Scotian Shelf, indicates that most damage to cold-water corals from bottom longline is not observed in bycatch, but rather remains on the seabed as coral "knock-over", coral "break", "hooks" in corals, and/or "lost" longlines, and DFO scientists have researched this topic. Thus, the bycatch from observer data is likely only a fraction of the total impact of longlining.

In conclusion, the body of peer-reviewed science literature, as well as DFO science studies and fishery observer data, demonstrates that bottom longline fishing gear does have negative impacts on cold-water corals. Recent results that there was very little new recruitment of *Lophelia pertusa*, up to 11 years after the implementation of the LCCA closure, potentially indicate that impacts have a long timescale that may affect reproduction.

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In response to (b), climate change research in the ECMR area has been ongoing, with efforts by DFO in recent years to integrate climate change considerations within the regional conservation network planning process. Potential impacts of climate change to the ECMR and other Scotian Shelf bioregion network sites include rising ocean temperatures, ocean acidification, and reduced dissolved oxygen availability. ECMR protects a large, deep-water frontier area, thought to have areas exceeding 2,000 metres in depth, with the shallowest depths of the canyons on the scale of hundreds of metres in depth. Due to the depth of the site, impacts of storm activity on benthic organisms like corals are expected to be indirect and associated with sediment supply from the shelf. Though the impact of these episodic storm events is expected to be minimal, more direct studies are required.

Basin-scale habitat suitability modeling has shown that North Atlantic deep-sea corals could experience a significant reduction in suitable habitat by 2100 as a result of climate change. A regional reassessment of the predicted distribution of the gorgonian coral *Paragorgia arborea* has recently been conducted for the northwest Atlantic, including projections to 2046-65 that include future ocean climates, and areas were identified in the upper slope in the eastern portion, including areas in ECMR, that will remain within suitable ranges for *Paragorgia arborea* at least through to the mid-century. Studies identified the existence of suitable habitat in the shallower portions of ECMR under present-day conditions and presented differing future projections.

Question No. 642—Mr. Rick Perkins:

With regard to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) and fishing licences, since January 1, 2016, and broken down by year: (a) what has been DFO's budget when it comes to enacting their "willing-buyer, willing-seller" policy; (b) what is the breakdown of (a) by license type and species; and (c) how many licenses have been acquired, broken down by license type and species?

Mr. Mike Kelloway (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada is committed to expanding access to rights-based fisheries for the 35 treaty nations in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and the Gaspé Peninsula for the purpose of pursuing a moderate livelihood. One of the key principles of the further implementation of the right to fish for a moderate livelihood is that fishing effort will not increase. This principle helps to ensure that conservation objectives will continue to be met for the benefit of all present and future harvesters. To fulfill this principle, the Government of Canada will provide additional first nations access by drawing on already available licences, meaning licences that were acquired by Fisheries and Oceans Canada, DFO, through previous voluntary licence relinquishment processes but not yet re-issued, as well as by the acquisition of additional licences supported by federal funding through a willing buyer, willing seller approach.

While voluntary licence relinquishment through willing buyer, willing seller arrangements supported by federal funding has been the government's approach since the Marshall response initiative and subsequently the Atlantic integrated commercial fisheries initiative, this approach is also an element of the current rights reconciliation agreement, or RRA, negotiation process and, most recently, the new pathway that was announced by the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans in March 2021, through which the department and

a community arrive at an understanding whereby a moderate livelihood fishing plan is developed by the community and an authorization is issued by the department, subject to available access. The remainder of the response to this inquiry is focused on the latter initiative.

With the launch of the RRA process in 2017, funds were made available through signed agreements for communities to acquire access according to their needs. As RRA negotiations were not successful with some communities, added flexibilities were obtained in 2020 for RRA funds to be used by the department to acquire access directly in cases where the RRA mandate was rejected but the community chooses to pursue a moderate livelihood fishing plan instead. With respect to funding amounts, this is a matter of cabinet confidence and confidential negotiations with treaty nations.

Further to this new flexibility, DFO Maritimes and Gulf Regions have launched a number of expressions of interest processes for existing commercial lobster licence holders who are interested in either leaving or reducing their participation in the fishery in exchange for financial compensation. A key criterion for these ongoing processes is that licences are obtained based not only on a willing buyer, willing seller basis but also on fair market value. The willing buyer, willing seller approach to increasing fisheries access is well established and has been used to great effect by Atlantic integrated fisheries initiative participants and communities that have signed a RRA on an ongoing basis.

Question No. 644—Mr. Adam Chambers:

With regard to the RCMP and the government sharing information about individuals and entities involved in the demonstrations related to the government's use of the Emergencies Act, in February 2022, in order to flag their accounts to financial institutions: (a) how many (i) individuals, (ii) businesses, (iii) other entities, had their information shared; (b) with how many recipients was the information of the individuals or entities in (b) shared with; (c) who were the recipients in (b); (d) what identifying information was contained in the communication; and (e) what was the form of the communication, and what was done to ensure any personal information was kept confidential?

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), the RCMP made 57 separate disclosures on different entities, which included 62 individuals who were named in the disclosures, and 17 businesses that were named in the disclosures. No other entities were included in these disclosures.

In response to (b), the information was shared with up to 50 financial institutions.

In response to (c), as examples, the RCMP provided information to banks, the Canadian Bankers Association, the Investment Industry Regulatory Organization of Canada, the Canadian Securities Administrators, credit unions, and the Mutual Fund Dealers Association.

In response to (d), the information provided included, but was not limited to, name/last name, date of birth, residential address, registered/associated vehicles, and associated businesses and phone numbers.

In response to (e), the RCMP disclosed information by unencrypted email as the information was Protected A. The disclosures were shared with specific points of contacts within the corporate security and/or anti-money laundering teams within the recipient institutions. This ensured the safeguarding of personal information. In addition, the RCMP kept this information confidential within its national police reporting system, PROS, which is consistent with RCMP internal policies related to the collection, retention, and safeguarding of information.

Question No. 646—Mr. Stephen Ellis:

With regard to employees at the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), as of June 14, 2022: (a) what is the total number of employees at the director general level or higher; (b) of the employees in (a), how many have an educational background in biology; and (c) what are the details of each employee at the director general level or higher that has such a background, including, for each, their (i) title, (ii) relevant degrees or certification?

Mr. Mike Kelloway (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), there were a total of 65 employees at the director general level or higher as of June 14, 2022.

With regard to (b), of the employees in (a), 20 employees have a science degree and 12 of them have an educational background in biology.

Additionally, 2009 employees across DFO occupy a science-related position in biological sciences, chemistry, scientific research and physical sciences, and therefore require a science degree upon appointment.

With regard to (c), of the 12 employees, 11 hold a Bachelor of Science degree in biology, including two with a Bachelor of Science in marine biology, and one employee has a Ph.D. in biology, all from various institutions. Employees' titles are being withheld to protect their identity and adhere to the Access to Information Act and the Privacy Act.

Question No. 647—Mr. Warren Steinley:

With regard to Canada's diplomatic missions abroad: (a) did any Canadian diplomatic staff or locally engaged staff attend a Russia Day event in 2022; (b) if the response to (a) is affirmative, in what city was each attended event, and of those events, which ones took place at the Russian diplomatic mission; (c) what is the name and title of the Canadian representative at each event referred to in (b); (d) if the person in (c) was not the head of mission, when was the head of mission informed of each representative's attendance; and (e) when was (i) Global Affairs Canada headquarters, (ii) the Minister of Foreign Affairs or her office, informed of each representative's attendance?

Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following reflects a consolidated response approved on behalf of Global Affairs Canada ministers.

In response to parts (a) to (e), Canada is unwavering in its support of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Canada has also led in the international efforts to support Ukraine and will continue to do everything in its power to hold Putin and his enablers accountable as we support Ukraine in the face of his illegal invasion.

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Global Affairs Canada has sent instructions to its personnel working in diplomatic missions around the world not to participate in Russian government-hosted meetings or events.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs has strongly condemned President Putin's unprovoked and unjustifiable invasion of Ukraine and announced the imposition of an unprecedented set of sanctions against those who have enabled Russia's war of aggression. She has made clear that there is no more business as usual with Russia or its representatives.

No Canadian representative should have attended the event hosted at the Russian embassy, and no Canadian representative will attend this kind of event in the future.

Question No. 651—Mr. Scot Davidson:

With regard to the National Capital Commission (NCC) and the O'Brien House on Meech Lake: (a) what specific measures, if any, were taken by the NCC to maintain the property and prevent it from falling into disrepair between November 1, 2019, and June 16, 2022; (b) on what dates, between November 1, 2019, and June 16, 2022, was the building without a tenant or occupant; (c) what measures, if any, are planned by the NCC over the next year to make any repairs or upgrades needed after being unoccupied for a period between November 1, 2019, and June 16, 2022; (d) who was the tenant or operator responsible for the upkeep of the property between November 1, 2019, and June 16, 2022; (e) how much was spent by the NCC on the renovations done to the property in 2018; and (f) what is the itemized breakdown of (e)?

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), the NCC contracts the services of a property management company to take care of the O'Brien House property. Measures taken to maintain the property include, but are not limited to, exterior maintenance such as landscaping and snow removal; cleaning; general repairs; and building security.

With regard to part (b), the building was vacant during this time frame.

With regard to part (c), the NCC is not planning any repairs or upgrades over the next year as the property is regularly being maintained by a contracted property management company.

With regard to part (d), the NCC was responsible for the upkeep of the property between these dates.

With regard to part (e), costs for the 2018 fiscal year, April 2017 to March 2018, amounted to \$4,226,782.24. These costs are part of the complete renovation project which occurred between fiscal years 2016-17 and 2020-21, in which the NCC spent a total of \$4,850,873.

With regard to part (f), the information requested is not readily available in the NCC's tracking systems. An extensive manual search would be necessary in order to provide a comprehensive response. This operation cannot be completed within the allotted time frame.

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 658—Ms. Niki Ashton:**

With regard to the Residential school missing children's - Community Support Funding program and the search of unmarked burial sites: (a) how many requests for funding were received since the program began in June 2021; (b) of the requests in (a), how many projects were denied funding; and (c) of the requests in (a), how many requests are being considered for funding?

Mr. Jaime Battiste (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, so far as Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada programming is concerned, the response to part (a) is that since June 2021, the residential school missing children community support funding has received 106 applications totalling \$214,180,918 in requested funding from indigenous communities and organizations.

In response to part (b), a total of four requests were denied funding under the residential school missing children community support funding. In addition, two requests were withdrawn and one was redirected to another federal program and received funding.

With respect to part (c), all applications that are submitted are considered for funding. To date the program has received 106 applications for financial support, of which 84 applications have been approved for a total of \$89,994,897 in funding, and seven have been withdrawn, redirected or denied, as described in part (b). Currently, the department is assessing 15 applications for funding support.

Question No. 663—Mr. Gord Johns:

With regard to the modelling of opioid-related deaths by the Public Health Agency of Canada: (a) since December 15, 2021, has the agency updated its model on a quarterly basis as it publicly committed to do on that date; (b) if the answer to (a) is affirmative, when was the first quarterly update made publicly available; (c) if the model in (b) was not made available to the public, what was the reason for that decision; and (d) if the answer to (a) is negative, why did the agency not fulfill this commitment?

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, PHAC publishes updated observed national surveillance data, i.e., reports on opioid- and stimulant-related deaths, hospitalizations and emergency medical services responses, which are released every three months: March, June, September and December.

Modelling releases happen every six months jointly with the June and December national surveillance data releases. The latest projections from the June 23, 2022, release are available here: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/opioids/data-surveillance-research/modelling-opioid-overdose-deaths-covid-19.html>.

The first release of modelling projections took place in October 2020. Thereafter, they were published every six months, starting in December 2020. PHAC publishes projection models every six months, because the use of two cycles of observed surveillance data, that is, six months of data, allows us to make more robust evidence-based updates to the model assumptions.

Question No. 668—Mr. Alistair MacGregor:

With regard to immigration detention: (a) how many minors have been separated from at least one parent since 2021, broken down by quarter; (b) does the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) still intend on implementing its commitment to publish "statistics nationally on minors being separated from at least one parent"; (c) when does the CBSA intend to publish statistics on minors being separated from at least one parent; (d) was there any change in policy leading to the decision to

publish statistics only when the minor was separated from both parents; (e) how does the CBSA measure compliance with the National Directive for the Detention or Housing of Minors (the directive); and (f) in how many cases involving minors has the CBSA been unable to preserve family unity as called for in part 8 of the directive since 2017, broken down by year?

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), the CBSA began manually tracking separated minor cases in January 2022. Prior to this date, the CBSA did not track data specific to separated minors and is unable to provide statistics retroactively. In the fourth quarter of the 2021-22 fiscal year, there were two minors temporarily separated from their accompanying parent. The first quarter of the 2022-23 fiscal year is still ongoing; however, there have been four minors temporarily separated from their parents thus far. In all cases, in both 2021-22 and 2022-23, the minors were reunited with family within the same day.

With regard to (b), in fall 2022 the CBSA will commence publishing statistics on the number of minors who are subject to a detention order and are separated from an accompanying parent and/or guardian and who are released into the care of an entity other than a parent and/or legal guardian.

With regard to (c), since January 2022, the CBSA has been sharing statistics on separated minors with external stakeholders and upon request. External stakeholders include, but are not limited to, the Canadian Council for Refugees, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Canadian Red Cross, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, the Child Welfare Immigration Centre of Excellence and Action Réfugiés Montréal. Statistics on separated minors will begin to be published in fall 2022.

With regard to (d), on December 16, 2021, the revised operational bulletin "Reporting of all Situations Involving the Detention, Housing, or Separation of an Accompanying Minor to the Border Operation Centre" was finalized and circulated nationally. This bulletin outlines the reporting requirements if a minor is separated. The CBSA reviews each report and tracks this information. Statistics on separated minors will begin to be published in fall 2022.

With regard to (e), section 60 of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, or IRPA, affirms the principle that the detention of a minor must be a measure of last resort, taking into account other applicable grounds and criteria, including the best interests of the child and potential alternatives to detention. In acknowledgement of this and in line with ministerial direction issued by the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, the CBSA developed the “National Directive for the Detention or Housing of Minors” and the “National Detention Standards on Unaccompanied and Accompanied Minors”. These documents are meant for operational use and take a balanced approach to achieving better and consistent outcomes for minors affected by Canada’s national immigration detention system. The CBSA also notifies the Canadian Red Cross of any unaccompanied minors in detention. The Canadian Red Cross provides immigration detention monitoring services to support the CBSA in ensuring that individuals detained pursuant to IRPA are treated in accordance with applicable detention standards and international instruments to which Canada is signatory. The CBSA began capturing and publishing data in reference to detained and housed minors in 2017, following the publication of the ministerial directive. Data on separated minors has been tracked manually since January 2022.

With regard to (f), in the fourth quarter of the 2021-22 fiscal year, there was one instance in which the family unit was not maintained and minors were separated from their accompanying parent. The two minors in this case were reunited with their parent that same day.

The first quarter of the 2022-23 fiscal year is still ongoing; however, there have been two cases involving minors in which the CBSA was unable to preserve family unity. In one of these cases, the minors were separated from an accompanying adult until the identity of the adult could be established. The parents and guardian for both minors were identified and the minors were reunited with their family members later that same day. In the second case, the minors remained with the one parent while the other was detained. The second parent was reunited with the rest of the family later that same day.

Question No. 670—Mr. Scott Reid:

With regard to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP): (a) how many Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) does the RCMP possess, (i) in total, (ii) by location, province or detachment; (b) since January 1, 2011, how many AEDs has the RCMP purchased, by year of purchase; (c) since January 1, 2011, what has been the total amount spent relating to the purchase, use, and maintenance of AEDs, broken down by year; (d) are any instruments (such as contracts, requests for proposals, requests for information, or tendering processes) active, in progress, in force, or under negotiation, for the purchase or maintenance of AEDs; (e) with respect to (d), for each instrument, what was the (i) instrument in question, (ii) date it took effect or was made publicly available, (iii) purpose; (f) since January 1, 2011, have any briefing or informational materials pertaining to AEDs been provided to the Minister of Public Safety, the office of the Minister of Public Safety, the office of the Deputy Minister of Public Safety, or the office of the Commissioner of the RCMP; (g) for each instance in (f), what was the (i) date the material was provided, (ii) recipient or office to which the material was provided, (iii) topic of the material provided?

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to parts (a) to (e) of the question, the RCMP’s departmental financial management system does not capture the requested information at the level of detail requested. As a result, the information requested cannot be obtained

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without an extensive manual review of financial files. This manual review could not be completed within the established timeline.

In response to part (f) of the question, on November 13, 2014, the minister’s office informally requested information on the use and availability of automated external defibrillators by the RCMP.

In response to part (g), a document on the use and availability of automated external defibrillators by the RCMP was transmitted to the Office of the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness via the executive services and ministerial liaison unit on November 24, 2014.

Our searches yielded no further results.

Question No. 684—Mr. James Bezan:

With regard to relocation applications from Afghan nationals who assisted the Canadian government, as of June 20, 2022: (a) how many applications has the government (i) received, (ii) approved, (iii) rejected; (b) what is the reason for any rejections in (a)(iii); (c) of the applicants in (a), how many (i) remain in Afghanistan, (ii) are waiting in a third-country, (iii) are in Canada; and (d) how many relocation applicants is the government aware of who were (i) killed, or presumed killed, (ii) incarcerated, or otherwise punished by the Taliban?

Ms. Marie-France Lalonde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as of June 20, 2022, the Canadian government has received 14,951 applications in person for the special immigration measures program. 10,734 of those applications have been approved, including those that have arrived in Canada. Eight applications have been refused for eligibility and/or admissibility reasons.

Of the above, 4,422 applicants are in various stages of processing or are approved and remain in Afghanistan. 3,268 are in third countries outside of Afghanistan and Canada, and 7,165 applicants have arrived in Canada.

IRCC is not able to provide a response to part (d) of the question, as the department does not track information of this type.

Question No. 685—Mr. James Bezan:

With regard to the takeover of Afghanistan by the Taliban in 2021: what are the details of all communication between Global Affairs Canada (GAC) and the Taliban since October 2021, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) titles of GAC officials involved, (iii) titles of Taliban officials, (iv) method of communication (email, in-person meeting, etc.), (v) summary of contents, including the topics?

Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following reflects a consolidated response approved on behalf of Global Affairs Canada ministers.

Canada has no intention of recognizing the Taliban as the government of Afghanistan. Similar to likeminded partners, Canada engages the Taliban informally through its senior official for Afghanistan, based in Doha. Canada engages the Taliban informally to convey key messages including our expectations regarding safe passage and to ensure that the Taliban respect their international human rights obligations.

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In processing parliamentary returns, the government applies the principles set out in the Access to Information Act. Information has been withheld on the grounds that the disclosure of certain information could be expected to be injurious to the conduct of international affairs.

Question No. 686—**Mr. Eric Duncan:**

With regard to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the new labelling requirements for beef and pork products: (a) is the minister taking any action to prevent the government from implementing the new requirements, and, if so, what are the details; (b) has Agriculture and Agri-Food conducted any analysis on the negative impacts of the new requirements on the (i) beef, (ii) pork, industry, and, if so, what were the findings of the analysis; (c) what industry or producer concerns about the new requirements is the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food aware of; and (d) for each concern in (c), what is the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food's response?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), Health Canada is the department responsible for the development of the new front-of-package nutrition labelling requirements as part of its broad healthy eating strategy. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, AAFC, supports the objective of the strategy, which is to help consumers make informed food choices. As part of the policy development process, AAFC provided Health Canada with relevant information to inform the policy.

Health Canada developed the front-of-package nutrition labelling requirements based on available evidence and consulted widely on the policy. Where supported by evidence, Health Canada made adjustments, including some technical, practical and health-related exemptions.

As announced on June 30, 2022, under the final regulations published in the Canada Gazette, part II, on July 20, 2022, Health Canada has provided a technical exemption for raw, single-ingredient ground meats to avoid giving the impression that they are nutritionally inferior to whole cuts, which do not carry the front-of-package nutrition symbol. In certain cases, these exemptions will be lost, such as if a claim is made or if anything is added to the meat, such as salt, saturated fat or even spices. As well, to help industry adapt, there will be a transition period until January 2026 to come into compliance with the regulations.

With regard to (b), AAFC provided Health Canada with relevant information to inform the policy development process. Information provided consisted primarily of sectoral and market information and intelligence as well as external research on the subject.

With regard to (c), AAFC is aware of concerns expressed by the agriculture and agri-food industry about the proposed requirement that ground meats be subject to front-of-package nutrition labelling regulations. The primary concern revolved around the fact that a symbol on ground meat could give consumers the impression that it is nutritionally inferior to whole cuts. Stakeholders have pointed out that ground beef, pork, and veal are single-ingredient, nutrient-dense proteins. Some indicated that recent analyses showed that ground meats had a limited impact on Canadians' saturated fat intake. Some mentioned the potential negative impacts of the label on the economy, environment, trade, food security and health of Canadians. Some also expressed concern with the signal that this labelling would send to Canada's trading partners.

With regard to (d), AAFC recognizes the important role that the beef and pork industries play in creating jobs, strengthening our economy and providing a variety of safe, high-quality foods to Canadians and the world. We also recognize that front-of-package nutrition labelling will require adjustments and investments from the food industry.

AAFC supports policy that is based on evidence. Where supported by evidence, Health Canada made adjustments to the front-of-package labelling requirements, including some technical, practical, and health-related exemptions.

As announced by Health Canada on June 30, 2022, under the final regulations to be published in the Canada Gazette, part II, on July 20, 2022, Health Canada has provided a technical exemption for raw, single-ingredient ground meats to avoid giving the impression that they are nutritionally inferior to whole cuts, which do not carry the front-of-package nutrition symbol. In certain cases, these exemptions will be lost, such as if a health claim or nutrient content claim, such as "high in iron", is made or if anything is added to the meat, such as salt, saturated fat or even spices. As well, to help the industry adapt, there will be a transition period until January 2026 to come into compliance with the regulations. This is a domestic policy that impacts labels of foods sold within Canada.

Question No. 687—**Mr. Mike Lake:**

With regard to the current Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance and the government's new labelling requirements for beef and pork products: (a) what specific steps, if any, has the minister taken, or will the minister take, to prevent the labelling requirements from having a detrimental impact on Alberta beef and pork producers; (b) has the minister or his office sent any communication or correspondence to either the Minister of Health or the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada raising concerns about the labelling requirements, and, if so, what are the details of any such communication; and (c) does the government have any projections on the economic consequences the requirements may have on the Alberta beef and pork industry, and, if so, what are the projections?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in cabinet and cabinet committees, as well as in meetings, phone calls and other conversations with cabinet colleagues, the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance works to ensure that the voices of Alberta businesses, stakeholders, industries, communities and residents are heard.

On July 20, 2022, Health Canada published new nutrition labelling regulations for packaged foods to help Canadians make informed food choices. These regulations will require a new symbol to be displayed on the front of packaged foods that are high in saturated fat, sugars and/or sodium.

Health Canada exempted certain foods from the requirement to display a front-of-packaging nutrition symbol. This exemption included raw, single-ingredient ground meats such as beef and pork. As such, the government has not brought forward new labelling requirements for ground beef and pork products.

Question No. 690—Mr. Randall Garrison:

With regard to Canada's guidelines on supporting human rights defenders and the human rights violations happening inside the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) and Tibetan areas in China such as Sichuan, Qinghai, Yunnan, and Gansu: (a) has Canada encouraged China to ratify the United Nations' International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; (b) has Canada encouraged China to sign the Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance; (c) since 2017, has Canada called upon the Chinese government to accept country missions which would visit the TAR and Tibetan areas in China by international human rights organizations; (d) since 2017, has Canada called upon the Chinese government to accept country missions which would visit the TAR and Tibetan areas of China by the United Nations (UN) Working Group on Enforced Disappearance, the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, and other relevant UN entities; (e) since 2018, how many requests has the Canadian government made for permission for Canadian officials and diplomats to visit the TAR, and (i) how many were approved and denied, (ii) were there any limits and restrictions placed on their travel, activities, and interaction with people; (f) since 2017, has Global Affairs Canada (GAC) requested that Chinese officials provide evidence of the whereabouts and well-being of Gendhun Choekyi Nyima the 11th Panchen Lama, and, if so, (i) when and where was this done, (ii) who was this addressed to; and (g) has GAC called upon the Chinese government to release information about the whereabouts and well-being of the leader of the search committee for the 11th Panchen Lama, Chadel Rinpoche, and the rest of his team?

Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), Human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent, and interrelated. The promotion and protection of human rights, including freedom of religion or belief, is a core priority of Canada's foreign policy. Canada continues to call on the government of China, both privately and publicly, to respect the rights of Tibetans and to take steps to improve the human rights situation in all Tibetan areas across China.

Canada remains gravely concerned about the deterioration of the human rights situation in the Tibet Autonomous Region, the TAR, and in particular with the increasing restrictions on the freedom of language, culture and religion; freedom of expression; freedom of movement; with the destruction of historic buildings, temples and mosques; and with the forced patriotic education of ethnic Tibetans.

The Government of Canada urges China to ensure full respect for the rule of law, to comply with obligations under national and international law with regard to the protection of human rights and to ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the ICCPR. In addition, the Government of Canada urges the Chinese government to provide meaningful and unfettered access for independent observers to the TAR, including UN special procedures. In 2018, during China's third universal periodic review, or UPR, Canada recommended that China ratify the ICCPR. Canada also recommended that China end persecutions on the basis of religion or belief, including for Tibetan Buddhists.

With regard to (b), Canada made recommendations to China on enforced disappearances in 2013 during its second UPR.

Canada remains concerned about Tibetan prisoners of conscience and called for humane treatment and the release of prisoners. Canada has called on China to respect, protect and promote freedom of expression, assembly and association, as well as freedom of

religion or belief for all. The Government of Canada has done so on numerous occasions, publicly and privately, in multilateral forums as well as in bilateral dialogues.

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With regard to (c), Canada consistently raises its concerns about violations of Tibetans' fundamental rights and freedoms with Chinese authorities, including through high-level meetings and speeches, official demarches, and bilateral and multilateral statements. Canada continues to advocate unhindered future access to the TAR for UN agencies, international human rights organizations, academics, researchers and foreign correspondents. Canada will continue to advocate in support of unfettered access to China in order to enable the independent analysis of the human rights situation.

With regard to (d), on multiple occasions in bilateral and multilateral settings, Canada continues to call for independent and unfettered access to China related to human rights concerns.

In 2015, Canada established the International Contact Group on Freedom of Religion or Belief, the ICG-FoRB, convened biannually by Canada and the United States. It is an important platform that brings together nearly 30 countries committed to protecting and promoting freedom of religion or belief. It has helped advance coordinated initiatives concerning issues of religious minorities, including Tibetan Buddhists.

With regard to (e), while Canadian diplomats have on occasion been permitted to travel to Tibet, access to Tibet remains tightly controlled. Former ambassador Dominic Barton participated in a Chinese government-hosted visit to Lhasa, Tibet, on October 22 to 26, 2020. The ambassador met with the Deputy Party Secretary and Vice Chairman of Government of the Tibet Autonomous Region, TAR, to discuss an array of issues, including human rights, climate change and the environment. The meetings also included officials from United Front Work Department and the departments of education, human resources and social security; ecology and environment; and health. This was the last visit of a Canadian diplomat to the TAR. Between 2015 and 2020, Canada officially requested access to TAR on a regular basis.

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With regard to (f), Canada is deeply concerned by ongoing reports of continued restrictions on the rights and freedoms of Tibetans. Canada has consistently advocated substantive and meaningful dialogue between the Chinese government and the Dalai Lama or his representatives to work toward a resolution of issues, in a manner acceptable to both sides. Requests have been addressed to senior Government of China officials, both political and diplomatic.

With regard to (g), the human rights situation in China, including in Tibet, remains a source of continuing concern for Canada. To that end, the Government of Canada will continue to raise concerns with Chinese officials on such matters, and the Government of Canada will continue to call on China to live up to its own laws and international obligations at every opportunity. Canada is committed to constructive exchanges with China on human rights, including through high-level visits, public statements, advocacy and diplomatic dialogue.

Question No. 695—Mr. Colin Carrie:

With regard to the purchase of single-use plastics by government departments, agencies and Crown corporations since January 1, 2020: (a) what is the total amount spent, broken down by year; and (b) what are the details of all such purchases, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) amount spent, (iii) description of goods, including the volume, (iv) vendor?

Hon. Greg Fergus (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while the Government of Canada does not track single-use plastic purchases, it is reducing plastic waste by reducing the unnecessary use of single-use plastics, including straws, utensils, bags, and bottles in government operations. They are, however, sometimes necessary for accessibility, health, safety or security reasons.

The government is also committed to the reuse and recycling of plastic in its operations, buying more products made from recycled plastics, and reducing packaging waste by prioritizing reusable or recyclable packaging. The government will track and report its waste diversion starting in fiscal year 2022-23, including progress towards diverting at least 75% by weight of plastic waste from landfills by 2030.

Question No. 701—Mr. Alex Ruff:

With regard to Health Canada's plan to label ground beef and pork as "high in saturated fat": (a) has Health Canada conducted an economic impact assessment, and, if so, where can the Canadian public access it; (b) will the addition of this warning label increase the consumer price of beef or pork, and, if so, by how much; and (c) what are the anticipated economic impacts of adding this label on producers?

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), in bringing the front-of-package, FOP, regulations forward, the government has given careful consideration and analyzed in detail the potential costs and benefits of its plan to inform Canadians of nutrients of concern in their food.

All regulatory packages go through a rigorous cost-benefit analysis, which is summarized in the regulatory impact analysis statement, RIAS, published with the regulations. In addition, a more detailed cost-benefit analysis report will be available upon request after the regulations are published.

The regulations and the RIAS were published in the Canada Gazette, part II, on July 20, 2022.

Finally, to ensure that FOP regulations are efficient, technical exemptions were given in specific conditions. Raw, single-ingredient ground meat was given such exemption.

In response to (b), the FOP nutrition symbol is not a warning and does not categorize a food as healthy or unhealthy. Rather, it provides a clear visual cue that a food is high in saturated fat, sugars or sodium.

The FOP nutrition labelling regulations are not expected to raise food prices. The Canadian market is competitive, and evidence suggests that prices, in general, are not going to change because of these regulations.

Canadians may see some small adjustments in price between products with and without symbols at first as their demand initially changes, but over time, prices are expected to equalize for products in the same category, for example as is the case currently for soups "lower in" versus "higher in" sodium. In most product categories, Canadians have many options for substitution.

In response to (c), single-ingredient ground meats are conditionally exempt from the FOP nutrition symbol requirement.

To become compliant with the new FOP nutrition symbol and vitamin D amounts, the food industry will incur a one-time cost to update labels, estimated at \$1.09 billion or \$887.02 million present value. The direct benefit of the additional information FOP nutrition labels will provide to Canadians is valued at an estimated \$2.33 billion over 15 years.

Question No. 704—Mr. Michael Barrett:

With regard to government spending on foreign aid: (a) does Global Affairs Canada consult Public Safety Canada's terrorist entity list prior to providing any funding related to its grant agreements with international and non-governmental organizations, including, but not limited to, the United Nations and local non-governmental organizations implementing partners; (b) if the answer to (a) is affirmative, since 2016, has any funding been denied or stopped after consulting the list, and what are the details, including, for each instance, the (i) date the funding was cancelled, (ii) entity which was slated to receive funding, (iii) amount to be received; and (c) if the answer to (a) is negative, is the government taking any other measures to ensure that foreign aid money does not end up financing terrorism, and, if so, what are the details of each measure?

Ms. Anita Vandenbeld (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to parts (a) to (c), Global Affairs Canada manages an extensive network of 178 missions in 110 countries. The department undertook an extensive preliminary search in order to determine the amount of information that would fall within the scope of the question and the amount of time that would be required to prepare a comprehensive response. The level of detail of the information requested is not systematically tracked in a centralized database. The department concluded that producing and validating a comprehensive response to this question would require a manual collection of information that is not possible in the time allotted and could lead to the disclosure of incomplete and misleading information.

Question No. 708—Mr. Garnett Genuis:

With regard to the government's position related to allegations of genocide as defined by the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide being committed: is it the position of the government that (i) Canada or actors in Canada are currently committing genocide against any group, (ii) the Government of Sri Lanka has committed genocide against Tamils, (iii) the Government of China is currently committing genocide against Uyghurs, (iv) the government of any other member state of the United Nations is currently committing genocide, and, if so, which ones, (v) any non-state actors is currently committing genocide, and, if so, which ones?

Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following reflects a consolidated response approved on behalf of Global Affairs Canada ministers.

In response to parts (i) to (v) of the question, the legal determination of whether a situation constitutes genocide must be done by a competent international or national court or tribunal, bearing in mind that the legal definition of genocide is precise and complex, as outlined in international treaties such as the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

In Canada, different levels of political recognition of genocide can occur through actions or motions by legislatures, including motions in the House of Commons or statements by governments. Statements from the Government of Canada are made publicly and are available on Government of Canada websites.

Canada takes all allegations of genocide very seriously and works with the international community to ensure that such allegations are investigated by an independent international body of legal experts.

Question No. 709—Mr. Garnett Genuis:

With regard to Canada's international development assistance since 2016: (a) has the government funded the provision of any healthcare services in a country or place where those services are illegal, and, if so, what are the details, including what services were funded, broken down by country; (b) has the government funded any organizations that provide healthcare services in violation of local laws; and (c) with respect to (a) and (b), which organization, which programs, which countries, and on what dates were the programs funded?

Ms. Anita Vandenbeld (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following reflects a consolidated response approved on behalf of Global Affairs Canada ministers.

In response to part (a), in accordance with the principles of good corporate citizenship, good global citizenship, and the rule of law, Canada is necessarily expected to abide by all applicable laws, both

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in Canada and abroad, and as such does not use development assistance to support activities that are illegal. For example, any support that Canada provides to strengthen national and local health care systems is in line with the legal frameworks and health priorities of recipient countries.

Parts (b) and (c) are not applicable.

Question No. 710—Mr. Garnett Genuis:

With regard to COVID-19 transmission within Canada: (a) how many Canadians are known to have contracted COVID-19 while on a domestic flight (i) between July 1, 2020, and July 1, 2021, (ii) between July 1, 2021, and October 29, 2021, (iii) between October 30, 2021, and November 29, 2021, (iv) since November 30, 2021; (b) how many Canadians are known to have contracted COVID-19 while in an airport (i) between July 1, 2020, and July 1, 2021, (ii) between July 1, 2021, and October 29, 2021, (iii) between October 30, 2021, and November 29, 2021, (iv) since November 30, 2021; (c) how many Canadians are known to have contracted COVID-19 while on a VIA Rail train (i) between July 1, 2020, and July 1, 2021, (ii) between July 1, 2021, and October 29, 2021, (iii) between October 30, 2021, and November 29, 2021, (iv) since November 30, 2021; and (d) how many Canadians are known to have contracted COVID-19 while in a VIA Rail train station (i) between July 1, 2020, and July 1, 2021, (ii) between July 1, 2021, and October 29, 2021, (iii) between October 30, 2021, and November 29, 2021, (iv) since November 30, 2021?

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, collective efforts by governments at all levels in gathering, sharing and analyzing data have allowed Canada to monitor and report on numbers and trends and make evidence-based public health decisions to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

There is no circumstance in which a public health authority can confirm with certainty the location in which an individual contracts COVID-19. The Public Health Agency of Canada, PHAC, cannot confirm cases of transmission of COVID-19 while on board a flight, in an airport, on a train or in a train station.

Question No. 713—Ms. Lisa Marie Barron:

With regard to studies and reports completed by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans: what completed studies have been done regarding (i) the creation of a public, online database that includes the beneficial holder of all fishing quota and licences in British Columbia, (ii) ending the sale of fishing quota and licences to non-Canadian beneficial owners, (iii) incentivizing independent ownership of licences and quota over corporate, overseas, or absentee ownership?

Mr. Mike Kelloway (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Fisheries and Oceans Canada has undertaken work to understand the extent of foreign ownership in Canada's commercial fishing industry through the completion of the beneficial ownership survey and has released a comparative analysis of east and west coast fishery policies.

A study, the licence and quota registry proposal, has been conducted to examine the technical feasibility of developing a licence and quota registry to improve the transparency of where licences and quotas are held in Pacific region fisheries.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada officials are working to finalize an engagement strategy in 2022 that will help us better understand the opportunities to improve our policies and programs and ensure that they are tailored to fisheries on the west coast.

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 715—Mr. Brian Masse:**

With regard to the Stellantis-LG Energy Solution large scale lithium-ion battery production plant to be located in Windsor, Ontario: (a) what is the government's financial contribution to the facility; (b) did the government evaluate and analyze the potential supply chain investments and companies that would follow the battery plant into the region; (c) what are those follow on plants and facilities; (d) does the government plan to provide additional financial support to secure those additional investments and companies for the region; (e) did the government evaluate the energy requirements needed for the battery production plant and follow on supply chain facilities; (f) did the government investigate supporting the province to ensure the power infrastructure and production was sufficient to secure all potential future investments in the supply chain for the battery plant; and (g) what would the government's financial commitment be to support the determined power infrastructure and supply upgrades?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), details of this agreement are subject to commercial confidentiality and cannot be disclosed at this time.

With regard to part (b), potential supply chain investments following this project were assessed. This investment will not only position Canada as a global leader in the production of electric vehicle, or EV, batteries, but also support the development of a sustainable domestic battery manufacturing sector in Canada. The project will create 2,000 direct jobs once the facility is in full operation. Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, ISED, estimates that the project will contribute close to 3,100 jobs annually and \$6.4 billion of cumulative GDP to the Canadian economy over a 15-year production period, directly and indirectly.

Canada is well positioned to continue to be a leader in the shift to vehicle electrification, building on strong automotive, manufacturing and mining sectors. Investing in Canada's battery supply chain builds on and feeds into Canada's strong industrial economy, known around the world for its craftsmanship and sustainable practices. As Canada looks to attract battery companies, upstream and downstream opportunities exist to attract more investments in numerous areas including mining, automotive and digital technologies.

These investments are also expected to produce high returns well beyond the battery sector. For example, an analysis of Canada's existing automotive footprint reveals that one additional job created in vehicle assembly results in five additional jobs throughout the broader economy.

With regard to part (c), the Government of Canada is dedicated to attracting other companies in the battery value chain, such as companies involved in battery critical mineral extraction and refining and battery cell component manufacturing, and encouraging them to set up shop in Canada in order to create jobs, generate economic benefits and contribute to a net-zero emissions future. Such companies could range from those interested in buying the output from Canadian mines to those interested in further refining those minerals into products used for battery cell manufacturing. Further details cannot be disclosed at this time due to commercial confidentiality.

With regard to part (d), the Government of Canada is committed to positioning Canada with a cleaner, stronger and better-prepared economy, one that is competitive in a low-carbon world. As a result, the government is looking to bring key international investments to Canada that will secure a strong battery supply chain for

EVs. If additional investments that would secure key benefits such as the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions were to be proposed, and which meet the requirements of the strategic innovation fund, the government would consider providing additional financial support.

With regard to part (e), energy requirements for large-scale manufacturing in Canada are usually provided by provincial and local governments that participated in discussions with the project proponents. An analysis of energy requirements has been completed by provincial and municipal governments.

With regard to part (f), the Government of Canada and its provincial and municipal counterparts understand the importance of positioning the country with a cleaner, stronger and better-prepared economy, one that is competitive in a low-carbon world. As such, all levels of government have undertaken a collaborative approach to securing investments that support this transition. Energy and power infrastructure requirements for large-scale manufacturing in Canada are usually provided by provincial and local governments.

With regard to part (g), the Government of Canada continues to undertake work to build a strong battery innovation and industrial ecosystem. This includes scaling up domestic battery supply chain companies and necessary related infrastructure using a variety of existing programs, as appropriate.

As previously indicated, energy and power infrastructure requirements for large-scale manufacturing in Canada are usually provided by provincial and local governments.

Question No. 717—Mr. Charlie Angus:

With regard to the Incentives for Zero-Emission Vehicles (iZEV) Program, since its inception, broken down by province or territory and fiscal year: (a) which vehicles were eligible under the iZEV program; and (b) for each vehicle in (a), what was the (i) number of rebates claimed, (ii) total amount of rebate provided?

Hon. Omar Alghabra (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all of the requested iZEV program data is publicly available information.

With regard to part (a), please refer to the following web page to see the current list of eligible vehicles for the iZEV program: <https://tc.canada.ca/en/road-transportation/innovative-technologies/zero-emission-vehicles/list-eligible-vehicles-under-izev-program>

The Tesla Model 3 Standard Range and Standard Range Plus trims stopped being eligible for the iZEV program as of November 23, 2021. Any Teslas listed in the iZEV statistics, see part (b) below, after that date were ordered by customers on or before November 23, 2021. This is noted within the following web page: <https://tc.canada.ca/en/road-transportation/innovative-technologies/zero-emission-vehicles/questions-answers-consumers>

With regard to part (b), please refer to the following web page containing the link to download the iZEV statistics into a spreadsheet: <https://open.canada.ca/data/en/dataset/42986a95-be23-436e-af15-7c6bf292a2e1>

The posted data on Open Government is current as of May 31, 2022. The statistics are updated on a monthly basis.

Question No. 720—Mr. Charlie Angus:

With regard to the Greening Government Strategy's on-road fleet targets: (a) what is the total number of new light-duty fleet vehicles purchased that are (i) zero-emission vehicles, (ii) hybrid electric vehicles; and (b) what is the total number of vehicles within Canada's light-duty fleet vehicles that are either zero-emission or hybrid-electric, reflected both as a number and a total percentage?

Hon. Greg Fergus (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, through the Greening Government Strategy, the Government of Canada has committed to make its conventional light-duty fleet greener and to transition to 100% zero emission vehicles, ZEVs, by 2030. ZEVs are vehicles that can operate on renewable energy without producing tailpipe emissions, such as battery-electric, plug-in hybrid and hydrogen fuel cell vehicles. On this pathway, the government has committed that at least 75% of its new purchases will be hybrid electric vehicles, known as HEVs, or ZEVs where suitable options are available and after considering operational feasibility.

The government of Canada has made progress on these commitments. In 2021-22, departments ordered more than 1,000 additional green vehicles, including approximately 280 ZEVs and 730 HEVs, in fleet segments and where suitable options were available, such as sedans and small sport utility vehicles.

As of March 31, 2021, the conventional light-duty fleet was composed of approximately 17,800 vehicles, including 450 ZEVs, making up 2.5%, and 1,100 HEVs, making up 6.1%.

The rate of ZEV adoption has been constrained by market availability of a supply of suitable vehicles that meet operational requirements. Limited ZEV options currently exist for the larger vehicle types, such as the vans and pickup trucks that make up the majority of the light-duty fleet, and supplies are limited due to ongoing global supply chain issues. ZEV purchases will increase rapidly as more suitable options become available in the market over the next one to three years.

Question No. 726—Mr. Ted Falk:

With regard to the government's Vaccine Injury Support Program (VISP): (a) how many injuries related to COVID-19 vaccines is the government aware of; (b) what is the breakdown of (a) by type of (i) vaccine received (Pfizer, Moderna, etc.), (ii) injury; (c) how many and what percentage of the injuries qualified for compensation from the VISP; (d) how many applications for compensation under the VISP (i) have been received, (ii) have been approved, (iii) have been denied, (iv) are still awaiting a decision, as of June 21, 2022; (e) what is the total amount paid out to date under the VISP; and (f) how many recipients does the money in (e) represent?

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the vaccine injury support program, VISP, provides financial support to people in Canada in the rare event that they experience a serious and permanent injury as a result of receiving a Health Canada-authorized vaccine administered in Canada on or after December 8, 2020. The program also provides death benefits

and support for funeral expenses in the rare case of a death as a result of receiving a Health Canada-authorized vaccine.

The VISP was launched on June 1, 2021, and is being administered independently by Raymond Chabot Grant Thornton Consulting Inc., RCGT, with funding from the Public Health Agency of Canada, PHAC. PHAC is not involved in individual cases, including in the determination of decisions regarding causality or compensation.

As the independent third party administrator, RCGT oversees all aspects of claims intake and assessment and is responsible for providing periodic public reporting on program statistics. Public reporting from the launch of the program on June 1, 2021, to June 1, 2022, can be found at <https://vaccineinjurysupport.ca/en/program-statistics>.

The Province of Quebec continues to administer its long-standing vaccine injury compensation program with federal funding. Information on Quebec's vaccine injury compensation program, including program statistics, can be found at <https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/advice-and-prevention/vaccination/vaccine-injury-compensation-program>.

In response to (a), (b) and (c), PHAC does not have access to real-time data on the number of claims submitted to the VISP or the nature of the claims submitted. Furthermore, as per the terms and conditions of the funding agreement with RCGT, PHAC will never receive disaggregated data on vaccine type, or details on the nature of injuries from RCGT.

Health Canada, HC, PHAC, the provinces and territories, and manufacturers continue to closely monitor the safety of COVID-19 vaccines, using the Canadian adverse events after immunization surveillance system, CAEFISS, and the Canada vigilance program.

An adverse event is any untoward medical occurrence that follows immunization. It is not necessarily causally related to the usage of the vaccine. Data on adverse events following COVID-19 vaccinations in Canada, overall and by type of vaccine and type of adverse event, is posted online on PHAC's vaccine safety report website: <https://health-infobase.canada.ca/covid-19/vaccine-safety>. All reports of adverse events following immunization received by HC and PHAC are included in this report, regardless of whether they have been linked to the vaccines. PHAC looks at all the data available in order to detect any early signals of an issue.

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For example, as of May 13, 2022, a total of 84,559,822 vaccine doses have been administered in Canada, and adverse events, side effects, have been reported by 46,149 people. That is about five people out of every 10,000 people vaccinated who have reported one or more adverse events. Of the 46,149 individual reports, 36,634 were considered non-serious, 0.043% of all doses administered, and 9,515 were considered serious, 0.011% of all doses administered.

It is important to note that although adverse events may occur after vaccination with a COVID-19 vaccine, they are not necessarily related to the vaccine. In addition, it is important to note that the number of reported adverse events received by HC and PHAC following immunization is not reflective of the number of applications received by the VISP. The VISP is an application-based program for serious and permanent vaccine injuries.

In response to (d), as of RCGT's last public report on June 1, 2022, RCGT had received 774 claims: 26 claims had been assessed by a medical review board and eight had been deemed eligible for compensation; 71 claims were deemed inadmissible as they did not meet the eligibility criteria or were missing information; 654 claims have been deemed to meet the basic eligibility criteria and are proceeding to a preliminary medical review. Further information with regard to program statistics can be found at the following link: <https://vaccineinjury.ca/en/program-statistics>.

In response to (e) and (f), as of their last report on June 1, 2022, eight claims had been deemed eligible for compensation. Due to privacy reasons, the specific figures, including the total compensation, cannot be disclosed. This approach ensures anonymity of the claimants.

The amount of compensation an eligible individual will receive is determined on a case-by-case basis, depending on the nature of the injury. Eligible individuals may receive income replacement indemnities, injury indemnities, death benefits, coverage for funeral expenses, and reimbursement of eligible costs such as otherwise uncovered medical expenses. Given the different types of supports available, the average dollar value of successful claims would not represent the amount an eligible claimant may receive through the VISP.

Question No. 728—Mr. Ted Falk:

With regard to the government's decision to suspend the COVID-19 vaccination requirement for the federal public service as of June 20, 2022, broken down by department, agency, or other government entity: (a) how many public servants impacted by the requirement were eligible to return to work on June 20, 2022; (b) how many of the public servants in (a)(i) actually returned to work on June 20, 2022, (ii) are scheduled or expected to return to work within 30 days of June 20, 2022, (iii) are expected to return to work, but not within 30 days of the requirement being suspended, (iv) are not expected to ever return to work in the public service?

Hon. Mona Fortier (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the policy on COVID-19 vaccination for the core public administration including the Royal Canadian Mounted Police was implemented in the fall of 2021, with vaccination providing a high degree of protection against infection and transmission of COVID-19 viruses. This approach, which required public servants to be vaccinated as a condition of employment, served as an effective public health measure to protect public servants and the communities in which they worked.

On June 14, 2022, following a review of the current public health situation, notably the evolution of the virus and vaccination rates in Canada, the Government of Canada announced that it would suspend the policy. Effective June 20, 2022, employees of the core public administration, CPA, were no longer required to be vaccinated as a condition of employment. Consequently, on that date, employees of the CPA who had been placed on administrative leave without pay, LWOP, because they had declined to disclose their vaccination status or were unwilling to be vaccinated with two doses, could resume regular work duties with pay.

At the time of the policy's suspension, approximately 1,500 employees were on administrative LWOP. Of these employees, 895 returned to work on June 20; 435 have returned to work after June 20, or are no longer in the CPA, including those who have taken retirement; and approximately 165 remain on LWOP for other reasons, which could include personal leave, maternity leave, a leave of absence, etc.

The Government of Canada will continue to keep Canadians safe, taking action based on the latest public health advice and science. This could include resuming vaccination requirements for federal government employees.

Question No. 733—Mr. Arnold Viersen:

With regard to the government's website for the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, as of June 21, 2022: (a) why does the "Status of House Business" link direct visitors to a page from the last prorogation of Parliament, as of August 18, 2020; (b) who was responsible for keeping the website accurate and with current information; (c) are there any quality control measures in place to ensure that the information contained on this page is accurate and up to date; and (d) why was the link not updated?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the website of the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons is maintained by the Privy Council Office and the "Status of House Business" link has since been updated.

Question No. 734—Mr. Clifford Small:

With regard to the monthly stock-take meetings by an oversight group referenced in the March 22, 2022, news release from the Prime Minister about an agreement between the Liberal Party of Canada and the New Democratic Party: what are the details of each stock-take meeting which has occurred to date, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) list of attendees, (iv) agenda items?

Hon. Greg Fergus (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the agreement serves to ensure Parliament continues to function in the interest of Canadians. As part of the supply and confidence agreement announced on March 22, 2022, both parties have agreed to take part in monthly stock-take meetings by an oversight group. The oversight group consists of a small group of staff and politicians. This group discusses overall progress on key commitments and upcoming issues.

The commitments under the agreement are publicly available at <https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2022/03/22/delivering-canadians-now>.

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 739—Ms. Lisa Marie Barron:**

With regard to the First Nations and Inuit Policing Program, since the fiscal year of 2015-16, broken down by fiscal year and community: (a) how many days has the Royal Canadian Mounted Police not been able to deploy a sufficient number of officers to meet agreed upon staffing levels; (b) what reasons were given for not being able to meet those staffing needs; (c) how many officers were assigned to provide community policing services in First Nations and Inuit communities; (d) when staffing levels were not met, what other resources and funding were provided in the absence of staff; and (e) how many officers are expected to provide community policing services in First Nations and Inuit Communities for the fiscal years of 2022-23, 2023-24, and 2024-25?

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to Public Safety Canada and part (e), indigenous communities, like all communities in Canada, should be places where people and families feel safe and secure. Culturally sensitive, respectful and properly funded police services are essential for community safety and well-being.

The first nations and Inuit policing program, FNIPP, is a contribution program that provides funding to support the provision of dedicated, culturally responsive policing services to first nations and Inuit communities across Canada. The services provided under the FNIPP are in addition to, and not in replacement of, the baseline policing services provided by the police service of local jurisdiction, including, in many instances, the RCMP.

While Canada has a role as a funder, provinces and territories retain jurisdiction over the administration of justice, including policing. As well, operational decisions regarding the deployment of officers and police resources are made at the discretion of the commanding officer of the local police service or detachment.

FNIPP policing agreements are cost-shared between the federal government, 52%, and the provincial/territorial, PT, government, 48%. The FNIPP currently serves 427, approximately 60%, first nations and Inuit communities in Canada. Funding under the FNIPP is provided to support two main policing models.

The first is self-administered police service agreements, SAs, where a first nations or Inuit police service is authorized or established by the PT government and provides primary, day-to-day, policing services to a first nations or Inuit community. SAs account for 789 police officer positions through 36 agreements, covering 155 communities.

The second is community tripartite agreements, CTAs, where a contingent of police officers from the RCMP provides dedicated policing to a first nations or Inuit community that is intended to supplement the level of PT police services provided to that community. CTAs are made pursuant to bilateral framework agreements between Canada and the participating PT. CTAs account for police officer positions through 144 agreements in 248 communities. For the 2022-23 fiscal year, 458.5 police officer positions are funded under CTAs. For the 2023-24 and 2024-25 fiscal years, it is estimated that, at minimum, 458.5 officer positions per year will be funded under CTAs, given that the CTAs will need to be renegotiated past 2023.

In addition to these two main policing models, the FNIPP provides support to 23 other policing agreements, with an additional 83.5 police officer positions.

In January 2018, the Government of Canada announced a federal investment of up to \$291.2 million over five years, beginning in 2018-19, for policing in first nations and Inuit communities. This additional funding was intended to address matters such as officer safety, police equipment purchases and salaries, as well as support 110 additional police officer positions in first nations and Inuit communities currently served under the FNIPP.

Building on these investments, budget 2021 proposes to provide \$861 million over five years, beginning in 2021-22, and \$145 million ongoing, to support culturally responsive policing and community safety services in indigenous communities. This includes \$43.7 million over five years, beginning in 2021-22, to co-develop a legislative framework for first nations policing that recognizes first nations policing as an essential service; \$540.3 million over five years, beginning in 2021-22, and \$126.8 million ongoing, to support indigenous communities currently served under the first nations policing program and expand the program to new indigenous communities; \$108.6 million over five years, beginning in 2021-22, to repair, renovate and replace policing facilities in first nations and Inuit communities; \$64.6 million over five years, beginning in 2021-22, and \$18.1 million ongoing, to enhance indigenous-led crime prevention strategies and community safety services; and \$103.8 million over five years, beginning in 2021-22, for a new pathways to safe indigenous communities initiative, led by Indigenous Services Canada, to support indigenous communities to develop more holistic community-based safety and wellness models.

With regard to parts (a) to (d), the RCMP management system does not capture the requested information at the level of detail requested. As a result, the information requested cannot be obtained without an extensive manual review of our files. This manual review could not be completed within the established timeline.

Question No. 740—Ms. Lisa Marie Barron:

With regard to the \$20 million allocated in budget 2021 for the development of a responsible plan to transition open net-pen salmon farming in coastal British Columbia by 2025: what are the details of each consultation, including the (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) attendees, (iv) topic discussed, (v) cost of each meeting?

Routine Proceedings

Mr. Mike Kelloway (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Fisheries and Oceans Canada is using this funding primarily to support indigenous engagement on the development of a net pen transition plan. This funding is for the current fiscal year, 2022-23. A call for applications for capacity funding was sent to all first nations in British Columbia on May 16, 2022. This application process was launched in advance of the upcoming engagement process on a draft framework for the development of a net pen transition plan, as announced by Minister Murray on June 22, 2022.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada is currently reviewing initial applications received from first nations and expects further applications to be submitted once details on the engagement process and the draft framework are released.

Opportunities for further consultation and engagement with Government of British Columbia, first nations, industry, local governments, stakeholders and British Columbians will be announced in midsummer to late summer 2022.

Question No. 742—Mr. Stephen Ellis:

With regard to communications between the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Commissioner and the Office of the Prime Minister, between April 18, 2020, and May 1, 2020: what are the details of all communications, including all verbal, electronic, written, or other communication, including, for each the (i) date, (ii) time, (iii) sender or initiator, (iv) recipient, (v) form (email, text, etc.), (vi) topics discussed, (vii) summary of what was written or said?

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the RCMP searched its records management system for memos from the commissioner to the Prime Minister or his office as well as a search of the commissioner's emails to and from the Prime Minister or his office and no documents were found.

While the RCMP does not have a record of any calls with the Prime Minister or his office, the commissioner recalls at least one instance in the days immediately following the mass casualty in Nova Scotia in April 2020, when the Prime Minister called to offer his condolences.

Note however that this time period was early in the COVID-19 pandemic with most staff working remotely. Therefore, the commissioner's regular administrative support for duties such as scheduling meetings/conference calls did not exist, and as such regular records of meetings and calendar entries are limited.

Question No. 745—Mr. Don Davies:

With regard to the Canada Revenue Agency's criminal investigation of KPMG's offshore tax scheme: (a) what is the job title of the person who decided (i) to initiate the investigation, (ii) when to initiate the investigation, (iii) the mandate of the investigation, (iv) the date of completion of the investigation, (v) the drafting of the full investigation report, (vi) determination of the findings of the investigation; (b) for items in (a), was the minister or her exempt staff involved in these decisions, and, if so, to what extent; (c) when did the investigation begin; (d) what are the titles and numbers of the documents used in the investigation; (e) how many hours were spent on the investigation; (f) how many full-time equivalent employees were involved in the implementation of the investigation; (g) when did the investigation end; (h) what are the detailed findings of the investigation; (i) was the minister involved in the investigation, and, if so, to what extent; (j) were the exempt staff of the minister's office involved in the investigation, and, if so, to what extent; (k) when was the minister informed of the findings of the investigation; (l) was the minister or her exempt staff involved in (i) the drafting of the full investigation report, (ii) the review of the full investigation report; (m) are there different versions of the full investigation report, and, if so, why, and what are the titles and numbers

of those versions; and (n) was the full investigation report sent to the Public Prosecution Service of Canada, if not, why not, and, if so, did the Public Prosecution Service of Canada make a decision to prosecute, if not, why not?

Hon. Diane LeBouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the CRA is unable to respond to the question in the manner requested. In order to ensure the integrity of the work of the CRA and to respect the confidentiality provisions of the acts the CRA administers, as section 241 of the Income Tax Act as set by Parliament prohibits officials from disclosing information that is taxpayer information, the CRA cannot comment on investigations that it may or may not be undertaking.

Furthermore, please be advised that the various acts administered by the CRA contain provisions vesting powers in the Minister of National Revenue. Most of the acts allow for the delegation of the minister's powers to designated officials. These officials are authorized to exercise powers or perform duties and functions of the minister through administrative delegation instruments signed either by the minister or by the commissioner. The Income Tax Act, ITA, is an example of this process, whereby the responsibilities of the minister as referenced in the ITA are delegated to officials within the CRA, all of whom are public servants.

Please note that neither the Minister of National Revenue, nor her staff, are in any way involved in any investigations the CRA may or may not conduct, in order to fully respect the agency's arm's-length status.

Question No. 751—Ms. Laurel Collins:

With regard to First Nations policing legislation, since 2014-15: (a) what funding has the government dedicated towards the co-development of a legislative framework that recognizes policing as an essential service; and (b) what consultations have taken place to support policing services that are well-funded, culturally sensitive and respectful of the communities they serve?

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), budget 2021 proposed to provide \$43.7 million over five years, beginning in 2021-22, to co-develop a legislative framework for first nations policing that recognizes first nations policing as an essential service. This includes funding to support virtual engagement sessions and capacity funding for first nations organizations and first nations police services organizations.

With regard to part (b), the Government of Canada concluded 13 virtual engagement sessions with first nations, provinces and territories, first nations organizations, first nations police services, first nations police boards/commissions, first nations women's organizations, first nations youth organizations, first nations 2SLGBTQIA+ people and organizations, subject matter experts and others to support the co-development of federal first nations police services legislation.

Bilateral engagement continues with meetings, upon request, from first nations, police services and other organizations, as well as written comments and submissions to a public safety indigenous policing email address.

Moving forward, the Government of Canada will continue to collaborate with provinces and territories, the First Nations Chiefs of Police Association, the First Nations Police Governance Council, and with first nations modern treaty and self-governing agreement signatories to identify practical considerations to inform the federal legislation.

Question No. 753—Mr. John Brassard:

With regard to communications between Dan Brien, the Director of Media Relations, Issues Management and Social Media for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and the Office of the Minister of Public Safety, including the minister, between April 18, 2020, and May 1, 2020: what are the details of all communications, including all verbal, electronic, written, or other communication, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) time, (iii) sender or initiator, (iv) recipient, (v) form (email, text, etc.), (vi) topics discussed, (vii) summary of what was written or said?

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, RCMP, can confirm that Dan Brien, Director of Media Relations, Issues Management and Social Media for the RCMP did not have any communications with the Office of the Minister of Public Safety, including the minister between April 18, 2020, and May 1, 2020.

Question No. 754—Mr. John Brassard:

With regard to communications between Dan Brien, the Director of Media Relations, Issues Management and Social Media for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and the Office of the Prime Minister, between April 18, 2020, and May 1, 2020: what are the details of all communications, including all verbal, electronic, written, or other communication, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) time, (iii) sender or initiator, (iv) recipient, (v) form (email, text, etc.), (vi) topics discussed, (vii) summary of what was written or said?

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, RCMP, can confirm that Dan Brien, director of media relations, issues management and social media for the RCMP did not have any communications with the office of the Minister of Public Safety, including the minister between April 18, 2020, and May 1, 2020.

Question No. 755—Ms. Rachel Blaney:

With regard to the Parliamentary Protective Service (PPS): (a) what is the process of registering a complaint against the PPS; (b) who is responsible for addressing the complaints; (c) is the complaint process made public; (d) broken down by year since 2012, (i) how many complaints have been received about the PPS, (ii) how many of the complaints received about the PPS were resolved, (iii) how many of the complaints against the PPS were submitted by Indigenous peoples or Indigenous organizations; and (d) how many complaints with PPS remain unresolved?

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Parliamentary Protective Service, PPS, is a separate and distinct organization from the RCMP and the Government of Canada. As such, this question should be directed to the PPS directly, or the Speaker of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Commons, who are responsible for the service.

Question No. 759—Ms. Heather McPherson:

With regard to legal fees incurred by the government in relation to LC, EB, KG, VD, MT and CL v Canada Employment Insurance Commission: (a) what is the total amount paid to date; and (b) who will be required to be paid for outside counsel

services, broken down by (i) department, (ii) agency, (iii) other government entity that incurred the expense?

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with respect to LC, EB, KG, VD, MT and CL v. Canada Employment Insurance Commission, to the extent that the requested information is or may be protected by any legal privileges, the federal Crown asserts those privileges. In this case, the federal Crown has waived solicitor-client privilege only as it relates to the total legal costs incurred by the government in relation to this matter, as defined below.

The total legal costs, actual and notional costs, associated with the LC, EB, KG, VD, MT and CL v. Canada Employment Insurance Commission matter amount to approximately \$264,309.74. This amount covers the costs associated with the numerous procedures filed and hearings held in various files related to this matter since 2018. Department of Justice lawyers, notaries and paralegals are salaried public servants and therefore no legal fees are incurred for their services. However, a “notional amount” has been provided to account for those legal services. The “notional amount” is calculated by multiplying the total hours recorded in the responsive files for the relevant period by the applicable legal services hourly rates. The actual costs component is determined from recorded legal disbursements in the responsive files for the relevant period. The total amount mentioned in this response is based on information contained in Department of Justice systems, as of June 21, 2022.

There have been no outside counsel services related to this matter.

* * *

● (1105)

[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, furthermore, if a revised response to Question No. 564, originally tabled on June 22, 2022, and the government's responses to Questions Nos. 567, 569, 572 to 575, 579, 585, 586, 588, 589, 593, 595, 597, 598, 600, 602, 604, 605, 607, 609 to 611, 614, 615, 618, 621, 623 to 625, 628, 630, 632, 633, 635 to 637, 639, 640, 643, 645, 648 to 650, 652 to 657, 659 to 662, 664 to 667, 669, 671 to 683, 688, 689, 691 to 694, 696 to 700, 702, 703, 705 to 707, 711, 712, 714, 716, 718, 719, 721 to 725, 727, 729 to 732, 735 to 738, 741, 743, 744, 746 to 750, 752 and 756 to 758 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled immediately.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I was listening very carefully and trying to keep track, but I missed 13, 51 and 79.

Could he repeat those odd numbers for us please?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It is the questions that were read that were presented. Therefore, if the hon. member is not sure about those other questions, we certainly will take a look at that after and come back to the House if need be.

Routine Proceedings

Is it the pleasure of the House that the aforementioned questions be made orders for return and that they be tabled immediately?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 564—Mr. Dan Muys:

With regard to government expenditures on Cisco and Cisco Systems products or services since January 1, 2020, including those obtained or purchased through a third party vendor: what are the details of each expenditure, including the (i) date, (ii) amount or value, (iii) vendor, (iv) description of goods or services, including the volume, (v) file number, (vi) manner in which the contract was awarded (sole-sourced, competitive bid, etc.)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 567—Mr. Pat Kelly:

With regard to the government's use of facial recognition technology between 2012 and 2022: (a) which departments or agencies contracted for facial recognition technology; (b) for each department or agency in (a), what are the start and end dates for its contracts for facial recognition technology; (c) for each department or agency in (a), for what purpose did it contract the use of facial recognition technology; (d) for each department or agency in (a) which terminated or declined to renew a contract for facial recognition technology, why did it choose to discontinue its use of the technology; and (e) are any departments or agencies currently considering contracting the use of facial recognition technology, and, if so, for what purpose?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 569—Mr. Pat Kelly:

With regard to the Canada Infrastructure Bank, broken down by year since its inception: (a) how many private sector investment dollars has it secured; (b) of the private investments in (a), how many unique investors do they represent; (c) how many projects funded in whole or in part by the bank were (i) completed, (ii) abandoned; (d) how many private investment dollars were refunded due to projects in (c)(ii) being abandoned; and (e) what percentage of funding for a project must be private for the bank to consider it successful?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 572—Mr. Taylor Bachrach:

With regard to funding of talent and research, in particular the Canadian Graduate Scholarship - Master's, the Canadian Graduate Scholarships (Michael Smith Foreign Study Supplements, Master's), the Canadian Graduate Scholarships - Doctoral, the Canadian Graduate Scholarships to Honour Nelson Mandela, the SSHRC Doctoral Fellowships, the Canadian Graduate Scholarships (Michael Smith Foreign Study Supplements, Doctoral), the Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarships, the SSHRC Postdoctoral Fellowships and the Banting Post-Doctoral Fellowships, for each program and broken down by fiscal year since 2002: (a) what was the total value of all awards; (b) what were the highest and lowest possible awarded amounts as well as the average value; (c) what was the total number of recipients; (d) what was the total number of applicants; and (e) what was the success rate of applicants?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 573—Mr. Jean-Denis Garon:

With regard to the tax audits conducted by the Canada Revenue Agency, broken down by industry, administrative region, electoral district and year from 2015 to 2021: how many audits were conducted (i) for small and medium-sized enterprises, (ii) for charities, (iii) by audit programs?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 574—Ms. Michelle Rempel Garner:

With regard to Canada's smallpox vaccine supply: (a) how many doses of smallpox vaccine does Canada have in its federal stockpile as of May 25, 2022; (b) what is Canada's capacity to domestically manufacture smallpox vaccines, and over what time period; and (c) how many doses of smallpox vaccine, within other sources, is the government aware of being available in Canada, broken down by source (e.g. provincial stores)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 575—Mr. Richard Bragdon:

With regard to the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS), and the statement from the spokesperson to the Minister of Finance in January 2021 that "We recognize that some state-owned enterprises have accessed the program to support jobs in Canada. We continue to actively assess adjustments to the Wage Subsidy": (a) what state-owned enterprises accessed the CEWS program; (b) for each enterprise in (a), how much funding did it receive under CEWS; (c) did the government request that any funding provided in (b) be repaid, and, if so, how much was repaid; and (d) what adjustments were (i) assessed, (ii) made, to the CEWS program following the statement?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 579—Mrs. Rachael Thomas:

With regard to government travel, broken down by minister's office since January 1, 2019: (a) which ministers or exempt staff have rented vehicles, including, but not limited to, car and driver services, limousine services or car services, within Canada or elsewhere; (b) for each use identified in (a), what was the (i) date of the rental, (ii) pick-up location of the rental, (iii) drop-off location of the rental, (iv) nature of the official business, including events attended, (v) cost of the rental, (vi) vehicle description, including type and model, if available, (vii) names of passengers, if known, (viii) name of the vendor, (ix) duration of the rental; and (c) for each rental listed in (a), was a driver provided?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 585—Mr. Philip Lawrence:

With regard to the various user fees collected by the government, including those collected by any department or agency: what are the details of all fees which have increased in the past 12 months, or are scheduled to be increased in the next year, including, for each, the (i) title and description of fee, (ii) fee amount or structure prior to the increase, (iii) dates of increase, (iv) increased fee amounts or structures, (v) percentage of fee increase, (vi) additional revenue projected as a result of the fee increase?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 586—Mr. Philip Lawrence:

With regard to the electric vehicle charging stations installed on government property: (a) what are the locations of each station; (b) on what date did each station become operational; and (c) for each location in (a), what was the total cost to acquire and install the station?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 588—Ms. Michelle Ferreri:

With regard to loan payback extensions for business owners who received loans through government business relief programs: (a) how many recipients of loans through the Tourism and Hospitality Relief Fund have (i) requested, (ii) received, extensions to their payback schedule; (b) what is the breakdown of (a) by length of extension; (c) how many recipients of loans through the Canada Emergency Business Account have (i) requested, (ii) received, extensions to their payback schedule; (d) what is the breakdown of (c) by length of extension; (e) how many recipients of loans through the Regional Relief and Recovery Fund have (i) requested, (ii) received, extensions to their payback schedule; (f) what is the breakdown of (e) by length of extension; (g) what impact will receiving a payback extension have on the partial forgiveness component of the loan, broken down by fund or program; and (h) of the businesses who received payback extensions, what percentage are projected to still receive a partial forgiveness to their loan, broken down by program, and percent of forgiveness?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 589—Mr. Adam Chambers:**

With regard to the Canada Child Benefit (CCB) and the CCB young child supplement (CCBYCS) payments made between April 2020 and January 2022: (a) how many individuals received (i) CCB, (ii) CCBYCS; (b) of the individuals who received (i) CCB, (ii) CCBYEC, how many also received payments under the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) during the same period; (c) of the individuals who received (i) CCB, (ii) CCBYEC, how many received Employment Insurance (EI) payments during the same period; (d) of the individuals who received (i) CCB, (ii) CCBYEC, how many received payments under other income support programs, broken down by program; and (e) of the individuals who received payments under both CCBYEC and CERB, EI or other income support programs, and broken down by each program, how many received payments at each of the payment levels (\$150 and \$300) based on their incomes for 2019 or 2020?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 593—Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman:

With regard to bonuses paid out to government officials in the 2021-22 fiscal year, broken down by department or agency: (a) what was the total amount paid out in bonuses; and (b) how many and what percentage of officials (i) at, or above the executive (EX) level (or equivalent), (ii) below the EX level (or equivalent), received bonuses?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 595—Ms. Raquel Dancho:

With regard to the current deployment of Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) officers in the province of Quebec, as of June 1, 2022: (a) how many RCMP officers are presently working in Quebec; (b) of the officers in (a), how many are working in the vicinity of the Roxham Road border crossing; (c) of the officers in (a), how many are not working directly in the vicinity of Roxham Road, but have been assigned to matters either directly or indirectly related to the Roxham Road border crossing; and (d) what is the breakdown of the number of RCMP officers deployed to each region or area of Quebec?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 597—Mr. Chris Warkentin:

With regard to the ArriveCAN application: (a) how much money did the government spend developing the application; (b) what is the itemized breakdown of all expenditures related to (a); (c) how much has been spent to date maintaining, updating, or promoting the application; (d) how much money did Shared Services Canada spend to initially develop this application; (e) what is the itemized breakdown of all expenditures related to (d); (f) what are the details of all contracts signed by the government related to the application in any way, including, for each (i) the vendor, (ii) the date, (iii) the value, (iv) the start and end dates, if applicable, (v) the description of goods or services provided, (vi) whether the contract was sole-sourced or awarded through a competitive bidding process; and (g) what is the total cumulative cost (i) incurred to date, (ii) budgeted related to the application?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 598—Mr. Daniel Blaikie:

With regard to the Canada Emergency Response Benefit and the Canada Recovery Benefit: (a) how much does the government estimate is owed in repayments; (b) how many individuals owe repayments; (c) how many individuals in (b) reported an income below the low income cut-off on their 2019 tax return; (d) what is the lowest amount owed; (e) what is the highest amount owed; (f) what is the average amount owed; (g) of the individuals owing money, how many does the government estimate were victims of fraud; (h) of the total estimated amount owed, how much does the government expect to (i) successfully recover, (ii) recover from those whose income is below the low income cut-off; and (i) how much does the government intend to spend on staff time and resources to recover these debts, broken down by (i) department, (ii) agency, (iii) other government entity?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 600—Mrs. Anna Roberts:

With regard to government statistics on court-imposed sentences for those convicted of crimes which carry a maximum possible sentence of 10 years or more, broken down by crime or criminal code violation, and by year in which the sentence was given, since January 1, 2016: (a) what percentage of those convicted were given the maximum sentence; and (b) how many people were (i) convicted, (ii) given the maximum sentence?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 602—Mr. Michael Barrett:

With regard to the story published in *La Presse* on June 6, 2022, about the Public Prosecution Service of Canada (PPSC) participating in secret trials in Quebec: (a) what is the total number of secret trials the PPSC has participated in since 2016; and (b) what is the breakdown of (a) by province or territory and by type and level of court?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 604—Mr. Damien C. Kurek:

With regard to the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) and the government's COVID-19 vaccination attestation requirement, as of June 6, 2022: (a) how many CAF members were either (i) placed on leave, (ii) released or terminated due to either not being vaccinated or not fulfilling the attestation requirement; (b) of the individuals in (a) how many were (i) active duty, (ii) Reserve Force, (iii) other; (c) what is the breakdown of active duty individuals in (b)(i) by (i) branch of the CAF, (ii) location they were serving from prior to the punitive action being taken; and (d) what is the breakdown of Reserve Force individuals in (b)(ii) by each of the four force sub-components?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 605—Mr. Martin Shields:

With regard to unconditional repayable contributions made by the government since January 1, 2016, broken down by department or agency: (a) what was the total (i) number (ii) value of contributions made, broken down by year; (b) of the contributions in (a) what is the (i) number (ii) value of contributions which have been written off to date; (c) what is the total amount of contributions written off, broken down by year; and (d) what are the details of all contributions in (b), including for each the (i) recipient, (ii) amount, (iii) date, (iv) project description or purpose of contribution, (v) reason it was written off?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 607—Mr. Dave MacKenzie:

With regard to the Royal Canadian Air Force and its CC-295 Kingfisher search and rescue aircraft: (a) in what year will the aircraft (i) enter into service, (ii) reach the initial operational capability (IOC); (b) what specific modifications, upgrades or repairs must be completed before the aircraft (i) enters into service, (ii) reaches the IOC; (c) what is the projected or estimated cost for each item in (b); (d) what is the itemized breakdown, including costs and completion date, of all the work that has been conducted on the aircraft since 2016; and (e) what is the schedule of all ongoing or future work to be completed on the aircraft, including the projected costs and completion date of each item?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 609—Mr. Marty Morantz:**

With regard to the ad hoc committee of parliamentarians announced by the government on April 27, 2022, concerning certain documents related to the National Microbiology Laboratory: (a) what are the terms of reference for the committee; (b) what specific legal authorities, if any, does the committee exercise or operate under; (c) what roles, responsibilities, operations, tenure and obligations were provided to the committee; (d) what is the scope, objective and mandate of the committee; (e) by what instrument (e.g., order in council, contract, memorandum of understanding, exchange of letters) is the committee constituted; (f) when will the instrument, referred to in (e), be laid upon the table of the House; (g) who are the signatories to any agreement related to the establishment, constitution or appointment of the committee, broken down by agreement; (h) who are the members, and, if any, alternate members of the committee; (i) by whom and on what date or dates were the members (and alternate members, if any) of the committee nominated, and, if a separate process, appointed; (j) who is the Chair, and, if any, vice-chair of the committee; (k) by whom and on what date was the Chair (and vice-chair, if applicable) of the committee nominated, and, if a separate process, appointed; (l) what security clearances are the members (and alternate members, if any) of the committee required to possess and (i) did each member already possess it, (ii) what was the process required to establish it, (iii) on what date did each member acquire it; (m) does the Chair or vice-chair require a different or higher security clearance than the other members of the committee, and, if so, what are the details, referred to in (l), concerning it; (n) what are the dates and locations for committee meetings (i) which have occurred, (ii) are scheduled in the future; (o) under what rules does the committee operate; (p) are official records of the committee's meetings kept, and, if so, (i) who is responsible for keeping them, (ii) where are they kept or deposited; (q) how are the committee's decisions, advice and recommendations being captured or recorded; (r) are the committee's meetings recorded via (i) video, (ii) audio, (iii) written transcripts; (s) where are the recordings, referred to in (r), kept or deposited; (t) what are the record-keeping procedures for written submissions to the committee and committee correspondence, including where they are kept or deposited; (u) did the government request the use of any House of Commons resources, including clerks and support staff, to support the committee's work, and, if so, what are the terms of any such agreement, including the cost paid for these services; (v) did the government request the use of any Translation Bureau resources, including translators and interpreters, to support the committee's work, and, if so, what are the terms of any such agreement, including the cost paid for these services; (w) did the government request the use of any Library of Parliament resources, including analysts, to support the committee's work, and, if so, what are the terms of any such agreement, including the cost paid for these services; (x) has the government or the committee retained outside legal counsel to support the committee's work, and, if so, what are the terms of any such retainer, including who was retained and the cost paid for their services; (y) when is the committee's work anticipated to conclude; (z) how will the committee report its findings, including whether the government will table a report and the subject documents in the House; (aa) who are the jurists who will act as the arbiters for the committee, and how were they selected, including by whom they were nominated, and, if a separate process, appointed; (bb) how much are the arbiters being paid for their work with the committee; (cc) by what instrument (e.g., orders in council, contracts) are the arbiters appointed; (dd) when will the instruments, referred to in (cc), be laid upon the table of the House; (ee) does the committee have the mandate to consider documents other than the documents referred to in the orders of the House of Commons, adopted on June 2 and 17, 2021, and, if so, what are the details concerning those documents and mandate; (ff) does the committee have the power to order the production of documents, and, if so, under what legal authority does it have such power; (gg) does the committee have the power to summon witnesses, and, if so, under what legal authority does it have such power; and (hh) what remuneration is paid to the Chair, vice-chairs, if any, and other members of the committee?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 610—Ms. Raquel Dancho:

With regard to complaints related to searches of electronic devices received by the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA), broken down by year since 2016: (a) how many searches involving the viewing of contents on individuals' electronic devices has the CBSA conducted (i) in total, (ii) broken down by point of entry; (b) how many complaints were received related to the searches (i) in total, (ii) broken down by point of entry; and (c) what are the statistics related to how the complaints were received, including how many complaints were deemed to be legitimate and what action was taken to address the complaints?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 611—Ms. Raquel Dancho:

With regard to government statistics on individuals charged with firearm related offences, broken down by each offence and by year since 2016: (a) what percentage of those charged had a previous criminal record; and (b) what was the total number of people (i) charged, (ii) charged, who had a previous criminal record, (iii) charged, who did not have a previous criminal record?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 614—Ms. Michelle Ferreri:

With regard to international arrivals being forced to wait on the tarmac at Pearson International Airport (Pearson) for extended periods of time due to government restrictions or capacity problems with government agencies involved in the processing of arriving passengers: (a) what is the government's estimate of the number of (i) planes, (ii) passengers, which have been forced to spend extra time on the tarmac at Pearson, broken down by month since January 1, 2022; (b) what was the worst day in terms of the volume of passengers being forced to remain on the tarmac for extra time; (c) on the date in (b), what was the number of (i) flights, (ii) passengers, that were forced to remain on the tarmac; (d) does the government have any estimates on the number of connecting flights missed by passengers as a result of the delay, and, if so, what are the estimates; (e) has the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance taken any action to ensure that the delays at Pearson are fixed before the summer tourism season; (f) if the answer to (e) is affirmative, what specific action has been taken; (g) if the answer to (e) is negative, why has no action been taken by that particular minister; and (h) what are the government's estimates on the percentage of foreign tourists who arrive through Canada each year through Pearson versus other Canadian airports?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 615—Mr. Blake Desjarlais:

With regard to federal funding for Métis, First Nations and Inuit organizations during the 2020-21 fiscal year: how much funding was allocated to (i) the Métis National Council and its affiliates (Metis Nation of Ontario, Metis Nation of Saskatchewan, Metis Nation of Alberta Association), (ii) non-affiliated Métis groups, specifically the Métis Settlements General Council and the Manitoba Metis Federation, (iii) Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, (iv) non-affiliated Inuit groups, specifically Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, Qikiqtani Inuit Association, Kitikmeot Inuit Association and Kivalliq Inuit Association, (v) the Assembly of First Nations, (vi) non-affiliated First Nations, specifically Treaty 8?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 618—Mr. Michael Kram:

With regard to the public order emergency declared in February 2022: (a) did any minister, including the Prime Minister, minister's exempt staff, including Prime Minister's Office's employees, or departmental official, brief, prior to 4:30 p.m. on February 14, 2022, any New Democratic Party member of Parliament, or any of their staff, about plans to declare the emergency; and (b) if the answer to (a) is affirmative, (i) what are the details of that briefing or briefings, (ii) was any representation made at a briefing that in declaring an emergency, the government would be acting on the advice of law enforcement, and, if so, what are the details of that representation?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 621—Mr. Tako Van Popta:

With regard to government funding for flood mitigation measures in the Fraser Valley: what are the details of all federally funded projects which are either ongoing or planned, including, for each, the (i) title or description, (ii) summary of the work being completed, (iii) location, (iv) amount of federal contribution, (v) total project cost, (vi) breakdown of how much each level of government or other entity is contributing to the project, (vii) start date, (viii) expected completion date?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 623—Mrs. Laila Goodridge:**

With regard to buildings owned or leased by the government, excluding Service Canada centres, which are located in flood plains or flood zones: (a) how many government buildings are located in a flood plain or flood zone; (b) what are the details of each building in (a), including (i) the address and location, (ii) whether the building is owned or leased by the government, (iii) the number of government employees who work in the building, if applicable; and (c) are there contingency plans or temporary locations designated to be used in the event of a flood, and, if so, what are they, broken down by each building?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 624—Ms. Michelle Rempel Garner:

With regard to Bill C-65, An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code (harassment and violence), and its application to the House of Commons workplace: (a) what analysis or rationale has been conducted by or provided to the government with respect to the exclusion of member to member harassment (i.e. harassment and violence as opposed to solely sexual harassment) from the House of Commons harassment policy; (b) is the government aware of incidences of harassment (i.e. harassment and violence as opposed to solely sexual harassment) deemed to be between members, that have been reported and subsequently deemed not covered by the policy, and, if so, how many; (c) what analysis, if any, has been provided to or conducted by the government with respect to if or how the House of Commons harassment policy could be fully extended to include all member to member harassment (i.e. harassment and violence as opposed to solely sexual harassment); (d) what analysis, if any, has been provided to or conducted by the government to review if processes used during the application of any provision of the Reform Act, 2014, particularly the provision regarding expulsion of caucus members, could contradict the act, the House of Commons harassment policy, or any other piece of federal or provincial legislation regarding workplace harassment; (e) what analysis, if any, has been provided to or conducted by the government to define the responsibility of party caucus chairs (i.e. as defined in the Reform Act, 2014) to prevent harassment within party caucus meetings; and (f) what analysis, if any, has been provided to or conducted by the government to analyze if member to member harassment could constitute a breach of parliamentary privilege?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 625—Ms. Heather McPherson:

With regard to all orders in council that have been adopted by the government but have not been published in the orders in council online database: (a) since 2004, broken down by date, the statute from which they were issued and section of the statute, how many orders in council have been adopted but not published; (b) how many orders in council adopted but not published were in response to Russian aggression towards Ukraine (i) since 2014, (ii) in 2022; and (c) what is the breakdown of the orders in councils identified in (b) by statute and section of the statute?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 628—Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman:

With regard to the government's social media accounts, broken down by department, agency, or other government entity: (a) how many employees or full-time equivalents are assigned to the accounts, and what are their titles; (b) how many accounts or profiles does the government manage, broken down by social media platform; (c) what are the details of each account or profile, including, for each, the (i) name of the platform, (ii) handle or profile name; (d) what specific procedures are in place to ensure that any information put out through the government's accounts (i) does not contain disinformation, misinformation, or misleading information, (ii) is not politically biased towards the government or the Liberal Party of Canada; and (e) for any procedures related to (d), who has final approval before an item is posted?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 630—Ms. Rachel Blaney:

With regard to the Table of Disabilities (Table) used by Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC): (a) what is the process to make changes to the Table; (b) what changes have been made to the Table since 2015, and when were the changes made; (c) is there a project underway to make changes to the Table to better reflect the needs of women veterans, and, if so, (i) how many staff members are involved in this project, (ii) what are the titles of those staff members, (iii) what are the timelines of the project; and (d) has the Minister of Veterans Affairs taken any meetings with department officials and stakeholders to discuss edits to the Table, and, if so, (i) on what dates, (ii) with whom?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 632—Mr. John Nater:

With regard to the reception "An Evening at Canada's House" attended by the Prime Minister at the Official Residence of the Consul General of Canada in Los Angeles held on or around the evening of June 10, 2022: (a) how many individuals were invited to the reception; (b) who was invited; (c) how was the invite list determined; (d) what costs were incurred by the government related to the event, broken down by item and type of expense; (e) what are the details of all contracts worth more than \$1,000 related to the event, including, for each, the (i) vendor, (ii) amount, (iii) description of goods or services provided; and (f) why was the event not listed on the Prime Minister's official itinerary for that day?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 633—Mr. Alex Ruff:

With regard to government statistics on crimes committed with handguns since January 1, 2016, and broken down by province or territory where the crime occurred: (a) how many gun crimes were committed by individuals (i) in legal possession of the handguns, (ii) using an illegally obtained handgun; and (b) what is the breakdown of (a)(i) and (a)(ii) by type of crime?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 635—Ms. Leslyn Lewis:

With regard to the government's participation in the development of the World Health Organization's (WHO) proposed international treaty on pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response: (a) what is the government's formal position with regard to a proposed legally binding international treaty on pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response; (b) what are the details of all documents the government has provided to the WHO or the World Health Assembly (WHA) related to the treaty, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) sender, (iii) recipient, (iv) title, (v) subject matter, (vi) summary of contents, (vii) file number; (c) what are the details of Canada's submission or contribution to the 75th WHA meeting with regard to strengthening WHO preparedness for and response to health emergencies; (d) what formal participation, if any, has Canada had, or plans to have with the intergovernmental negotiating body formed in February 2022; (e) what are the details of all documents or recommendations the government provided to the WHO to inform discussions at the December 2021 Special Sessions, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) sender, (iii) recipient, (iv) title, (v) subject matter, (vi) summary of contents, (vii) file number; (f) what specific measures, if any, are being taken to protect Canada's independent decision-making authority with regard to future public health responses in a pandemic; (g) what specific measures, if any, are being taken to increase accountability and transparency in the WHO's and WHA's decision-making process; (h) which elected and unelected officials led Canada's delegation at the WHA meetings, including the number of people in the delegations and their titles and positions, for each meeting since 2016; (i) what meetings are scheduled for public consultation overall and with Canadians; (j) what meetings are scheduled to discuss the drafting of the treaty; and (k) does the government have any plans to undertake a formal and public review of Canada's whole-of-government pandemic response to inform future national pandemic planning, and, if so, what are the details?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 636—Ms. Leslyn Lewis:

With regard to publicly available information on unpublished or secret orders in council (OIC) signed by the government since January 1, 2016: (a) on what date was each OIC signed; (b) who signed each OIC; (c) what was the general subject matter or purpose of each OIC; (d) who made the decision to keep the specific contents of each OIC secret; (e) what justification was claimed in keeping the contents of each OIC secret (national security, commercial competitiveness, detrimental to the Prime Minister's image, etc.); and (f) what is the justification for the increased use of secret OICs?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 637—Ms. Rachel Blaney:**

With regard to case managers at Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC), broken down by year since 2018: (a) how many new employees have been hired as (i) temporary or term staff, (ii) permanent staff; (b) how many have left VAC; (c) how many vacant positions exist by office; (d) how many empty positions exist by office; (e) how many are currently on extended sick leave; (f) how many have been on sick leave for longer than two months; (g) how many are currently on short- or long-term disability; and (h) how many have been on short- or long-term disability?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 639—Mr. Rick Perkins:

With regard to studies conducted by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO): (a) what specific studies, if any, has DFO conducted since January 1, 2016, on the impact of pinnipeds on fish stocks; (b) for each study in (a), (i) when was it conducted, (ii) what were the findings; (c) what is the current DFO science budget for seal stock assessments; and (d) what is the projected DFO science budget for seal stock assessments for each of the next five years?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 640—Mr. Rick Perkins:

With regard to employment within the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO): (a) what is the net increase or decrease of positions or full-time equivalents at DFO in total, between 2019 and 2022, broken down by section of DFO and type of position; (b) what is the breakdown of the number of jobs abolished, between 2019 and 2022, by type of jobs abolished and reason for abolishment; and (c) what was the total number of jobs abolished between 2019 and 2022 in the (i) ecosystem and fisheries management sector, (ii) ecosystems and oceans science sector?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 643—Mr. Eric Melillo:

With regard to page 11 of the Canada's National Shipbuilding Strategy 2020 Annual Report, where it indicates that \$3,618,548,097 in contracts have been awarded in Ontario since 2012: (a) what is the total number of contracts that have been awarded since 2012; (b) which vendors received these contracts; (c) what is the total value of contracts awarded, broken down by vendor; (d) of the total amount listed in the report, how much was spent on (i) large vessel contracts, (ii) small vessel contracts, (iii) repair, refit or maintenance contracts, (iv) lease contracts, (v) other contracts, broken down by type; and (e) what is the breakdown of each part of the question by year since 2012?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 645—Mr. Dan Albas:

With regard to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada passport offices, since January 1, 2018: (a) how many public service employees or full-time equivalents were working physically in person at each passport office, broken down by office location and by month; and (b) how many passports were issued each month?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 648—Ms. Heather McPherson:

With regard to Canada's commitment in the feminist international assistance policy to promote sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) for women and girls, and its 10-year commitment at Women Deliver 2019 to dedicate \$700 million annually to the neglected areas of SRHR: (a) how much international assistance funding dedicated to SRHR has been disbursed annually by Canada in the fiscal year (i) 2019-20, (ii) 2020-21, (iii) 2021-22; (b) how much of that has gone to the neglected areas of SRHR (abortion, advocacy, adolescent SRHR, including comprehensive sex ed and contraception); and (c) what steps is the government taking to ensure support for this work is scaled up to reach the 2023 funding commitment?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 649—Mr. John Brassard:

With regard to COVID-19 vaccine doses procured by the government, and broken down by manufacturer (Pfizer, Moderna, etc.): (a) how many doses obtained by the government have been delivered to Canada but have yet to be administered as of June 15, 2022; (b) how many doses are set to be delivered between June 15, 2022, and the end of September 2022; (c) of the doses currently on hand in (a), how many are set to expire each month until the entire batch is expired; and (d) of the doses scheduled to be delivered in (b), when are those doses scheduled to expire?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 650—Mr. Marty Morantz:

With regard to the attendance of Yasemin Heinbecker, Global Affairs Canada's (GAC) deputy chief of protocol, at an event to celebrate Russia Day at the Russian embassy in Canada: (a) who approved Ms. Heinbecker's attendance at this event; (b) what was the stated rationale for attending this event; (c) when was the Minister of Foreign Affairs' office made aware of Ms. Heinbecker's planned attendance at this event; (d) who in the Minister of Foreign Affairs' office approved the statement from departmental spokesperson Christelle Chartrand declaring that "this is not a business-as-usual situation, but we still maintain a diplomatic relation with Russia on matters of Canadian interests and GAC sent a protocol officer to the reception"; (e) was the quote in (d) the entire statement that was sent to the Globe and Mail from Christelle Chartrand, which was reported on June 12, 2022, and, if not, what was the entire statement; (f) what, if any, direction from the Minister of Foreign Affairs has been given to employees of GAC with respect to Canada's relations with Russia since February 24, 2022; and (g) what, if any, direction from the Minister of Foreign Affairs has been given to employees of GAC with respect to attending events at the Russian embassy since February 24, 2022?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 652—Mr. Michael Barrett:

With regard to the data held by the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) related to COVID-19 measures: (a) what is the latest available data, as of June 15, 2022, on (i) the current rates related to the level of COVID-19 in wastewater, (ii) the random testing positivity rates, (iii) the available hospital capacity, (iv) other COVID-19 related metrics monitored by the PHAC; and (b) for each sub-part of (a), what is the breakdown by (i) province or territory, (ii) municipality?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 653—Ms. Lori Idlout:

With regard to the Nutrition North Canada (NNC) program, since the 2014-15 fiscal year: (a) how many complaints of spoiled or expired products has NNC received, broken down by supplier and eligible community; (b) what quality assurance mechanisms are in place to ensure that perishable goods, from all sources, reach their final retail destination prior to their best before date; (c) what is the frequency that each of these mechanisms are applied for each recipient; (d) how many instances of non-compliance have been found, broken down by supplier and affected community; and (e) what actions has the government taken to address non-compliance by funding recipients?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 654—Ms. Lori Idlout:

With regard to investments in on-reserve kindergarten to grade 12 education, broken down by fiscal year since 2014-15 and by province or territory: what was the annual investment in (i) language and culture, (ii) literacy and numeracy, (iii) special needs education, (iv) learning materials and supplies, (v) accommodation and transportation, (vi) information technology, (vii) teacher salaries?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 655—Ms. Lori Idlout:

With regard to improvements to education infrastructure on-reserve, broken down by province or territory and year since 2015: (a) what new school construction projects have been supported; (b) what renovation projects, upgrading projects, supporting projects or feasibility studies have been completed; and (c) of the funding made available in budget 2016, how much of that funding has been (i) delivered, (ii) committed, (iii) lapsed?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 656—Mr. Don Davies:**

With regard to Canada's pledge at the UN Women Generation Equality Forum in 2021 to commit \$100 million in new funding for standalone programming addressing unpaid and paid care work in low-and middle-income countries: (a) how much international assistance funding dedicated to care programming has been dispersed by Canada since July 2021, broken down by month; (b) how much of that funding has been (i) channeled to multilateral institutions and processes, (ii) earmarked for standalone projects; and (c) what steps is the government taking to ensure that this funding supports and can be accessed by women's rights organizations and feminist in-country partners in the Global South?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 657—Ms. Jenny Kwan:

With regard to the Afghans who were validated by the Department of National Defence (DND) or Global Affairs Canada (GAC) and referred to Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), in response to the 2021 crisis in Afghanistan, broken down by the department that referred the file: (a) how many of these referrals have been received by IRCC; (b) how many referrals resulted in the creation of an IRCC application; (c) how many of these applications (i) have been accepted, (ii) have been rejected, (iii) are still being processed, (iv) have been put on hold; (d) how many of the applicants have landed in Canada; (e) how many individual applicants are there in the applications; (f) how many, if any, Afghans referred to IRCC by DND and GAC were identified as duplicates resulting in the creation of only one application; (g) what is the average processing time for the applications that have been (i) accepted, (ii) refused, broken down by stream; and (g) what is the average length of time that unapproved or declined files have been in the system, broken down by stream?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 659—Ms. Jenny Kwan:

With regard to Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's (CMHC) Rental Construction Financing Initiative: (a) what is the current dollar value of monthly rent used by CMHC to qualify a project for the 30% median total income affordability requirement for at least 20% of units, broken down by region; and (b) what would be the dollar value of monthly rent for those regions if the affordability requirement were to change to 80% average market rent?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 660—Ms. Jenny Kwan:

With regard to the National Housing Strategy: (a) how many applications have been received under the (i) National Housing Co-Investment Fund, (ii) Rental Construction Financing Initiative, (iii) Rapid Housing Initiative, broken down by program, stream (e.g. new construction, housing repair and renewal), stage of the application, year of submission, province, number of units and dollar amount for each finalized application since 2017; (b) how much funding from the programs referred to in (a) have been allocated to (i) finalized agreements, (ii) conditional commitments, broken down by province, program and stream; (c) what is the current average processing time to reach a finalized agreement for applications under the (i) National Housing Co-Investment Fund, (ii) Rental Construction Financing Initiative, (iii) Rapid Housing Initiative; (d) what is Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's reasoning for redacting most provinces from projects in the government's responses to question Q-40, submitted on September 23, 2020, and question Q-161, submitted on December 6, 2021; (e) why were redactions to provinces not made in the government's response to question Q-282, submitted on February 4, 2020; and (f) what, if any, policies were implemented that resulted in the change in approach to redactions and when were they implemented?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 661—Mr. Yves Perron:

With regard to the AgriInvest program: (a) what is the most recent information on the aggregate balance of AgriInvest accounts paid by the (i) producer, (ii) government; and (b) what is the breakdown of the data in (a) by (i) province, (ii) administrative region of Quebec, (iii) production type?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 662—Mr. Gord Johns:

With regard to polling data obtained by the Privy Council Office since January 1, 2016, concerning the decriminalization of possession of controlled substances: what are the details of all such polling, including, for each poll, (i) who conducted the poll, (ii) the start and end dates of when the poll was conducted, (iii) the number

of participants, (iv) the complete results of the poll, including the questions asked and the responses received, (v) the value of the contract related to the poll, (vi) the dates the polling data was shared with Health Canada or the Public Health Agency of Canada, if applicable?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 664—Mr. Scot Davidson:

With regard to the National Capital Commission (NCC) and the Mackenzie King Estate in Gatineau Park: (a) what is the detailed current state of the property; (b) what are the details, including the date, the project description and the cost, of every project the NCC has done since 2018 to improve, upgrade or maintain the property; and (c) what are the details of every project the NCC plans to do between now and 2025 to improve, upgrade, or maintain the property?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 665—Ms. Michelle Ferreri:

With regard to the ArriveCAN application: (a) has Destination Canada done any analysis on the impact on Canada's tourism sector of the government's decision to continue requiring tourists entering Canada to submit their personal information through the application, and, if so, what are the details, including the findings, of the analysis; (b) as of June 16, 2022, how many organizations and entities is the government aware of which have called on the government to end the ArriveCAN application; (c) what are the names of the organizations and entities in (b); (d) does the government have any data which shows that maintaining the ArriveCAN application requirement has an overall net benefit; (e) if the answer to (d) is affirmative, what is the specific data; and (f) if the answer to (d) is negative, or if there is no data provided in the response to (e), why has the government not ended the ArriveCAN application?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 666—Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman:

With regard to representatives from Global Affairs Canada (GAC) attending Russia Day celebrations at the Russian embassy in Ottawa: (a) how many individuals at GAC received an invitation to the event; (b) what are the titles of the individuals who received an invitation; (c) how was it determined that Yasemin Heinbecker would attend the event on behalf of the government; (d) of the individuals who received an invitation, how many responded to the event; and (e) of the responses in (d), what were each of the responses, broken down by individual?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 667—Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman:

With regard to the comments made by the Minister of Foreign Affairs on June 14, 2022, that "I didn't want an explanation. I would have never approved it. So there's no explanation" in reference to Canadian diplomats attending Russia Day celebrations: (a) why did the minister not want an explanation; (b) how was the minister able to determine whether any disciplinary action was needed without hearing an explanation; (c) were any officials or exempt staff disciplined as a result of the incident, and, if so, what are the details; (d) did the minister or her office initially approve the attendance at this event; and (e) did the Office of the Prime Minister tell the minister to take the position that officials should not have attended the event, and, if so, when?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 669—Mr. Alistair MacGregor:

With regard to the Canada Revenue Agency's (CRA) audit programs for business and particulars since November 2015, broken down by year and program: (a) what is the value of total reassessments resulting from the audits; (b) what is the total net revenue collected; (c) how many audits were performed; (d) how many audits resulted in reassessments with an amount owed to CRA; and (e) how many auditors were performing audits for each program?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 671—Mr. Scott Reid:**

With regard to the Universal Broadband Fund and other funds relating to the government's various commitments since October 2015 to provide broadband and high-speed Internet services to rural and underserved communities: (a) how many applications for funding have been received for projects located in whole or in part in Lanark County or Frontenac County, Ontario; (b) of those applications in (a), how many have been approved, and when was each approved; (c) what is the total dollar amount distributed to projects located in whole or in part in Lanark County or Frontenac County, Ontario; (d) what are the details of each approved project referred to in (b), including the (i) recipient, (ii) amount, (iii) location, (iv) project description or summary.

(Return tabled)

Question No. 672—Ms. Lisa Marie Barron:

With regards to data held by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans regarding the interception of Pacific salmon stocks by Alaskan fisheries since 2000: (a) what is the estimated commercial harvest in Southeast Alaskan fisheries of Pacific salmon bound for Canadian rivers, as landed weight, number of fish and estimated value, broken down by (i) year, (ii) species of salmon, including steelhead, (iii) river system, (iv) conservation unit, (v) Alaska Department of Fish and Game statistical area; (b) of the amounts in (a), what is the estimated commercial harvest specific to Alaskan fisheries management area District 104, broken down by (i) year, (ii) species of salmon, including steelhead, (iii) river system; (c) of the amounts in (a), what was the estimated commercial harvest in 2020 and 2021 broken down by week for July, August and September; (d) of the amounts in (a), what was the amount, broken down by (i) seine fisheries, (ii) troll fisheries, (iii) gillnet fisheries, (iv) terminal-hatchery fisheries; (e) what was the total estimated bycatch of Pacific salmon bound for Canadian rivers in Southeast Alaskan fisheries broken down by (i) year, (ii) species of salmon, including steelhead, (iii) river system, (iv) conservation unit, (v) Alaska Department of Fish and Game statistical area; (f) of the amounts in (a), which species does Alaska provide direct information to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans concerning interception, based on genetic sampling or coded wire tagging; (g) for the years 2019, 2020 and 2021, of the Conservation Units or Stock Management Units the Department of Fisheries and Oceans collect Alaskan catch information, what is the proportion of total Canadian and US recreational and commercial catch harvested by Alaska by Conservation Unit, Stock Management Unit, or Indicator Stock; (h) of the conservation units for which the Alaska Department of Fish and Game or the Pacific Salmon Commission does not provide catch information, which are deemed likely to be intercepted based on (i) past tagging studies, (ii) genetic stock information, (iii) coded wire tags, (iv) research conducted by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, or the Pacific Salmon Commission, (v) other information, because they have similar migration routes and timing as Conservation Units, Stock Management Units, or indicator stocks catch for which information is provided for?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 673—Mr. Scott Reid:

With regard to Correctional Service Canada's (CSC) penitentiary farms and related CORCAN operations, related to the Joyceville and Collins Bay institutions: (a) what are the total amounts spent to build, repair, maintain, and operate all related infrastructure since January 1, 2016, broken down by (i) year, (ii) location, (iii) purpose, (iv) source of funding; (b) what are the total amounts spent to operate all related programming since January 1, 2016, broken down by (i) year, (ii) location, (iii) purpose, (iv) source of funding; (c) what are the total amounts spent to build, repair, maintain, and operate any infrastructure relating to goat dairy farming since January 1, 2016, broken down by (i) year, (ii) location, (iii) purpose, (iv) source of funding; (d) what are the total amounts spent to build, repair, maintain, and operate any infrastructure relating to cow dairy farming since January 1, 2016, broken down by (i) year, (ii) location, (iii) purpose, (iv) source of funding; (e) what are the total amounts spent to build, repair, maintain, and operate any infrastructure relating to animal slaughter since January 1, 2016, broken down by (i) year, (ii) location, (iii) purpose, (iv) source of funding; (f) what are the total amounts spent to operate all programming related to goat dairy farming since January 1, 2016, broken down by (i) year, (ii) location, (iii) purpose, (iv) source of funding; (g) what are the total amounts spent to operate all programming related to cow dairy farming since January 1, 2016, broken down by (i) year, (ii) location, (iii) purpose, (iv) source of funding; (h) what are the total amounts spent to operate all programming related to animal slaughter since January 1, 2016, broken down by (i) year, (ii) location, (iii) purpose, (iv) source of funding; (i) what are the projected total amounts to be spent on infrastructure and programming relating to goat dairy farming from fiscal year 2021-2022 through fiscal year 2025-26, broken down by (i) year, (ii) location, (iii)

purpose, (iv) source of funding; (j) what are the projected total amounts to be spent on infrastructure and programming relating to cow dairy farming from fiscal year 2021-22 through fiscal year 2025-26, broken down by (i) year, (ii) location, (iii) purpose, (iv) source of funding; (k) what are the projected total amounts to be spent on infrastructure and programming relating to animal slaughter from fiscal year 2021-22 through fiscal year 2025-26, broken down by (i) year, (ii) location, (iii) purpose, (iv) source of funding; (l) what are the total revenues that have been generated by the programming and operations referred to in parts (b), (f), (g), and (h), since January 1, 2016, broken down by (i) year, (ii) location, (iii) purpose, (iv) source of funding; (m) what are the total revenues projected to be generated by the programming and operations referred to in parts (b), (f), (g), (h), (i), (j), and (k), from fiscal year 2021-22 through fiscal year 2025-26, broken down by (i) year, (ii) location, (iii) purpose, (iv) source of funding; (n) how many animals are presently at each institution, how many are allocated for what purpose, and how many are projected to be purchased or added through fiscal year 2025-26, broken down by (i) type of animal, (ii) purpose; (o) what measures are in place, and what measures are planned, at each location, to protect the well-being of the animals present, and to reduce the likelihood or possibility of animal abuse, neglect, or inhumane treatment; (p) what measures are in place, and what measures are planned to (i) monitor, (ii) interdict, (iii) reduce, (iv) eliminate the smuggling of contraband into or out of the institutions, as those measures relate to the penitentiary farms, the abattoir, and related CORCAN operations, by location; (q) do any agreements, contracts, memorandums of understanding or analogous arrangements exist between CSC or CORCAN and (i) Feihe International Inc., (ii) Canada Royal Milk, (iii) Mariposa Dairy, (iv) Gay Lea Foods Co-operative Limited, (v) any subsidiary thereof, (vi) any other external entity, respecting the sale, purchase, transfer, or use of goat milk or cow milk and, if so, what is the nature and summary of the terms of each arrangement; (r) for each penitentiary farm operation, whether referred to in parts (f), (g), and (h) or of some other agricultural nature, how much of the product is (i) kept and used inside CSC institutions, (ii) sold to external entities, (iii) transferred on a non-commercial basis to external entities, (iv) disposed of without use; (s) what is the present monthly capacity of each operation referred to in parts (f), (g), and (h), is the present monthly capacity for each operation substantially similar to the maximum planned capacity and, if not, when is the maximum planned capacity projected to be reached for each operation; (t) what is the number of inmates who are now or were previously employed in each operation referred to in parts (f), (g), and (h), broken down by (i) year, (ii) location, (iii) job or function; (u) what is the number of inmates who are projected to be employed in each operation referred to in parts (f), (g), and (h), broken down by (i) year, (ii) location, (iii) job or function; (v) how many correctional personnel are presently required, for a normal 24 hour period, to supervise each operation referred to in parts (f), (g), and (h), by location; (w) how many individuals, who are neither inmates nor correctional personnel, are presently employed, for a normal 24 hour period, in each operation referred to in parts (f), (g), and (h), by (i) location, (ii) job or function; (x) what specific measures are in place, or planned, to monitor and assess the effect of employment in CORCAN operations related to the penitentiary farms on inmates' post-release employment and recidivism rates; (y) what specific biosecurity measures are in place, or planned, to reduce the risk of disease outbreaks or negative health effects related to the penitentiary farms on inmates, correctional personnel, animals, and nearby residents; (z) what measures are in place to monitor and ensure that CORCAN operations related to the penitentiary farms are persistently in compliance with international and statutory obligations relating to inmate labour and inmate-produced goods and products; (aa) has CSC produced projections of the costs, excluding lost revenue, relating to ceasing each operation referred to in parts (f), (g), and (h), respectively and, if so, what are the details of those projections?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 674—Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval:

With regard to the Small Craft Harbours program and the status of the Verchères quay since 2015: (a) what are the amounts allocated to this program annually; (b) what is the list of approved projects, including the (i) amount allocated, (ii) year the project was approved, (iii) type of harbour; (c) what are the criteria for the allocation of funds; (d) what is the file status of the Verchères quay under this program; and (e) what priority is given to the file for the Verchères quay?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 675—Ms. Leah Gazan:**

With regard to the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Plan, broken down by province and territory since their respective agreements were announced: (a) how many new childcare spaces have been created; (b) how many early childhood educators jobs have been created; (c) how much of the federal investment has been delivered; and (d) to date, what is the average savings per child (i) with 50% average fee reduction, (ii) at \$10 per day?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 676—Ms. Leah Gazan:

With regard to the government's research and analysis on policies and programs that could positively impact Canada's economy and society, since fiscal year 2014-15: (a) what reports, studies or analyses have been done on implementing a guaranteed liveable income; (b) what were the conclusions of each report listed in (a); and (c) which jurisdictions were included in the government's review of existing basic income projects?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 677—Ms. Leah Gazan:

With regard to supporting safe communities during resource extraction projects: (a) what funding has been dedicated towards establishing equitable benefits and community-led initiatives to ensure the safety and security of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people at all stages of major resource projects; (b) what activities have been co-developed to mitigate impacts of temporary work camps and worker influxes; (c) what plans have been implemented to improve the collection and analysis of gender-disaggregated data in order to develop targeted measures in support of safe resource worksites and communities; and (d) how much funding has been delivered and allocated through the Aboriginal Community Safety Planning Initiative?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 678—Ms. Leah Gazan:

With regard to Family Information Liaison Units (FILUs), since the fiscal year 2014-15, broken down by province or territory and fiscal year: (a) how much funding has the government provided to support FILUs as part of the Federal Victims Strategy; and (b) how many families have accessed services provided by FILUs?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 679—Mr. Alexandre Boulerice:

With regard to income support benefits and the population groups designated by the government as "hard-to-reach populations" or "vulnerable populations," since November 2015, broken down by year and by type of income support benefit, including the Canada Child Benefit, the Canada Workers Benefit, the Old Age Security, the Guaranteed Income Supplement and the GST credit: (a) what are the designated groups; (b) what was the benefit take-up rate for each group in (a); (c) among the rates in (b), which rates exclude people who did not file a tax return; (d) what is the estimated gap between the rates in (b) and those observed in the general population; (e) among the groups in (a), what is the estimated number of people who are eligible for a benefit yet did not receive it; and (f) what is the estimated rate of people required to file a tax return who did not yet file one?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 680—Mr. Alexandre Boulerice:

With regard to claims for regular employment insurance benefits, between January and June 2022, broken down by month: (a) what was the processing time for claims, broken down by (i) average length of time, (ii) median length of time; (b) how many claimants received their benefit after 28 days; (c) of the claimants in (b), how long did it take for them to receive their benefit, broken down by (i) average length of time, (ii) median length of time; (d) of the total claims submitted, how many claims are still pending; and (e) how many officers are processing claims?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 681—Mr. Alexandre Boulerice:

With regard to programs addressing food insecurity, since November 2015, broken down by year and by program: (a) what is the total funding received; (b) of the funding in (a), what is the total funding disbursed; (c) what is the total number of applications; (d) of the applications in (c), how many applications were (i) approved, (ii) denied; (e) what is the timeline for assessing, reviewing and approving or rejecting an application, broken down by (i) average time, (ii) median time; (f) of

the applications in (e), what percentage met the service standard; (g) has the government finalized the development of a national emergency preparedness and response plan for Canada's food system and, if not, why not; and (h) what is the current rate of food insecurity as measured by Statistics Canada?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 682—Mr. Gord Johns:

With regard to the investment of more than \$800 million in community-led harm reduction, treatment, and prevention initiatives the government has indicated it has committed since 2015 to address the overdose crisis: (a) how much funding has been allocated to date; (b) where has the funding been allocated to date, including, for each project, the (i) organization, (ii) project title (iii) description, (iv), primary focus, (v) location, (vi) contribution agreement amount from the federal government, (vii) project duration?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 683—Mr. Gord Johns:

With regard to the Shared Health Priorities bilateral agreements, since fiscal year 2016-17, broken down by province or territory and fiscal year: (a) which federal investments have been directed towards (i) increasing the availability of mental health and addiction services in the community, excluding hospital and family physician funding, (ii) improving access to school-based programs for early prevention, detection and treatment, (iii) mental health promotion and mental illness prevention, (iv) expanding access to crisis intervention services and integrated multidisciplinary professional services, including peer support workers and mental health professionals on crisis response teams; (b) what measures or indicators are being tracked to monitor the effectiveness of the investments in (a); and (c) what reports, studies, or analyses has the government made publicly available concerning the effectiveness of these investments?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 688—Mr. Randall Garrison:

With regard to the effects of climate change in Tibet, the Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (1992), and the United Nations' (UN) Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change reports: (a) has the government ever raised (i) concerns regarding the detrimental effects of climate change and Chinese development policies on Tibet's fragile ecosystem, and, if so, when, where, and with whom have these concerns been raised, (ii) environmental concerns relating to Tibet during UN climate change conferences, or other global climate change conferences; (b) has the government called for an external investigation of alleged violations of the human rights of environmental activists inside Tibet, and, specifically, has the government raised concerns about the imprisonment of the Tibetan nomad environmental activist A-Nya Sengdra who was imprisoned for his activism in 2019; (c) has the government called for an external investigation of human rights violations in Tibet concerning the mass removal of nomadic pastoralists; and (d) has the government raised with China the issue of expansive dam-building in Tibet, its impacts on Tibet's fragile ecosystem, and whether there has been consultation with local Tibetan communities?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 689—Mr. Randall Garrison:**

With regard to Canada's trade relationship with China and human rights violations in the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) and Tibetan areas of China, such as Sichuan, Qinghai, Yunnan, and Gansu: (a) has Canada raised concerns over human rights violations during its possible Canada-China Free Trade agreement (FTA) exploratory discussions; (b) has Canada consulted with Tibetan human rights advocacy groups during its public consultations on a possible Canada-China FTA, and, if so, (i) how many were consulted and what were their names, (ii) what was the full report of their concerns and recommendations; (c) does Canada and China's joint feasibility study examining the potential economic benefits of a FTA for both countries include considerations of human rights violations; (d) how does Canada ensure that the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development guidelines for Multinational Enterprises and the United Nations Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights are upheld within its Foreign Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement with China; (e) has the Canadian government prohibited the importation of goods from Chinese companies violating the Customs Tariff section 132(1)(m)(i.1) which prohibits the importation of goods that are produced wholly or in part by forced labour, and, if so, (i) how many companies were banned, (ii) when was this done, (iii) what are their names; and (f) has Global Affairs Canada conducted any investigation into recent reports stating that an estimated 500,000 Tibetans have been placed into labour camps similar to the ones in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 691—Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval:

With regard to the 2018 Canada–Quebec Integrated Bilateral Agreement for the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program: what are the details of all the relevant documents supporting the government's decision to unilaterally amend the content of the bilateral agreement, including (i) communications such as letters, emails and messages from the ministers' offices and departments concerned, (ii) the terms and conditions of programs and funding, (iii) final reports from the management and oversight committees and subcommittees, (iv) signed amendments, (v) notes and memos?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 692—Ms. Niki Ashton:

With regard to the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy program, since the date the program was created, broken down by the size of the business applying (small, medium, large): (a) how many audits have been conducted; (b) how many notices of determination have been sent to applicants; (c) for the notices in (b), what is the dollar value; (d) what is the dollar value of the total amounts previously paid that have been reimbursed; and (e) of the amounts reimbursed in (d), what is the dollar value of the total (i) applicable interest, (ii) penalties?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 693—Ms. Niki Ashton:

With regard to the whistleblower allegations concerning the Canada Revenue Agency advance pricing arrangement (APA) program, as reported by La Presse on May 24, 2022, since November 2015, and broken down by fiscal year: (a) how many APA agreements have been concluded; (b) what was the processing time for each of the agreements concluded in (a); (c) of the agreements concluded in (a), how many were retroactive agreements; (d) for each of the agreements in (a), what is the dollar value of the foregone tax revenue; (e) for each of the requests in (c), what is the dollar value of the foregone tax revenue; (f) for the agreements in (c), what was their processing time; (g) of the agreements in (a), which ones were not recommended by public servants; and (h) does the minister or their exempt staff participate in the decision-making process for accepting requests and concluding agreements, and, if so, to what extent and for which agreements?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 694—Ms. Niki Ashton:

With regard to the whistleblower allegations about the Canada Revenue Agency's (CRA) Advance Pricing Arrangement program and the Minister of National Revenue's statement in the House that "the investigation carried out by an independent tax expert showed that the terms of the agreement were favourable to the agency and did not provide any type of preferential treatment to the taxpayers involved": (a) when was the minister informed of the allegations that the CRA had entered into certain arrangements without due diligence; (b) what is the job title of the individual who (i) made the decision to launch an investigation, (ii) made the decision to engage an independent tax expert, (iii) was responsible for setting the tax expert's

terms of reference, (iv) was responsible for hiring the tax expert; (c) with respect to the points in (b), was the minister or her exempt staff involved in these decisions, and, if so, to what extent; (d) what are the details of the process that led to the hiring of the tax expert; (e) what is the name of the tax expert; (f) what was the value of the contract awarded to the tax expert; (g) what were the details of the tax expert's terms of reference; (h) on what date did the investigation start; (i) did the investigation start before the tax expert was hired; (j) what are the job titles of the individuals in charge of the investigation; (k) what are the job titles of the individuals who answered the investigator's questions; (l) what are the titles and numbers of the documents analyzed as part of the investigation; (m) what laws and regulations were consulted as part of the investigation; (n) when did the investigation end; (o) what is the job title of the individual who made the decision to end the investigation; (p) what are the detailed findings of the investigation; (q) was the minister involved in the investigation, and, if so, to what extent; (r) were the exempt staff in the minister's office involved in the investigation, and, if so, to what extent; (s) when was the minister informed of the investigation findings; (t) was the minister or her exempt staff involved in (i) drafting the investigation report, (ii) reviewing the investigation report; (u) are there different versions of the investigation report, and, if so, why and what are the version titles and numbers; and (v) was the investigation conducted an independent one?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 696—Mr. Earl Dreeshen:

With regard to the government's plans and statistics related to the disposal of medical waste produced during the COVID-19 pandemic, including used rapid test kits: (a) what is the government's waste management plan for medical waste; (b) what are government's estimates on the amount of medical which has ended up in (i) landfills, (ii) the Great Lakes, (iii) the ocean, since the pandemic began, broken down by type of waste; (c) what measures, if any, did the government put into place to prevent used rapid test kits from ending up with other garbage; and (d) what (i) amount, (ii) percentage, of medical waste generated, since March 2020, has been exported to a foreign country?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 697—Mr. Earl Dreeshen:

With regard to the government's plans and statistics related to disposable personal protective equipment (PPE) used during the COVID-19 pandemic, including masks and disposable gloves: (a) what is the government's waste management plan for disposable PPE; (b) what are government's estimates on the amount of PPE which has ended up in (i) landfills, (ii) the Great Lakes, (iii) the ocean, since the pandemic began; (c) does Transport Canada have any estimates on the amount of waste generated by the government's mask mandate in airports and on airplanes, and, if so, what are the estimates; (d) has Environment and Climate Change Canada done any research on the negative environmental impact related to PPE, and, if so, what are the details, including the findings, of such research; (e) what percentage of PPE is currently being recycled; and (f) what (i) amount, (ii) percentage, of PPE waste generated, since March 2020, has been exported to a foreign country?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 698—Mr. Arnold Viersen:

With regard to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada: (a) what is the number of applications (i) received in total, (ii) accepted, (iii) rejected, for visitor visas to Canada, broken down by year since 2016, and by reason for visiting; and (b) what is the breakdown of (a) by country of applicant?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 699—Mr. Alex Ruff:

With regard to motion M-133 passed on February 7, 2018, during the 42nd Parliament: (a) how much money, broken down by year from 2018 to 2022, has the government spent to promote September 28 as British Home Child Day; (b) what activities has the government undertaken to promote September 28 as British Home Child Day, broken down by year, from 2018 to 2022; and (c) what are the government's plans to promote September 28, 2022, as British Home Child Day in Canada?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 700—Ms. Bonita Zarrillo:**

With regard to persons with disabilities (PWD) in Canada and the demographics of PWD, broken down by gender, age group, province or territory, ethnic background, income range and fiscal year: (a) what are the demographics of PWD who are eligible for the disability tax credit (DTC); (b) since 2010, how many Canadians have been denied the DTC; (c) since 2010, how many applications per year have been received for DTC; and (d) since 2010, what reasons for rejection of the DTC have been provided?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 702—Ms. Bonita Zarrillo:

With regard to persons with disabilities (PWD) in Canada and their interactions with government agencies, including, but not limited to, Service Canada, Canada Revenue Agency, Employment and Skills Development Canada: (a) what are the known barriers for PWD communicating with the government; (b) what are the accessibility standards; (c) since 2015, how many complaints have been received from PWD; and (d) since 2015, how many positive comments have been received from PWD?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 703—Mr. Alex Ruff:

With regard to passport applications received by Passport Canada between January 1, 2022 and June 15, 2022: (a) how many applications were received, broken down by (i) month, (ii) week; (b) how many applications were processed, broken down by (i) month, (ii) week; (c) how many Passport Canada employees have a Flexible Work Agreement in place, broken down by month; (d) how many personnel did Passport Canada employ on January 1, 2020; (e) how many personnel did Passport Canada employ on May 31, 2022; (f) as of May 31, 2022, how many employees have been hired in the last (i) 30, (ii) 60, (iii) 90, days; and (g) what actions is Passport Canada taking to improve service delivery of the Passport Canada program?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 705—Mr. James Bezan:

With regard to the government's inventory of armoured vehicles and donation to Ukraine: (a) how many armoured vehicles, broken down by model, does the Department of National Defence (DND) currently hold of the (i) LAV II Coyote, (ii) M-113 or T-LAV, (iii) LAV II Bison; (b) how many armoured vehicles, broken down by model, does the DND currently hold that are surplus to Canadian Armed Forces immediate operational needs and are in a serviceable condition of the (i) LAV II Coyote, (ii) M-113 or T-LAV, (iii) LAV II Bison; (c) how many armoured vehicles, broken down by model, does the DND currently hold that are surplus to Canadian Armed Forces immediate operational needs and are in a repairable condition of the (i) LAV II Coyote, (ii) M-113 or T-LAV, (iii) LAV II Bison; (d) how many (i) LAV II Coyote, (ii) M-113 or T-LAV, (iii) LAV II Bison, armoured vehicles has the DND considered donating to Ukraine; (e) when does the DND plan to donate the pledged 40 armoured vehicles to the Government of Ukraine; and (f) when can the Government of Ukraine expect to receive the donated armoured vehicles?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 706—Mr. Brian Masse:

With regard to notices of determination and notices of debt sent to applicants for COVID-19 financial support programs for individuals, since the date of inception of each program and broken down by each financial support program for individuals: (a) how many audits have been conducted; (b) how many notices have been issued to applicants, broken down by (i) notices of determination, (ii) notices of debt; (c) for the notices in (b), what is their dollar value; and (d) what is the dollar value of the total amounts previously received refunded?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 707—Mr. Brian Masse:

With regard to the proposed Ojibway National Urban Park: (a) what is the official process that Parks Canada has initiated for consultation, including (i) who have they met with, (ii) who have they invited to participate, (iii) when did the process start, (iv) what is its anticipated end date; (b) has Parks Canada engaged with the City of Windsor to negotiate the transfer of the municipalities' lands to Parks Canada for the proposed Ojibway National Urban Park; (c) has Parks Canada engaged with the government of the Province of Ontario to negotiate the transfer of the province's land to Parks Canada for the proposed Ojibway National Urban Park; (d) what funding allocations or estimates has Parks Canada made (i) for the process

of consultation for the proposed Ojibway National Urban Park, (ii) for the transfer of lands from the City of Windsor and the Province of Ontario, (iii) the establishment of Ojibway National Urban Park, (iv) for the ongoing parks management; and (e) has Parks Canada engaged with Caldwell First Nation to create a co-management agreement for Ojibway National Urban Park?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 711—Mr. Garnett Genuis:

With regard to engagement with the Russia embassy in Ottawa, since February 23, 2022: (a) how many meetings, phone calls, or email exchanges have occurred between ministers, ministerial staff, parliamentary secretaries, or public servants, and representatives of the Russian embassy; (b) what were the (i) dates, (ii) times, (iii) details, (iv) objectives, (v) outcomes, of the meetings or exchanges in (a); (c) how many social events hosted by the government were held where the Russian embassy or an employee of the Russian embassy received an invitation; (d) what were the (i) dates, (ii) times, (iii) locations, (iv) details, of the social events in (c); (e) how many social events hosted by the Russian embassy did a Canadian minister, ministerial staffer, parliamentary secretary, or public servant attend; and (f) what were the (i) dates, (ii) times, (iii) locations, (iv) details, of the social events in (e)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 712—Ms. Jenny Kwan:

With regard to the estimated 3,700 evacuees that Canada transported or facilitated the transport of from Afghanistan in August 2021: (a) how many evacuees were Afghan nationals who have been validated by the Department of National Defence as having an enduring relationship with the Canadian Armed Forces; (b) how many Afghan nationals who have been validated by the Department of National Defence as having an enduring relationship with the Canadian Armed Forces and were designated for those flights but did not make it on those flights; (c) how many Afghan evacuees were not on the lists provided by the Government of Canada prior to boarding the flight; (d) how many evacuees were Afghan women and girls; (e) how many evacuees were put on the list by other countries, broken down by nationality (Afghan or another nationality); (f) how many evacuees on those flights were related to referrals by (i) Global Affairs Canada, (ii) Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada; and (g) how many evacuees were Canadian citizens?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 714—Mr. Brian Masse:

With regard to the report of the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology from the 43rd Parliament, 2nd Session, entitled "Fraudulent Calls in Canada: A Federal Government's First Start": what steps has the government taken to combat fraud and spam calls in Canada, including (i) legislative considerations, (ii) work with international partners to ensure that transnational offenders are held accountable, (iii) monitoring the progress of solutions combatting fraud and advance more transparent progress reporting, (iv) working closely with public and private stakeholders to promote fraud awareness for Canadians, (v) working with the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission and telecommunications service providers to implement the STIR/SHAKEN framework, (vi) promoting the class action suits in the United States that provide refunds to Canadian victims of phone fraud or cybercrime schemes, (vii) developing the new national cybercrime and fraud reporting system to improve the processes used to report fraud and cybercrime incidents to law enforcement, which was anticipated to be operational in 2022, to help improve the quality of data on fraud in Canada?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 716—Mr. Richard Cannings:

With regard to efforts that focus on education, training and economic opportunities for Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people, broken down by fiscal year since 2014-15: (a) how much funding has been dedicated through the (i) First Nations and Inuit Youth Employment Strategy, (ii) Indigenous Skills and Employment Training program, (iii) Women's Employment Readiness Pilot, (iv) Women's Entrepreneurship Strategy; and (b) how much of the funding in (a) has been committed?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 718—Mr. Charlie Angus:**

With regard to the Canada Greener Homes Grant Initiative, broken down by province or territory and fiscal year since the program's inception: (a) how many applications were received by Natural Resources Canada; (b) how many applications were approved for (i) home insulation, (ii) air-sealing, (iii) windows and doors, (iv) thermostats, (v) space and water heating, (vi) renewable energy, (vii) resiliency measures; and (c) what is the total amount of grant funding provided for each application type in (b)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 719—Mr. Charlie Angus:

With regard to the Sectoral Workforce Solutions Program, broken down by province or territory and fiscal year since the program's inception: (a) what is the total number of applications received from (i) not-for-profit organizations, (ii) for-profit organizations, (iii) municipal governments, (iv) Indigenous organizations, (v) provincial or territorial government bodies; (b) how many applications were approved for (i) building talent for the clean economy, (ii) supporting demand-driven solutions for sectors hardest hit by the pandemic and those key to recovery, (iii) investing in the health care sector; and (c) how much funding has been delivered to organizations in each policy area in (b)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 721—Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:

With regard to the government's Future Fighter Capability Project: (a) what are the top 10 risks related to the planned procurement; (b) what are the specific actions to be taken to mitigate each risk; (c) what is the expected delivery date of (i) the first 20 jets, broken down by jets one through to 20, (ii) the remaining jets; (d) what is the total cost of acquisition for the jets; (e) what is the anticipated cost of maintaining the 88 jets, over their lifetime; (f) will the first batch of jets be part of the Block 4 build by Lockheed Martin, and, if not, what specific block of jets will; (g) what are the anticipated economic benefits for the 88 jets broken down by (i) province, (ii) year, (iii) type of industrial benefit, (iv) new jobs associated with each, (v) value of each benefit in dollars before taxes, (vi) tax benefits per province; (h) what are the core reasons why the F35s was selected over the Saab Gripen, including what the key mandatory requirements were, and how they were met; (i) which of the proponents delivered a fixed-price contract; and (j) what are the total costs of the industrial and technological benefits for the program, and for each of the two down-selected proponents?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 722—Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:

With regard to the government measures related to space debris and space situational awareness: (a) what are the core policies and programs the government has in place to address these issues; (b) what policies and priorities are guiding the government's public declarations on these issues; (c) how much has the government budgeted in (i) 2020, (ii) 2021, (iii) 2022, (iv) 2023, (v) 2024, (vi) 2025, to support its policies and programs related to space debris and space domain awareness; (d) what is the purpose of the Sapphire satellite, and how is it used by (i) Canada, (ii) Canadian allies; (e) what are the top 10 risks related to the Sapphire satellite; (f) what are the government's plans related to a replacement of the Sapphire satellite; (g) what specific measures will the government take to ensure that Canada can contribute to space domain awareness and other measures related to space debris; (h) how is Canada planning to work with (i) NORAD, (ii) the UN, (iii) NATO, on space domain awareness and space debris, broken down by year from 2022 to 2025 inclusively; (i) is the government planning to leverage space situational awareness and space debris management as part of NORAD modernization; and (j) does the government have any future plans to manage space debris and space situational awareness, and, if so, what are the details of the plans?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 723—Mr. Peter Julian:

With regard to the federal minimum wage and all income support benefits indexed to Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation, since April 2021, broken down by month and by each monthly CPI measure: (a) what is the approximate percentage point difference between the monthly CPI increase and the federal minimum wage; and (b) what is the approximate percentage point difference between the monthly CPI increase and the monthly increase to the maximum payment of (i) Old Age Security, (ii) the Guaranteed Income Supplement, (iii) the Canada Child Benefit, (iv) the GST credit, (v) the Canada Workers Benefit?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 724—Mr. Peter Julian:

With regard to notices of redetermination and notices of debt related to the COVID-19 individual benefits, broken down by notices of redetermination and notices of debt, since November 2021: (a) how many recipients have gotten these notices; (b) what is the estimated dollar value of the amounts that the government (i) intends to recover, (ii) has actually recovered; (c) of the recipients in (a), how many received a reduction in their Employment Insurance benefits; and (d) for the reduction in (c), what is the estimated dollar value of the amounts the government (i) intends to recover, (ii) has actually recovered?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 725—Mr. Ted Falk:

With regard to the federal carbon tax or price on carbon: (a) what is the total amount collected from the tax, broken down by province in the 2021-22 fiscal year; (b) what was the total amount dispersed in rebates, or Climate Action Incentive payments, broken down by province for the 2021-22 fiscal year; and (c) what is the itemized breakdown of how the government is spending the difference in the amount between (a) and (b), including how much of each provincial amount is going to back to that province, and in what form?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 727—Mr. Ted Falk:

With regard to the government's ArriveCAN application: (a) since January 1, 2022, how many travellers have presented themselves at the border for entry into Canada without having submitted their information through the application prior to arrival; and (b) what is the breakdown of (a) by month and point of entry?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 729—Ms. Lindsay Mathysen:

With regard to the new funding and policy approach for First Nations kindergarten to grade 12 education that took effect on April 1, 2019: (a) what meetings, consultations, and other engagements have taken place to develop and implement regional or local education agreements; and (b) for each meeting in (a), which (i) organizations, (ii) governments, (iii) rights-holding groups, (iv) other representatives, were in attendance at these meetings?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 730—Ms. Lindsay Mathysen:

With regard to the bilingual bonus governed by the Bilingualism Bonus Directive, broken down by province and territory: (a) how many employees have received the bilingual bonus since 2015; (b) of the recipients in (a), how many employees received the bilingual bonus for speaking an Indigenous language; and (c) how many employees are expected to speak an Indigenous language as part of their daily responsibilities?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 731—Ms. Lindsay Mathysen:

With regard to federal government funding for fiscal years 2019-20, 2020-21, and 2021-22, allocated within the constituency of London—Fanshawe: what is the total funding amount, broken down by (i) fiscal year, (ii) department or agency, (iii) initiative, (iv) amount?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 732—Mrs. Tracy Gray:**

With regard to Statistics Canada's Consumer Price Index (CPI): (a) what is the total number of times the CPI basket weight was changed since November 2015; (b) what are the details of each change, including (i) the date the change was made, (ii) the products removed, (iii) the products added, (iv) the products remaining, (v) what changes were given to the weight of any products, (vi) the weight given to each product after the change; (c) what are the details of all changes to the products included in the "Food purchased from stores" basket share component since November 2015, including, for each change, the (i) date the product was removed, (ii) date the product was added, (iii) description of the changes or alterations to the weighting of the food products in the component; (d) what is the process to make decisions on amendments to the CPI basket weights, including which individuals are required to sign off on the changes; and (e) what is the scheduled date for the next amendment or change to the CPI basket weight?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 735—Ms. Bonita Zarrillo:

With regard to the Canada School of Public Service, broken down by department: (a) how many government employees, broken down by unit and percentage of total employees, have completed the Indigenous Learning Series, as of June 17, 2022; (b) is participation in the Indigenous Learning Series mandatory; (c) are new employees expected to complete any part of the Indigenous Learning Series as part of their training; (d) how many employees have access to the available learning products of the Indigenous Learning Series; (e) are employees, both new and experienced, given time to complete training through the Indigenous Learning Series during contracted working hours; and (f) what percentage of content available through the Canada School of Public Service is available in an Indigenous language?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 736—Mr. Blake Desjarlais:

With regard to the Canada Student Financial Assistance Program since October 1, 2020, broken down by month: (a) what is the total amount the government has collected in repayments of student loans; (b) what is the total amount of new loans delivered to (i) full-time and part-time students, (ii) students from low-income and middle-income families, (iii) students with dependants, (iv) students with permanent disabilities; (c) what is the total amount of new grants delivered to (i) full-time and part-time students, (ii) students from low-income and middle-income families, (iii) students with dependants, (iv) students with permanent disabilities; (d) how many new applications have been received under the (i) Repayment Assistance Plan, (ii) Repayment Assistance Plan for Borrowers with a Permanent Disability; and (d) how many borrowers have defaulted on their student loans?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 737—Mr. Blake Desjarlais:

With regard to the Review and Analysis Division (RAD) of the Canada Revenue Agency, broken down by fiscal year since 2014-15: (a) how many reviews or investigations were conducted on Muslim organizations and charities; (b) what criteria is used to determine whether an organization's work is (i) religious, (ii) social; (c) what are the criteria that must be met in order for an investigation or review to be initiated under RAD's responsibilities; and (d) what is the average cost to taxpayers of RAD reviews or investigations?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 738—Mr. Taylor Bachrach:

With regard to the government's commitment to combatting systemic racism within the Royal Canadian Mounted Police since 2014-15: what steps have been taken to (i) reform the recruitment and training processes, (ii) collect, analyze, and report race-based data, (iii) establish the RCMP-Indigenous Collaboration, Co-development and Accountability Office, (iv) enhance the access, design and delivery of appropriate education and training using an Indigenous lens?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 741—Mr. Stephen Ellis:

With regard to communications between the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Commissioner and the Office of the Minister of Public Safety, including the minister, between April 18, 2020, and May 1, 2020: what are the details of all communications, including all verbal, electronic, written, or other communication, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) time, (iii) sender or initiator, (iv) recipient, (v) form (email, text, etc.), (vi) topics discussed, (vii) summary of what was written or said?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 743—Mr. Blake Desjarlais:

With regard to passport processing offices, since March 1, 2019, broken down by month until June 21, 2022: (a) how many public service employees or full-time equivalents were working in person at each passport office; (b) how many requests were received for (i) new passports, (ii) passport renewals, (iii) children's passports, (iv) urgent passports; (c) what service standards were communicated to the public about when they would receive their passports; (d) how many passports were issued; and (e) what was the number of unprocessed passport applications?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 744—Mr. Taylor Bachrach:

With regard to the licence for sale of cannabis for medical purposes under Section 26 of the Cannabis Regulations, broken down by province: (a) how many licences have been issued since 2018; (b) how many inspections of licence holders have been conducted by Health Canada, broken down by (i) province, (ii) year, (iii) municipality, (iv) licence classes and subclasses; (c) how many licence holders have been found to be non-compliant with the Cannabis Act or Cannabis Regulations, broken down by (i) province, (ii) year, (iii) municipality, (iv) licence classes and subclasses, (v) violation; (d) what number of enforcement actions have been taken by Health Canada to licence holders found to be in non-compliance, including the number of licences refused, suspended or revoked and the number of administrative monetary penalties issued, broken down by (i) province, (ii) year, (iii) municipality, (iv) licence classes and subclasses, (v) the value of administrative monetary penalties?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 746—Mr. Don Davies:

With regard to the Canadian Coal Transition Initiative (CCTI) and the CCTI Infrastructure Fund, since their inception, broken down by fiscal year and by initiative: (a) what is the total amount of funding provided under each program to date; (b) how many projects have been funded; (c) in which communities have the projects been funded; (d) what is the timeframe for assessment, review, and approval or rejection of an application, broken down by (i) average timeframe, (ii) median timeframe; and (e) what accountability metrics are in place to ensure that (i) emission reduction targets are met, (ii) workers in the sector find employment in other industries?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 747—Mr. Don Davies:

With regard to disability benefits provided by Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) since November 2015, broken down by year: (a) what is the median time to process (i) an initial application, (ii) a reassessment application; (b) of the applications in (a), how many were processed after 16 weeks of receiving all the information needed for processing; (c) of the applications in (a), what is the percentage of cases that VAC met its service standard target; (d) how many of the decisions on initial applications submitted for mental health conditions were made in more than 16 weeks, as a (i) percentage, (ii) raw number; (e) of the timeframes in (a), what are the application processing times broken down by recipient groups (i) male, (ii) female, (iii) anglophones, (iv) francophones; (f) what is the total number of applications; (g) how many officers process applications broken down by (i) temporary officers, (ii) permanent officers; (h) what is the volume of backlog of applications; and (i) were the number of total applications processed below the fiscal year target, and, if so, what is the target and what is the number of total applications processed?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 748—Ms. Laurel Collins:

With regard to study permits issued by the government since 2018-19, broken down by fiscal year and originating country: (a) how many applications for study permits were received; and (b) of those applications in (a), how many were (i) approved, (ii) rejected?

(Return tabled)

Government Orders

Question No. 749—Ms. Laurel Collins:

With regard to funding received by National Sport Organizations (NSOs), broken down by fiscal year, since 2014-15: (a) what is the total amount of funding received by the NSOs for the (i) Sport Support Program, (ii) Athlete Assistance Program, (iii) Hosting Program; and (b) did any NSOs receive reduced funding or had funding denied during the accountability stage of the Sport Funding and Accountability Framework tool?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 750—Ms. Laurel Collins:

With regard to government funding for fiscal years 2019-20, 2020-21, and 2021-22, allocated within the constituency of Victoria: what is the total funding amount, broken down by (i) fiscal year, (ii) department or agency, (iii) initiative, (iv) amount?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 752—Ms. Lori Idlout:

With regard to the Inuit Nunangat Declaration on Inuit-Crown Partnership signed on February 9, 2017, and the Inuit Nunangat Policy announced on April 21, 2022: (a) how much has been spent implementing the Partnership Declaration annually from fiscal years 2016-17 to date; (b) how has the government ensured accountability in the implementation of the Partnership Declaration; (c) in what ways has the implementation of the Partnership Declaration been audited for efficacy; and (d) what funding has been allocated and approved for the implementation of the Inuit Nunangat Policy annually?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 756—Mr. Daniel Blaikie:

With regard to Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) high net worth compliance program, broken down by year, from November 2015 to date: (a) how many audits were completed; (b) what is the number of auditors; (c) how many new files were opened; (d) how many files were closed; (e) of the files in (d), what was the average time taken to process the file before it was closed; (f) of the files in (d), what was the risk level of non-compliance of each file; (g) how much was spent on contractors and subcontractors; (h) of the contractors and subcontractors in (g), what is the initial and final value of each contract; (i) among the contractors and subcontractors in (g), what is the description of each service contract; (j) how many reassessments were issued; (k) what is the total net revenue collected; (l) how many taxpayer files were referred to the CRA's Criminal Investigations Program; (m) of the investigations in (l), how many were referred to the Public Prosecution Service of Canada; and (n) of the investigations in (m), how many resulted in convictions?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 757—Mr. Daniel Blaikie:

With regard to the Pandora Papers, Panama Papers and Paradise Papers cases and the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), broken down by each case: (a) how many auditors are currently assigned to each case, broken down by auditor category; (b) how many audits were completed; (c) how many high risk cases of non-compliance were identified; (d) how many new files were opened; (e) how many files were closed; (f) of the files closed in (e), what was the average time taken to process the file before it was closed; (g) of the files closed in (e), what was the risk level of each file; (h) how much money was spent on suppliers and subcontractors; (i) of the suppliers and subcontractors in (h), what was the initial and final value of each contract; (j) of the suppliers and subcontractors in (h), what is the description of each service contract; (k) how many notices of reassessment were issued; (l) what is the total amount recovered to date; (m) what is the value of total reassessments resulting from audits; (n) what is the total net revenue collected; (o) how many taxpayer files were referred to the CRA's Criminal Investigations Program; (p) of the investigations in (o), how many were referred to the Public Prosecution Service of Canada; and (q) of the investigations in (p), how many resulted in convictions?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 758—Mr. Daniel Blaikie:

With regard to the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) and the Small and Medium Business Enterprises Directorate, broken down by year, from November 2015 to date: (a) how many audits were completed; (b) what is the number of auditors; (c) how many new files were opened; (d) how many files were closed; (e) of the files in (d), what was the average time taken to process the file before it was closed; (f) of the files in (d), what was the risk level of non-compliance of each file; (g) how much was spent on contractors and subcontractors; (h) of the contractors and sub-

contractors in (g), what is the initial and final value of each contract; (i) among the contractors and subcontractors in (g), what is the description of each service contract; (j) how many reassessments were issued; (k) what is the total net revenue collected; (l) how many taxpayer files were referred to the CRA's Criminal Investigations Program; (m) of the investigations in (l), how many were referred to the Public Prosecution Service of Canada; and (n) of the investigations in (m), how many resulted in convictions?

(Return tabled)

[English]

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

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I wish to inform the House that, because of the ministerial statement, Government Orders will be extended by 30 minutes.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

CANADA DISABILITY BENEFIT ACT

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.) moved that Bill C-22, An Act to reduce poverty and to support the financial security of persons with disabilities by establishing the Canada disability benefit and making a consequential amendment to the Income Tax Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

She said: Madam Speaker, I am honoured to rise today for second reading of Bill C-22, an act to reduce poverty and to support the financial security of persons with disabilities by establishing the Canada disability benefit.

I would like to acknowledge that I do so on the traditional unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe people.

In 1967, during the 27th Parliament, the Right Hon. Lester B. Pearson rose in the House of Commons and stated that no senior should live in poverty, and the guaranteed income supplement was born.

In 2016, our government stated that no child in our country should live in poverty, and the Canada child benefit was born.

Today, I begin with the following declaration: in Canada, no person with a disability should live in poverty.

The values that drove past governments to reduce poverty and create benefits for seniors and children are the same values that have created the bill before us today. I am talking about equality, fairness and inclusion, Canadian values, values that guide us and define us as a country and bring out the very best in us.

Let me begin by also telling the House about my community, the disability community. The disability community is vibrant, talented and diverse. Twenty-three percent of Canadians identify as having a disability. We are the largest minority. We are a family member, a friend, a neighbour and a co-worker.

Let me also share a harsh truth. Working-age Canadians with disabilities are twice as likely to live in poverty than working-age Canadians without disabilities. The poverty rate for working-age Canadians with disabilities in 2017 was 23%. The situation is even worse for individuals with severe disabilities, women, indigenous people, LGBTQ+ and racialized Canadians with disabilities.

[Translation]

When the pandemic hit, the situation only got worse.

In a recent Statistics Canada survey, two-thirds of respondents with a disability said they had difficulty meeting their basic financial needs because of the pandemic. That is why Bill C-22 aims first and foremost to reduce poverty. It aims to close the long-standing economic disparity experienced by many Canadians with disabilities.

Canada has a bold poverty reduction strategy and has set ambitious targets, including reducing poverty by half by 2030. The three pillars of Canada's poverty reduction strategy are living with dignity, fostering equal access to opportunity and inclusion, and improving resilience and security. These are the aims of Bill C-22.

The Canada disability benefit would close the gaping hole in the federal social safety net for people with disabilities between the Canada child benefit, old age security and the guaranteed income supplement. It would provide continuity and assurance.

• (1110)

[English]

A common experience within the disability community is one of immense relief and often celebration at turning 65. Why? Because at age 65, OAS and GIS kick in, because there is income security, often for the first time in a person's life. In fact, the poverty levels of persons with disabilities decreases by almost 60% between the ages of 64 and 65, from 23% to 9%. For persons with severe disabilities, it goes from 31% to 11% just for having their birthday. Canadians should not have to wait until they are 65 years old to experience even a modest degree of financial security.

We are also at a unique point in history where the first generation of persons with more complex disabilities are outliving their parents. Thanks to lower infant mortality rates and advances in medicine, people are living longer. This is certainly to be celebrated, but it also means that we must ensure there are adequate supports available to everyone throughout their entire lifetimes. We must reassure and demonstrate to families that worry about the future of their loved ones that these supports will be there when they are gone.

Government Orders

How did this come to pass? How is it that in a country such as Canada, so many of our people live in such dire circumstances? How can we speak of equality of opportunity and fairness when such inequality exists? To understand the roots and extent of poverty that exists within Canada's disability community, we have to look at the history of how persons with disabilities in our country have been treated. That history is not a proud one. I believe it is not one with which we, as a country, have come to terms.

Historically, persons with disabilities have been discriminated against, marginalized and excluded. Ours is a history of institutionalization, of lobotomization, of sterilization. We took away people's ability to make decisions for themselves. At one point in our history, we outlawed the use of sign language. We did this to our people. We took a medical approach to disability that told people they were broken and in need of fixing, and a charity approach to disability that told people they were objects of charity and pity, in need of saving. Individuals with disabilities were denied the opportunity to make choices, to control their lives and to develop their potential.

Most Canadians are not aware of the pain and trauma that institutions, including federally run institutions, caused people with disabilities and their families, and we are not working with awareness of the aftermath of this trauma.

Bill C-22 would give us the opportunity to send a clear message to working-aged persons with disabilities and, quite frankly, to every person with a disability that we will no longer sit by and watch them struggle to make ends meet, struggle to live with dignity, struggle as they live a life of uncertainty and poverty, that the equal opportunity to make for themselves the lives that they wish, as afforded to every Canadian, is theirs as well.

[Translation]

Before getting into the details of the bill, I would like to place the benefit in the general context of the government's efforts to foster the inclusion of people with disabilities. Bill C-22 builds on the work done in the past six years to create a country that is more fair, accessible and inclusive.

In 2016, we launched a national dialogue and consultation process that culminated in the enactment of the Accessible Canada Act. This historic legislation aims to realize a Canada without barriers by 2040. It is the most important step forward for the rights of Canadians with disabilities since the adoption of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982.

Government Orders

● (1115)

[English]

The Accessible Canada Act lays out key principles that are guiding government decisions and actions as we work toward a disability-inclusive Canada. These include that all persons must have the same opportunity to make for themselves the lives that they are able and wish to have regardless of their disabilities, and that persons with disabilities must be involved in the development and design of laws, policies, programs, services and structures. With Bill C-22, we are remaining true to these principles.

The bill before us today is also informed by our pandemic work and what we learned throughout these past years.

In April 2020, we formed a COVID-19 disability advisory group to advise me, as minister, on the lived experience of persons with disabilities throughout the pandemic and to inform the federal government's response. It was the counsel of these individuals that led to actions like additional support for seniors and students with disabilities, as well as the one-time payment and other measures to help persons with disabilities mitigate the economic shock of the pandemic crisis.

The inequality that was exposed and worsened by the pandemic also led to the creation of Canada's first-ever disability inclusion action plan. This is a plan that will modernize and revolutionize the way the federal government supports persons with disabilities.

The action plan has four key pillars: financial security, employment, accessible and inclusive communities, and a modern approach to disabilities. This action plan will challenge our government and the networks and systems we operate in to do better. It will challenge Canada to be better. This is not a box we need to check off the list; it is a road map on how we consider persons with disabilities in all aspects of our society going forward. The development and implementation of this action plan is being done in collaboration with the disability community.

In Canada, we are moving beyond the disability community mantra of “nothing about us without us”, in recognition of the fact that every decision the government makes, every program that is designed and every service that is delivered impacts persons with disabilities. We have moved to the shortened version of “nothing without us”, because everything is about us.

In this spirit, we conducted an online survey to ask Canadians what was needed in the disability inclusion action plan and how it could make a concrete difference in the lives of people. Over 8,500 people responded. We have met with hundreds of members of the disability community and other experts, including through disability community-led engagement and indigenous-led engagement.

The disability inclusion plan is a work in progress, but what the community has made clear to us, what we know for sure, is that poverty reduction will be the key metric by which we measure its and Canada's success, and we know that the Canada disability benefit must be the cornerstone of this work.

[Translation]

Bill C-22 will create this benefit. It establishes the major principles and general provisions of the administration of the benefit, and

authorizes the Governor in Council to implement most of the elements of the benefit by regulation.

Along the same lines as the guaranteed income supplement for seniors, the benefit will be based on income and help low-income, working-age Canadians with disabilities.

The framework format of this legislation is intentional. Not all details are contained in the bill. Why is that?

First, in the spirit of “Nothing without us” and in recognition of the fact that governments have too often imposed ways of doing things on people with disabilities, we are collaborating with the disabled community on the benefit's design. People with disabilities are in the best position to know what they need. They are familiar with the challenges and barriers that prevent them from achieving financial security.

The 2021 budget includes funding over three years to ensure people with disabilities will actually participate in the process, and work is well under way.

● (1120)

[English]

We are also doing important work with the disability community on the fourth pillar of the disability inclusion action plan to reform eligibility criteria for existing federal disability programs and benefits.

As well, we need to work very closely with provinces and territories. Bill C-22 recognizes the leading role the provinces and territories play in providing supports and services to persons with disabilities, and the importance of engaging with them in developing income supports and other support services.

The success of this benefit and the number of lives it will change will directly correspond to the work being done with provinces and territories on benefit interaction. Fundamentally, the Canada disability benefit would be an income supplement, not an income replacement. Like the GIS, it would not be intended to replace existing provincial and territorial support. Each month, it would put more money directly into the pockets of low-income persons with disabilities.

Government Orders

We are working with provinces and territories to make sure this new benefit would align with and complement services, benefits and supports, because we cannot have a situation anywhere in this country where income supports are clawed back, or wraparound services are cut off, because of the Canada disability benefit. The disability community is concerned about this and has called upon provincial and territorial governments to not claw back existing income or other supports. These concerns are top of mind in every conversation I have. I am pleased to report that conversations in this regard are going well with the provinces and territories. There is a shared commitment to improving the lives of persons with disabilities across this country.

In conclusion, Bill C-22 would allow Canada to create a thoughtfully designed benefit that would give financial security to working age persons with disabilities. As we move to debate this bill, I want to remind my colleagues that Canadians support the creation of the Canada disability benefit. According to a recent Angus Reid survey, nearly 90% of Canadians are in favour of the benefit.

Support for the benefit was also expressed in an open letter to the Prime Minister and me from 200 prominent Canadians, including former parliamentarians, academics, business and union leaders, economists, health care professionals, and disability advocates. The urgent adoption of the CDB legislation was also called for in an open letter signed by nearly half of the members of the other place.

That support is echoed in nearly 18,000 signatures on a House of Commons e-petition, and that e-petition asks that we fast-track the design and implementation of the benefit, and that we involve persons with disabilities at every stage. This was echoed in the House on May 10, when members of all parties unanimously supported the motion put forth by the member for Port Moody—Coquitlam to put in place the Canada disability benefit without delay.

I hear from Canadians almost every day who are anxious to have this benefit in place. I too am anxious to have this benefit in place. This bill could be a game-changer in the lives of so many people.

I want to thank members of the disability community who, for generations, have called for government action to support the financial security of persons with disabilities. What disability rights advocates have fought for and have achieved matters, and it has made a difference. Make no mistake. It is because of their efforts that I stand here, in this place, as a woman with a disability, and as Canada's first-ever minister responsible for disability inclusion. It is because of their efforts that we are debating Bill C-22 here today.

I urge every member in the House to do the right thing and support this legislation. I urge them to join me and declare that no person with a disability in our country should live in poverty. Let us not miss this opportunity.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the minister for bringing forward this important legislation. I have one thing to ask, though.

It is not clear to me exactly how much the benefit would be for. Is the thought behind it that it might be a topping up, similar to CERB? What is the amount we are thinking of?

• (1125)

Hon. Carla Qualtrough: Madam Speaker, part of the thinking behind making this framework legislation was to recognize the important role that provinces and territories play in this space. Conceptually, this is modelled after the guaranteed income supplement, so it would be supplemental income, in addition to other supports that individuals receive. However, the negotiations with provinces and territories really will dictate the ambition of this because, if they are not willing to not claw it back, we are not willing to replace the income they already provide.

It is roughly modelled after the GIS. The idea would be to lift people out of poverty and get people to a point where they are no longer living in poverty. However, the exact amount will be directly informed by the negotiations with the provinces and territories.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Madam Speaker, as we begin the debate and this study, and since we are dealing with principles here, I would say from the outset that just because a person has an impairment does not mean that they have a disability. That is a basic principle, as far as I am concerned. Disability is a social construct.

A person living with disabilities achieves autonomy when they have social and economic autonomy. If the bill and especially the regulations, which do not exist yet, are drafted with that in mind, then they will certainly have our attention and support.

For a person living with disabilities to have dignity, to live in dignity, how much basic income should they receive annually?

[English]

Hon. Carla Qualtrough: Madam Speaker, I completely agree that a lot of the barriers that disable Canadians who have various impairments have been created by social construct. A lot of people are living in poverty in this country because they have been legislated into it and they cannot escape it, or they are afraid of taking that chance.

With this bill we are sending a message that we understand and we will take people beyond that. We are also working, through our disability inclusion action plan, to address the other barriers people face, whether they are barriers to employment or inclusion, like not being able to get in the door to work somewhere, or attitudinal barriers, the assumptions people make and the bias and discrimination that exist in society. Quite frankly, a lot of the laws, policies and programs at all levels in this country discriminate. That is the big picture.

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Right now people are living in poverty, and this bill addresses lifting people up, giving them a chance and telling them that they matter and that they should not be living in poverty.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, as it stands, this bill is a promise. It is just a promise, but promises do not put food on the table.

I raised with the minister the issue of adequacy and the need for certainty that this bill will provide adequate standard of living for people with disabilities.

Is the minister prepared to include adequacy in this bill and move it from a promise to certainty?

Hon. Carla Qualtrough: Madam Speaker, I thank the member opposite for her collaboration on this really important piece of work.

There are two fundamental reasons for proceeding in this way with framework legislation. One is because we want to include persons with disabilities and the disability community in this conversation. They are uniquely positioned to know what they need and what barriers they continue to face. The other, of course, is the reality of the dynamic, the interaction, and the need to harmonize benefits.

Absolutely, the goal of this is to reduce poverty. Absolutely, the goal is to lift people out of poverty. As I said in my remarks, we have legislative poverty reduction targets, and we have a legislative poverty line. That is the goal, which is very clear in my mind.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, I thank the minister for her efforts to ensure Bill C-22 is the first bill debated in this fall session. She said earlier that no person with a disability should live in poverty. Everyone in this chamber would agree with that. However, we also know that this bill has no specificity about the amount of the benefit, who will be eligible for it and what will be done to prevent clawbacks.

I wonder if the minister could share with us what she will do to ensure no person with a disability, regardless of their age, is living in poverty in this country.

Hon. Carla Qualtrough: Madam Speaker, those are the exact points we are laser focused on as we move forward with this bill, and as we move forward into a regulatory process that would allow us the flexibility and public discourse to make sure we actually get where we want to go with this.

We know there is such an important role to be played by provinces and territories. Working-age Canadians with disabilities are the target population. It is the gap we are trying to fill between children with disabilities, who get the Canada child benefit, and seniors with disabilities, who get OAS and GIS. This is the target population.

Nobody, disability or not, deserves to live in poverty. This particular measure targets a specific cohort of the population in Canada that is disproportionately living in poverty.

• (1130)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the minister for tabling this bill,

and more importantly, for the extremely well-thought-out and passionate speech she delivered to the House in presenting it.

My question is about the economic impact on people living with disabilities. Before I became involved federally, I was involved municipally in my community, and I was a member of the accessibility standing committee of our city council. One of the things we came to realize very quickly is the economic impact on those with disabilities and what that means in our communities.

I am wondering if the minister could comment on what the impact of lifting people out of poverty will be on this largest minority, as she referred to it, in our economies.

Hon. Carla Qualtrough: Madam Speaker, as I said, financial security is one part of a four-part approach to disability inclusion in Canada. The second part is employment. There are significant barriers for this untapped labour pool, and in a time of labour shortages, this is a group that could be contributing and sharing their talent and expertise with us more meaningfully.

We know that, if the available pool of persons with disabilities in this country were working, it could bump the GDP between 2% and 3%. What is stopping people is not the lack of ambition, will or talent. It is the entrenched barriers that exist within people's minds and within our systems. The exciting part is that we get to talk about it. We get to celebrate people, the contributions they could be making and the potential that exists out there. This is one piece of it.

The CDB speaks to the other piece, which is financial security, and the reality is that people are living in poverty today, and we need to get them the assistance and support they deserve.

Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the minister for her advocacy and for being an inspiration in this country.

My question is more technical in nature. This is the second bill we have seen during this Parliament that would do substantial work in the regulations. There is actually not a lot of detail about what the bill would provide in terms of a benefit. I am curious if the minister is concerned about the precedent this sets and how much information we as parliamentarians will have before agreeing to pass this bill.

I do support this bill fully in its spirit. I speak for me and not on behalf of my party, of course.

Hon. Carla Qualtrough: Madam Speaker, I was concerned, in moving forward with this legislation, that we were not to impose requirements or criteria on a population that has always been imposed upon. I was concerned that we would make it more difficult for provinces and territories to collaborate and harmonize if we were to be too prescriptive.

The whole notion of moving forward collaboratively in almost a co-development fashion is novel, and it feels a little uncertain, but it is the right thing to do. At the end of the day, after we go through this, we could look back and say that we had included people, we had given the provinces and territories the flexibility they needed to stand up and deliver, and people's lives were made better.

[Translation]

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise to speak in the House. Before I begin, I would like to seek unanimous consent to share my time with another member.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Does the hon. member have unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Calgary Midnapore.

• (1135)

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

[English]

It is certainly a pleasure to be back here in the House once again representing the good people of Calgary Midnapore and, even better, to be here under our new leader, the member for Carleton.

Nobel Prize winner and humanitarian Pearl Buck once wrote, “the test of a civilization is in the way that it cares for its helpless members.” I would certainly say the subjects of this act today are not helpless, but they do need our help. I believe that what Madam Buck was trying to say is how we treat the most vulnerable members of our society reflects the quality of it.

Let me take a moment to reflect on how the government has treated the most vulnerable members of our society.

Frankly, its track record is not very good. At best, there have been false aspirational words, strong statements and, of course, thoughts and prayers, with ultimately very little benefit to anyone. Is that the intention of the legislation here today and of the government here today? Is it a holding document, something the Liberals just want to put in the window but do not intend to deliver on?

It would be easy to argue this, considering the legislation was the last piece of legislation placed before the House in the spring of 2019, right before we went into an election that summer, and the government knew it. It would be easy to think this, given it was the last piece of legislation tabled before our summer recess. It would be easy to assume that this is once again just thoughts and prayers and a hope for Canadians. However, I know the minister and know she wants the best for her community, and I believe her, so I do not think that these are aspirational words meant to simply inspire hope.

That is the best of the legislation we have seen from the government, with this false inspiration; it is not the worst. What has been the worst? It has been legislation that divided Canadians. It has been legislation that left swaths of Canadians behind, to be absent from our society and to be ignored without recourse. Is this legisla-

tion the worst legislation we have seen from this government? No, it is not. Canadians have seen the worst and they will not forget.

Where does this legislation today find itself? This legislation finds itself in the mushy middle. Why is it the mushy middle? It is because this legislation wants to help but falls short in convincing all Canadians that it actually would help. We have seen this with legislation before, where details were omitted and left to the regulations, including budgets and how they are able to balance themselves.

There are many concerns with this legislation. For example, there is the eligibility for the benefit. Many are concerned about whether individuals with invisible disabilities would be eligible. When we are walking down the street and meet someone, we do not know what they are dealing with. We do not know if they are dealing with an invisible disability such as cancer or heart disease. We have no idea, and this legislation does not provide clarification as to whether these invisible disabilities would be covered.

Then there is the amount of the benefit that Canadians with disabilities would receive. It is not yet clear how the amount would be determined in conjunction with the existing provincial benefits. Of course, many disability supports are currently provided provincially, but there is no indication as to whether this benefit could be considered income and would therefore disqualify individuals from receiving some provincial benefits.

• (1140)

There need to be assurances that there will be no provincial disparity so that no matter where someone lives in Canada, they are equally supported. “A Canadian is a Canadian”, the Prime Minister has said, so let us show it.

We need to know how the benefit will be impacted if there are provincial changes to the disability support. Because we do not know how much the benefit would be, how the benefit would be delivered or who would be eligible, we do not know what the cost would be to deliver the benefit. With last week's announcement of the affordability bill, we are now at \$56.5 billion in budget 2022. We do not know when or how the benefit would be delivered. Would the benefit be delivered monthly, weekly or at tax time? It simply is not clear or outlined within this legislation.

Another major concern is whether the benefit would be indexed to inflation. With rising inflation, Canadians are already suffering, with an unbelievable rate in June of 4.1%. It is unbelievable that we would even have to consider the impacts of inflation on people with disabilities.

There is the process to appeal for persons with disabilities who are denied benefits. We know that disabilities are unique, and we know that there should be a fair and equitable appeal process for those who have been denied benefits.

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When persons with disabilities would start to receive the benefit is another major concern for us with this legislation. As well, right now the coming-into-force date would be determined by an order of the Governor in Council, so even if this legislation passes and receives royal assent, Canadians with disabilities may not receive the benefit for some time, if they receive it at all.

One in five Canadians lives with a disability. They need our support to live full lives and participate fully in society, including in the workforce. The Conservatives believe that all Canadians living with disabilities deserve timely access to these benefits and services and should not be penalized for going to work, as is too often the case today.

They do not need more uncertainty, and I would like to point out, with my apologies, that the rate in June was 8.1%, not 4.1%, as I said previously. They do not need bureaucracy; they need our help. If we want to be seen as a society that Pearl Buck would find worthy, then let us really help.

In conclusion, this is not the worst of the legislation we have seen, but it is not the best of the legislation we have seen, of aspirational ideas and of the slogan “sunny ways”. With the worst of it, the government has consistently wedged, stigmatized and divided. It is the mushy middle, but if we really want to have a society that Pearl Buck would judge as worthy, then let us have an act that actually helps people.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister and Liberal members have been very clear. We want an economy that works for all Canadians, and Bill C-22 speaks to that. It would ensure that we give more disposable income to people with disabilities.

The minister talked about how there is a disconnect in the issue of poverty for a person with a disability who is turning 65. The member opposite seems to want to mock the bill by challenging whether it will take effect. The Conservative Party of Canada can recognize what the government has been talking about: enabling Canadians to be actively engaged in the economy as full participants. Let us fight poverty.

Will the member be clear in her indication of support for the bill and its quick passage?

• (1145)

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Madam Speaker, the economy is working for nobody. This is very clear right now, as we had, as I mentioned, an inflation rate of 8.1% in June and have a budget in 2022 of \$56.5 billion with the act that was recently announced. Canadians cannot buy groceries right now, they cannot fill up their vehicles with gas at this time and new families cannot purchase homes. The economy is not working for anyone, so I would suggest the member not discuss the economy.

I made it clear in my speech that the Conservatives will be supporting the bill, but it is not super inspirational.

[*Translation*]

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Madam Speaker, in French, we refer to people “en situation de handicap”, “vivant avec

un handicap” or “handicapée”. There are a number of terms that are used. However, there is something that concerns me.

Guillaume Parent, the director of the Centre d'expertise finances et handicap, recently told La Presse that, in Quebec, fewer people considered themselves as having a disability or living with a disability because the French word “handicap” does not have the same scope as the English word “disability”.

Will a distinction be made between the two terms so that people understand what we are talking about and so that they are able to access the services in question?

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

I think the intention is the same no matter which term we use. That also means that the bill's shortcomings remain the same. Whatever term we use, I hope that the bill's flaws will be remedied in the regulations.

This bill is just as flawed no matter which term we use.

[*English*]

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Madam Speaker, the disability community has been clear: It needs help now.

How did we get here? It is consecutive Liberal and Conservative governments that have failed the disability community. After seven years in power, the Liberal government has dragged its feet and now tabled a bill that is empty on the critical pieces and critical details of the bill. Who is eligible? When will people get the benefit? How much will the benefit be?

Could the member comment on how, after seven years, a government could table something without details?

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Madam Speaker, it is very rich to point to Conservative and Liberal governments when the New Democrats are in fact in a coalition with the Liberals. The member should have done a better job of negotiating if she wanted to see that within the bill.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to return here to the House for a scintillating debate, and it is nice to start on a topic that all parties can agree on: the importance and the need for an increase to the support we are giving people who are living with disabilities.

To start, I wanted to read a letter that I signed with members from all parties that went to the minister to request that we expeditiously get this benefit in place. The letter does a great job of summarizing the desperate need for such a benefit. It states:

We write in support of the immediate re-introduction of the Canada Disability Benefit Act in order to reduce poverty and support the financial security of persons with disabilities.

We also call on the government to ensure that people with disabilities are meaningfully involved in the creation and implementation of the Canada Disability Benefit, and to work with provincial and territorial governments to ensure that the benefit complements provincial and territorial programs.

One in five people in Canada has a disability and over one million Canadians with disabilities live in poverty. People with disabilities in Canada have a higher rate of unemployment and people with severe disabilities earn less than \$13,000 per year on average. People with disabilities face many direct and indirect costs from having a disability, including medical expenses, specialized equipment, accessible housing, and reduced earnings. COVID-19 has only exacerbated these inequalities.

The Canada Disability Benefit is an important step in removing the barriers that people with disabilities face in Canada, and it must be part of a comprehensive government approach that includes creating good quality jobs and disability-inclusive spaces.

It is critical that we move forward more quickly to support people with disabilities and, as parliamentarians representing different parties, we are ready to work alongside you to ensure that we build a truly inclusive Canada.

This is the kind of cross-party co-operation that Canadians are looking for.

If we look at the plight of the disabled, I cannot speak to how much in benefits they are receiving in other provinces, but I can tell members I have a continual stream of people coming to my office who are unable to afford to live. In Ontario, they get about \$1,200 a month as their benefit.

We can think about the fact that affordable housing is a huge issue in this country. Across the country, Canadians cannot find a place to live that is affordable, but in my riding I would tell members that any place one can find is about \$1,000 a month. We know a couple of years ago, before the pandemic started, 60% of Canadians were within \$200 of not being able to pay their bills. That was before the pandemic and all the hardships that happened. It was before the subsequent, multiple increases to the carbon tax that the Liberal government put in place, which have increased the cost of home heating and increased the cost of groceries.

There is now an added burden on disabled people. If they have \$1,000 to find a place to live in Sarnia and they have \$200 leftover for everything else, along with all the increases that have happened, it is no wonder that people cannot afford to live. We are seeing them increasingly trying to go to food banks. We see all these problems they are having.

We also know that the health care system is in disarray in our country. For persons like me, trying to get a medical appointment to see a specialist, or whatever is needed, is difficult enough. However, to navigate that system for many persons living with disabilities is extra complicated and extra expensive. I think we would all agree in this House that there is a great need for the benefit.

When it comes to implementing things, it is important to know the details. I find this document is almost a virtue-signal that this is important to do, and we all agree that it is. How much is it going to cost? There has been out-of-control spending everywhere from the Liberal government. We all agree it is a good idea to spend here. However, how much is it?

● (1150)

The implementation of this also needs to not exclude people. It was I, on a Friday, in the House, who highlighted the problem with the disability tax credit, when the government decided to make 80% of people who used to be eligible for the benefit no longer eli-

gible. Then they denied it. We chased them around for months and months, with the disability stakeholders calling out the government on it. Finally, the situation was remediated, but it was not just about taking away their tax credit. That also made them eligible for the disability pension benefit. If one did not get the tax credit, one did not get the pension benefit. When we are talking about implementing supports for the disabled, it is important we know who is eligible. That is going to be critical.

It is also important that we are not giving money with one hand and taking money away with the other hand. We are saying we are going to top them up, and I would argue the amount of topping up is important. The minister indicated that this would be like GIS, but she also said that people who are on OAS and GIS and are disabled go from 23% living in poverty to, when they turn 65, 9% living in poverty. If no disabled person should live in poverty, that tells me we do not have the right amount for the GIS, so that is going to be an important discussion as well.

The government is going to raise the carbon tax again in January. If one is giving money with one hand, while driving up the cost of groceries and home heating and taking the money away with the other hand, that is not going to be helpful at all. Therefore, that will be very important.

It has to be indexed to inflation. Certainly, we have the highest inflation that we have seen in this country in 40 years. Interest rates are up. People are concerned. If we are not keeping pace with that, it will be problematic. I do hear that, if everybody needs an 8.1% increase, it is going to be another inflationary pressure. It is more important than ever that we prioritize spending in the government and that we know clearly where we are going to spend.

When it comes to helping the disabled, I find that we are not always on the same page. The member for Carleton, who is our new leader, had brought a private member's bill to help disabled people. The minister talked about preventing the clawbacks that happened. His bill was going to address the clawbacks that were happening, but the government did not support his bill and it did not pass.

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I think that all of us are looking for ways to help. I do not think we should only help by giving money to the disabled. I think we should be incentivizing their work, making it possible. I know that there are barriers they face in terms of accessibility, and the accessibility act, while well-intended, has not always come to fruition. In my riding, there are still places that were grandfathered under that and are inaccessible. Certainly, some attention needs to be paid there.

In addition, I would say that we need to look at the history of how we have treated the disabled community. The remarks from the minister were very well taken on this. We have a lousy track record. We need to get it right. To do that, we need to not just consult with provinces and territories to make sure they are not clawing back the benefits we are going to give, but I we also need to consult with people in the disabled community so that we understand how they need to receive that benefit.

My colleague from Calgary Midnapore mentioned that it is not clear whether it would be a monthly benefit or if it would come at tax time or what it would come as. People who are struggling to get by definitely need to receive this more regularly, so my opinion is that this would be something to take under consideration.

Certainly we will support this bill in principle, but when it comes to committee and all of the details, I hope that the consultations with provinces and territories have been done so that we can see how much of the benefit we need to put in place, so that we can get a costing on it, perhaps from the Parliamentary Budget Officer. I also hope we will be clear on who is going to be eligible and how that is going to be determined, because I would not want to see people fall through the cracks unnecessarily.

In terms of the implementation, it should be accelerated, but it is more important to do it right than to do it fast.

• (1155)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I did hear the minister, in her comments earlier, talk about the consultations with those primarily affected by this, the disabled community. I think that she even indicated that this would be an ongoing thing and would continue to happen. That is to respond to one of the member's last points.

With regard to the issue of trying to home in on the exact amount, does the member not respect the fact that there are already services provided by the provinces and that one of the things we want to ensure we do not end up seeing is that we just end up transferring money to the provinces and they end up decreasing what they are spending?

We have to ensure that money the federal government puts into this is genuinely redirected to those in need in addition to what they might already be receiving. Would she not agree this is a critical element?

• (1200)

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Madam Speaker, we want to make sure we are not giving something to the provinces they are going to claw back, because disabled people will be worse off as a result. There is some evidence of how much money it takes to live, which I think

varies by location. A lot of times we see that when people are assigned a salary, if they are working in Vancouver or Toronto there is a supplement for addressing the cost of housing there and things like that. Therefore, the amount may not be the same across the board depending on where people live. I think there is a private member's bill from one of the NDP members calling for \$2,200 a month. We saw with the CERB that \$2,000 a month seemed adequate, so I would say that might be a target. I would again encourage the government to look at the GIS, because single people who receive the OAS and GIS are living in poverty, so it is not the right amount.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Madam Speaker, in a June 15 article in *La Presse*, Guillaume Parent wrote that the consultations could go on for three years.

What does my colleague think about that? Does she not think that is a rather long time to wait for people who are already in need?

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

I think that three years is too long to wait for benefits. I would rather see the government put measures in place immediately and then continue to hold consultations to determine whether those measures are working.

[English]

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, as a result of consecutive Liberal and Conservative governments' inaction, those living with disabilities in my riding of Nanaimo—Ladysmith are increasingly homeless and reliant on food banks. Some are getting sicker instead of better as they do not have access to the medications they need or to adaptive equipment, for example. Instead of being treated with the dignity and respect they deserve, those living with disabilities are being left behind.

Does the member agree that we need to see the current government implement a bill that provides clear, immediate supports for those living with disabilities?

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Madam Speaker, I absolutely agree we need to hurry to get a benefit in place.

With respect to the previous governments that have neglected this, I would say we cannot change the past. We can only change the future. Now is the time, and we need to move forward with this legislation.

[Translation]

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise here today as the Bloc Québécois critic for disability inclusion.

The government has introduced a bill that aims to improve the financial situation of Canadians with disabilities and of working age. The bill is intended to address certain gaps in the social safety net, which includes old age security, the guaranteed income supplement and the Canada child benefit.

I think that this is an important goal, and I can say right now that the Bloc Québécois is in favour of the principle. We believe that it is important that Canadians have access to a strong social safety net and that it is the government's role to ensure that they do. Today's Quebec is built on these same principles, and we can only support any initiatives in this vein that could be of benefit to Quebecers.

However, as it stands, Bill C-22 is woefully incomplete. Beyond the principle of solidarity and financial assistance for people with disabilities, the government gives no details on the form the benefit will take. We all know that the devil is in the details. We believe that this is a major shortcoming and that the bill should be enhanced and, especially, fleshed out.

Right now, 22% of Canadians live with a disability. That is almost one out of every four. Unfortunately, we know that almost a third of all Canadians with disabilities live under the poverty line and that the unemployment rate for most of this group is higher. In Quebec alone, 37% of people with disabilities live on an income of less than \$15,000 a year.

In the government's online survey, which we heard about before actually getting a hold of it through the library, 70% of respondents indicated that financial security should be the government's main priority.

The same respondents indicated that they found it hard to cover the costs associated with living with a disability. These include housing costs, medical costs and the cost of goods and services to assist people with disabilities.

It is also important to remember that the pandemic made their financial hardship even worse. The COVID-19 crisis had an impact on the general health of Canadians with disabilities, and many had a hard time obtaining the assistance and services they had access to before.

The government finally decided to send out a one-time payment of \$600, an amount that is wholly insufficient to provide relief and help people meet their present and future needs. Frankly, it is high time that the government took this seriously. People with disabilities have waited long enough.

A majority of groups and unions are in favour of this benefit, but only because the existing federal programs fall short. For example, the people with disabilities who are most in need cannot access the disability tax credit.

Just 2.2% of the population in Quebec applies for the tax credit, even though 16% of Quebecers live with a disability and are eligible. It is complicated to apply for the credit and not everyone with a

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disability is eligible. Furthermore, as one of my colleagues pointed out, there is an issue with the French word "handicap" and its meaning. There is a difference between the meanings of the French words "incapacité" and "handicap", and some people do not consider they have a "handicap".

● (1205)

The minister's action plan for people with disabilities includes employment, but its definition of disability and associated issues needs updating. Eligibility, for one thing, needs to be clear.

I would also like to talk about the registered disability savings plan, the RDSP, a federally subsidized program that enables people with disabilities to save a lifetime maximum of \$90,000. Only 26.6% of Quebecers eligible for the disability tax credit participate in this program.

The point is, there are programs, but people, especially Quebecers, do not really know about them, and they tend to be flawed. We know that 59% of people believe that supports available to people with disabilities fail to ensure a decent quality of life. The government needs to realize that, and it is time to get serious about dealing with this issue.

Now, 89% of Canadians support a benefit for persons with disabilities. In Quebec, it is 91%. Plus, 66% of Canadians believe that the ability to work and to receive financial support are the most important factors to consider in determining measures to improve financial security.

Bill C-22 seems to be moving in the right direction there. However, at this point, I cannot say for certain whether Bill C-22 addresses the public's concerns. It is essentially a blank page. It sets out the broad principles, but all of the details, criteria and dollar amounts will be decided through regulations to be made by the minister.

I am going to take the liberty of pointing out a few aspects that should be clarified, in order to help the government flesh this out. When will this happen? Our biggest concern is that the government has not given itself a timeline.

The federal government is planning a three-year consultation process to work out the details of this benefit. Many people are concerned that the process is going to drag on and the benefit is not going to be created any time soon.

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While it is important to recognize the value of consultation, it must not become a barrier to implementing measures that are needed now. We cannot let the government drag this out with endless consultations, as it did with employment insurance reform, even though the solutions are clear.

I should add that it is very disappointing that we are debating this Bill C-22 now when a similar bill had been introduced in June 2021. Unfortunately, Bill C-35 died on the Order Paper because the Prime Minister got election fever. Sadly, people with disabilities are the ones who are now paying for that delay, because they are still waiting.

Who will receive this new benefit? Those are the people the minister must focus on. Bill C-22 is rather mum on that question. Other than mentioning working-age persons with disabilities, it does not define anything.

The Bloc Québécois believes the benefit should cover as many persons with disabilities as possible, which is why it is important to have a broad, modern definition. Most importantly, the benefit needs to be easy to use and understand. I think we need to learn from our mistakes.

What will be the actual financial repercussions of this benefit? No one has any idea how much money will be granted. According to several groups, this benefit needs to lift people out of poverty, and we agree. It is not enough to reduce poverty.

Again, we have no clear idea of the terms of the benefit, other than the fact that it targets working-age people and will be considered an income supplement.

Bill C-22 merely states an intention to reduce poverty. What we need, in the long term, is to eliminate poverty, not just reduce it.

• (1210)

How can we do that?

Finally, the government's bill gives absolutely no indication as to how this benefit will be created. The bill does not say if Ottawa itself will deliver the benefit or if the federal government plans to transfer the money to Quebec and the other provinces for them to deliver the benefit. It is not clear whether this benefit will be paid on top of what already exists in the provinces. It is mentioned, but not specified.

Virtually all the terms and conditions of the benefit will be determined through regulations made by the minister; they have not been included in the bill. Members will therefore understand why I feel so uncomfortable voting blindly for such a bill.

I hope the minister will listen to this one point that I really want to emphasize. Overlap between programs must be considered. Programs already exist in Quebec and in the provinces to support things like health care costs, transportation allowances, grants for special equipment, employment supports, and the list goes on.

The provinces must be allowed to adapt the program to their own realities. It is imperative that the federal government respect provincial jurisdictions and existing programs, and the new benefit must complement what already exists, as called for by all the stakeholders. We are waiting for the government to clarify these issues.

I would like to add that we believe that helping people with disabilities must not stop there. In fact, the throne speech promised an action plan for this issue, but we are still waiting for it.

According to the government's latest consultation, 45% of respondents said that they would prefer being reimbursed for disability-related costs as a way to improve their financial security, and 28% want tailored measures to ensure they have income security at different stages or transitions in their lives. We need to be able to increase assistance when someone with a disability experiences a change in their financial situation or a decline in their health. In addition, 17% want better access to existing government supports and services.

It is good to create new programs that meet a need, but we must also ensure that we optimize the programs that already exist. We must also improve employment assistance. I would remind members that 59% of Canadians with disabilities aged 25 to 64 are employed, compared to 80% of Canadians without disabilities. That shows that we have a problem. These people want to work but do not have the same opportunities as those who are not disabled. Furthermore, Canadians with disabilities aged 25 to 64 earn less than Canadians without disabilities. In fact, those with mild disabilities earn 12% less, and those with more severe disabilities earn 51% less. That is a substantial difference.

Therefore, there is an equity issue that we must address. Of those consulted, 67% noted they need to be equipped to succeed through workplace accommodations; 57% want help developing skills and obtaining appropriate training to get a job; 51% said they want support looking for quality jobs; and 70% said that employers must provide a work environment that is supportive of persons with disabilities. The government must tackle all these issues.

• (1215)

In closing, I would like to reiterate a few key points. The Bloc Québécois supports the general principle of the bill because it is high time that people with disabilities, particularly those living in poverty, got the help they need to live a decent life.

However, the government needs to do its job. People with disabilities deserve better than a blank page and statements like “we will see” and “trust us”. We hope that the minister will soon give us more details so that we can comment on the substance of the bill, not just the form.

[English]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have heard some of the discussion today from Bloc members and they seem to be hung up on the issue of who would be a recipient of this disability credit. I would encourage the member, and all Bloc members who share this concern, to google the Accessible Canada Act. The very first link that pops up will be the actual legislation. If the members scroll down about five or six paragraphs to the interpretation, they will see the definition, which reads:

disability means any impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment — or a functional limitation — whether permanent, temporary or episodic in nature, or evident or not, that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders a person's full and equal participation in society.

The definition of who would be a recipient, who would qualify, is very clear and is laid out in the act that already exists. I wonder if Bloc members have had an opportunity to review that interpretation as to who would be impacted by this legislation.

• (1220)

[Translation]

Ms. Louise Chabot: Mr. Speaker, of course we took the time to review it. I wonder whether my colleague took the time to listen carefully to my speech.

We know that this targets people of working age, but the point we are trying to make when we talk about who is eligible is that the concepts of disability and impairment do not have the same linguistic and cultural scope. That is an important point.

I would like to remind my colleague that, according to the September 23, 2020, throne speech, the disability inclusion plan includes a new inclusive process for determining eligibility for benefits that reflects a modern understanding of disability. We have questions about that, and I think I was very clear.

[English]

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague talked a lot about the bill being incomplete, that it had no details and that it basically needed to be made more specific. These are questions that we all have, at least on this side of the House, about the legislation. We want to see the bill move forward. We are hoping that the government is listening to the conversation we are having right now, so it can pick up some of these points as it moves forward and make those changes so we can see them in the legislation.

Disabled people do not want to be recognized. They do not want a big sign put above their heads saying “I am disabled.” They want to be able to move forward. I know many people who are disabled and they wonder if the people they talk to day in and day out even understand that they have a disability. These issues are invisible to a lot of Canadians.

I wonder if the member could comment a little more about those people who are possibly included in this legislation. Unfortunately, we heard an answer from across the way a minute ago basically saying that the government was not putting that information in the

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legislation. Could the member comment on whether it should be and on other things she would like to see in the legislation?

[Translation]

Ms. Louise Chabot: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

One thing that is clear about eligibility is that this legislation is intended for persons with disabilities who are of working age. Who are these people, however? We have the beginning of an answer.

The clause entitled “Regulations” is what worries me about this bill because so much is left unsaid. Bills are passed on principle, which, in this case, is to provide income support to the poorest persons with disabilities. Regulations, on the other hand, set out the details, such as the eligibility criteria for the benefit; the conditions that are to be met in order to receive the benefit; the amount of the benefit or the method for determining the amount; the manner in which the benefit is to be indexed; the payment periods; and the applications for the benefit. Right now, the legislation is rather vague.

We understand that there will be consultations and that the government wants to work for and with persons with disabilities. However, it has been a year, so I think that it should be able to specify certain things that we could actually work on in committee before the bill passes third reading.

[English]

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I agree with the member for Thérèse-De Blainville that the bill is empty of details and needs improvement.

I wonder if the member could express what improvements the Bloc would like to see and what improvements would be necessary at committee.

[Translation]

Ms. Louise Chabot: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her question.

Basically, we need to get to work on this. Consultations have taken place, and in the interest of co-operation, we are told that discussions with the provinces are ongoing. What are the results so far? What do we already know?

In all honesty, I would say that we cannot wait years for this. It is important to introduce this bill, and I must say that all the parties have lobbied by writing letters to everyone about having this bill reintroduced a year later. It is important because we are waiting for answers to these questions.

Consultations cannot drag on forever. We cannot remain in the dark about the fundamental content of the bill and simply be told that it will be decided by regulations. That is not good enough. It needs to be done quickly and, structurally speaking, there needs to be more content.

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• (1225)

[English]

The Deputy Speaker: I want to a moment to make a quick comment. We just experienced it, where people were on the other side in the hallway, which was really noisy. That noise bleeds into the chamber. I need to remind all members that if they are in that area on the outside to try to keep the volume and the laughter down. Sometimes the comments, the questioning and the topic we are discussing in the chamber are important and sensitive, and hearing the laughing going on outside cheapens what is happening in here.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques.

[Translation]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would first like to congratulate my colleague on her great work and on her speech.

As members know, Quebec is the envy of many nations for its very strong social safety net. Obviously, the Bloc Québécois will certainly support any program that improves the lives of people with disabilities.

My colleague from Thérèse-De Blainville already talked about the vagueness of the timelines. No one knows how long the consultation period will last. It is too slow.

Another grey area has to do with how these future regulations will be applied. It is not clear whether Ottawa will pay the benefits directly to Quebec and the provinces or whether the federal government will pay the benefits directly to individuals eligible for this new benefit program.

I wonder if my colleague has any suggestions for the government regarding the best and most effective way to deliver such a program.

Ms. Louise Chabot: Mr. Speaker, there are two approaches that I think would be best.

First, this program must respect and not interfere with the jurisdictions of Quebec and the provinces. Second, the program must complement existing measures and not replace them. The government must guarantee that.

The government can ensure that this program complements existing measures by sending the funding directly to the provinces or by providing additional money, taking into account Quebec's jurisdiction. These are the kinds of questions we want to see answered.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Thérèse-De Blainville for supporting the principle of this bill. I also want to thank her for endorsing our letter, which shows cross-party support for the Canada disability benefit.

We know that respect for provincial jurisdictions is particularly important to her. Does she have any advice for the members of the House who want to get this benefit passed as quickly as possible with the support of the Bloc Québécois?

Ms. Louise Chabot: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question.

As members know, during discussions to advance and pass this bill, I have always expressed my concern for respecting jurisdictions.

I am not sure what measures exist in other provinces, but in Quebec, we have disability supports. The government is trying to create that kind of social safety net, but it cannot take a centralist approach and decide what is right.

People living with disabilities need to be asked what they think is right. Likewise, the government must absolutely ask Quebec and the other provinces what can be done to improve the situation, instead of taking over their roles.

• (1230)

[English]

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, before the House rose for the summer, all members called to put in place, without delay, a Canada disability benefit, and so I want to start by thanking the minister for respecting the will of the House and bringing Bill C-22 to the floor for second reading today.

I would also like to thank every member for their support of my unanimous consent motion that brought unity to this place on an issue of human rights and dignity. It is clear everyone in the House wants to get to work on improving the lives of persons with disabilities.

[Translation]

I look forward to working with all members to get the best possible bill passed, so we can put money in bank accounts and eradicate poverty among persons living with disabilities.

[English]

I also want to express my gratitude to all the organizations, individuals and allies who have done the heavy lifting to get us to this pivotal point. Their work has been difficult and powerful. Every meeting, email, phone call, letter, research paper, round table, media campaign and petition has led us to this point. I thank the disability advocates and allies in my own riding of Port Moody—Coquitlam, including the amazing staff and members of Community Ventures Society, Share, Kinsight, Inclusion BC, Special Olympics British Columbia, Douglas College, Community Volunteer Connections, Lelainia Lloyd, Elaine Willis and Merle Smith. They have shared their skills and stories of the barriers that people with disabilities navigate every single day in this discriminatory and ableist world.

I acknowledge that the disability community has had to do much too much heavy lifting to fight for their basic human rights and equity. They should not have to face such discrimination, and I raise my hands to all of them for the work they do. I know their fight will continue even after the Canada disability benefit becomes law because the discrimination that persons with disabilities experience in this country is a moral, systemic and systematic failure that perpetuates in communities across this country. New Democrats are committed to doing the work for change.

New Democrats want to see Bill C-22 become law as soon as possible. We want people with disabilities to be legislated out of poverty. We want to see the funding for this new benefit in the next budget, and we want this new benefit to get to people right away.

We hope the Liberal government is committed to the same goal, but there is still work to do. This bill, as it currently stands, lacks the details, as many of my colleagues have mentioned. It lacks the details needed to know if it will achieve the goals it sets out to achieve. There is no clear eligibility, no details of how much the benefit will be or even when people can expect to start receiving it. This bill lacks the accountability and measures needed to be successful.

If this were an NDP government bill, it would have looked very different. New Democrats would have outlined how we will eliminate poverty, not just express an aspiration to reduce it. Canadians have waited seven years for this promised benefit, yet there are no details of what it actually means, and people with disabilities are no closer to having money in the bank. This is unacceptable. The Liberal government has a responsibility to tell Canadians how this bill is really going to improve their lives. How will it do what it aspires to do? What are the tangible ways it will help?

With the rising cost of food and the skyrocketing costs of housing and rent, too many persons with disabilities are suffering. COVID-19 has only amplified existing inequalities. People with disabilities have disproportionately been affected by loss of employment, social isolation, lack of access to transit and recreation. For those with immunity risks, just going out for necessities is still a risk.

Throughout the summer, too many tragic situations have happened. This is not new suffering. It is just an amplification of how dire the situation is, and it speaks to why the Canada disability benefit must be fast-tracked so it can help those who are suffering and save lives. The stakes are high when dealing with lives, and that is why Canadians need to have assurance that this benefit will be adequate, will reach the people it needs to reach, and will be fast-tracked.

• (1235)

Poverty is a reality for almost one million people with disabilities. Poverty is not an accident. It is legislated. This is because there is no national framework to protect their basic needs. The longer the government turns away from the promised Canada disability benefit, the more dire the situation becomes.

I want to share just a few of the stories from women who have reached out to me. For anonymity, I am just going to share their stories without names.

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Here is the first one: “I’m trying to find remote work part time but if I make over \$200 a month, Doug Ford will take it back provincially. We desperately need help and no three-year study is needed. It’s been done. So many studies. Why the Liberals are stalling as more people are applying for MAID. My daughter is 21, epileptic with a blood disorder, also on disability, and she said, ‘Mom, maybe we should consider MAID.’”

This is the second one: “This Canada disability benefit needs to get approved by all federal parties and ‘fast-tracked!’ This has nothing to do with working or not, as many cannot work! MAID is not a substitute for government aid to help pay for rent, groceries and medicine.”

Here is the last one I will share today: “I sacrificed many comforts to make life almost affordable. I share an apartment with two others above a store. The room I sleep in is not legally allowed to be called a bedroom because it has no window. It probably used to, but now the space between my building and my neighbour has a roof. I chose it because it made it easier to find roommates, and it’s quieter. But it gets so hot in the summer that I can’t sleep. My roommates keep their doors closed most of the time, so I get no natural light or fresh air at home. But it’s better than the alternatives.”

I hear in these voices and the voices of many a call for urgent action. The rising cost of living is not slowing down, yet persons with disabilities are forced to wait for the government to see them, to prioritize them and to fulfill a promise it made years ago.

Since 2015, the Liberals have spoken about the importance of lifting people with disabilities out of poverty and the need for dignity, autonomy and human rights, yet their actions and their timelines have not matched their words. The Liberal government does not seem to understand the importance of this bill and how the lack of urgency is hurting people. It is beyond time that the Liberals do better.

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Where past governments have failed, this House cannot. We can, through a united voice, hold the government to its promise of a Canada disability benefit that would actually lift people out of poverty and improve the lives of some of the most vulnerable Canadians who are falling further and further behind. This is a historic opportunity to end legislated poverty for persons with disabilities. The government can end it by delivering some of the most significant national income security advancements for Canadians with disabilities in over 50 years. Economists predict that poverty in Canada would be reduced by as much as 40% by eliminating disability poverty. I will repeat that number: 40%. I ask members to imagine that in Canada.

Done right, Bill C-22 has the potential to uphold the human rights and dignity of persons with disabilities and truly ensure they do not live in poverty. The key to the success, which many other members in the House today have also expressed, is that the amount of the benefit must be adequate. It must be enough to meet the basic needs of persons with disabilities.

In Canada, we have an official poverty line that spells out the amount needed to cover the basic needs of everyday life. It is a marker of the minimum income that people need to survive, yet that measure has failings, as it does not take into consideration the additional costs of a disability. That is why the government must work closely, as has been said in the House today, with other levels of government to ensure that Canada's disability benefit is truly a poverty reduction benefit with no clawbacks of any current federal, provincial or territorial disability programs.

Inclusion Canada says it this way: "provide a guaranteed adequate income floor for working age persons with disabilities." This is what the committee has clearly expressed over and over again. A national benefit must be adequate.

Over one million people with at least one disability in this country live in poverty. Done right, this bill would legislate a million people out of poverty. Let us get it right, and let us do that quickly.

• (1240)

I reiterate that adequacy cannot come with clawbacks. The number one worry about this new benefit in the disability community is that any new income support program would result in clawbacks somewhere else. The Liberal government has already shown a pattern of introducing income support programs only to claw them back. This cannot happen. In the past, New Democrats have successfully fought for Liberal government clawbacks to be reversed. We do not want to have to do that again. There needs to be protection in this bill for no clawbacks.

I want to take a moment here to talk about choice. There can be no legitimate conversation on human rights, dignity, autonomy, or individual choice when people's most basic needs, such as housing, food, clothing and medication, are not met due to poverty. Governments say that everyone has equal and inherent rights, but we only need to look at the government's failure to deliver pandemic supports to persons with disabilities during this pandemic to remind ourselves that people living with disabilities are continually left behind.

The continuing exclusion of persons with disabilities in government decision-making and in budgetary commitments, and the insurmountable barriers to full and equal participation in civic life, have led some of the most vulnerable in our society to consider ending their lives, not because they choose to die, but because they see no way to live.

Successive Liberal and Conservative governments have failed to offer people with disabilities equal protection under the law, including the income supports they need to survive. This is long-standing discrimination that needs to be corrected. Low-income persons with disabilities require, at minimum, a bill that commits to adequacy without clawbacks. It is a matter of life and death.

New Democrats share the disappointment of the advocates and allies who spelled out their needs and concerns, shared their stories and took part in years of consultation with the government, only to have eligibility details missing from the bill. No one knows who would receive this benefit.

People with disabilities are relying on the government to fast-track this benefit to deliver support without delay. The government has had a full year, seven years actually, to add that to this bill, and it makes no sense to New Democrats that the government has not been able to clearly articulate who will be eligible.

As New Democrats, we are concerned that, without the details, the government will leave people behind. We saw this during the pandemic. Even though persons with disabilities were already more likely to live in poverty, persons with disabilities were the last group to get emergency supports from the government. While corporations benefited from quick and decisive government action on emergency supports, persons with disabilities were an afterthought, and when those supports did come, only a third of people who needed it actually received it because access to those supports was underpinned by a deeply flawed disability tax credit system.

The disability tax credit does not work for those living in poverty. New Democrats support the calls from disability organizations and individuals for eligibility criteria to include persons with disabilities already eligible for provincial, territorial and federal disability programs. The government cannot rely solely on the disability tax credit, and the government must overcome its internal data problems because getting help to people must not be limited by the logistics of an antiquated system.

Eligibility must also be accessible, consistent and dignified. For too long, governments have added the burden of excessive reporting requirements to persons with disabilities, including checking in and having to empty out their pockets in front of a government employee. This is a barrier that takes away a person's autonomy and dignity. It is essential that eligibility for this new benefit is modernized and does not strip people of their dignity.

• (1245)

In closing, Canada aspires to be a world leader in the eradication of poverty, and here is our chance to make that a reality for persons with disabilities. This bill needs to ensure adequacy, support and eligibility. Promises are not enough. The persons living with disabilities in this country deserve the adequacy that they are entitled to. I look forward to working with all of the House at committee on this bill.

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for her impassioned speech and for her advocacy on this really important issue. She has been a champion in poverty reduction for the community of persons with disabilities for so long.

I have heard very clearly from the House about the need to get this done and the need to get it done quickly for persons with disabilities. I am wondering if the member can reflect on some of her thinking about how we can work together to ensure that the provinces and territories do not claw back this benefit and do not deny people services or supports inadvertently because of people getting the Canada disability benefit. How can we work together to find a way to weave a system that is so diverse across the country into a coherent support network for people with disabilities? I know that is the member's expertise and I would be really appreciative of any guidance she has.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the minister for her collaboration up to this point with all members of the House.

We talk about the provinces, and I have had conversations with a number of ministers across my province. They are waiting for some leadership from the federal government. They are open to having these conversations. I would say that given the seven years the disability community has been waiting for this, those conversations should be much further down the road.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for her advocacy for persons with disabilities.

I am not very familiar with what is in place in B.C. in terms of supports, so I wonder if she could comment on what the province does currently and how she would like to see that augmented in order to correctly support people living with disabilities.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Mr. Speaker, fortunately, persons with disabilities across the country have provincial supports. They do not have enough, but they do have provincial support. In B.C., we have an NDP government and this is top of mind for it. This is definitely work that it wants to do around what those disability benefits need to look like. There are a number of them.

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I want to share with the minister that one of the most popular disability supports in B.C. is a bus pass, a transit pass. It is unbelievable how many people in the consultations I did were afraid to lose their bus pass and their ability to move to their job, to get their groceries and to move around in society and civic life.

I just wanted to share that. The government in B.C. is working hard to ensure that persons with disabilities have free and active participation in civic life.

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for introducing the topic of euthanasia or MAID into this conversation. The minister talked extensively about how people with disabilities need to feel valued. I hear over and over again from the disabilities community in my riding that they are very concerned about the euthanasia regime in Canada and how it makes them feel undervalued.

I am wondering if the hon. member could comment on that.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Mr. Speaker, that conversation should not have to be part of this bill, but over the summer we saw more and more of that conversation happen. It is our obligation in the House to make sure that every Canadian does not live in poverty.

• (1250)

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for her advocacy for persons with disabilities.

Canada has an obligation to uphold the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and to ensure dignity and equality for all people. The government has been failing, and after seven years of dragging its feet, tabling a bill without the details of who is eligible, when the benefit is going to come forward and how much the benefit will be is extremely disappointing for the people in my riding who are struggling right now.

I am curious if the member has more comments about the need for the government to speed up and to ensure that all people with disabilities are included and that the level of benefit will actually meet the needs of the people who are struggling.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Mr. Speaker, I think we need to get the bill to committee. We need to get the bill to committee so we can discuss it and get some details into the bill. Whether it happens in committee or we lose control of it by moving it out of committee before we get those details in place is a matter of importance in this space.

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We need to make sure that we get this bill right and we get it right fast. I am concerned that if this bill passes without comprehensive conversations in committee, where we do nothing and do not get information, it could take another seven years to get this benefit into people's hands.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Port Moody—Coquitlam for her strong advocacy, both for Canadians with disabilities and for a guaranteed livable income.

As she rightly points out, Canadians with disabilities need immediate support. In addition to moving forward and improving Bill C-22, we need to press to ensure that the benefit is funded as urgently as possible and press for emergency supports in the interim. As of now, though, the Canada disability benefit is not in the supply and confidence agreement with the governing party and the NDP, and important items that are, such as dental care, are being moved on more quickly as a result.

Could the member share her advice for what all members can do to get all parties to put funding the Canada disability benefit at the top of the priority list?

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Mr. Speaker, as I said in my speech, I am very optimistic and very hopeful that all members of the House will be able to sit together and pass this bill quickly.

[Translation]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I really enjoyed the speech by my NDP colleague. It is great to see so much support for people with disabilities. The Bloc Québécois supports them as well. However, there is something missing, and I believe that it is important to address it. In that regard, we should also commend the fact that the government wants to improve the situation.

Nevertheless, we have noted something that several of my colleagues talked about earlier. The bill is vague and short on details about guidelines and how exactly this will work. This seems to be a bill that gives the government too much leeway. There are few specifics. Therefore, it is difficult to know what it means in practical terms, given all the leeway given to the government.

Does my colleague want to comment on that?

[English]

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Mr. Speaker, in my speech, I mentioned the tools for accountability and measurement. One of the areas that the NDP feels very strongly about is to have some measurement tools written into the bill. I know there will be some freedom about how this would be implemented, but we need to at least have security and certainty in the bill regarding what the amount will be.

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to share my time with the member for Newmarket—Aurora.

I am pleased to rise today to add my voice to those supporting Bill C-22 during second reading. I will use my allotted time to speak to the overarching themes, present the rationale for the bill and explain why it has been drafted the way it has.

First, I want to read an excerpt from a letter I received from a constituent, a mother of two children with disabilities, herself struggling with the debilitating effects of long COVID-19. “Worry about finances creates an additional and unrelenting daily stress” she writes, “one that for many Canadians is on top of the physical pain, accessibility issues and often the accompanying mental anguish of constantly living in survival mode.” She goes on to describe the impact of Bill C-22 as a life preserver that “would allow Canadians with pressing health concerns a way to budget with dignity, and have some ability to plan their lives beyond today’s most pressing needs.”

Echoing former prime minister Lester B. Pearson, the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion has said that no person with a disability should be living in poverty in Canada, just as no senior or child should be living in poverty. Canada is better than that.

The values that drove past governments to create benefits for seniors and children are the same values that have led to this bill before us today. If passed, Bill C-22 would establish the Canada disability benefit and would reduce poverty, benefiting hundreds of thousands of working-age Canadians with disabilities. Not only that, Canada would make global history, as no other country has a similar benefit for working-age adults with disabilities.

We know that persons with disabilities live in poverty at disproportionately much higher rates than we see in the general population. The 2017 Canadian Survey on Disability showed that working-age Canadians with disabilities were twice as likely to be living in poverty as their peers without disabilities.

The pandemic has only worsened this situation. In a recent survey, two-thirds of respondents with disabilities said they were having trouble making ends meet financially as a result of the pandemic, and one-third of respondents with disabilities reported a decrease in their income as a result of the pandemic. That is unacceptable and we must take action to address it.

While the Government of Canada has done tremendous work to advance accessibility and the rights of persons with disabilities in Canada, the truth is that we are not yet there. We need a mechanism whereby we can lift people out of poverty while we continue implementing the Accessible Canada Act. We need a Canada disability benefit, and I am not alone in saying this. There is strong public support for the benefit.

According to a recent Angus Reid survey, nine out of 10 Canadians are in favour of the benefit. We heard clearly while developing the disability inclusion action plan, which is being finalized, that financial security is the most urgent priority for the Government of Canada to address for persons with disabilities. We heard that persons with disabilities struggle with the costs associated with their disability, including housing, medical expenses and disability supports. We also heard feelings of hopelessness, exhaustion and anger from the experience of living in poverty.

A recent House of Commons e-petition garnered nearly 18,000 signatures demanding that we fast-track the design and implementation of the benefit and involve persons with disabilities at every stage. Another e-petition on the same subject is still open and has gathered nearly 2,000 signatures. The urgency is palpable.

I will now turn to the proposed bill and explain what it would do if passed into law.

First and foremost, Bill C-22 would establish the Canada disability benefit. That is its purpose. That is its main *raison d'être*.

• (1255)

The legislation would set out the guiding principles and general provisions for how the benefit would be administered. It would de facto authorize the Governor in Council to implement most of the benefit's design elements later on through regulations.

I know this is a worry to some. Are we not just writing a blank cheque, some may say. Are we not rubber-stamping something we have no control over? We need to know how we are going to define eligibility and how much the benefit is going to cost taxpayers. These are real concerns and excellent questions.

I hope to address these and say that we cannot define eligibility in a vacuum. We cannot settle the terms of the benefit without the active participation of the disability community. For far too long, persons with disabilities have been left out of the process. Decisions have been made for them without their input.

We cannot go ahead with designing such a groundbreaking generational benefit without obtaining the knowledge, expertise and help of persons with disabilities. Their guidance will ensure that the benefit enshrines the spirit of "nothing without us".

As the minister has said, persons with disabilities know best what they need, the challenges they face and which barriers most prevent them from having financial security. This framework bill is not a blank cheque; it is not a blank page.

For example, we already know that the benefit would go to those most in need and we would do that through income testing. Conversely, we would also need to ensure the benefit would not create unintended consequences. The benefit should make persons with disabilities better off. That is our goal.

Finally, we also recognize the leading role the provinces and territories play in providing supports and services to Canadians with disabilities. As such, we want to make absolutely sure this new benefit supplements and does not replace existing provincial and territorial benefits and supports.

Government Orders

In summary, Bill C-22 sets out an approach that would establish the benefit in law, while we work with the disability community, the provinces, territories and the stakeholders, as well as the members of the House, to firm up the details.

We have already begun this work. In the summer of 2021, bolstered by funding from budget 2021, the government launched an engagement process that resulted in valuable input from the disability community, national indigenous organizations and provincial and territorial governments. If Bill C-22 becomes law, it will compel Parliament to review it three years after it comes into force. That is a shortened timeline for a parliamentary review and will allow for adjustments or course corrections if needed.

I hope I have been clear that with Bill C-22 we would enshrine an urgently needed benefit into law and then allow for the time to thoughtfully design it to make a real impact on the financial security of working-aged persons living with disabilities. Ultimately, this work we are embarking on could reduce poverty and improve the lives of hundreds of thousands of persons with disabilities.

This is a truly landmark piece of legislation and I urge all my colleagues to support Bill C-22 with urgency.

• (1300)

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have listened with interest to the debate today and would like the parliamentary secretary to comment on something my colleague from the NDP in British Columbia brought up about people with disabilities experiencing such despair with respect to not being able to find adequate housing, adequate supports or, in many cases, a family doctor in British Columbia. They are turning to MAID, medical assistance in dying, for what is not a terminal disease or what that legislation was promised to be.

I wonder if the member could address whether he is concerned about the trend of people with disabilities considering MAID because they cannot get the supports they need from their governments at all levels, whether he thinks this legislation will have an impact on that and whether there is a whole-of-government approach being focused on this issue that should concern all Canadians and certainly all members of Parliament.

• (1305)

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk: Mr. Speaker, I do share my hon. colleague's concerns, and I thank him for voicing those important concerns in the House.

Government Orders

The legislation would lift hundreds of thousands of Canadians out of poverty. This is legislation that would help make life more affordable for hundreds of thousands of Canadians living with disabilities. At the same time, this process provides a platform for Canadians with disabilities to have their voices heard and to design this benefit as well. Those two elements about Bill C-22 are critically important, and I thank my hon. colleague for raising those critical issues.

[Translation]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I really appreciate this morning's debate. Dealing with the issue of poverty among people with disabilities in Quebec and Canada is very important. However, there is one problem. Any time the federal government talks about negotiating a program with the provinces, we in Quebec have a strong reaction, because that never works. We have seen this with health care. We have been asking for health transfers for years now, but the federal government always attaches conditions. We also saw this with the big national housing strategy launched in 2017. It took three years for any of the money to flow to Quebec so we could start addressing our housing needs.

Can my colleague assure us that the federal government will stop dragging its feet on this extremely important and urgent issue and stop sticking the Canadian flag everywhere so it can claim to be the government that is addressing the issue of poverty among people with disabilities in Canada?

[English]

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk: Mr. Speaker, absolutely, we look forward to working with all our provincial and territorial partners. We look forward to working together with all members of the House on passing Bill C-22. We share the urgency I hear in the member's voice as well. This is the reason we are debating Bill C-22 as the first piece of legislation on the very first day of the sitting of the House for the fall Parliament. It really highlights the urgency shared on this side of the House. We know and we hear that urgency is also reflected and being voiced on all sides of the House as well.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have been promising help for people with disabilities ever since I was elected seven years ago when they were first elected as a government. During COVID, the Liberals treated people with disabilities more or less as an afterthought, and when they did receive a benefit, only a third of the people who should have received the benefit actually received it.

Could the parliamentary secretary tell me if all the people who need this benefit will get it? Will it be adequate and will it be prompt? Will we have to wait three years, as the minister has suggested?

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk: Mr. Speaker, certainly that is the objective of the legislation and of this government. When Bill C-22 passes, the Canada disability benefit will be enshrined in legislation. It will secure and anchor it. With this legislation, the train is firmly on the tracks. It is up to us, as members of the House, to see how fast and how far the legislation goes.

Mr. Tony Van Bynen (Newmarket—Aurora, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since the beginning of our mandate, the Prime Minister has

made it clear many times that disability inclusion and accessibility are a key priority.

Since 2015, we have committed \$1.1 billion in funding to ensure greater accessibility and supports for Canadians with disabilities, and we have made huge strides in breaking down barriers. This includes appointing Canada's first-ever cabinet minister responsible for persons with disabilities, passing and implementing the historic Accessible Canada Act and establishing Accessibility Standards Canada.

It also includes acceding to the Marrakesh Treaty, which makes the production and international transfer of accessible books for people with print disabilities easier, and the optional protocol of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, strengthening the protection of human rights for persons with disabilities in Canada.

In 2019, when the Accessibility Canada Act came into force, the government focused its efforts on identifying, preventing and helping remove barriers to accessibility. We are communicating to Canadians how we are shortchanging the economy and ourselves if we exclude people. We have removed barriers to employment, making buildings physically more accessible and making accessibility and inclusion part of the design and the delivery of our services and programs.

Then the pandemic hit.

It is clearly documented that the COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately affected the health, social and economic well-being of those individuals living with disabilities. However, even before the pandemic, persons with disabilities suffered from long-standing inequities, and COVID made these inequities worse.

It is for this reason that we have taken a disability inclusive approach into our pandemic response by setting up a COVID-19 disability advisory group and providing a one-time payment to persons with disabilities.

In 2020, we committed to developing a disability inclusion action plan, the DIAP, and that work is being finalized. The DIAP is a blueprint for the change to make Canada more inclusive of persons with disabilities. It has four pillars: financial security, employment, accessible and inclusive communities, and a modern approach to disability.

At its core, the plan is simple, and that is to improve the lives of Canadians with disabilities. However, the work required to accomplish this, to make Canada inclusive, fair and free of physical, societal and attitudinal barriers, will be extensive.

The bill before us today represents bold action on the first pillar of the plan, namely that of reducing poverty and providing financial security to persons with disabilities. Consultations with Canadians on the disability inclusion action plan show that poverty and financial security of persons with disabilities are overwhelming priorities, and the proposed benefit, a cornerstone of the action plan, would help respond to these concerns.

We recognize that not all persons with disabilities are able to be gainfully employed and others are not able to work at all. The objective of the proposed benefit is to improve the financial security of individuals in these situations.

We are also taking action on the second pillar of the action plan, employment, which is critical to financial security of persons with disabilities.

Budget 2022 recently provided more than \$270 million toward the employment strategy for persons with disabilities, and that strategy has three prongs: first, to help persons with disabilities gain jobs, advance in their careers or become entrepreneurs; second, to support employers as they develop inclusive workplaces; and third, to aid organizations and individuals who are helping persons with disabilities find employment.

Most recently, the minister launched a call for proposals under the opportunities fund for persons with disabilities to fund up to 180 projects that would help people find and keep jobs, and that is not all.

• (1310)

We have modernized and increased support for the enabling accessibility fund, or EAF. The EAF provides money for projects that make Canadian communities and workplaces more accessible for persons with disabilities. It aims to give persons with disabilities a greater chance to be a part of community activities and to get the services they need to find work.

The EAF provides money for three types of projects. First are youth-led projects of up to \$10,000 that help persons with disabilities in their communities. Some supported activities have included the purchase of para hockey sleds, construction of raised gardens in community gardens and the creation of an accessible sensory room. Second are grants of up to \$100,000 to fund infrastructure and construction projects and information communications technology projects that improve accessibility in communities or workplaces. The funds have supported building ramps, accessible doors, accessible washrooms, installing screen reader devices and hearing loop systems, and constructing a specially designed office. Third, there are also large contributions of up to \$3 million to support larger projects. Last year, we added a simpler method for people to apply for funding to pay for single items such as accessible doors, accessible washrooms, ramps and the like.

I know that many of us in this House have had projects funded by the EAF in constituencies, and I know that the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion and many of our colleagues have had a chance to visit these projects in our communities. We have heard first-hand how these investments have improved accessibility for Canadians with disabilities. In budget 2022, we proposed to make new investments in accessible books, including the creation of the new equitable access to reading program, which would enable people with print disabilities to better participate in our society and economy. This is all part of the work we are doing to include Canadians with disabilities in all aspects of everyday life.

In spite of the pandemic, we have also taken significant strides in implementing the Accessible Canada Act. The Accessible Canada

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Act regulations, published in December 2021, marked the first step in operationalizing the act. These regulations require over 5,000 federally regulated entities to publish plans indicating how they plan and intend to proactively identify, remove and prevent barriers to accessibility and to outline how they will report their progress as well as how they will establish feedback mechanisms by which persons with disabilities can provide input.

Most recently, we have appointed Stephanie Cadieux as the first-ever accessibility officer, and shortly after, Michael Gottheil was named as the first accessibility commissioner within the Canadian Human Rights Commission to enforce compliance with the Accessible Canada Act and its regulations.

With regard to standards, in 2019 we established Accessibility Standards Canada, whose board of directors is primarily comprised of persons with disabilities. It is working with disability communities, industry and other partners to create national accessible standards that aim to raise the bar in terms of the requirements and approaches to the seven priority areas that are set out in the act, namely transportation, employment, information and communication technologies or ICT, communications other than ICT, the built environment, the design and delivery of programs and services, and the procurement of goods and services and facilities. The accessibility standards are a critical part of a barrier-free Canada for persons with disabilities, because while they are norms, they are not the law and they have the power to drive widespread adoption of inclusive design.

Accessibility Standards Canada is looking at setting norms for plain language on forms and websites, how we shape our outdoor spaces from sidewalks to parks, emergency egress and how people with disabilities can get out of buildings in a hurry if needed, as well as removing physical barriers that prevent persons with disabilities from accessing the workplace—

• (1315)

The Deputy Speaker: I hate to cut the member off, because he was doing such a great job of using up all the time that was available to him. I want to thank the member for his intervention.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Sarnia—Lambton.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there have been numerous comments today about how Bill C-22 is missing the eligibility criteria of who will receive the benefit, yet in Canada we have many insurance companies that provide disability benefits and have a comprehensive list of who qualifies for those.

Has the government consulted with these people, or would the government consider doing that, so that we could include eligibility criteria in Bill C-22?

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Mr. Tony Van Bynen: Mr. Speaker, I certainly enjoyed working with the member opposite on the HUMA committee.

In terms of the criteria she is inquiring about, as we had said earlier, we are going to be developing the criteria through consultation, including with persons with disabilities. I think it was Napoleon who said, he who sits in the saddle best knows where it pinches. In this case I think we should be consulting with the people who are most affected. We certainly are engaged in the process of doing so.

● (1320)

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have been listening to the debate since this morning, and I think that many members agree on the principle of this bill. However, the bill basically says nothing about the terms and conditions, criteria, process or accountability in particular.

According to my colleague, what mechanism will enable parliamentarians to measure the effectiveness of the regulations that will be enacted to ensure they uphold the fine principle we are discussing this morning?

[English]

Mr. Tony Van Bynen: Mr. Speaker, I also had the opportunity to work with the member opposite on the health committee, and I certainly appreciate his contributions in those areas as well.

In terms of accountability, with 30 years of banking experience, in my mind, of course accountability has to be critical. It is important that we set out expected outcomes and that people put together plans that measure against those expected outcomes. I fully expect the government will do so, and I am convinced we will develop a good plan and great criteria once we have finished consulting with people who have disabilities and the organizations that represent them. We will see what is important to the people who would be the beneficiaries of the program, and we will certainly set out to make sure we satisfy those needs.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, given the high levels of poverty people with disabilities face, the fact that they are often living shadow lives of what they should be able to because of the fundamental inequities, I am very wary about making promises that cannot be delivered. My question to the member, in terms of this legislation, is about a credible plan to actually get it to people and ensure, particularly in my region of Ontario, that it will not be clawed back by the Doug Ford government. We have seen it go after poor people relentlessly. People are not able to pay their rent. People are not able to live in dignity. What steps can we see in this legislation that would protect people on disability from suffering these provincial clawbacks?

Mr. Tony Van Bynen: Mr. Speaker, coming from Ontario, I understand what the member is referring to. I might add that, during the previous campaign, in the town of Newmarket there was one elected on that member's side all the way down in Newmarket, Ontario, so I thought it was great to see that. However, in terms of the experience of having these clawbacks, there have been extensive discussions with all of the ministers within the provincial areas, and this program is intended to be incremental, not substitutional. The negotiations will not go forward until the incremental portion is solidly part of the program.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am very surprised the bill is basically empty and will await regulations to tell us what we already know. There are already people in Canada on the disability tax credit. They need to have those benefits increased substantially. Why would we impose needs-based testing on people who need help now?

Mr. Tony Van Bynen: Mr. Speaker, I think it is important we focus our resources on where the needs are most critical, and there needs to be a process to do so. In order to do that, there needs to be a needs-based testing program. I understand there is a critical need, and this program is intended to support people who have critical needs, such as people who are marginalized. People with disabilities certainly are highly represented in that area.

Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge.

We are here today talking about Bill C-22, an act to reduce poverty and to support the financial security of persons with disabilities by establishing the Canada disability benefit. I am generally in favour of that and supportive of this draft legislation. We all want to see all Canadian citizens, regardless of their level of ability, able to participate fully in our economy and to be active participants in our society.

To start off, I am going to give a big shout-out to the many great organizations in my riding of Langley—Aldergrove that are doing the important work of helping people with disabilities, organizations like the Langley Pos-Abilities Society, which focuses on people's abilities rather than their disabilities. I was a participant in a competition put on by this organization a couple of years ago at a public event in one of our parks, where one of the tests was for us, in wheelchairs, to negotiate ourselves around some obstacles, such as opening a door, getting through it and pulling ourselves up a ramp. There was another test that required us to put something very technical together while blindfolded. There was yet another test that I recall that required us to do a simple task like putting butter on our toast with our dominant hands tied behind our backs. Coming out of that, I had a new respect for people who struggle with disabilities in their everyday lives, but also for the great organizations that work with them.

When looking at Bill C-22, I was happy to see that it is premised on the constitutional concept of equality, so I thought I would look at this draft legislation from a constitutional perspective. The preamble section, which is a very important part of any legislation, talks about the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. That document recognizes the “equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family”. The preamble of the bill also talks about our own Constitution, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, specifically section 15, which is our equality section. Section 15 says, “Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination”, and there is a list of enumerated things that cannot be discriminated against, including mental and physical health, which brings us to Bill C-22.

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms has been with us for 40 years. It is instinctive for us now. It is part of the world view that shapes our sense of justice and how the government should interact with its citizens. However, even though it is instinctive, it does not mean that it is simple. It is a very complicated question. Anytime we talk about equality, it opens up questions like how proactive the government must be to ensure that all citizens have equal opportunities or perhaps equal outcomes of their programs, or does section 15 simply mean that a law, once passed, must not contravene or breach section 15.

To underline the complexity of this principle, which has not just been invented recently, Nobel Prize-winning author from the late 19th century and early 20th century, Anatole France, put it this way, sarcastically of course, in majestic equality, laws “forbid rich and poor alike to sleep under the bridges, to beg in the streets, and to steal their bread.” We have an instinct that says that equal treatment is not always fair, and fairness is not always equal.

There is a British Columbia case that went all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada that really underlined that principle. A young woman, healthy and fully able-bodied, wanted to work for the B.C. forest fire service and passed all the requirements, except for one. She failed the test under the uniform minimum aerobic standards for firefighters. She simply was not strong enough. She challenged this under section 15 of the charter. The B.C. government argued, saying it did not contravene section 15 at all because it applied equally to men and women. The Supreme Court of Canada saw through that and said, no, it has a disproportionate discriminatory effect on women. That case is important for this proposition. Courts should look not only at how a law is applied but also its effect on individuals.

● (1325)

With all of this background, I picked up Bill C-22 with a great deal of interest, to see how it would tackle these complex legal questions, and the answer is that it would not at all. This bill dealing with such an important and complex question is scarcely six pages long. One page is the preamble, which I have already mentioned. There are a couple of pages about some technical things. There are two pages, fully one-third of this draft legislation, that talk about the regulatory power that this Parliament is being asked to give to cabinet.

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I was very happy to hear the minister and also the parliamentary secretary say that one of the reasons they wanted to give cabinet such broad regulatory power was to ensure that there would be consultation with people affected by it. I completely agree with that. I might just add as a side note that I was very happy to hear that my friend, Stephanie Cadieux, formerly an MLA from my neighbouring riding, has been appointed to this, so I am somewhat more optimistic that the government is now going to do a good job. However, I am really puzzled as to why, wanting to consult with the community that is going to be most affected by this, the government thinks that it is appropriate to bypass the important work that this Parliament does.

I said that I am supportive of this legislation. I really am. I will be voting in favour of it at second reading, together with my colleagues, to bring this to committee. However, coming out of committee, I would expect that these important questions are going to be answered. They have been raised by many of the previous speakers, including questions like how we should define disability, who qualifies for the benefit, how much the disability benefit is going to be in dollars and cents, what it is going to cost the government coffers, whether there will be means testing and who would get to qualify. We want to help disabled people, but are we going to be helping rich people? Will there be clawbacks?

I was talking to my brother just the other day. He was disabled by Parkinson's, and I told him that we were going to be talking about this topic this week. He said that, whatever we do, we should make sure workers are not disincentivized from working. I am happy to hear the minister say that would not be the case, although the legislation does not actually say that. I think she is saying to trust that they are going to do it right.

Parliament has a very important function, which is to review legislation. So far, it looks like what the government is asking for is a blank cheque to be able to do the work behind closed doors, and the Liberals are just saying for us to trust the government to get it right. We are going to be looking to the committee to have a thorough review of this legislation, and we will be looking for answers to these very important questions.

I might add just one more point, which is that my province, and I am sure every province, has some sort of a program to help disabled people. We are not hearing anything about how this Canada disability benefit program would mesh with provincial jurisdictions and organizations. Is there going to be a whole new federal bureaucracy to manage this? These are the questions we need answers to.

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• (1330)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, just picking up on the last point that the member made with respect to the provincial jurisdiction and other supports that might be coming from provinces, I am curious. Would the member agree that it is very important that whatever is rolled out from the federal government is not used as an opportunity to roll back at the provincial level? We need to safeguard any benefits that would be coming from the federal level to ensure that those are not just opportunities for the provinces to look for savings, but in fact that this would be something that builds upon anything that might exist within a province. Would he agree that this should be important when considering this legislation?

Mr. Tako Van Popta: Mr. Speaker, under another part of our Constitution, section 92.13 of the Constitution Act, 1867, property and civil rights come under the exclusive jurisdiction of provinces. I would say this is exclusively a provincial jurisdiction. The only way the federal government can get involved in this is to work together with provinces. I would completely agree with the member opposite that whatever the federal government does has to be supplemental to what the provinces are doing and not in substitution thereof. The negotiations need to make that a condition.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my colleague was saying earlier that the bill bypasses the work of Parliament by giving cabinet too much regulatory power.

This bill covers an important topic and principles that we all seem to agree on. What is more, the real work of the bill would be done through the regulations. For all these reasons, would my colleague agree to add a clause to the bill to ensure that parliamentarians are able to review the regulations and provide their input?

• (1335)

[English]

Mr. Tako Van Popta: Mr. Speaker, it is a very interesting proposition. My understanding of the legislative process is that Parliament gives cabinet, the Governor in Council, authority to make regulations. Every bill we pass and review here has a regulations section. This one is just so broad; that is what is unusual about it. Regulations are usually there for setting fees, the application form and appeal procedures if somebody is dissatisfied with a decision of the minister.

I do not know if it is appropriate for cabinet to come back to us with the regulations. What is appropriate is for the legislation itself to have, for example, a good and thorough definitions section that deals with all these things. This is generally what we see in federal legislation. It is what we need to do.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a part that is important for many Canadians who are watching to know is that we really want to see this legislation get to committee. This House expressed itself unanimously just before we broke, to make sure this actually gets done. Canadians have been waiting nearly seven years. Would the member agree that while we look at some of the regulations present within it, we also look at some of the programs of the provinces that the member mentioned

for eligibility and that they be adopted by this legislation to ensure that no one is left behind?

Mr. Tako Van Popta: Mr. Speaker, I completely agree. It is this body that should be looking at who qualifies, whether there are going to be clawbacks, how much it is going to cost and what the dollar amount is. These are the sorts of things that should be in the legislation and not in the regulations.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this bill and debate allow me to bring up a couple of people within my riding. One is my own daughter, who lives with a high-functioning disability, and another is Jenna Wuthrich, an indigenous mouth artist who is confined to a wheelchair and needs to crowdfund to try to get her only way of transportation because, as many know who have adult children who live with disabilities, one ages out of programs.

As with any legislation, the devil is in the details. We need to make sure it is done correctly out of the gate, so we know who is eligible, for how long, and what the needs-based assessment is. This bill is very important. I ask my hon. colleague to further expand on the due diligence being done now and whether Parliament has a say in it.

Mr. Tako Van Popta: Mr. Speaker, indeed it is Parliament's function to look at exactly those questions about what the qualifications are going to be. The regulations should be limited to the more technical aspects of the functioning of the program. On his example of people who age out, this is exactly what the citizens of this country want. They want to see all people being treated fairly and equally. This is what section 15 of our charter is all about.

Mr. Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to debate Bill C-22, an act to reduce poverty and to support the financial security of persons with disabilities by establishing the Canada disability benefit and making a consequential amendment to the Income Tax Act.

The government is attempting to create a Canada disability benefit to supplement existing provincial benefits for low-income persons with disabilities, modelling it after the Canada child benefit and guaranteed income supplement.

Conservatives, as we heard, will support the Canada disability benefit at this time, because we believe in principle it is the government's intent to reduce poverty among Canadians living with disabilities. Conservatives believe strongly that the government must do all it can to provide support for the most vulnerable among us.

• (1340)

[Translation]

One in five Canadians has a disability. These people need our help to live their lives to the fullest and to participate fully in society, including in the labour market.

[English]

Conservatives believe that Canadians living with disabilities deserve timely access to benefits and services and should not be penalized for going to work, as is so often the case today.

The creation of the Canada disability benefit should consider the complex web of programs currently in place, which, for many Canadians with disabilities, can result in actual benefit cuts and higher taxes because they work.

I know different people on disability for whom just the little work they are able to do helps them financially, but it also helps them psychologically and helps their entire well-being. Too often the Liberal government has pursued an “Ottawa knows best” approach, leaving many Canadians behind as they try to access federal supports and services.

Conservatives believe that the federal government should work with the provinces to ensure that federal programs do not impact or hurt Canadians and are not working at cross-purposes.

We are concerned that applying for the Canada disability benefit may result in difficult and bureaucratic processes. Canadians are at the breaking point with government bureaucracy. There is a Service Canada office in the same block as mine, and every day there are lineups, people waiting for hours oftentimes, to be able to get service, or not. This should not be. That is a concern that we have. If we are bringing this new benefit, there must be timely access.

The ArriveCAN app is another example of bureaucracy. There are bottlenecks in our airports, cutting down tourism and international travel. This is on the Liberal government.

As we await further details on the Canada disability benefit, Canadians believe that the Liberal government must ensure that Canadians who qualify are able to access their benefits in a timely fashion.

Have members ever heard of the Potemkin villages? The Potemkin villages were named after Grigory Potemkin. He was a Russian aristocrat during the time of Catherine the Great, the empress of Russia in the 1700s. He built these villages, as the empress was going to visit Crimea for the first time, to show that people were living very well and that they had nice houses. The only problem was that it was all fake. When the empress stopped for the night, they would move this fake village to the next place, on and on.

What is my point in bringing this forward? There are appearances. My concern is that, with the Liberal government, they have good things, good policies here in place, like we have right now with the disability act, but they are giving with one hand and taking away with the other. So much of what they are doing is actually undermining the most vulnerable of Canadians.

Today it was announced that the consumer price index numbers showed the price of food going up 10.8%. It is a 40-year high. Life is getting harder for Canadians.

There needs to be a little more consistency when it comes to the approach of the Liberal government, supported by the NDP. There needs to be a consistency, because we are not seeing that.

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The cost of goods and services is skyrocketing. Inflation is eating away at what Canadians can afford and what they are putting on their tables. The price of gasoline in Vancouver is nearly \$2 a litre, double what it was a year ago. We can compare that to Alberta, where it is 70¢ cheaper a litre. A lot of the difference is in the taxes.

I have a suspicion that perhaps the Liberals do not really care about its impact because it is due to “dirty fuel”, but it has an impact. Somebody I care about came over to our place. He has been struggling with disabilities and is finding it hard to make ends meet. He ran out of gas on the way to my place and did not have any money to get more gas.

These taxes, such as the carbon tax, are hurting the most vulnerable. It is putting a lot of pressure on people. We see it in our bills. We also see that it is impacting farmers. They are having to pay these taxes. It goes on to the consumers. Everything is rising more and more. Conservatives have called for no more new taxes. This is it. We need to think of everybody. These consumption taxes, the taxes on CPP and EI benefits, which are just automatically going up, are hurting the most vulnerable.

If they cared, they would stop these taxes and they would watch the way they are spending money. It is really impacting our society. It is not whether one has an increase in their salary, but their net income. Net income is what someone has at the end of the day after all the payroll taxes and other deductions come off, while the cost of living goes up.

We do support this. We support the Canada disability benefit act. It is important. We are looking forward to bringing about improvements. We do not know the details. As the previous member mentioned, we wonder what it is all about. In theory it could be good, and we want to help this along.

Once again, the policies of the Liberals are undermining Canadians. They have another policy with respect to agriculture. They are looking at bringing a 30% reduction of nitrogen in fertilizer, which will have a big impact. I was at the 2022 Cranberry Field Day in my riding. They were saying that it is not like they want to put this nitrogen in, as it is an expensive cost for farmers, but it is important for productivity. It is going to reduce how much they are able to produce. That will mean less produce, which will raise prices for those who especially cannot afford it. Not to mention that nitrogen is the fourth most common element in the universe after oxygen, carbon and hydrogen.

These things are important. It is important to just be more careful about purchasing. The idea of printing money, just printing more and more money, actually devalues what people have and makes things extremely expensive, making rental and housing costs go up. I took this fellow out for lunch who is also on disability. He said he is struggling just to pay for medication. It is hard.

Government Orders

These policies, the lack control and taxes impact the poorest among us, so it would be great to have this act, which we support, but let us make it comprehensive. Let us look at all the different angles.

• (1345)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the legislation that we have before us is, in fact, of great benefit for individuals who receive a disability benefit. I am encouraged to hear that the Conservatives, as of late, seem to want to support the legislation.

What really intrigued me was when the member made reference to CPP as a tax. CPP is, in many ways, a source of income for Canadians who are going to retire in future. Yes, CPP premiums are going to be going up, which will allow for those workers in the future, when they retire, to retire with more disposable income.

Can the member be clear about whether he supports CPP increases, or does he believe that it is purely a tax? It actually is to ensure that seniors, when they retire, will have more disposable income.

• (1350)

Mr. Marc Dalton: Mr. Speaker, it is not just with the CPP. It is also with the carbon tax, EI, and these automatic increases. Although I am not a member from Alberta, I know it has put a hold on provincial taxes on gasoline, which has made a big difference.

I have noticed that people, even from my riding, have been moving there because taxes make a difference. People can afford to live. The government is making life unaffordable for everyone. Let us turn the dial.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I recently spoke with a constituent in my riding of Nanaimo—Ladysmith who shared with me that, because he was living with a disability, he felt he was being treated as disposable, which is heart-wrenching. It really spoke to me and reaffirmed the importance of the government doing better today.

Would the member agree that it is essential to those living with disabilities that they are not legislated into poverty and are provided with adequate support through the Canada disability benefit today?

Mr. Marc Dalton: Mr. Speaker, when the Conservatives were in power in 2015, we brought about the Employment Equity Act, the purpose of which was to achieve equity in the workplace so no one would be denied opportunities for reasons unrelated to ability, and to address workplace disadvantages faced by four designated groups: people with disabilities, women, aboriginal peoples and members of visible minorities. The Conservatives are concerned about Canadians who are struggling who are living with disabilities.

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.

First, I would be remiss if I did not wish my daughter a happy birthday today.

Second, this is the anniversary for many of us of our election one year ago, and I hope I never take for granted rising in the House. I

send my congratulations as well to all those who are marking the one-year anniversary of their first election or a re-election.

My colleague spoke about the vulnerable. Does he have a couple of key ways in which he feels the government has let down the vulnerable and simple ways we might address that?

Mr. Marc Dalton: Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I did not wish my granddaughter a happy birthday. It is her third birthday.

Our new leader has proposed that, for every dollar of increased expenditure, we would be looking for savings, and there is a lot of room for savings. My apartment overlooks buildings where I have not seen anybody for two and a half years. I have since found out they are empty government buildings. Let us do something with them.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to hear that the member for Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge is supportive of the legislation with lots of good words this afternoon, but the fact is that there is a real sense of urgency for those living in poverty. We took a recess over the summer. Those living in poverty did not get a recess from that.

Could the member speak to what he can do within his party to fast-track this legislation and get emergency supports to people living with disabilities today?

The Deputy Speaker: I need to remind the members to keep their conversations low as they come into the House of Commons because we still have debate going on.

The hon. member for Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge.

Mr. Marc Dalton: Mr. Speaker, I know we are happy to move things forward, but we really see an empty shell with this bill. With respect to regulations, there are subparagraphs (a) through (t), but we do not know what the regulations are. We need to see those regulations to help move the bill forward so we can ensure those with disabilities would best profit from it.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what a pleasure it is to rise and speak to such an important piece of legislation, which the minister brought forward today. I know it will disappoint many members opposite, but I will be sharing my time.

Let me get back to the point. Whether it is the Prime Minister or members of the Liberal caucus, we can often be heard talking about an economy that would work for all Canadians. That is a central theme in the Liberal caucus. We understand and appreciate the importance of Canada's middle class and those aspiring to be a part of it. Recognizing that the true value of having a strong and healthy middle class would give us a healthier economy and a better society.

When we talk about an economy that works for all Canadians, it is important. That is the reason I am so glad that the first piece of legislation on our return is Bill C-22. Bill C-22 would ensure that there is a larger disposable income for those individuals with disabilities. This is something truly unique happening here in Canada. We are recognizing that the national government plays a significant role in ensuring that people with disabilities would receive money coming from the government.

I hear many of the comments from opposition members talking about wanting more details. This legislation would establish the framework, and no doubt there would be interesting discussions taking place in the standing committees. However, we need to realize that, when we establish a national program, and we speak from experience because we have developed other national programs, we need to work with different provinces and stakeholders. Not every province is the same. Provinces and territories have different structures in place.

As a government, the last thing we want to see is a payment going out, and then a province clawing back that money from a person with a disability. There are agreements that have to be achieved. There are negotiations and discussions that have to take place.

In Manitoba, for example, there is an income support program for people with disabilities. We are talking about something that is relatively new that started just in the last year. It has been talked about for a while. I am an optimist. I am hoping that Premier Heather Stefanson will work with our minister, and maybe Manitoba and the Government of Canada could come up with an agreement that could ultimately see people with disabilities in Manitoba further ahead in regard to disposable income.

As the minister herself indicated in introducing the legislation, this legislation would potentially lift tens of thousands of people out of poverty. Our track record shows that lifting people out of poverty is something we have experience in as a government. It is one of the things that differentiates us from the Conservative Party. Whether it was the guaranteed income supplement, which lifted tens of thousands of people out of poverty, including hundreds in Winnipeg North alone, or the Canada child benefit, which lifted tens of thousands of people out of poverty, including again hundreds, if not thousands, in Winnipeg North alone, this particular legislation—

• (1355)

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. It is “easy come, easy go...little high, little low...doesn't really matter to me”, but I cannot hear the statement because there are too many people talking. I would like to remind people in this political fandango that we should actually take the time to listen to what is being said.

The Deputy Speaker: I appreciate that intervention. I just did that, probably three minutes ago, but maybe some people did not hear as they were coming into the chamber. Let us keep the noise down a little while we listen to the hon. member for Winnipeg North.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, my feelings are not hurt. Members can continue their idle chatter.

Statements by Members

From my perspective, we continue to provide policy and budgetary measures that are, in a real and tangible way, lifting people out of poverty. Bill C-22 would do just that. It is legislation that all of us should be supporting and sending it to committee.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1400)

[English]

ATTACKS ON HINDU TEMPLES

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, recent attacks on Hindu temples in Toronto, including BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir and Vishnu Mandir, must be condemned by all as hate crimes.

Hindu Canadians arrived here from South Asia, Africa, Caribbean but mostly from India. They are the most peaceful and hard-working community and keep a low profile focusing on their families and children's education.

The increasingly vocal and well-organized anti-India and anti-Hindu groups in Canada has resulted in increasing anti-Hindu sentiments. Hindu Canadians are legitimately concerned about rising Hinduphobia in Canada.

I urge all levels of government to note this and take remedial actions now. Let us all work hard to ensure that people of all religious faiths continue to peacefully coexist in Canada.

The Deputy Speaker: I will once again remind folks to keep the noise down. Statements by Members is an important time for all members who have the opportunity to present them. Some of them, of course, are very serious in their nature.

The hon. member for Barrie—Innisfil.

* * *

CAR ACCIDENT IN BARRIE

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to six young people who died on August 27 as a result of a tragic car accident in Barrie.

Curtis King, River Wells, Luke West, Haley Marin, Jersey Mitchell and Jason Ono-O'Connor are being remembered as talented athletes and students who were figuring out their paths in life, as we would expect them to be at just 20, 21 and 22 years of age. They were friends, loving friends, loyal friends, and amazing young adults taken way too soon. As members can imagine, the entire community is mourning this tragedy, and this loss and the pain will be felt for a long time by many.

On behalf of the member for Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte and myself, I express our deep and sincere condolences to the family and many friends of Curtis, River, Luke, Haley, Jersey and Jason. We would also like to extend sincere thanks to the Barrie police, firefighters and Simcoe County paramedics who responded to this horrific incident and are working hard to find answers for the families.

*Statements by Members***SHARON LUSTIG**

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I rise because I want to honour the memory of a very important friend and a member of the Humber River—Black Creek community, Sharon Lustig.

It is with profound sadness that I recognize Sharon's passing on September 5. She was a devoted mother to Ellen and Joel, a caring grandmother to her grandchildren and a loving wife of the long-standing Humber River Riding Association president, Ernie Lustig, who devotedly served our constituency for 23 years.

Sharon's commitment and contribution to our community is profound. She always advocated on issues that mattered most. She was a great support to her family and friends, most of all to her loving husband Ernie for 70 years, and to Sam and I and our family.

Sharon will always be remembered and dearly missed by all of us who loved her.

May my dear friend Sharon rest in peace.

* * *

[Translation]

MAUDE CHARRON

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the strength, talent and perseverance of Rimouski-born weightlifting champion Maude Charron. Maude won an Olympic gold medal in Tokyo in 2021 and was named international athlete of the year at the Sports Québec gala held in June. A few weeks ago, she added to her impressive record when she dominated the 64-kilogram weight class at the Commonwealth Games. Not only did she win gold, but she also set not one, not two, but three records at the games.

Beyond being a medallist and record holder, Maude is also a fantastic ambassador. She is inspiring a whole new generation to take up a sport and, above all, to believe they can make their dreams come true while training in their home region.

Her exceptional performance and authentic personality have made Maude the pride of not just the Lower St. Lawrence, but the entire nation as well. I encourage her to continue sharing her inspiring passion.

* * *

● (1405)

RETURN OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I had a busy summer reconnecting with the constituents, businesses and organizations in my riding, listening to their needs and drawing on their infectious enthusiasm to recharge my batteries.

Our Liberal team tuned in to people across the country, and we used what we learned about Canadians' needs to redefine our priorities as we head back to work. Business people, community groups and individuals told us what a relief and a lifeline the measures we introduced over the past two years were.

We also listened to their concerns about the challenges they are facing right now. The labour shortage, the affordable housing shortage, global inflation and gun control are the top issues as the new parliamentary season gets up and running.

Together with my colleagues, I am rolling up my sleeves and getting down to business.

I wish everyone a good session.

* * *

[English]

ANNA MARGUERITE RUFF

Mr. Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Anna Marguerite Ruff, known as Peggy, born August 7, 1922, passed away on September 10 at the young age of 100. She was number nine of 11 kids, mother of five, grandmother of 14, great-grandmother of 23 and great-great-grandmother of one.

I could easily talk about grandma for hours, and I have. She was legendary across the Canadian Armed Forces, including Bosnia, Afghanistan and Iraq. I asked family to give me one word to describe her and here are some of those words: applesauce; stellar; tender-hearted; honest; funny; strong; feisty; clever; unforgettable; caring; tomato soup, and that is world famous; and family.

Grandma played golf into her 80s and was a huge Toronto Blue Jays fan. She loved cribbage and was a provincial champion just shy of her 95th birthday, even though she was legally blind. Grandma made a huge impact on a lot of different organizations in the community. Whether it was the ladies' auxiliary, the legion, different church groups, seniors or many more, grandma was respected by all.

She was stubborn, a trait she clearly passed onto her children. Thankfully, it skipped a generation and her grandkids did not inherit it. However, I can attest first-hand that her great-grandchildren did.

I love my grandma. Her whole family loves her. She will be missed.

* * *

CABLE PUBLIC AFFAIRS CHANNEL

Mrs. Rechie Valdez (Mississauga—Streetsville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first, I would like to take a moment to welcome my colleagues back to the House of Commons.

I rise today to congratulate the Canadian Cable Public Affairs Channel for celebrating its 30th anniversary.

[Translation]

CPAC was founded in 1992 by an association of cable companies to preserve an independent voice for Canadian democracy and our democratic process.

[English]

CPAC is broadcasted into the homes of nearly 11 million Canadians and is available for streaming worldwide. Every day, Canadians tune in to CPAC to get direct access to parliamentary debates, provides an opportunity to learn about the work MPs do every day and broadens their understanding of the relevant issues as they unfold.

CPAC takes Canadians far beyond the headlines and provides us with compelling coverage of historic breaking events.

On behalf of all MPs, I wish CPAC a very happy 30th anniversary.

* * *

CANADA'S GREAT LAKES CROSSING

Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Whitby, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with great honour that I rise in the House today to speak about one of Whitby's finest: our very own Mike Shoreman.

Despite being diagnosed with Ramsay Hunt syndrome and being told it would leave him disabled and unable to continue his lifelong passion for paddleboarding, Mike decided to take on a monumental challenge: paddleboarding across all five Great Lakes.

Not only did Mike not let his diagnosis deter him from continuing his life's passion, instead he persevered and dedicated himself to a worthy cause. He launched Canada's Great Lakes Crossing to raise awareness and to provide funding for youth mental health resources. This summer, on August 20, Mike completed the final leg of his journey by paddleboarding across Lake Ontario, becoming the first person with a disability to paddleboard across the Great Lakes.

His story reminds us of just how crucial access to mental health resources are and that there is no limit to what individuals living with disabilities can accomplish. Mike Shoreman not only inspires our community in Whitby, but is a role model for all Canadians.

I would ask that everyone please join me in congratulating Mike Shoreman on his impressive achievement.

* * *

• (1410)

[Translation]

CONSERVATIVE PRIORITIES

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what is wokeism? At first, the term “woke” was used to describe someone who was aware of and offended by the injustices and discrimination experienced by minority groups.

Today, however, this once-positive idea has been appropriated by a movement that is using it for political gain. Nowadays, wokeism is a culture that shuns, boycotts or cancels anyone who dares to disagree with its virtuous proponents.

Statements by Members

Was I wrong at the beginning of the pandemic when I said that planes from China should not be allowed to land in Canada? Am I wrong to bring up the fact that immigrants should not be permitted to enter Canada willy-nilly at Roxham Road?

For both those opinions, I have been called a racist. However, Quebecers defend their heritage, culture and language and make no apologies for it. The Quebec nation is bucking wokeism, and we will too.

The new Conservative leader will put people, their pensions, their paycheques, their homes and their country first.

* * *

NEW SCHOOL YEAR

Mr. René Arseneault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today is our first day back in Parliament this fall, and I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge all of the students in Madawaska—Restigouche who have recently gone back to school. We wish all students going back to school, college or university much success this school year.

[English]

This month, all students going back to school, college or university will be faced with choices, challenges and frustrations along the way. They will discover subject matters they love and struggle with others.

[Translation]

What is important is that each student use this time to find their own voice and their own path.

[English]

Whether they are one day teachers, doctors, farmers or hairdressers, some day in the future, Canada will need them. The process of finding their inspiration starts in those classrooms.

[Translation]

They have endless opportunities, and Canada will need their passion and their skills.

[English]

To young people going back to school, I urge them to explore a range of interests and find their passion. Canada will need them to develop it to its full potential.

The Speaker: Before we go to the next person, I just want to remind everyone that there are statements being made. It is great to see everyone talking to each other. I know we have missed each other. If members want to cross over and whisper as opposed to talking across the aisle, that would be great.

The hon. member for Peterborough—Kawartha.

*Statements by Members***IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP**

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the new Conservative leader will put people first: their retirement, their paycheques, their homes and their country.

We will bring hope to doctors, nurses and engineers, and others who are immigrants to this country but are blocked from working in their professions for no other reason than that they come from another country. We will team up with provinces to guarantee that, within 60 days, an immigrant applying to work in their profession will get a yes or no based on their tested abilities, not based on where they come from.

We will back up 30,000 small study loans for those in need of time off work to study up to Canadian standards. The current labour challenge felt in my riding of Peterborough—Kawartha and across our nation is substantial. Increased immigration is key for getting through it.

Enough talking. Remove the gatekeepers to get more doctors, more nurses, more engineers and more inflation-proof paycheques for newcomers to Canada.

Mr. Frank Caputo: Mr. Speaker, the new Conservative leader will put people first: their retirement, their paycheques, their homes and their country. We need to restore home ownership. Right now—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. I just want to make sure everybody is listening to each other, not shouting or heckling.

If he does not mind, the hon. member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo will begin again, from the top.

* * *

● (1415)

HOUSING

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the new Conservative leader will put people first: their retirement, their paycheques, their homes and their country.

We need to restore the hope of home ownership. Right now, youth and newcomers cannot get a home because local government gatekeepers block housing with heavy fees and long delays for building permits. This leaves us with the fewest houses per capita of any country in the G7, even though we have the most land to build on.

A Conservative government would require big cities that want federal infrastructure money to speed up and lower the cost of permits, and to approve affordable housing around all new transit stations so that our young people can live there and not even need to afford a car. We will also sell 15% of the under-utilized 37,000 federal buildings to turn them into housing and use the proceeds to reduce our deficit.

In other words, stop printing money and start building homes for people.

TREVOR ROBERT THOMAS HARRISON

Hon. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every one of us who has the privilege to sit in this chamber is here because of the hard work, intelligence and love of the staff who support us every day.

This past week, the Liberal family lost one of our most valuable members. At the very young age of 36, Trevor Robert Thomas Harrison died in the presence of his beloved wife Kaisha, his wonderful and devoted parents Karen and John and his family.

We have lost a colleague and a friend. We are deeply grieved, but we are all the richer for having had him among us for a decade and a half. Over more than 10 years, Trevor has grown and thrived, served and worked, and taught us through his courage and grace as he lived with cancer. Working for members, ministers and the leader's office with the government House leader, Trevor was wise and respectful, good humoured and patient, kind and always optimistic.

He was an anchor for his family and friends. He fought the good fight. He finished the race and kept the faith. He will rest in peace and surely be remembered in love.

* * *

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, one year ago today, Canadians went to the polls and they sent political parties of all stripes a very clear message. They are tired of the games. They want us to put the interest of Canadians first.

I promised in that election that if I came back we would fight for a national dental care plan, and I am pleased to see it is one of the top priorities in Parliament this session. We are pushing for a doubling of the GST tax credit to help people who are getting gouged relentlessly by the big oil and grocery barons. We are pushing the government to insist on a low-income tax supplement because times are hard for people.

Democracy is a fragile thing, and we all need to do more in an age of disinformation, conspiracy theories and the rising threat of political intimidation. We need to rebuild trust with Canadians. I make it my promise in this session of Parliament to work harder to maintain the trust of the people who sent me here.

[Translation]

30TH ANNIVERSARY OF CPAC

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, free, objective information sources are essential to democracy. We cannot overstate how important and invaluable the media is. The media is so invaluable that cable companies themselves made the decision 30 years ago to come together and create an independent channel dedicated exclusively to parliamentary affairs.

It is a privately owned, non-profit, ad-free service that is dedicated exclusively to broadcasting the day-to-day workings of democracy. This service, known as CPAC, is broadcast on television and online for free and is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year. I want to wish CPAC and all of its staff a happy anniversary on behalf of the Bloc Québécois.

I thank CPAC for being there to broadcast the historic moments and the not-so-historic ones, the big speeches and the not-so-big ones, the decisive scrums and the more meandering ones, as well as the crucial question periods and the more over-the-top ones. I also thank CPAC for giving Quebecers and Canadians an unfiltered view of everything that goes on in the House and for showcasing our political system in the name of democracy.

Happy 30th anniversary, CPAC.

* * *

• (1420)

[English]

COST OF LIVING

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the new Conservative leader will put people first: their retirements, their paycheques, their homes and their country.

Today, people feel like they have lost control of their pocket-books and of their lives. The cost of government is driving up the cost of living.

The Liberal government has doubled our national debt, adding more debt than all previous governments combined. It is the most expensive government in history. The more it spends, the more things cost.

What is the result? Seniors delay their retirements and watch their life savings evaporate with inflation. Thirty-year-olds are trapped in 400 square-foot apartments, or worse, their parents' basements because the price of homes have doubled under these Liberals. Single mothers are putting water in their children's milk so they can try to afford the 10% year-over-year increase in the price of groceries.

No wonder people are worried. Most are lucky to get by. Many are falling behind. There are people in this country who are just hanging on by a thread. These are citizens of our country. We are their servants. We owe them hope.

Oral Questions

JAMES SMITH CREE NATION

Mr. Jaime Battiste (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our hearts are heavy today as we mourn the tragedy that occurred on and around the James Smith Cree Nation on September 2. A tight-knit Cree community has lost beloved community members: elders, youth, brothers, sisters, mothers. Today I stand to remember and offer condolences to the 11 victims and their family members. We mourn as a country the victims from the Burns, Sanderson, Head and Petterson families.

As a first nations MP who lives on a first nations reserve, I can only imagine the grief, pain and overwhelming sense of loss that the community is going through. As a government, we will work with indigenous leadership to ensure adequate resources to help heal and to help keep indigenous communities safe in the future.

I know the strength and the resilience of first nations in Canada, but I want the community to know that they are not alone. We are thinking of them. We are praying for them, and we will do what is necessary to help them.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

TAXATION

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on January 1, the government will be raising taxes on Canadians' paycheques. The government is planning to increase taxes on gas, home heating and groceries on April 1.

House prices have doubled. The cost of food is going up faster than it ever has in the past 40 years. Canadians can no longer pay their bills.

Will the minister cancel these tax hikes on seniors and workers?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by congratulating the member on his first question as the new leader of the official opposition.

We are going to see two competing visions over the course of this session. The first is our government's plan to support Canadians and those who need it most. The second is that of the Conservative Party and members of Parliament who would leave Canadians to their own devices.

Just today, we introduced new measures. We are providing \$500 for housing, introducing a new dental plan and doubling the GST/HST credit. That is money in Canadians' pockets when they need it.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister says that the Conservatives would leave Canadians to their own devices, but housing prices have doubled.

Oral Questions

In fact, when the Prime Minister came to power, the average Canadian could pay for their housing with 32% of their paycheque. Now that cost eats up 50% of their paycheque. The price of food is rising faster than it has in the past 40 years. Canadians have no more to give, but the government wants to raise payroll taxes as well as gasoline and heating taxes.

Will the government stop these tax increases so that Canadians can pay their bills?

• (1425)

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us talk about how people can pay their bills with our new dental plan. A single-parent family will receive \$1,160 now that we have doubled the GST/HST credit. Seniors will get \$701 and a couple with two children will receive \$1,400.

Liberals are in the House with a responsible plan to help Canadians where and when they need it.

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, all of that will be vaporized by inflation, which is costing families over \$2,000 in extra costs, and that does not include the increased interest rate prices that people are paying on their mortgages. In fact, the average family used to pay its housing bill with 32% of its paycheque every month. Now it is 50% after seven years of the Prime Minister in power. What is his solution? It is to raise taxes on paycheques, with higher EI and CPP premiums that will shrink paycheques, and it is to put higher taxes on gas, groceries and heat.

Why will the Liberals not cancel these tax hikes so that Canadians can keep a roof over their heads?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first of all, it is important to talk about the fact that the member is talking about EI and CPP, things that are important for people who have lost their jobs or for seniors when they are planning for retirement.

However, let us talk about real solutions. We have brought in 13 agreements on child care across the country. By the end of this year, families will be saving 50%. That is thousands of dollars that are going to help them with the high cost of living. Those are real solutions that are making real differences in the lives of Canadians every single day.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, people cannot even afford to have a family in the first place, because they cannot get out of their parents' basements or out of 400-square-foot apartments after housing prices have literally doubled in this country under the Prime Minister. Now, with rising interest rates, which the government promised would not happen any time soon, families have to spend 50% of their income, the highest in over three decades, just to keep a roof over their heads. The solution from the Liberals is higher taxes on gas, groceries and paycheques.

Will the Liberals follow the Conservative demand and cancel all of these tax hikes on workers and seniors?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are absolutely focused on the issue of housing affordability in this country. That is why we have put forward real solutions like the housing accelerator fund, which is about increasing housing supply. It is also about turning more Canadian renters into homeowners. It is about introducing the first-time homebuyers' tax credit and putting in place a first-time homebuyer savings account to enable more young Canadians and others to access their dream of home ownership.

We cannot take the Leader of the Opposition seriously on these issues, because on every single tangible solution that we have brought forward that actually works, he has voted against it.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government worked to double the price of housing in this country and give us the second-worst housing bubble of any country on planet earth. Now Canadians have had the costs they must pay for monthly housing bills go from 32% of their paycheque to 50% of their paycheque.

What is the Prime Minister's solution? It is to reduce their paycheques by taking a bigger bite out of them with higher payroll taxes. He also wants to raise gas taxes, home heating taxes and, indirectly, the price of groceries, by tripling the carbon tax.

Will the government cancel these tax hikes so that Canadians can afford to eat, and to heat and house themselves?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the course of this session, we are going to see two competing visions, one that shows our government doing what needs to be done for Canadians as they are facing higher inflation and the other—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order.

We had started so well. I just want to continue and make sure that everybody knows that when somebody is talking, we normally stay quiet and listen, and then we can ask questions or answer after.

The hon. Minister of Tourism.

Hon. Randy Boissonnault: Mr. Speaker, throughout this session, we are going to see two competing visions, one in which our government focuses on the needs of Canadians, and one in which Conservatives tell the country that it is on its own.

Just today, we introduced two pieces of legislation that will add a \$500 top-up on housing, double the GST credit and put in place a Canada dental benefit.

These are targeted measures to Canadians who need it the most, when they need it the most. Our hope on this side of the aisle is that the Conservative Party will support us to get these measures to people as soon as they need them.

* * *

● (1430)

[Translation]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we are glad that the House has resumed because it is absolutely vital that we talk about guns. That was the big news story this summer in Montreal. There was one shooting after another happening almost every day. Just last Tuesday, there were four shootings in a single evening. Here is what Mayor Plante had to say: “I have no control over the most important element, and that is the guns on our territory”.

I want to ask the federal government the same question she did, word for word: “What is it doing to protect us and prevent these weapons from ending up in the hands of our young people?”

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first of all, our thoughts are with all of the victims' families. This is a very difficult time for Montrealers.

We have a very good working relationship with Mayor Plante. I am always in contact with her and my Quebec government counterpart. For our part, we have a plan that involves more laws. We have a plan to add resources. Since last year, we have invested \$321 million to strengthen the integrity of our borders, and we will continue to work with all Quebecers to protect all of our communities.

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, based on what Mayor Plante has said, I am not so sure they have such a great working relationship.

The minister is talking about legal guns, but we need to take action against illegal guns. What we are seeing in our streets are illegal guns, and the federal government is responsible for letting them in. It is all well and good to engage in prevention and mobilize the police, but we cannot perform miracles when guns are streaming across our borders. That is the government's responsibility.

Guns are being fired right on Saint-Denis Street. Guns are being fired in schoolyards. When is the government going to take responsibility?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is exactly why I hope the Bloc Québécois will support Bill C-21. With this bill, we are going to give the police more tools that will help them fight organized crime so we can strengthen our borders and better protect our communities. That is what we plan to do, together with Quebec.

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[English]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we have a cost-of-living crisis that is hurting people. The Liberals kept saying “it is not our fault” and that it is worse in other countries.

Oral Questions

We have a leader of the opposition who thinks he can magically opt out of inflation by buying cryptocurrency, which ended up tanking and hurting people, so we have “say nothing” and “do nothing”, and then we have New Democrats, who forced the government to put more money into people's pockets.

My question is this: What took the government so long to act when people needed respect and support?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today is a great day for Canadians. We are talking about helping Canadians with affordability and with the cost of living right now by having a \$500 top-up to the Canada housing benefit, introducing a new Canada dental benefit plan and also making sure we double the GST credit.

If we look at the 2020 budget, the 2021 budget and the 2022 budget, this Liberal government has been making life more affordable for Canadians, including child care and including the Canada workers benefit. The government is delivering for Canadians, and that is what Canadians expect.

* * *

[Translation]

TAXATION

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on average, the cost of groceries has gone up by 10%. Major grocery store CEOs are making huge profits. Their greed played a role in the inflation that is hurting families right now.

When will the government force these major grocery store CEOs to pay their fair share and reinvest, as a show of respect for families and people across this country?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been committed to ensuring that everyone pays their fair share of taxes, and we remain committed to just that.

We are permanently increasing the corporate tax rate by 1.5% for the largest and most profitable banks and insurance companies, and there is a 15% recovery dividend on the excess profits these institutions made during COVID-19.

This government is prudent when it comes to taxation.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal carbon tax is up 25% to \$50 a ton. It does not just increase the cost of gas; it increases the cost of everything for Canadian families. Many Canadians pay more in carbon taxes than they get in tax rebates. Worse, the Liberals miss their targets, and by a lot. Inflation is out of control and Canadians are struggling, and the Liberal plan is to triple the carbon tax.

Will the government cancel its planned tax hikes, yes or no?

• (1435)

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are fighting climate change, and we are delivering on affordability.

The hon. member will recall that the Parliamentary Budget Officer has confirmed that the price on pollution will put more money in people's pockets. Eight out of 10 families will get more back than they pay, through the climate action incentive. This year, I would remind the hon. member that a family of four will receive up to \$745 in Ontario, \$830 in Manitoba and \$1,100 each in Saskatchewan and Alberta.

We are fostering affordability and fighting climate change.

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Parliamentary Budget Officer says that 60% of households in Ontario, in Alberta, in Saskatchewan and in Manitoba pay more than they get back.

It started at \$30 a ton. Then it was \$40 a ton. Now it is \$50 a ton, and the Liberals are on track to triple it to \$170 a ton. Emissions have gone up. The price of everything has also gone up.

I will ask again. When do the Liberals plan to step out of fantasy land, join us in the real world and admit that their plan to triple the carbon tax is wrong?

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that climate change and the cost of inaction is absolutely enormous. We have been experiencing climate impacts all over the country, and we have a practical and affordable way to reduce pollution.

While the Conservatives want to make pollution free again, we are reducing pollution. We are putting more money in people's pockets, and we are building the clean economy of the future.

Mr. Scott Aitchison (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC): Mr. Speaker, thanks to the ever-increasing Liberal carbon tax I am receiving messages from Canadians across this country who are wondering how they are going to heat their homes and eat this winter. Now the Liberals are coming after workers' paycheques, with CPP and EI increases.

Canadians cannot afford to have the government take any more of their money. They are desperate for relief from the high-tax Liberal agenda. It is a simple choice. Will the Liberals continue to punish hard-working Canadians, or will they finally stop inflicting the pain and cancel their tax hikes?

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have all heard the Leader of the Opposition's calls for freedom. I hope that the hon. member did not mean the freedom to pollute.

While Conservatives want to make pollution free again, we are reducing pollution, putting more money in people's pockets, and creating a clean economy and good, clean jobs.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in 2015, the Prime Minister's decisions hurt Canadians' personal finances. For example, he said he cut income tax, but in the same breath, he did away with the children's fitness tax credit and income splitting. He also promised to eliminate interest on student loans, but now he is going to increase it.

Will the Prime Minister promise not to raise taxes?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this year, we signed 13 agreements with the provinces and territories to lower the cost of child care across the country. That means putting thousands of dollars back in the pockets of parents so they can give their children what they need, cover the high cost of living and buy the things they need.

Our agreement is helping families. That is great, and that is what we will keep doing.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, before the pandemic even began, this Prime Minister was spending like no other prime minister in Canadian history. His out-of-control spending has led to record high inflation. Now Canadians are paying exorbitant prices for products and services.

Just to add fuel to the fire, he also plans to further increase the carbon tax. Canadians already cannot afford to put gas in their cars or feed their families, let alone dream of buying a house one day.

Will the Prime Minister promise not to raise taxes?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, just today we introduced in the House two bills that will make life more affordable for Canadians. Specifically, we are providing a new dental plan for Canadians, topping up the housing benefit and doubling the GST/HST credit. This is in addition to all the measures in the 2022 budget.

Oral Questions

We are here to support Canadians. That is exactly what we are going to do.

• (1440)

[English]

Hon. Tim Uppal (Edmonton Mill Woods, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are already struggling to keep up with the record-high cost of living expenses caused by the current government's out-of-control spending, high-risk economic policies and painful interest rate hikes. Many are forced to use credit cards and to take out loans just to pay their bills and feed their families. In fact, new CPI data shows that grocery prices have risen by over 10%. That is a 40-year high. Canadians cannot afford the Liberals' risky economic policies.

Will the government commit to cancelling its planned tax hikes on Canadians?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us be really clear. The riskiest advice that anybody in the House of Commons has given Canadians over the last six weeks was to put their money into Bitcoin. Had Canadians done that, they would have lost their shirts. They would have destroyed their own personal finances.

Our plan is a real plan that will help make life more affordable: \$1,160 for single mothers, \$700 for single seniors and \$1,401 for couples with two children. That is just the GST tax credit increase for Canadians we are talking about. That side can support us and do right by Canadians.

* * *

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the day we have been fearing for months is upon us. The temporary EI measures will end on September 25. The minister has yet to present a comprehensive reform of the system. Workers will fall right back into the EI gap as the system reverts to the status quo, leaving six in 10 workers behind. That is not an option.

September 25 is in five days. The minister needs to get moving. Does she at least plan to renew the temporary measures in the meantime?

[English]

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, during the pandemic, we put in place temporary EI measures to help address the extraordinary economic circumstances at the time: shutdowns, lockdowns, job losses. We continue to move forward with our economic policies that focus on addressing labour shortages and that focus on making sure Canadians have money in their pockets, such as the one-time increase in the GST credit and the dental care program.

Workers continue to have access to EI. Workers who are currently on EI are not impacted by anything, moving forward. We are winding down COVID measures, but I can assure every worker in Canada that they still have access to EI.

[Translation]

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, that is not true, and it is a shame that we are forced to demand that the government renew the temporary measures because the minister did not do her job. She needs to completely overhaul EI. She was mandated by the Prime Minister himself. It is clearly set out in her mandate letter. Not only must the minister present a plan, but she was also meant to implement reforms by summer 2022. Summer 2022 is over and the minister has once again shown up empty-handed.

When will she present a comprehensive EI reform?

[English]

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in recognition of the fact that seasonal workers are still struggling, we are extending the seasonal worker pilot to make sure that we address the black hole. We are committed to modernizing the EI system. We are working very hard, through the consultations, to make sure stakeholders have a say. Workers, unions and businesses, everybody is at the table. I have committed to putting forth this vision by the end of this year and we will do just that.

[Translation]

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, what will it take for the minister to make serious reforms to EI?

Workers' groups have been consulted. There have been two consultations, so the problems and solutions have been identified.

The minister has a mandate, so what more will it take? Why is she abandoning workers?

[English]

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to remind everybody in the House of our commitment to extend EI sickness benefits from 15 to 26 weeks. That will be in place by the end of the year. By the end of this year, workers will have access to 26 weeks of EI sickness benefits.

Oral Questions

● (1445)

TAXATION

Mr. Clifford Small (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, CPC): Mr. Speaker, energy poverty in Atlantic Canada is at nearly 40%, the highest in the country. Newfoundland and Labrador's Liberal premier is begging the Prime Minister not to put a carbon tax on home heating fuel, which will drive up heating costs by 20%. Winter is coming. Seniors will need to choose between food on the table or a warm home.

Will the government pledge to cancel its planned tax hikes on my province's workers and seniors today?

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government understands the affordability concerns faced by Atlantic Canadians, which is why the federal system is designed to put money back into the pockets of families. If the federal system is applied in the provinces of Newfoundland and Nova Scotia, we will ensure they receive the climate action incentive payments via quarterly cheques, which will be in the mail in October.

We remain committed to working in a collaborative and productive way with provincial counterparts to fight climate change while making life more affordable for Canadian families.

Mr. Clifford Small (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Cory from Gander, and many more like him, are not too impressed with that answer. Does the minister get it? Last year, Cory spent \$4,000 on oil to heat his home. The Liberal carbon tax will add \$700 to his annual heating bill. Cory considers himself middle class, but with these inflationary tax increases he is worried about paying his bills.

I again ask this on behalf of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, many of whom voted for the current Prime Minister: Will he choose not to hurt them and cancel these planned tax hikes?

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we hear Canadians in Atlantic Canada and the issues they have raised with respect to the cost of oil heating, which is why just last week we announced a special program for Atlantic Canada in particular to help them transition from oil to renewable energies and have cleaner, cheaper ways to heat their homes. We are there to support Canadians. We are there to support Atlantic Canadians.

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister does not know that the program only covers 3% of the people in Atlantic Canada. What are the other 97% supposed to do? Nova Scotia has surpassed the 2030 carbon reduction emission targets and will reach net zero by 2050 without a carbon tax. Nova Scotia is getting results with technology, not taxes. Why let outcomes drive the government's policy when it can increase taxes? The carbon tax will add 14¢ more a litre to home heating fuel when 40% of Atlantic Canadians are experiencing energy poverty.

Will the Liberals listen to Premier Houston, implement his plan and commit to not imposing the ineffective carbon tax?

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been there consistently to support Canadians as we transition to more affordable forms of energy for our homes. As I mentioned, just last week we announced a program that highlights supports for Atlantic Canada. More than that, we are working with the provinces, including Nova Scotia and those in Atlantic Canada, on ways we can provide affordable clean energy. We are there. We will continue working with our provinces, including Atlantic Canada specifically. We are focused on that.

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Mr. Speaker, obviously the motto of the current government is fighting affordability. The Atlantic premiers are not being listened to. They are beating the government's targets, but it will not listen. Why will the current government not listen? Is it because it just wants more tax revenue and more money in the bank to spend on useless programs? When will it commit to not increasing taxes?

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member will not believe me, perhaps he will believe the Parliamentary Budget Officer, or perhaps he will believe the commissioner on environment and sustainable development. The reality is that the price on pollution puts more money into people's pockets. Eight out of 10 families will receive more than they pay in through the climate action incentive—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I will have to interrupt the hon. parliamentary secretary. There are some folks close to my left ear, and I am having a hard time hearing. I am going to ask the member to start from the top please, so that I can hear the whole answer.

Mr. Terry Duguid: Mr. Speaker, I was just repeating what I said before. Eight out of 10 families will be better off. We are fighting climate change. We are delivering on affordability in so many ways, as our Minister of Tourism has highlighted many times today.

Surely the Conservative Party does not want to take money out of people's pockets. Once again, a family of four will receive \$745 in Ontario, \$830 in Manitoba and about \$1,100 in Saskatchewan. That is real money that is going to help with affordability.

• (1450)

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on Saturday, this Liberal government will change the rules for EI, making it harder for workers to get the benefits that they have earned.

Canadian workers are caught between a rock and a hard place. On one side we have the Liberals punishing workers by cutting EI and keeping their wages at rock bottom, and on the other side we have Conservatives intent on abandoning workers altogether who are hardest hit by this economy. At a time when workers are struggling with the rising cost of living, this Liberal government is choosing to make them suffer more.

Will this Liberal government immediately stop the changes to EI and finally fix the broken system?

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as our COVID pandemic economic measures wind down, I can assure everyone in this House that we continue to support workers and we continue to be there for workers. We are working very hard to modernize the EI system. EI for sickness will be in place up to 26 weeks by the end of this year.

I would also remind everyone here that we have recovered 113% of the jobs lost during the pandemic. We have an incredibly low unemployment rate. Our economic rebound has been incredibly extraordinary given everything this world is going through at this time.

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FAMILIES, CHILDREN AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, people are struggling with the rising cost of living. Things are getting harder. Instead of helping, the Liberals are clawing back the Canada child benefit. Who will be hit the hardest? It is single mothers struggling to make ends meet. This is cruel. Families need more support to pay rent and feed their children, not less.

Will the Liberals reverse these clawbacks and ensure that families who received pandemic supports are not unfairly penalized?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we understand the high cost of living. In fact, when we came into office in 2015, we got rid of the universal child care benefit that the Conservatives were sending to millionaires and instead brought in the Canada child benefit that can provide up to almost \$7,000 a year for children under the age of six for the lowest-income families. In fact, we raised the Canada child benefit this summer, indexed to inflation, because we understand how much families rely on this money to make sure they can give their children what they need.

We have been there for families and we will keep being there.

Oral Questions

TAXATION

Mr. George Chahal (Calgary Skyview, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week, the government announced the doubling of the GST credit as one of the measures to help vulnerable Canadians fight inflation.

Can the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance tell us more about this support measure?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, just last week we announced the doubling of the GST tax credit and we tabled that legislation today.

What does it mean? We are talking about a single mom with one child and \$30,000 of net income getting \$1,160 through that credit. A single senior with \$20,000 in net income will get \$701. A couple with two children with \$35,000 in take-home pay will get \$1,401. That is real money in the pockets of real Canadians. That is responsible leadership.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians should feel confident that when they work hard, they will have a roof over their heads and food on their tables, but under this NDP-Liberal government, Canadians are working harder and harder but falling farther and farther behind. This government's uncontrolled spending is driving up the cost of living, and increased taxes like the failed carbon tax is diving deeper and deeper into their pockets.

When will this NDP-Liberal government stop driving up costs and cutting the paycheques of Canadians?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the supports that we have announced today are targeted to the Canadians who need it the most, vulnerable Canadians who need this help.

I will share with the House some information from Lindsay Tedds, an economist at the University of Calgary, who has said very clearly that this is targeted to low-income individuals who are probably the ones unable to dip into savings or other things to pay for these increased costs. It is unlikely to increase inflation.

The Conservatives are going to deflect and distract. We are going to keep delivering for Canadians. That is responsible leadership.

• (1455)

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, 600,000 Quebecers are using food banks because they cannot afford to feed themselves. More and more of them are working folk. Rising costs are driving inflation, and workers cannot make ends meet. Groceries alone have gone up by more than 10%.

Will the Prime Minister commit to leaving more money in people's pockets by immediately putting an end to these new tax increases?

Oral Questions

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the support measures we are aiming to put in place will do exactly what my colleague is asking. They will put money in the pockets of the Canadians who need it most.

At the same time, we are very much aware of the issue of inflation. Economists throughout the country have clearly said that our measures will not increase inflation.

That is our commitment to Canadians: Support them where they need it while remaining fiscally prudent.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let me explain to my colleague what “making ends meet” means.

Back in the day, “making ends meet” meant harvesting enough to survive until the next harvest. Nowadays, “making ends meet” means surviving from paycheque to paycheque. Unfortunately, fewer and fewer Canadians are able to make ends meet now because everything costs more: interest rates, food, gas, rent and taxes.

Instead of putting Canadians through the wringer, can the Prime Minister at the very least stop putting forward new measures that raise the price of everything?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, taken together, the measures we outlined today and in budget 2022 are aimed at helping Canadians who need it most.

Let us look at the numbers. A family earning \$70,000 will get \$650 from the dental plan alone. Families that earn between \$70,000 and \$80,000 will get \$390 per child per year. That is real money in the pockets of Canadians.

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, according to Statistics Canada inflation remained above 7% last month. Why?

It is because of this government's incompetence and its failure to understand the economy. As long as the Liberal-NDP coalition is in place, Canadians and Quebecers will have to deal with this inflation.

Will the Liberals promise to at least cancel the tax hikes? If not, why not?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, these measures will not increase inflation. They will bring much needed support to the people on the ground. We are focusing on Canadians who need help the most.

Economist Trevor Tombe was clear when he said that global factors and spending, changes or tax changes made by the Government of Canada were unlikely to have a significant effect. It is the economists who are saying that our plan is a fiscally prudent plan.

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CANADIAN HERITAGE

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Quebec music industry is struggling right now, mainly because of

the meagre royalties our musicians are getting from music streaming sites and the two years of pandemic that brought festivals and concerts to a halt.

To top it all off, now francophone artists have also lost revenue because of a calculation error on the part of SOCAN. That is yet another blow to French-language music, and the last thing francophone artists needed right now.

Can the minister send a clear message to our artists so that they know they can count on him when facing adversity?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for all of the work that he does for Canadian Heritage and for artists, and I want to tell him loud and clear that our artists should all be treated fairly and equitably, whether they speak English or French.

That is a principle that should be respected by everyone, period.

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Heritage no doubt read Thomas Gerbet's Radio-Canada article, which stated that Francophone artists in Quebec reckon that the SOCAN calculation method cost them 45% of revenue from 2019 to 2021. This issue has been fixed since November 21, 2021, but SOCAN has not allocated any compensation for francophone artists. The minister has something of a moral duty to ensure that francophone artists are treated fairly.

How does he plan to show his support for artists?

• (1500)

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I plan to be clear, as I was just moments ago, and repeat that our artists should all be treated the same, whether they speak English or French. That is a principle that should be respected by everyone.

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[English]

TAXATION

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the cost of government is driving up the cost of living. A half trillion dollars of Liberal inflationary deficits have bid up the cost of the goods we buy and the interest we pay. Inflation is running at historic highs and taking a massive bite out of the ability of Canadians to pay the bills.

Now, if one thought it could not get much worse, one would be wrong, because the Liberals are planning on raising taxes on the paycheques of Canadians by hiking CPP and EI premiums.

Instead of making the problem worse, will the government commit to cancelling its planned tax hikes and cancel its tripling of the carbon tax?

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we are a bit hesitant to take advice from that side on EI considering that when the current Leader of the Opposition was in charge of EI in 2015, workers paid 20% more into EI than they do today in a system that was not as generous as it is today.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the new measures proposed by the government will just get vaporized by continued sustained inflation. It is the cost of government that is driving up the cost of living.

Food is up 10% year over year, and four out of 10 Canadians are cutting their diets because of rising food costs. Canadians who have never used a food bank in their lives before are being forced to because they simply cannot keep up with soaring prices. Canadians are struggling to get by, and the government plans to raise taxes on gas, home heating, groceries and paycheques.

Will the government reverse its planned tax hikes and commit to no new taxes?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will tell members what was vaporized: Canadians' savings when they followed the new Conservative leader's advice to go put money into Bitcoin. Quite frankly, it is shameful, irresponsible and reckless.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what has been vaporized is Canadians' purchasing power as the government has caused the record-breaking inflation that is hammering Canadians' abilities to make ends meet.

The best way to stop inflation is to put an end to the deficits that caused it in the first place. Instead, the Liberals are going to make the problem a whole lot worse. Rising prices have robbed Canadians of the ability to heat their homes and fill their fridges, and in the coming new year, the government is planning on hiking payroll taxes and carbon taxes, meaning Canadians will have to spend more as they take home less.

Will the government simply cancel its planned tax hikes?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us go through the numbers through the years.

In 2015, when we lowered income taxes on Canadians, that member and that bench voted against. In 2019, when we lowered taxes for Canadians, again the Conservative leader and that bench voted against. In 2021, when we lowered taxes for working Canadians, that side of the aisle voted against. Even this summer, when we reduced taxes on businesses, once again, the Conservatives in the House voted against taxes.

We know who has the record on having the backs of Canadians on taxes.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

DENTAL CARE

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in many instances, dental care is not affordable for some families. Last week, the Prime Minister announced that the government's first bills on the docket this fall are going to make life more affordable for those Canadians who need it the most.

Can the Minister of Health tell the House how the government is delivering on its promises with regard to dental care for Canadians?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first, I would like to congratulate and thank the member for Châteauguay—Lacolle for the remarkable work she is doing for her community.

The good news today is that we have a new dental benefit to help low- and middle-income families, who together have a total of 500,000 children under the age of 12, with up to \$650 per year or \$1,300 over two years. This benefit will help lower the cost of living for these low- and middle-income families, but more importantly, it will help them protect their kids' oral health by reducing infection, pain and disease associated with poor oral health.

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● (1505)

TAXATION

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have been warning the Liberals about the dangers of inflation for two years now. They kept saying there was nothing to worry about, but now we are in a Liberal inflationary spiral. Over half of Canadians have said they could not afford a sudden expense over \$1,000. Nearly 40% of Canadians are worried about their debt load. Families are having a hard time putting gas in the car and food on the table.

Will the Liberals promise not to raise taxes?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the last six years, the Conservatives have voted against tax cuts proposed by the Liberal Party four times. The targeted measures we are introducing in the House today are designed for Canadians who need them most. We will put more money into housing, we will create a dental program and we will double the GST/HST credit. That is real money in the pockets of real Canadians.

*Oral Questions**[English]***SMALL BUSINESS**

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, small businesses will be among the hardest hit by planned Liberal tax hikes.

First is the planned payroll tax increase forces them to pay more taxes on wages. Second is the Liberal plan to triple the carbon tax. While large, industrial corporations do not pay the carbon tax at all, small businesses will see their energy costs sky rocket, forcing them to charge more to consumers and pay less to workers.

Will the government cancel these new tax hikes so small businesses can survive?

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me outline what we have done for small businesses during the past two and a half years. We have supported small businesses throughout a pandemic. What we have also done, a matter that I am sure the member opposite is very concerned about, is support small businesses in their inclusivity with the women's entrepreneurship program. We have launched a Black entrepreneurship program. We are supporting indigenous businesses.

The Conservative record on supporting small businesses leaves a little to be desired. When we have proposed rebates for small businesses, the Conservatives have opposed them in their voting record. When small businesses in the city were under siege by an illegal blockade, the man who is now the Leader of the Opposition supported that blockade and the impediments it caused to small businesses. That is the Conservative record.

* * *

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada is the fifth largest natural gas producer, but does not export any LNG. The world wants Canadian LNG, but the Liberal gatekeepers killed 16 projects, 100,000 jobs and forced Canada to import. What is worse is that after the Prime Minister's snub, Germany may do a deal with Saudi Arabia instead.

Canada could be the sixth largest LNG exporter if all the projects were built and replace all Russian LNG to Europe, Japan and South Korea.

Why do the Liberals always export Canadian paycheques and projects to foreign dictators?

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last month, we welcomed the German chancellor to Canada. What are we exporting? Hydrogen and critical minerals. What are we creating right here at home? Well-paying, sustainable jobs.

We had conversations with the chancellor. We responded to what they need, and we will be there to support our allies while supporting Canadian jobs.

HOUSING

Mr. Michael Coteau (Don Valley East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in my riding of Don Valley East, many people are struggling with increased rent and housing costs, especially families, working individuals and the most vulnerable. There is no question that more help is needed and that our government must continue to act.

Could the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion please tell the House—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

• (1510)

The Speaker: I am sure the minister wants to hear the question. I could not hear it.

I will ask the hon. member to start from the top.

Mr. Michael Coteau: Mr. Speaker, in my riding of Don Valley East, many people are struggling with increased rent and housing costs, especially families, working individuals and the most vulnerable. There is no question that help is needed and that our government must continue to act.

Could the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion please tell the House what new measures our government is putting in place to help families through this difficult time?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that it is getting harder for many Canadians to afford the increased rent. That is why today we introduced legislation to provide a \$500 federal top-up to the Canada housing benefit. This will help 1.8 million low-income Canadians and will be on top of the already existing \$2,500, on average, from the Canada housing benefit.

On this side of the House, we will always have the backs of Canadian renters.

* * *

HEALTH

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this summer, 21 families a day buried their loved ones because of the toxic drug crisis. This is devastating but was foreseeable. The Public Health Agency of Canada warned that this crisis could continue to get worse. This is just weeks after the Liberals and the Conservatives both voted against an NDP bill to create a national health-based strategy. Instead of supporting real solutions, the Liberals' inaction has cost lives.

When will the Liberals fix their mistakes by creating a national health-based strategy to fight this crisis?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are obviously devastated by the news every day of so many Canadians dying of mental health issues, issues that can be cared for and prevented for the reasons and example the member just gave. We are investing, and very mindful of the need to invest, in the mental health of Canadians.

My colleague, the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, is working very hard on that. She has announced many measures and more will come.

* * *

CONSULAR AFFAIRS

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Scott Graham, a senior from my riding, is missing. He was last seen in Spain at the Canadian embassy visibly injured and without life-saving medication. His daughters feel like they have been left to investigate on their own. Scott reached out for help, but Canada's system to support people in an emergency failed.

When Canadians go to their embassy, they expect to get help. When loved ones go missing abroad, they expect real action for families.

What is the minister doing to support the family while making sure this never happens again?

Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the hon. member that we are very concerned for the well-being of Mr. Graham. Consular officials, both here in Ottawa and in Spain, have taken this very seriously and will continue to advise us as we continue to search for information about his well-being. We will be in contact with his friends and family as well.

The minister has asked for a complete understanding of how the department and the embassy have dealt with this situation, and we are happy to report back to the House at a later day.

* * *

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I wish to draw the attention of members to the 30th anniversary of CPAC, the Cable Public Affairs Channel. CPAC has been broadcasting the debates of the House, gavel to gavel, for three decades.

[Translation]

CPAC was originally created in 1992 by a consortium of 27 Canadian cable companies. Its primary mandate was to broadcast the proceedings of the House of Commons to millions of homes with cable, at no cost to taxpayers.

[English]

Since then, CPAC has expanded to provide continued unfiltered coverage of House of Commons proceedings and parliamentary committees, as well as a multitude of other public affairs activities across the country.

Government Orders

Despite the rapidly advancing forms of social and digital communications, CPAC continues to play a key role in keeping our fellow citizens informed about the business of Parliament. CPAC has worked in close partnership with us to ensure that Canadians have a front-row view into the very heart of our democracy.

[Translation]

CPAC has come to play such a significant role in Canadian political life that it is truly hard to imagine that such an essential service did not always exist. Today we welcome to the gallery the members of CPAC's board of directors.

On behalf of all members of Parliament, I would like to thank them for their invaluable contribution to the Canadian democratic process.

• (1515)

[English]

Mr. Jake Stewart: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Today, in question period, the leader of the official opposition, the member for Thornhill and others cited a March 2022 report by the Parliamentary Budget Officer that shows the carbon tax will be a net cost of \$1,461 to Ontario households, \$1,145 to households in Manitoba—

The Speaker: I will have to interrupt. I am afraid this is more debate than a point of order. I am sure that if the member checks things out and finds something that is a point of order, he can bring it back tomorrow.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

CANADA DISABILITY BENEFIT ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-22, An Act to reduce poverty and to support the financial security of persons with disabilities by establishing the Canada disability benefit and making a consequential amendment to the Income Tax Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, just prior to question period, I talked about what the Prime Minister and members of the Liberal caucus talk a great deal about, and that is moving forward, as we have in the past, and putting an emphasis on Canada's middle class, emphasizing the importance of ensuring that we have an economy that is working for all Canadians. That is something we take very seriously.

When we take a look at Bill C-22 and we get an understanding of the real purpose behind it, the principle, as I see it, is to ensure that all Canadians have a better, more equal opportunity to participate. This legislation would enhance the disposable income for literally tens of thousands of people with disabilities from coast to coast to coast.

Government Orders

Members should not be surprised at the progressive nature of this legislation. As a government we have demonstrated, virtually from 2015, that we are committed to supporting Canadians who need that additional support. I can recall when we first talked, in 2015, about increasing the GIS for the poorest of all seniors. I made reference before question period to the hundreds of individuals in Winnipeg North who were lifted out of poverty as a direct result of the increase to the GIS. Earlier I made reference to the hundreds of kids in Winnipeg North who were lifted out of poverty because of changes and enhancements we made, and because we brought in the Canada child benefit program.

Once again, we are seeing another progressive piece of legislation that will lift tens of thousands of people with disabilities out of poverty. This is the type of government that has made a difference in a very real and tangible way, ensuring that the disposable income of people in many different areas, in all different regions of our country, would be increased. That makes our economy healthier. It will increase and improve the quality of life for people who need it in a very real and tangible way.

The legislation itself will set the framework for a national program. Part of that program means that we have to work with the different provincial entities out there. Depending on the province, we could find a patchwork of sorts. There may be disability credits in some areas, possibly. There may be support programs in other areas. As the minister indicated when introducing the bill, we want to make sure that the money we are giving to people with disabilities today is not going to be clawed back in other types of provincial or territorial supports. This should be top-off money.

That is something that would require a great deal of effort, an effort we have demonstrated to Canadians we can be very successful in. One need only take a look at the child care program, the first-ever national child care program, on which we were able to achieve agreements with all of the provinces and territories. It is that same sort of worth ethic, working with Canadians and working with other jurisdictions, that will enable us to create the first-ever national disability program, arguably what could be the first such national program in the world.

This is a wonderful opportunity for members to be very clear in supporting the legislation. Let us see this bill go to committee, come back and ultimately become law.

● (1520)

Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the member's intervention. I hope he took a break over the summer and was not here speaking the whole time. It is not surprising to hear his voice again in this chamber.

My question is relatively simple. The member claims, as do many other members of his party, that this would help hundreds of thousands of people out of poverty, which may be true. Has the Department of Finance booked any amounts of money for this program, or do we still not know how much the program is going to cost?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, as I indicated, the legislation establishes the framework. There are budgetary measures, no doubt, and discussions that will have taken place between the different departments. However, one of the things that needs to be

highlighted is the fact that there are so many variances from coast to coast to coast because of other provincial and territorial programs, and that at the end of the day we are going to have these negotiations to ensure that there is a sense of equity and fairness, no matter where people live in Canada. The ultimate goal is lifting people who have disabilities out of poverty. This legislation is a great step, a historic step forward in that direction.

[Translation]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Winnipeg-North for his speech. I am going to need some clarification. I was speaking just this morning with Marie-Christine Hon of the Dynamique des handicapés de Granby et région.

She has been working with people with disabilities for a long time. She knows her stuff. She explained to me that she has looked at the bill. As much as she has read it over and over again, some questions still remain in her mind. Far too many things are left undefined in the bill. As my colleague from Thérèse-De Blainville so aptly said this morning, the devil is in the details, and they are not there in the bill. I would therefore appreciate it if my colleague could enlighten me on that.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I do not believe that one can provide the kinds of details that members of the opposition have been requesting in the last number of hours for this legislation. They will come in the form of regulations and in the form of negotiations between the provinces. What is important here is that every member of the House of Commons, whether from the Bloc, Conservative, NDP or Green, should be recognizing the principle of this bill by supporting and voting in favour of the legislation. By doing that, they are sending a very powerful message to all Canadians in all regions of this country that the desire of the House of Commons is to financially support people with disabilities in Canada. That is what this legislation would do, and we can all take great pride in supporting it.

● (1525)

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, I welcome any support that lifts persons with disability out of poverty. However, the Liberals have had seven years to put it in place. There are no protections in this bill to ensure that it would lift anybody out of poverty. I put forward a bill in support of a guaranteed livable basic income, Bill C-223, supported by disability groups and organizations through the country, which would lift people out of poverty in addition to current and future government programs and support.

I wonder if my colleague is so committed to really lifting persons with disabilities out of poverty and if he will be supporting my private member's bill, Bill C-223, a framework to implement a guaranteed livable basic income.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I will, in fact, review the member's bill. However, it is important to recognize that in Manitoba we have actually seen some movement from the province toward an income support program for people with disabilities. This is why I say it is so critically important. It is an opportune time to start looking at what other provinces have and to look for willing provinces with whom to sit down and try to negotiate.

I would like to say that Manitoba could potentially be the first province to have an agreement dealing with this legislation and some of the measures that the Province of Manitoba is taking. Hopefully all provinces and territories will be able to come on board, and that is why it is so critically important and why this legislation is timely. Let us get the job done by seeing it ultimately pass through the House.

Mr. Majid Jowhari (Richmond Hill, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am delighted to rise today to express my support for the second reading of Bill C-22, the Canada disability benefit act. Debate commenced earlier today in the House.

We have taken a huge step toward securing the right for every Canadian to fully participate in society through unimpeded access to basic services, in particular opportunities for long-term and adequate employment. This bill, as a framework legislation, would enact a Canada disability benefit for working-age persons with disabilities as a federal income supplement.

Elements of the benefit that will be established through regulation include eligibility, application and payment processes, and many other questions my colleagues have raised over the morning session of this House. The Canada disability benefit will become an important part of Canada's social safety net, alongside old age security, the guaranteed income supplement and the Canada child benefit. It has the potential to significantly reduce poverty for hundreds of thousands of Canadians with disabilities.

Among many other benefits, the three most significant advantages of this bill to my constituents in Richmond Hill are as follows: First, the bill would take a concrete step towards eradicating deep-seated poverty for persons with disabilities through the establishment of a comprehensive financial benefit plan; second, it would not disrupt eligibility for other income supplements, thereby supporting persons with disabilities at no cost to other available benefits; finally, it would promote an inclusive dynamic in which people of all abilities are able to collaborate and contribute in a meaningful way to their economy.

The creation of an inclusive community is strongly influenced by the advancement of accessibility, which calls for the mitigation of various obstacles that the six million people with disabilities in Canada may face on a daily basis. These obstacles include, but are not limited to, the loss of benefits as a result of becoming unemployed, the lack of accessible support services, and social exclusion in the workplace. As such, the Canada disability benefit would be a once-in-a-generation opportunity to amend the deep-seated social and economic exclusion that is the reality of many persons with disabilities in Canada.

Undoubtedly, a central objective in developing a thriving community dynamic is to secure employment in a barrier-free workplace for all Canadians with disabilities.

Government Orders

Despite these facts, workers with disabilities are twice as likely to live in poverty and are disproportionately paid less. Nearly 850,000, or 21%, of working-age Canadians with disabilities live in poverty, nearly three times the rate of persons without disabilities. The numbers speak for themselves. Working-age persons with disabilities who live alone and lone parents, many of whom also have more severe disabilities, are even more likely to be living below the poverty line. Among those with disabilities, women, members of the LGBTQ community, racialized Canadians and indigenous people are more likely to be financially insecure.

These statistics tell us one important thing: Immediate action is required to secure the financial well-being of persons with disabilities in Canada.

As Canadians struggle with affordability issues, they continue to face serious financial and social barriers to obtaining long-term employment. The prosperity of our community is reliant on the social and economic inclusion of all persons with disabilities. It is essential that Canadians with disabilities can afford the food, rent and medication they need to live a meaningful, dignified and quality life.

Our government has always stood by Canadians with disabilities and ensured that the necessary investments have been made to provide them with the essential support they need. For instance, the enabling accessibility fund, a \$64-million investment, was launched by our government earlier this year to support infrastructure projects across Canada that improve the accessibility, safety, and inclusion of persons with disabilities across communities and the labour market.

● (1530)

Noting the many unprecedented hardships that Canadians continue to endure, it is important to ensure that no one with a disability is left behind. The active integration and inclusion of persons with disabilities into our community is vital to me and to those in my riding of Richmond Hill.

Throughout the year, I have had the pleasure of meeting and collaborating with a variety of groups and organizations that dedicate themselves to the well-being of persons with disabilities.

L'Arche Daybreak and the MS Society of Canada are among the groups that we have had the privilege of closely working with. L'Arche Daybreak is a long-standing non-profit in Richmond Hill and an admirable example of how people of different intellectual disabilities can live, work and learn together.

Government Orders

In commemoration of National AccessAbility Week in June 2022, I visited L'Arche Daybreak to extend my heartfelt gratitude for all of their tireless efforts in making our community more just, compassionate and vibrant as a whole. Today, I am confidently affirming that Bill C-22 has paved the path to provide L'Arche Daybreak's members with the financial resources necessary to pursue diverse employment and educational opportunities.

As we are living in the country with the highest rate of MS, I wholeheartedly advocate for the interests of the MS Society of Canada. The volunteers and staff at this organization raise awareness and offer support for people with MS and their families. I have observed their hard work first-hand through my attendance at numerous events, including MS Awareness Day and our York region MS charity car show.

By ensuring that Canadians living with MS and other disabilities have adequate income support, we promote their participation in all aspects of life, bringing us closer toward a barrier-free world. This is why the introduction of Bill C-22 would, without a doubt, benefit organizations such as L'Arche Daybreak and MS Society of Canada by promoting equality of opportunity for persons with disabilities.

At this moment, I would like to acknowledge and extend my sincere thanks for the commitment displayed and the long-standing advocacy demonstrated by the individuals working for these groups. I assure members that our government will work tirelessly to see that these organizations and members are supported through the introduction of new benefits for persons with disabilities.

As I stand here today in support of this important piece of legislation, I strongly believe that expediting the Canada disability benefit bill into law would put an end to the deep-rooted poverty faced by our friends, families and neighbours, and allow them to meet their basic needs throughout their lives. This legislation means more investment to make our communities and workplaces barrier-free for persons with disabilities. For my community, it means a stronger and a more inclusive Richmond Hill.

Today, I invite all of my honourable colleagues to join me in supporting this important piece of legislation so that together we can continue to have Canadians' backs and create a Canada that includes everyone.

• (1535)

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, certainly, everyone will support the need for a disability benefit. I just want to be sure I understand the situation. This bill has been introduced, but we do not know who would be eligible to collect it, how much it would be and when it would be implemented. Is that accurate?

Mr. Majid Jowhari: Madam Speaker, what this bill provides, as I indicated in my speech, is a framework. If I wanted to draw a parallel, I would say to think of a railroad, laying out the groundwork for all of the rails to be drawn for the locomotive to come.

As we go through the 13 provinces and territories, and as we work with all of the organizations and the individuals who are impacted, we will work with those territories and provinces to make sure that it is not only inclusive but also does not have any unintended consequences.

Yes, there might be some ambiguity at this point, but if we pass the bill, get it to committee and start calling witnesses from across Canada, from across organizations, and working with the provinces, we can ensure that we have a very pragmatic program and regulation to roll out.

[Translation]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Madam Speaker, I think that we all agree that this is a statement of good intentions and sound principles. This is not the first time such a bill has been introduced. There is no problem there.

I also agree that, sometimes, it is important to support the principle and then give the bill some substance or correct certain grey areas during study in committee. The Bloc Québécois agrees, and that is why we will vote in favour of the principle. However, we need to at least flesh this bill out a little since there is nothing in it about the terms and conditions.

For example, I am wondering about one very simple thing. Will the benefits be paid to people directly or will the money be sent to Quebec, which will then take care of paying these benefits?

[English]

Mr. Majid Jowhari: Madam Speaker, first of all, I thank the member for supporting this bill. It is important because it lays down the groundwork.

As you said, let us expedite this. Let us get it to the committee, and let us work with all provinces and territories. I am sure a member from the Bloc will be there. I am sure there will be members from all parties and all sides who will represent not only the interests of Quebec but also the interests of all Canadians dealing with disabilities.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind the hon. member to ask questions and respond through the Speaker and to not directly address the member.

Continuing with questions and comments, we have the hon. member for Vancouver Kingsway.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, I think I speak for everybody in the House when I say that any measure that would help people living with diverse needs or with disabilities is a positive measure. However, as has been repeatedly pointed out, this is only a framework, and it does not identify who will receive disability benefits, how much they will get or when.

The fact that this is unnecessary is proven by the legislation, which was introduced by the government and driven by the NDP, to establish a dental benefit. I can tell colleagues how much people will get: \$1,300 per child. I can tell colleagues when it will start: December 1. I can also tell colleagues that it will be given to children under 12.

Why can the government not specify what the benefits would be for people living with disabilities with this legislation when it can do it in other legislation? By the way, we know that nobody in this country is suffering more from the current inflation and difficult economic times than people living with diverse needs, so why can the government not get these benefits to people right now?

• (1540)

Mr. Majid Jowhari: Madam Speaker, I have had the pleasure of working with my hon. colleague at the health committee, and I am particularly looking forward to receiving this bill at that committee.

As I have repeatedly said, and as many of my colleagues in the House have said, we are putting in place a framework. It was introduced in the House on June 2, and now, as soon as we have come back, this is the first item on the agenda. We look forward to an expedited debate so we can get it to committee and have the substantive conversation we need to ensure that the solutions and regulations we develop have the recommendation of the committee and all organizations.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would like to remind members not to bang around when they are speaking because it affects the interpreters. If you have papers near the speaker, it results in the same thing. That happened earlier today. It makes it very hard for the interpreters to hear, and it is hard on their ears as well.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Calgary Shepard has the floor.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be careful for the interpreters' ears not to bang the microphones. I will also be splitting my time with the member for King—Vaughan.

I have been listening to this debate since this morning when the minister rose to introduce the bill and explain what it will do. Many members have now spoken explaining many of the shortcomings of this legislation. While this is a so-called framework, it has taken, as some members have said, over seven years to get to this point. It has been over one year now, by the minister's own admission, of working on it. There are other pieces of legislation, such as that the New Democratic member just reminded the House of, that are coming before here with far more details than this particular piece of legislation.

I have worked on income tax legislation affecting the disability tax credit for persons with disabilities. I have an interest in this particular area. Although I support the legislation, I have deep misgivings about it. I am also disappointed that the government could not provide more clarity to the House while we approve it because that would help us decide on the costs of this legislation when we turn around and explain it to our constituents.

Government Orders

There are 21 paragraphs in clause 11 on regulations. They itemize every single component that should, truthfully, be in statutory legislation. This morning, the minister referred to the guaranteed income supplement, which mirrors comments she made and that were reported by the CBC back on June 2. The article says she said, "Bill C-22 has been designed to lift recipients to an income level similar to that provided by the Guaranteed Income Supplement, which ensures someone receiving the benefit gets around \$19,000 in benefits a year." That is not very difficult. That \$19,000, if it is the target, should be in the legislation.

They had over a year to do this. Justice Canada probably has thousands of lawyers who could help draft this piece of legislation to ensure that all the potentially unique opportunities for provinces to either claw back benefits or change something could be captured. I understand the government is saying that this is to be determined in the future at some point and somehow, but if the House is going to approve it, we would like to know things like criteria, eligibility and who would be eligible to get it. It should not be left up to regulations.

I have a Yiddish proverb, as I always do. I notice some clerks are looking at me and waiting for it. The proverb says, "If you do not want to do something, any excuse is as good as another." It sounds way better in Yiddish when one hears it, but this is exactly the point. The government has said it had a year to do this. It actually had seven years. This is a long-term promise it made. Persons with disabilities will continue to wait to hear whether, in their particular situation, they will meet the criteria or the eligibility requirements, and how this will be paid out.

I want to go into the clause on regulations now because I think there are areas of concern that many members will have when this goes to committee that should be changed.

In clause 11 on regulations, there is paragraph (c), which reads, "respecting the amount of a benefit or the method for determining the amount". It would be left up to the cabinet to decide in the future. I do not quite understand why that is necessary. Just this morning, the minister repeated that she is aiming for an amount similar to GIS, which is \$19,000. That should be there. We actually do not need to leave it up to cabinet to decide.

Paragraph (d) reads, "respecting the manner in which a benefit is to be indexed to inflation". Why? We just spent most of question period talking about the rising cost of inflation and the cost of living. It should be nothing less than a 100% cost of living adjustment. It is called a COLA. It is done already. If there were an issue about it being only done once a year, this is the opportunity to legislate it, perhaps twice or four times a year, using StatsCan, CPI or core inflation. Whatever that number is, the government has the opportunity now to put it into legislation. That should not be under regulations.

Government Orders

Paragraph (e) reads, “respecting payment periods and the amount to be paid each period”. In the GIS legislation, which I saw when I was going through it, this is laid out in legislation. If we are going to mimic the guaranteed income supplement and follow the format, which is not a bad idea that makes a lot of sense, we could just copy the GIS legislation, paste it into this one, move forward and not leave it up to cabinet.

The next one is “respecting the amendment or rescission of decisions made by the Minister”. This is paragraph 11(1)(g), and it would be set by cabinet. A cabinet minister would be sitting at the table to make decisions on whether he or she made the wrong decision and would then determine whether that decision should be rescinded. Again, I do not believe this is a wise way of organizing this legislation.

Paragraph (i) of clause 11 states, “respecting appeals”. The cabinet would be able to decide how appeals will be dealt with. It goes on and on.

• (1545)

Some of these regulations make sense. For administrative penalties and summary conviction provisions on the back end, I think there is some wisdom in this. There is a reference to a very specific section of the Old Age Security Act, section 44.2, in order to ensure there is some type of collaboration between the two programs.

Again, the issue may be that we are still unsure of what some provinces will do. My home province of Alberta has two programs, known by their acronyms as AISH and PDD, which I think will be impacted by this. If there is a concern that some provinces will decide to claw back the benefits, we can just write it into the legislation so people will not lose out. In the past I have supported looking at the disability tax credit and perhaps the Income Tax Act and whether it should be a refundable tax credit. That would use the tax code, instead of setting up an entirely new benefit, in order to reach people who cannot use the DTC right now because they do not earn enough income.

I have had a lot of constituents write to me about this. I want to make sure I read their names into the record. I did read their emails. They are Patti Phillips, Penny Clipperton, Pamela Cowan, Darrell Howard, Sharon Lahey, Jennifer Dobie, Margaret Lima, Loretta Wall, who sent me two emails on this, and Mackenzie. I want to recognize the fact they have written to me on this subject and are interested in ensuring that persons with disabilities have a benefit that works for them and takes them out of poverty.

I am not opposed to the idea of the legislation, and as many members have said already, we can all get behind it, but too much of it is left up to cabinet to decide. During the pandemic, we saw opportunities where I think cabinet got it wrong. With certain transport regulations, it is still holding on to pandemic restrictions such as wearing a mask on aircraft when I do not think any other western country forces people to do so. I do not think wisdom comes from on high in cabinet. I think wisdom comes from the people deciding what is best for them. The representatives of the people are in the House of Commons, so let us vote on constructive, meaty legislation that sets this out.

If there are disagreements, they are matters of law, not matters of policy to be decided through government regulation later on, things that can be changed much faster than pieces of legislation. I would much rather see the disagreements in the future over whether the disability benefit reaches enough Canadians, for example, come back to the House of Commons for a fulsome debate about the benefit, the cost and the eligibility criteria. Those are not things we are able to debate. Actually, probably the only time we will be able to debate them will be at the standing committee this bill is being sent to.

I want to also say that the guaranteed income supplement in the Old Age Security Act is very detailed with respect to how much money someone is eligible for, what the criteria are and how they are determined. It is set out in law, and much less of it is set out in regulations. I would draw the attention of the House to section 12 in part II of the legislation, a lot of which could be applied to this legislation. Again, it is a copy-and-paste job.

For the amount we have been debating so far to ensure that no person with a disability is left in poverty, I want to draw the House's attention to the LICO calculation that Statistics Canada does. In 2020, it said for a household of one person in a population area of half a million people, the LICO is \$22,060. If we are just aiming for the GIS as a target, so about \$19,000 give or take a few hundred dollars up or down, which is the target the minister implied both in June and today in the House, the vast majority of Canadians would not reach that amount. However, I have heard backbenchers on the government caucus side say repeatedly that it would reach a whole bunch of different people.

As my time is drawing to a close, I will say that although I will be supporting the legislation, I have tried to expound on some of the issues I have with most of this being left up to regulations. I hope that at committee we can fix the legislation to provide Canadians better certainty as to whether they would be eligible, how much they would be eligible for, when they would get it and whether it would always be 100% adjusted to inflation so it is not eaten into over time. It does not make much sense to set up a benefit that would lose its real value over time so that people will not be able to buy groceries and the medications they need and will not be able to do all types of things.

I look forward to questions and comments, and I am thankful for the time that has been given to me.

• (1550)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is encouraging to hear members of the Conservative Party stand in their place and say they will be supporting the legislation.

What I have witnessed in listening to the debate, just as the member has in listening to the debate, is there are concerns with regard to the depth and the details, or lack thereof. That is being implied by the opposition parties. I have indicated that it is in fact a framework. The minister responsible for the legislation indicated that she is open to thoughts and ideas with regard to improving it.

Based on the member's comments, is it safe to assume that the Conservative Party will be bringing forward amendments, and one specifically to ensure there would be annual cost-of-living increases in the program? Is that what the member is advocating for?

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, yes, of course. In clause 11, the regulations, right now the government is proposing that the indexation to inflation will be determined by cabinet, both the day it would happen and the amount it would be. It seems infinitely reasonable, when we are talking about a cost-of-living crisis in Canada, that we protect the most vulnerable, to whom we are trying to extend the benefit.

I think the member and others on the government caucus benches have said this is about legislating a principle into law. Well, principles are not legislated. Those are seen in government motions they could put forward. There is a lot to fix in this legislation, and I am sure we will have many amendments at committee to propose.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from Calgary for his speech. To be clear and to the point, the framework is lacking, as my friend said earlier. There is not much of a framework, and we are having a hard time seeing what the end result of all this will be, even though we support in principle what we see on paper.

My question is this: How does my colleague explain the fact that consultations will follow?

We are talking about three years of consultations. Does he think that is a reasonable time frame?

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, my colleague is quite right. It seems to me that we have been waiting several years for this bill, which was introduced today, to be debated in the House. The bill has some flaws. The framework lacks substance considering what is being proposed, and there are no details, either.

It will be up to the Council of the Federation, the provinces and the federal government to negotiate the details later. Thus, people will not have access to these benefits for all those years and will have to wait. I think they are being given false hope and we must avoid doing that in the House.

When we propose a benefit, we have to ensure that once the bill is passed by the House and the Senate, people can count on receiving it the following year or the year after that at the latest.

[English]

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his acknowledgement of my private member's bill, Bill C-223, to put in place a guaranteed livable basic income.

I share many of his concerns, certainly, like the very clear lack of detail in the bill, the fact that there are no protections in the bill that would actually lift anyone out of poverty and the fact that the minister has stated it would take three years before the first person would even receive the benefit when people are struggling now. This is deeply concerning.

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The member seems to be really compassionate in his understanding of human rights and the need to lift people out of poverty. I am wondering if he supports a guaranteed livable basic income for individuals who currently do not have it. We know that a significant number of those with disabilities live in abject poverty, with a lack of response from consecutive Liberal and Conservative governments. We can turn the page on that, and I am wondering if my hon. colleague supports Bill C-223 to put in place a framework for a guaranteed livable basic income.

• (1555)

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, I think debate on Bill C-223 is outside the scope of this legislation.

I approach legislation like this as a father of a young daughter who had a disability when she was born and who passed away from her disability. I met a lot of parents over that time who are taking care of their children until the age of maturity, and the biggest fear they always had is that their children would not be able to provide for themselves. The parents would save through their registered disability savings plan, the RDSP, which was one of the great contributions to the parental system in Canada for looking after children. It was introduced by the late Jim Flaherty when he was the Minister of Finance.

A lot of parents would come to my office and tell me how good it was for them to be given the certainty that when they pass away, it will be a way to look after their children. However, also, nowadays a lot of parents are looking to find out how their child with a disability can both work and have the confidence that comes from work. For those who are unable to work, is there a benefit out there, or is there a way they can get government support for them as well?

Mrs. Anna Roberts (King—Vaughan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-22. However, before I do so, I would like to begin by saying that working alongside Canadians with disabilities and helping parents with children who have disabilities have been a passion of mine my entire life before I entered politics.

For the past eight years, I have volunteered with the Township of King, the municipality I live in, as part of its accessibility advisory committee. As a member of the committee, I have worked together with the mayor and council and made recommendations to the township to ensure that community parks, buildings and facilities are accessible to all residents regardless of their abilities. This way, everyone may feel a sense of belonging in their own communities and fully enjoy the facilities provided for them.

I also spent 10 years volunteering with Creating Alternatives, a not-for-profit organization that supports young adults with developmental disabilities by helping them practise literacy and social and work skills as they transition into adulthood. During my time there, I worked with individuals with a wide range of disabilities to create an environment where they felt safe, accepted and confident.

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As the member of Parliament for King—Vaughan, I have many constituents in my riding who have children with disabilities or struggle with disabilities themselves who take the time to share their personal stories of hardship with me. Because of the rising cost of living, a resident in my riding with a disability cannot afford to drive and is forced to commute using public transit. Her commute to get to her specialist appointment now takes six hours. Let me repeat that. It takes six hours.

Let me share yet another prime example of a hard-core effect that inflation has had on people with disabilities. One man's son had benefited from participating in the activities offered by a local organization five days a week. However, due to “Justinflation”, these same programs have doubled in cost, making them no longer affordable. This father, whom I spoke with just a few short days ago, also shared with me that his wife has since had to leave her job to stay home to care for their son with disabilities, while he has now had to take on a second job. This has taken a serious toll on his mental health and physical well-being. This is only one example of the heartbreaking challenges the government has put on Canadians.

According to Statistics Canada, one in four Canadians is currently living with a disability, 90% of them living below the poverty line and earning less than \$18,000 a year. Let me be clear when I say that I completely understand how important it is that we take care of Canadians with disabilities. We must be there to support our country's most vulnerable residents, but we must do it with an effective plan that will really and truly help them.

We cannot do it with rushed bills. We need to consider important factors when introducing a national disability benefit. We need clear examples and guidelines on how this benefit will impact provincial programs. Canada is a country with many provinces and territories that all have their own set of rules, but Bill C-22 does not account for any of them. We must ensure that Canadians with disabilities and their families can feel confident that their financial security will not be put at risk when applying for this benefit.

In my home province of Ontario, over 600,000 Canadians with disabilities receive benefits from the Ontario disability support program, also known as ODSP. These Canadians rely on programs like ODSP to make ends meet. How will the new Canada disability benefit impact how much money they receive as part of their ODSP? What about other federal programs, like the registered disability savings plan? The lack of information in Bill C-22 does not show how this will impact any provincial program. If the federal program provides additional funds for our constituents, how will this affect any current benefits received at all levels of government? The Liberal government has completely failed to truly consider how this benefit will impact Canadians with disabilities across this country.

• (1600)

Let me remind this House that we have all seen this movie before. This is exactly what happened to millions of seniors after they applied for the Canada emergency response benefit. The government did what it does best: It printed cash and asked questions later. What happened then? Millions of seniors who collected CERB could no longer qualify for the guaranteed income supplement. Once they stopped collecting CERB, they could not receive GIS.

Seniors across Canada were forced to foot the bill because of the government's short-sighted legislation.

We need more benefits and services for Canadians living with disabilities. People are struggling now more than ever to pay their bills and keep up with inflation. Parents are doing everything they can to provide a life of dignity and happiness for their children living with disabilities. However, Bill C-22 would not be able to help them unless it is carefully considered and works with other provinces and territories. The Canada disability benefit would be of no use if it would give money to Canadians with disabilities while reducing the funds they receive from other programs. We need to do our vulnerable communities justice while providing them with the assistance they so desperately need through an effective and well thought-out plan. However, as of right now, Bill C-22 would not provide these details to ensure current programs are in place.

Through the eyes of the international community, Canada is a compassionate and caring country that acts as a force for good. In today's uncertain world, other countries look to us for aid, assistance and hope, but as we are instructed on an airplane, people must put their own oxygen masks on first before they can help others. Therefore, before we consider helping abroad, we need to focus on helping the most vulnerable Canadians here at home. We cannot do that with a vague, unfinished plan like Bill C-22.

I want to end my speech here by quoting one very famous lady who lived with disabilities her entire life. I am sure everybody will recognize Helen Keller. She said, “We are never really happy until we try to brighten the lives of others.” She also said, “The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt with the heart.”

I lost a sister who lived with disabilities through no fault of her own, by an accident. When she was four and a half years old, she was hit by a drunk driver. Her disability benefits did not cover the basic needs that she required. Thank God for family support or she would have ended up in the streets.

• (1605)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the intervention from my colleague from King—Vaughan, in particular her talking about her own personal examples at the beginning and toward the end of her speech. However, I was quite surprised by the manner in which she aggressively attacked the rolling out of CERB.

CERB was a program that was intended to get money into the hands of people as quickly as possible. Over five million people had money in their bank accounts within five weeks of the World Health Organization's declaring a global pandemic. Indeed, the intent was to take care of Canadians as quickly as possible. Canadians were relying on their government at the time to do exactly that.

Would the member have preferred to see the CERB program roll out much slower back in March and April 2020? Does she think that it would have been better for the money not to arrive at the beginning of April but rather perhaps in June and July if it meant that we could meet the standards that she is proposing?

Mrs. Anna Roberts: Madam Speaker, all I am saying is that CERB was a program that had to be implemented given the circumstances, but the program did not stipulate the conditions. Unless we can provide clarity on any funds that are delivered to individuals, we cannot administer programs and expect individuals to pay the consequences after they are over.

[Translation]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from King—Vaughan for her speech and for sharing her own experiences.

I myself had an uncle who was in a motorcycle accident when he was 19, and it had long-lasting effects. He lived with disabilities for the rest of his life. These experiences leave a mark.

Getting back to Bill C-22, I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on an important topic that she touched on briefly. Quebec has a significant social safety net in place, so this bill must complement the programs that exist already and must not override them. The measures in the bill must also respect the jurisdictions of the federal government, Quebec and the provinces.

I would like to hear her thoughts on these two big and very important points that remain to be clarified in Bill C-22.

[English]

Mrs. Anna Roberts: Madam Speaker, if I understood the question correctly, we need to ensure that the program that is going to be implemented at the federal level offsets or coordinates with the provinces. We cannot give money with one hand and expect to take it back with the other. That is not going to help.

In our province alone, we have programs for individuals with disabilities. Unfortunately, due to the cost of inflation, those programs are not affordable to everyone. We need to ensure that we are going to increase that money without affecting the provincial programs.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague across the way for what she has said and for fighting for people living with disabilities. It is so incredibly important. We have heard in the House about the rising inflation and how it is hitting those living with disabilities harder.

Uniquely, some provincial members of Parliament in our province of Ontario have put themselves on what they call a “welfare budget”. They are trying to live on what people who are in the Ontario disabilities program or Ontario Works receive. I think they

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are trying to live on \$47.60 for groceries each week to show how incredibly important it is for them to receive increases.

Now, the provincial government has only given 5% and those members are calling for that to be doubled. I wonder if the member supports initiatives like that as she has been so positive about ensuring that people living with disabilities have the income they need to survive.

• (1610)

Mrs. Anna Roberts: Madam Speaker, last week I visited an organization in our community called Reena, which provides housing for people with disabilities. It has created an environment where people with disabilities can share their experiences. There are staff there who will help and assist them. One of the things it does is that it has programs to assist with funding. The funding is not always enough, because some of these programs cost money. I agree that we need to include an increase so that they can at least buy the minimum. Right now, out of the \$895 that one recipient is receiving at Reena, \$500 of that goes to housing. There is not much left over, so we do need to do better.

Mr. Tim Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Malpeque.

It is a privilege to be part of this debate today. I would like to start by talking about poverty reduction. Simply put, the legislation before us today would reduce poverty for hundreds of thousands of working-age Canadians with disabilities. We are working to implement Canada's first poverty reduction strategy. That strategy includes concrete poverty reduction targets on top of establishing Canada's official poverty line to track progress.

One of these targets was a 20% reduction in poverty relative to 2015 levels by 2020. I am proud to say that we reached this objective ahead of schedule. We did so because of the actions we have taken and the investments we have made since 2015. Those investments include the Canada child benefit, the Canada workers benefit, a strengthened guaranteed income supplement and Canada's COVID-19 economic response plan.

However, we all know that more needs to be done. Poverty has many faces, and we know that under-represented groups are among the most affected. Poverty impacts vulnerable groups such as single-parent families, older single adults and persons with disabilities. I am proud that Canada's first poverty reduction strategy recognizes that vulnerable groups of Canadians are more at risk of poverty.

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Canadians with disabilities have historically been affected by economic disparities. According to a 2017 Canadian survey on disability, working-age Canadians with disabilities are twice as likely to live in poverty as working-age persons without disabilities. A third of people with severe disabilities were living below the poverty line. That is why we have been working hard to build a more accessible and inclusive Canada.

In 2015, Canada got its first-ever minister responsible for persons with disabilities. In 2019, the Accessible Canada Act came into force, followed by the accessible Canada regulations in 2021. These help to remove and prevent barriers to accessibility. Most recently we made two key appointments to advance accessibility and disability inclusion as Canada's first chief accessibility officer and first accessibility commissioner assumed their duties.

Over the past two years, the global pandemic highlighted and deepened the entrenched inequities faced by Canadians with disabilities. Persons with disabilities already face a higher cost of living, and because of the pandemic, these additional costs have been exacerbated. They are facing increased costs for medical supplies, medication, transportation and assistive services.

As part of Canada's COVID-19 economic response plan, we provided a one-time payment for up to \$600 for persons with disabilities to help face the increased costs during the pandemic. After further consultations with stakeholders, we expanded that one-time payment to include nearly two million Canadians with disabilities who are receiving federal disability benefits.

However, today we are talking about Bill C-22, and we know that could help us do even more. Establishing the new Canada disability benefit would create a more accessible and inclusive Canada, while also addressing long-standing financial hardships. It is a proactive approach in its creation and delivery. This legislation would help reduce poverty and benefit thousands of working-age Canadians with disabilities. This new benefit would help lift working-age persons with disabilities out of poverty and bring long-term financial security. Its aim is to supplement, not replace, existing federal, provincial and territorial supports. This benefit would make it easier for persons with disabilities to access federal benefits, programs and services, and help to foster a culture of inclusion.

The Canada disability benefit would help working-age persons with disabilities to fully participate in our society and our economy. It is an investment in the realization of a fully inclusive society. For many people with disabilities and for those who care for them, daily life may not be easy. Disabilities affect the entire family. Meeting the complex needs of a person with a disability can put families under a great deal of stress: emotional, financial and sometimes even physical.

Only a few days ago I spoke to a mom in my community, Angela, and her son Lucas, who is living with cerebral palsy. She, like any parent, is concerned for Lucas and his ability to live independently. Angela is hoping Bill C-22 could assist with the transition and living expenses for Lucas when he begins to live independently. For her and for Lucas to take the time to meet with me at the Woolwich Memorial Centre, where I set up a remote office for the day, told me how much she cares about Lucas. She told me of many

others in our community who are focused on helping those who need more support.

By the way, Lucas was very at home in the hockey rink where we met. He is a defenceman for the Woolwich Thrashers Sledge Hockey team. With a nickname of "Bulldozer", I am glad we met off the ice and not on it.

• (1615)

I have also recently spoken to another couple, parents Grant and Carol, on a number of occasions, at a local town hall on affordability and also at a sit-down meeting in Elmira.

They are caring for their son, who is working as a paralegal while living with cerebral palsy. At some point, caring parents like Grant and Carol know they might not be around to care for their son. They want to ensure that he has the best chance at success.

It is stories like these and others that I have heard in my community that motivate and drive me. People with disabilities need health care and health programs for the same reasons as everyone else: to stay well, active and a part of our community. Having a disability does not mean a person is not healthy or cannot be healthy. Being healthy means the same thing for everyone: staying well so that we can lead full, active lives, to be able to enjoy a full life and have the support we need to fully engage in society. We want to build a community where everyone can, and does, belong.

There are things we can do to reduce poverty. There are policies that can make a difference and, as we know, we are already seeing results. As policy-makers, we are responsible for improving the lives of all Canadians, especially marginalized and vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities. As policy-makers, our responsibility today is to support Bill C-22 and move forward together with the Canada disability act.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, there has been discussion today about how we are going to work with the provinces and territories to make sure they are not clawing back benefits.

How is the government going to harmonize all the other federal disability benefit programs that exist to ensure that people are supported but there is no overlap?

Mr. Tim Louis: Madam Speaker, one of the themes we are hearing today is making sure we are protecting the most vulnerable and protecting people with disabilities. We want to make sure this benefit is supplementing what we are doing and is not going to be clawed back. We heard those words. We do not want that to happen. I am encouraged to hear that all parties are looking out for people. We want to make sure we can work together with the provinces.

It is going to be different with each province. We are going to have to get there in negotiating, but I think we are all on the same side on this one. It is encouraging to hear that we want to make sure this benefit is a supplement to all the other benefits that already exist, as opposed to being a replacement for them.

[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, I commend my colleague from Kitchener—Conestoga on his speech and also for the week he spent in Quebec City this summer perfecting his French. I hope to hear him give his response partly in the language of Molière.

Since the beginning of the debate on Bill C-22, I have been hearing a lot about how this is a framework that we need to build on. There is indeed a lot missing from this bill. We keep hearing about good intentions, and obviously we agree in principle that we must do more to include persons with disabilities. We must improve their living conditions. Everyone agrees on that. No one can be against apple pie, as they say back home.

What I am seeing, however, is that not only are members getting used to doing the government's work at our riding offices, but it has now gotten to the point where we have to do the government's work in committee too. Bill C-22, as introduced, is clearly incomplete and inadequate. We must work on it to improve it, which is what the Bloc Québécois intends to do.

My question for the member for Kitchener—Conestoga is this: Why introduce a bill with so little content, on a subject that is so incredibly important?

• (1620)

Mr. Tim Louis: Madam Speaker, now I am nervous. I am going to try to say a few words in French, for my colleague and my French teacher.

It is important for me and for all Canadians that we work together with the provinces and territories.

[English]

We left room because we need to work together. Different provinces look different. Some are more advanced than others. Quebec has set a strong standard for what we can do together, and I think we can learn from each other. I am not afraid of that work. Leaving space, I am especially encouraged, because it feels like everyone is on the same side. We can work on the details and we can make sure that this works across Canada. I have every confidence that we can do it.

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, people with disabilities have been suffering from higher bills, but big corporations are making gross profits on the backs of vulnerable people. Since 2015, the Liberals have wanted to look like they care about people with disability, but these empty bills will offer no concrete help and risk delaying help to people desperately in need of it for another three years. They promised to deliver this without delay, yet here we are.

Instead of helping people now, why are the Liberals delaying this support for people with disabilities?

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Mr. Tim Louis: Madam Speaker, I was so engrossed in the question that I forgot I was the one who had to answer it.

It was before my time, but since the Liberals took government in 2015, the Canada child benefit was one of the things we did that was targeted support. The guaranteed income supplement was targeted support. Canada's worker benefit was targeted support, as was raising taxes on the wealthiest Canadians and lowering taxes for the middle class. It is that targeted support that we have been working on. It is slow progress. We are working on it and we are going to keep going there. I would disagree that we have done nothing, but I think we can work together and get more done.

Mr. Heath MacDonald (Malpeque, Lib.): Madam Speaker, so much passion coming from all sides of the House on a very important issue is extremely nice to hear.

I am pleased to rise today and participate in this important debate on Bill C-22. I listened with great care to the remarks of the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion. Since her appointment in 2015 as Canada's first-ever cabinet minister responsible for persons with disabilities and accessibility, she has worked tirelessly to ensure that persons with disabilities can fully participate in all aspects of society and the economy. She lives it.

Let us be absolutely clear. Bill C-22 is groundbreaking legislation. It proposes the establishment of a new Canada disability benefit that would help reduce poverty for hundreds of thousands of working-age Canadians with disabilities.

In my previous life, I had the opportunity to work and advocate alongside several organizations representing those living with disabilities. The challenges are real, and we all know the pandemic has been especially hard for persons with disabilities. It has brought into clear focus the financial hardships experienced by some of our most vulnerable citizens. In the 2020 Speech from the Throne, we promised to bring forward a disability inclusion action plan, which is being finalized, and a new Canada disability benefit. We are fulfilling that promise today.

As with any legislation, the preamble should clearly articulate the principles that will guide and enable the legislation all the way through to implementation. The preamble in Bill C-22 meets that test and then some. It leaves no doubt that our intention with the Canada disability benefit is to reduce poverty.

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We know that far too many Canadians with disabilities live below the poverty line. We also know that persons with disabilities face the real and troubling prospect of losing their basic financial support and other benefits once they are employed and on a payroll. The question then becomes how we design a new benefit that will respond to this challenge, how we find the balance and thread the needle. Should members support this legislation, it will be referred to our colleagues on the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities. By the discussions here today, I am sure that will happen and the appropriate outcome will be attained.

I have no doubt that the committee's review will be of considerable interest to stakeholders, including Canadians with disabilities, whose lived experiences can inform us on how the new benefit ought to be designed. That is why a key principle in the preamble specifically refers to "nothing without us" and specifies that "persons with disabilities must be involved in the development and design of laws, policies, programs, services and structures". I would not be surprised if members wanted to see this bill become law next week or the week after, but we need to get it right.

I would remind my colleagues that members of this chamber and the other chamber were able to review the Accessible Canada Act in a timely and responsible manner. It should also be noted that the Accessible Canada Act was developed following one of the most inclusive consultations in our country's history. More than 6,000 Canadians and 100 organizations shared their views and ideas on what an accessible Canada meant to them.

The Accessible Canada Act was a historic achievement. It was arguably the most significant piece of legislation on disability rights in Canada since the charter, and it became law on June 21, 2019. The act represents a seismic shift that brings a new accessibility lens to everything we do, challenging us to think differently and to do things very differently. It reaffirms our commitment to making Canada barrier-free and accessible for everyone.

Instead of having to fight for basic access and inclusion after the fact, the new law requires more than 5,000 federally regulated entities, including government departments, Crown corporations and private sector companies, to publish their plans for identifying, removing and preventing barriers to accessibility and inclusion, and to report to all Canadians on their progress in implementing these plans.

At its core, the Accessible Canada Act is about ensuring that all persons with disabilities are treated with dignity and have equal opportunity, autonomy and involvement in their communities. We are making progress. In April, we appointed Stephanie Cadieux as the first-ever chief accessibility officer. Shortly afterwards, Michael Gottheil was named as the first accessibility commissioner to the Canadian Human Rights Commission. These appointments represent two important milestones in implementing the Accessible Canada Act.

• (1625)

Another good example of our progress is the work to create accessibility standards. The Accessible Canada Act established a new organization, Accessibility Standards Canada, which is now developing standards for federally regulated spaces with input from the

disability community. Priority standards include the built environment; emergency egress and wayfinding, which is a technology that helps visually impaired persons know where they are and how to get from one location to another; and the built environment procurement.

While the standards developed by Accessibility Standards Canada are voluntary in nature, they are a critical component of realizing a barrier-free country by 2040, as they have the power to support widespread adoption of an inclusive design mindset. Those standards will first be applied to federally regulated spaces, and it is our hope that they will contribute to an undeniable culture shift across Canada towards disability inclusion.

However, the public service is not waiting for the standards. Federal departments and agencies are busy developing their accessibility plans and working to implement a whole-of-government approach under the public service's widespread accessibility strategy.

On the disability inclusion action plan, the third pillar of the plan relates directly to the objectives of the Accessible Canada Act. It focuses on accessible and inclusive communities. Actions under this pillar will include not only ways to address physical barriers in our communities and workplaces but also the barriers that prevent persons with disabilities from fully participating in their communities and the economy.

For example, budget 2022 proposed to make new investments in accessible books, including the creation of a new equitable access to reading program. This new program will help create more accessible books for Canadians with print disabilities, enabling them to better participate in society and our economy.

As we look ahead to the world after the pandemic, it is critical that we do so with the idea of making the recovery as inclusive as possible. This brings me back to the bill before us today. If passed, the Canadian disability benefit would reduce poverty and better support persons with disabilities to fully participate in our economy and our society.

Canadians with disabilities live in every corner of our great country and in every constituency of every member of this House. Today, we have an opportunity to make a real difference and help our most vulnerable citizens. It is time that they receive the support they need. Let us do the right thing. Let us build a more inclusive Canada and a better future for Canadians with disabilities. Let us give all the people in Canada a real and fair chance to succeed. I was told once by an individual who had a severe disability that all of us are only one accident away from having a disability.

I ask my hon. colleagues to join me in supporting this much-needed legislation.

• (1630)

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to first welcome everyone back.

One of the things I have seen today is the great focus on individuals with disabilities and their stories, and I think that is tremendously important. However, we as parliamentarians sometimes gloss past and do not speak specifically enough to the details.

I want to thank the member for Malpeque. His work on the finance committee with me has been very meaningful. He is a very intelligent member, and I want to see if he is concerned, as I am, that there are no numbers in this particular bill.

While the goal of reducing poverty for persons with disabilities is obviously front and centre in the government's communications, it does not actually give a number as to what level of support we would expect across the country. I know that this is a challenging country, but the other part is that the minister can change that amount or a new government can come in and change that amount at any time. Is the member concerned that we are giving too much power to one individual and one government to tell people what level of support they should get?

Mr. Heath MacDonald: Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague on the finance committee, and I certainly hope that we reconvene tomorrow at our first meeting.

It is always concerning when there are no numbers, but I think that the bill before us today is such an important and broad bill that sending it to committee and evaluating it at that level is most appropriate. Also, dealing with the provinces on an individual basis to negotiate the different kinds of issues that may be relevant in the funding agreements within the provinces is most appropriate. I would add that the bill will likely cross the table of the finance committee as well.

[Translation]

Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech.

I want to start by saying that people with disabilities are already grieving because of their disability. There is no way of knowing when an accident is going to happen. People can lose a limb, or they can be born that way.

I am wondering what this bill has to say about eligibility. I know that Mr. Parent, from the organization Finautonome, says that eligibility is a high-priority issue that needs to be addressed. I would like to know what the government is planning to do about it.

[English]

Mr. Heath MacDonald: Madam Speaker, I believe the evaluation process that this bill has to go through is broad, and it has to be inclusive. We have to get this right.

This is a one-shot deal to some extent. I believe that, with all the endorsements from all sides and all parties in this House, we will

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get it right when it is sent to committee for its policy and regulations.

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, more than 5.3 million Canadians live with some form of disability and over one million Canadians who live with disability live in deep poverty, yet the Liberal government wasted a year of this Parliament before retabling this empty shell of a Canadian disability benefit act that excludes far too many details.

Who will be eligible for this benefit? How much will this benefit be? When will persons with disabilities start to finally see this benefit?

Mr. Heath MacDonald: Madam Speaker, I believe sincerely in our minister. I think she has lived the experience. I have heard her speak on Prince Edward Island to several groups pertaining to disabilities and organizations. She wears her heart on her sleeve and I appreciate everything she has done.

The former hon. member for Malpeque advocated on behalf of persons with disabilities and developing programs for accessibility across the country, mainly in Atlantic Canada and the Caribbean. I certainly see that as a real benefit to Canada as a whole and persons living with disabilities.

• (1635)

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, I too would like to speak to this today. What would sum this bill up the best is, "We are the government; just trust us". That essentially is what this bill is all about. It is an empty shell of a bill. In some ways it is lacking in courage on the part of the government. People might ask me why I say that. Governing is hard work and it takes effort. I would say that this bill has not put in the hard work and has not taken the effort to do what it says it is supposed to do.

On the face of it, it says that this is a disability benefit bill. Those are nice words at the top of an empty piece of paper because we do not know what the benefit is. We do not know who is eligible for it. We do not know how it would affect disability benefits that are already in place across the country. We just do not know a lot of things. Essentially, it is a blank piece of paper with three words on the top: Canada disability benefit. That, to my thinking, is not governing the country. That is not providing leadership to this country. When someone is the government, they get the privilege of providing leadership. They get the privilege of putting forward ideas. They get the privilege of drafting the legislation, putting it forward and opening it up to critique. However, this is an extremely hard bill to critique.

As the official opposition, it is our job to oppose legislation. As the Bible says, "iron sharpens iron", and it is our job to sharpen it and fix the holes. However, all these things are not in this bill. It is very difficult to say that this bill is going to impact people living in my riding in a particular way because we literally do not know. The bill does not say. It is an empty bill. I would note that when the member for Hamilton Centre, with whom I disagree on a lot of things, calls this bill an empty bill, we are both saying the same thing. I would say that is a unifying thing perhaps in this House.

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The fact that the Liberals are not willing to put forward the details of this in many ways seems like a cop-out. It seems like they are putting forward this bill, but they do not want to risk opening themselves up to some criticism around it. Therefore, they are going to let a minister at some point in the future detail out all of the things. That is a challenge. I do not deny that. However, that is the luxury of being the government. They get to put forward and propose the bill. In this particular instance, I do not feel at all that the government has actually proposed the bill. It has just said that these are the notions of what it wants to do and that we should support it in that. We are going to support the bill being sent to committee, and we are hoping that, as this bill goes through the process, some of these things will be fleshed out.

However, it is awfully hard to vote on something on which the government is saying, "Trust us". Why should we trust the government? We have watched the government operate this country for seven years, and we have learned there are things we should not trust the government on. When it comes to running basic programs in this country, this country is falling apart. Try to get a passport currently. Over the last number of years, that has been an immense challenge. Try to immigrate to this country. My office is inundated with immigration cases and I imagine that my office is not the worst in this country in terms of being inundated. That is a reality. I do not trust the government when it says, "Just trust us". I want to see what it is actually proposing and I want to know the things I am voting on in specific detail.

Moving on from there, I want to talk a bit about the idea of subsidiarity. It is probably a more Catholic idea. I am a reform guy, but it is more of a Catholic idea. It is the idea that those closest to the individual bear the first responsibility. In that respect, I just want to recognize the organizations, the institutions and the people. What it comes down to is the people who take care of, who help with and who employ folks who live with disabilities.

● (1640)

I will start with the family, for everyone who I know who lives with a disability is an integral part of a family and, in many cases, becomes a defining feature of a particular family. I have a good friend who has a severely disabled son and their son, who is known by the name James, is a defining feature of that family, the particular house that they live in and the particular vehicle that they drive. Many of the vacations they go on are determined by and function around that individual.

I want to thank the families that do this hard work. This is hard work, and families are generally the most well positioned to take care of individuals with disabilities. That is the law of nature. That is the law of reality. In many cases, we see that function amazingly.

When it comes to the broader community, I know that many people are part of a church community. I know that my friend relies heavily on his church community for help in taking care of his son. I know that a big part of how they function is through folks coming in to help out during the week so they can go grocery shopping or these kinds of things. Their church community is a big part of taking care of a person with disabilities.

Then we have employers who reach out. Before I was elected, I worked at the auto mechanic shop, and we have an organization in

town called the Blue Heron Support Services Association. They run a day care program for folks with disabilities, and part of that program was to find a job for each one of these individuals.

In the auto mechanic shop where I worked, the Chrysler dealership, they had one of these employees from this program. His name was Wayne. I got to know Wayne very well. It was his job to help out with a whole bunch of tasks, but that gave Wayne a job. When people asked him what he did for a living, he told everybody that he worked at the local mechanic shop. It was a big, fulfilling part of his life, and caused all of us to interact with Wayne on a daily basis, which was a rewarding experience for all of us.

I want to thank places like Stephani Motors, which helped sponsor Wayne in this placement, and Blue Heron Services, which is doing amazing work making sure that these people have a standard of living, are happy and fulfilled in what they do. That is some amazing work that Blue Heron Services and Stephani Motors do in my home town. I also recognize the work that ECHO Society in Whitecourt does with a similar program.

All of these things wrap around to ensure that folks living with disabilities can get jobs, have a place to live, and have an engaging life, as there is often a big recreational component to these programs as well, to ensure that they are a part of the community.

I want to come away from the utilitarian idea of humanity, that one is only as valuable as one's utility. I reject that. I think that we are endowed with dignity because we are human, not because of our utility. I want to mention that, for sure.

Then we want to talk about the broader civil society organizations across the country, the disability rights advocacy groups and things like that, that come and meet with me often. I want to recognize them for their work as well.

I guess I just want to focus a little on a resilient community. They often say that it takes a village to raise a young person. In many respects, that is the case. My experience, and I talked about Wayne already, is how the business community, the church communities and the local families are involved with that. Those kinds of things all wrap around to ensure that these people are part of our community.

I want to mention the feeling the minister talked about at the beginning of her speech, that of being valued. That is an important aspect of whatever we do in this disability space, ensuring that folks feel valued in our society.

• (1645)

Shifting gears a little, I want to talk a bit about the whole idea of poverty and the disability benefit money being given out. Over the last number of years, I have heard it is getting more and more difficult to survive on the benefits the government gives out. In Alberta, we have a system called AISH. I think it is generous enough. There are some issues around the fact that, if people make money, they get a one-to-one dollar clawback, which is a challenge for many people.

However, the inflation that is currently happening, the provincial government really has no control over. The provincial government is responsible for the benefit, but it has no control over the inflation. We are watching things like food, housing and heating going up in price dramatically, and the government benefits are not able to keep up.

Inflation is driven entirely by the federal government. The federal government is responsible for our monetary policy. It is the one responsible for the printing of money in this country. While the provincial government is often responsible for the outlay of service, the federal government is responsible for how much those services cost, given the fact that it has been driving the inflation.

On the one hand, we see the government doing things that are raising the price of other things, and then saying it has to fix the problem. Then it is just handing out more money on the other hand. That is going to have a ping-pong effect, as when there are fewer resources and more money, things are going to get more expensive, and then there has to be more money.

It just seems to me that the government should be focusing on reducing the costs of some of the costs of living, such as food, clothing, shelter and all that kind of stuff. It should work on ensuring that folks who are living on a fixed income could continue to live on that fixed income, rather than have inflation eat away at it and have their housing cost 50% of what they are taking in when it used to only cost 30% of what they are taking in.

This inflation piece is a big part of this disability discussion. Perhaps that is the reason why the government has not laid out a number, because in this dramatically inflationary time, had it laid out a number a year and a half or two years ago, that number may have looked fine then, but today that same number would not look nearly as good, given the fact that housing costs have doubled over the last two years. Maybe that is why the government has left this as an empty bill. Perhaps that is one of the reasons we see this.

For the last point, I want to go back to what the minister was talking about around ensuring that folks with disabilities feel valued. I was elected in 2015, and since the time I got elected, there has been a change in the disability groups' requests and the things that they bring to me to talk about.

I just want to talk about the euthanasia regime in this country and how the disability community is coming to realize that the euthanasia regime that has been put in place, starting in 2017, with significant overhauls in 2020, has changed their sense of value in our Canadian society. I would hope that the minister and the government recognize that the changes they have made to the euthanasia regime in this country has led to that.

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I have a number of headlines that have come up across the country, such as "Is Choosing Death Too Easy in Canada?", "Are Canadians being driven to assisted suicide by poverty or healthcare crisis?" and "Why is Canada euthanizing the poor?"

These are headlines that have come up in my newsfeed over the last few years. These are from The New York Times, The Guardian and The Spectator, which are all, interestingly, newspapers that are based outside of Canada. It is particularly interesting that it is noted in the article from the Spectator that the CBC had an article saying there is no link between poverty and choosing medically assisted death.

• (1650)

It is interesting that the CBC would choose to report that, given that other countries around the world have been reporting the opposite. In Canada, we have had a case of a veteran with PTSD being offered euthanasia by his case worker. That is not how the Canada I want to represent should be dealing with folks who are living with disabilities. That is not how we want it. Therefore, it is a challenge for me to say that the government is really concerned about folks who are living with disabilities when it has been the architect of a euthanasia regime that is causing people living with disabilities to feel less valued in our society and pushed more toward euthanasia.

The Euthanasia Prevention Coalition has highlighted a series of cases that I do not think were ever anticipated when the euthanasia regime was brought in. These are headlines from news articles it has found as well: "Alberta man requested euthanasia based on poverty", "Veterans Affairs Canada worker advocates euthanasia for PTSD", "Shopping for a death doctor in Canada", "Gwen is seeking euthanasia because she cannot access medical treatment", "Euthanasia, disability and poverty in Canada", "Euthanasia for long COVID and poverty", and "Canada's MAID law is the most permissive...in the world".

These are cases that keep getting highlighted to me by the disability community, which is very concerned about the feelings of value we place on folks who live with disabilities in this country. We want to ensure they are valued in this country and do not feel they need to pursue euthanasia instead of getting the health care treatment or the housing they need. These are documented cases across the country that I think warrant some care and attention given the fact we are here discussing the plight of disabled people across the country.

To sum up, I call on the Liberal government to start governing. This bill is an empty bill. It has some nice words on the top of it, but it fails to outline the details of what we are trying to pursue here with it.

I want to recognize the hard work of the organizations that support the ideas of subsidiarity, family, church, civil society, and the government getting involved to help folks who are in dire straits. I want to recognize the good work of organizations such as the ECHO Society, Blue Heron Support Services and the many organizations across my riding that do good work on this.

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I want to also recognize the deep impact inflation is having on folks who live on a fixed income and how they are struggling more and more given the out-of-control inflation the government has caused in this country. I want to recognize the impacts of the carbon tax, in particular how it, and the increased costs of groceries and home heating, really do affect our folks living on a fixed income.

Finally, I want to recognize how the euthanasia regime that has been put in place in this country is causing folks across the country who live with disabilities to not feel valued and to consider euthanasia rather than getting the supports they need. I would tell those who find themselves in that situation to reach out to their local community members and organizations, and their local member of Parliament if need be, so they can help hook them up with the supports they need so nobody in this country feels undervalued.

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Calgary Midnapore, The Economy; the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, Government Policies; the hon. member for Vancouver East, Indigenous Affairs.

• (1655)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, first I must say that I disagree with the member's conclusions on economic policies with respect to inflation. To imply that provinces and even municipalities do not play a role in inflation is just outright wrong. They do, in fact, have an impact. One only need look at provincial variances, even within provinces. The member used the example of housing. That is something I would expand upon, but it is not what my question is about.

My question is about the legislation. Everyone in this chamber supports Bill C-22. That has been very clear. Yes, there are some issues surrounding the details within the legislation, but there seems to be a general feeling that those issues could be dealt at the standing committee. My friend knows how busy the chamber can get and how limited the time is here, whether it is because of the GST tax credit legislation that will be coming up, opposition days or the dental care legislation. We have a good opportunity to try to pass this legislation so that it at least goes to committee, and then we can have all sorts of debate come third reading.

Would the member not agree, given that everyone seems to be supporting the legislation, that it would be in the best interests of Canadians and people with disabilities to see the legislation go to committee? It seems to me that the principle of the legislation is universally accepted and supported in the House, so why not get it to committee?

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Madam Speaker, I always appreciate the thoughts of the member for Winnipeg North. We get to hear a lot of them.

Nonetheless, yes, it sounds like the sentiment of the bill, a benefit for the disability community in this country, is universally supported in this place. The devil is in the details and that is why we are here to debate things.

I would point out again, as I did at the beginning of my speech, the lack of governance the Liberals are providing by not providing details as to how much the benefit will be, who is eligible and how it will be rolled out. All of these things should be in the bill. Those are the prerogatives of governing, and I would criticize the Liberals again for bringing forward a vacuous bill when they have been promising something like this for over three years.

[Translation]

Ms. Andr  anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Peace River—Westlock for his speech.

I want to tell him that, as a Quebecker, I value the right to die with dignity, and I support the non-partisan work that was done in Quebec in that regard. The intellectual shortcut he took from Bill C-22 to the issue of euthanasia is extremely dangerous.

That said, I have a question for the hon. member. The study of Bill C-22's predecessor, Bill C-35, ended a year ago when the election was called. Incidentally, today also marks the first anniversary of my re-election as the member for Shefford. I want to once again thank the voters in my riding for placing their trust in me.

At present, Bill C-22 provides for three years of consultations. That is a long time for persons with a disability who need help immediately and who are being affected by inflation right now.

I also want to remind my colleague that I am very involved with disability organizations. My partner and I have done a lot of volunteer work, and a member of my family had a disability and passed away.

[English]

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her work. It sounds like we are in agreement that this bill is lacking in details. I was very much looking forward to having details on this bill.

As the member noted as well, this bill was in the works prior to an election that nobody asked for or needed, so I am hoping, like her, that the Liberals will be able to put some details in the window. We will see what we get at committee.

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Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, I agree with my hon. colleague that this bill is lacking. The Liberals have had seven years to put it in place, but there are no details and there always seems to be quick solutions. I will give a couple of examples. Pipelines received \$2.2 billion in fossil fuel subsidies, something the Conservatives supported. The Conservatives were in power forever and had years to do something. There is all this money for corporations and all this money for corporate bailouts, but those with disabilities and organizations have to beg for a pittance.

Now the minister is saying that people have to wait for three years. I have offered a tangible solution. I put forward a bill, Bill C-223, in support of a guaranteed livable basic income that would lift people out of poverty, in addition to current and future government supports. The Conservatives talk about government waste. I can say there is lots of corporate waste that they continually support.

I am wondering if the member supports my bill, Bill C-223, as he is so worried about lifting people out of poverty. It is a framework for a guaranteed livable basic income.

● (1700)

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Madam Speaker, I must say that very few bills have elicited such a response as Bill C-223. In my constituency office, I have had thousands of people communicate with me over that particular bill. I will not be supporting it. However—

Mr. Matthew Green: Contrary to all the emails.

Mr. Arnold Viersen: No, that is not contrary at all, actually. Most of the emails were calling for me to very much not support that particular bill.

However, I would point out that it is within the NDP's power to change this Parliament, as it has put together a confidence agreement with the government. While NDP members seem to share my disappointment in Bill C-22, I would point out that they are continuing to support the government.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, as the member for Peace River—Westlock points out, Canadians with disabilities need more than a message. They need funds in the bank. I share his concern that the text of the bill is the exact same as it was in June 2021.

Given the member's support for moving the bill ahead, can he share whether he also supports getting emergency funds to Canadians with disabilities who need it now, recognizing that the bill is not going to see the light of day for quite some time?

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Madam Speaker, I am not entirely sure what the member means by “emergency funds”, but I would again point out that I am very disappointed that this is such an empty and vacuous bill. The prerogative of the government is that it gets to propose things, but this is hardly a proposal. This is three words on the top of a blank page.

Members keeping saying to send the bill to committee, but I am not exactly sure how the committee will flesh some of these things out. I am sure we will hear from thousands of Canadians on what they think the government ought to do, but regarding how the bill

will get fleshed out at committee, given my experience with committee, I am not exactly sure what to expect from that process.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, I think the member brought up a lot of the shortfalls of the bill. The government, over the last few years, has been promising that it would bring it through, but we see that most of the details are being left up to cabinet to decide.

I want to put this to him. Twenty-one regulations would be created through this piece of legislation, but it is leaving it up to cabinet to decide very simple things, such as when the benefit would be paid and what the rules would be for recision, which means how it would get paid back. The one that is most concerning to me is subclause 11(d), which says, “respecting the manner in which a benefit is to be indexed to inflation”. We have a cost-of-living crisis in this country. It is becoming more and more unaffordable, and when we go to the grocery store we see it. It is sticker shock for most people. The people on a fixed income, as the member was saying, are the ones who are hurt the worst, especially at the grocery store but also on their rent. Month after month, it is becoming more difficult to pay those bills, and now we would leave it up to cabinet to decide how this will be fixed in the future, for our benefit.

Could the member perhaps weigh in with his opinion on whether this is a particular area that should be amended in order to provide certainty for persons with disabilities?

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Madam Speaker, the bulk of the bill is on the so-called regulations side of things. Again, I do not know if we can determine in the regulations that the minister should tie this to a particular percentage point or something like that around inflation.

I note that inflation is probably the number one reason that folks from the disability community are communicating with me to say that it is getting harder and harder to live on what they receive. It is interesting that the government would not just put in the bill that this would be indexed to inflation.

● (1705)

Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Whitby, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook.

It gives me great pleasure today to rise in the House to speak to a piece of legislation that I think is essential to supporting Canadians, reducing poverty, making life more affordable and building a more inclusive and accessible Canada. Bill C-22 is another step forward on the path to reducing poverty in Canada.

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Our government has been focusing on uplifting Canadians and identifying the barriers that limit people in communities from economic advancement and participation. It is why, in 2018, Canada's first-ever Opportunity for All poverty reduction strategy was launched. Opportunity for All focused on government action to reduce poverty through dignity, opportunity and inclusion, resilience, and security. These are the pillars that have guided our government's work in identifying how to better serve Canadians, while also measuring the progress of our efforts in tackling poverty. Poverty is a long-standing problem in this country and has persisted for much too long. It can and must come to an end.

As a government, we have been strong in implementing measures to serve all Canadians in the pursuit of poverty reduction. We have seen significant improvement in the lives of Canadians and their families through the increases to the Canada child benefit, which has lifted hundreds of thousands of children out of poverty. By listening to seniors, we have provided increases to the guaranteed income supplement, which has lifted many thousands of seniors out of poverty. There is also the creation recently of the Canada workers benefit, which provides tax credits to low-income workers across Canada. All of these benefits help to build up our middle class and support people who are most at risk of living in poverty.

What all of these measures have in common is that they are necessary for reducing the risk of Canadians' finances receding below the poverty line. What they also demonstrate is that we have a real track record of taking sizable and tangible steps forward on tackling the income gaps that exist in Canada. We are committed to continuing to bridge these gaps. It is why I am very pleased to speak to Bill C-22, an act to reduce poverty and to support the financial security of persons with disabilities by establishing the Canada disability benefit.

As a part of our government's poverty reduction strategy, persons with disabilities were identified as one of numerous groups at risk of living in poverty. As we know, over six million Canadians have been identified as persons with disabilities, and six million is by no means a small segment of the population. Many of our family members and neighbours are persons living with one or more disabilities, which is exactly why this bill is a crucial measure for improving the financial security of the Canadians who need it most.

The Canada disability benefit would build upon the groundwork that has been established by this government to ensure the rightful inclusion of persons with disabilities. This is directly in line with not just our government's commitment to poverty reduction, but another important piece of legislation, called the Accessible Canada Act, which came into force in 2019. It mandates that Canada must improve and move toward a barrier-free Canada by 2040.

Building upon the work that our government has done for Canadians with disabilities is of the utmost importance to this government. It is why we have initiated consultations with the disability community and other equity-seeking groups as a part of the disability inclusion action plan to ensure that our government continues to develop policy that is reflective of the needs of Canadians. This bill will be a cornerstone of our disability action plan.

The Canada disability benefit will greatly impact the lives of many Canadians, as this legislation seeks to reduce poverty and support the financial security of working-age persons with disabilities. The Canada disability benefit will become another crucial part of Canada's social security net, as it will address the long-standing financial hardships felt by persons with disabilities. Supporting the financial security of persons of working age with disabilities is at the heart of this bill as approximately one in five Canadians is living with a disability.

As we know from the Canadian Survey on Disability from 2017, approximately 22% of working-age Canadians with disabilities were living in poverty in 2017. Furthermore, persons with severe disabilities, at 26%, and very severe disabilities, at 31%, are particularly vulnerable and experience high rates of poverty, nearly three times the rate that persons without disabilities experience, which was roughly 11% in 2017.

● (1710)

Let me repeat that: Living with a severe disability makes a person three times more likely to live in poverty. That is a social injustice that needs to be rectified as soon as possible. The income supplement that is proposed in this legislation will help provide additional needed income assistance over and above those offered by provincial and territorial governments.

In addition to the vulnerability of individuals living with severe and very severe disabilities, those who also identify as members of the BIPOC community and/or as LGBTQ2S+ have also been reported to have a greater likelihood of facing income insecurity.

We must also not forget the strain that the pandemic has put on these communities. Of course, the inflationary pressures we are seeing caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the supply chain disruptions that resulted, not to mention Russia's unjust war on Ukraine and China's zero-COVID policy, have continued to exacerbate an already challenging increase to the cost of living.

It is a priority of our government to create legislation that enhances the lives of persons with disabilities, which is exactly why implementing the Canada disability benefit to strengthen the financial security of working-age persons living with disabilities will do just that.

By working with the provinces and territories, the implementation of the Canada disability benefit will serve as an income supplement to ensure those who qualify for the benefit do not experience clawbacks in their finances from other income supports that they currently receive. We will make sure people are better off as a result.

Through an inclusive consultation process centred on the disability community and stakeholders across the country that serve them, provinces and territories included, the development of the disability benefit will be designed to work for the people it is intended to help. This legislation provides a framework for enacting this important support while creating the room for details to be formulated through regulation.

We have all heard of the principle of “nothing about us without us”, and this legislation provides the framework for staying true to this principle. This legislation allows us to do this now and delay no further. The Conservatives seem to fail to understand the concept of a framework legislation and a consultation process that will help determine more specifics as we move forward.

I have heard first-hand from people in my community who live with disabilities of the financial strains and hardships that they deal with on a day-to-day basis. I want to highlight the story of a man named David whom I spoke to last week in my riding.

David has several disabilities, and his wife also lives with a disability. David and his wife have four children and an annual income that puts them well below the poverty line. David's family receives the Canada child benefit, thankfully, which provides them with much-needed extra funds to support their family. In David's case, the Canada disability benefit would provide further financial security to his family. Many Canadians share a very similar experience to David.

I also spoke recently with a woman named Marie in my riding, who is a former school teacher who suffered from a stroke and now faces challenges with mobility and communication. Her husband has taken on the role of a caregiver in their home, and Marie requires the use of a wheelchair and remains on the first floor. The couple are living well below the poverty line and reached out to me to get advice on how they could raise funds to widen a doorway, just so Marie could get out to her backyard and experience some fresh air.

These stories are heartbreaking to hear, but they are not uncommon, and I know Marie and her family, as well as David, will benefit greatly from the Canada disability benefit. We must continue the work of adequately addressing the financial insecurity that millions of persons with disabilities experience. Like in Marie's and David's cases, the need for special equipment, customized supports for cars or homes, and medical procedures can really add up and increase the financial burdens they experience.

I am confident that the Canada disability benefit will greatly benefit many low-income, working-age Canadians with disabilities. As a government, we will continue to work diligently to reduce the risk of poverty for those individuals. I fully support Bill C-22, as I know this benefit will improve lives and lift Canadians out of poverty. I encourage all opposition members to do so as well.

• (1715)

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, in the paragraph the member was reading that said persons with disabilities represent about one in five Canadians, there was a section he read that was discussing the potential benefits and who might be getting this.

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Is he implying that the government believes that up to one in five Canadians would therefore be eligible for this benefit? Is that the government's goal? It is not in the legislation, so all we have to go on is just making assumptions based on the 21 regulations. I am putting it to the member: Are one in five Canadians going to get this benefit?

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Madam Speaker, I do not think that one in five Canadians will receive or be eligible for the Canada disability benefit. I believe it will be targeted at working-age individuals living with a disability who need supplemental income in addition to the income benefits they already get.

It really has to be very targeted. That is why I think the consultation process across the country with provinces and territories, assessing the cost of living and looking at the basket of goods Canadian families need to purchase are very important. We need to design this benefit so that it works for all individuals who are of working age and who cannot work because of their disability.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Madam Speaker, as we have said repeatedly, the bill's framework is sound. No one can be against doing the right thing, but many elements are missing.

Here is my concern. We are talking about people with disabilities. Can my colleague reassure me that Ottawa will not interfere with provincial jurisdictions? After all, this bill really falls within the health portfolio.

[English]

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Madam Speaker, the consultation process that is engaging provinces and territories in designing this benefit is essential for ensuring that this really is a supplemental income benefit that individuals living with disabilities will be able to get.

There is no intention, from my perspective, to overstep into provincial jurisdiction, but to work collaboratively with stakeholders who serve individuals living with disabilities, with the families and individuals who live with those disabilities, and with the provincial counterparts we have, in order to ensure this benefit really leaves people better off.

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, I agree that poverty for those with disabilities is a crisis in this country, and the Liberals have had seven years to address this crisis. This is my second time being elected, and this crisis still has not been addressed, and then I read that it is going to take three years for anybody to even receive this benefit. This is deeply concerning, because we know, according to Disability Without Poverty, that 41% of people impacted by poverty are those with disabilities.

Government Orders

We have had solutions on the table. I will give an example. P.E.I. has put forward a proposal for a guaranteed livable basic income; it is just waiting for support from the federal government. I put forward a private member's bill, Bill C-223, in support of a framework for a guaranteed livable basic income, which is supported by disability groups across the country, to lift people out of poverty now.

I am wondering if the hon. member supports a guaranteed livable basic income, especially for persons with disabilities.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Madam Speaker, I thank the member opposite for her incredible work and advocacy for individuals who lack the income to live a full life. I have always been a vocal advocate for a guaranteed basic income, and I have never hidden that from anybody. I think the patchwork of benefits we offer today could be greatly enhanced by a guaranteed basic income, so I thank the member.

• (1720)

[Translation]

Mr. Darrell Samson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak to Bill C-22.

[English]

I must say the Canada disability benefit act is long in waiting and I am proud that our government is moving forward on this important legislation. I am also very proud of our minister, who has been a strong leader in this area since 2015. I call her the ace in the hole that we have, and that leadership will benefit us as we move forward in this important area.

Our government has created a strong environment in which all Canadians can succeed. It is extremely important that we have an economy in which all Canadians and individuals have the opportunity to participate and to which all can contribute.

I want to bring us back to 1967 and a Liberal government under the leadership of the Right Hon. Lester Pearson, who at the time stood up in this House and said that no seniors should live in poverty. That is why we saw the creation of the guaranteed income supplement.

As well, in 2016, our government stood up and said that no child should live in poverty, and that is why we brought forward the Canada child benefit, which lifted hundreds of thousands of young Canadians out of poverty.

Today, we are standing before members and saying that no people with disabilities should live in poverty. That is why we are coming forward with this very important bill to support people with disabilities in our country.

It is clearly evident that people with disabilities face unique barriers in many areas, in particular health, social well-being and financial security. We have seen that. During the challenges of COVID, it became very evident, or more evident. I had many calls in my office from people with disabilities.

It is important to note that people with disabilities are twice as likely as other Canadians to be living in poverty. I would also say

that six million people above the age of 15 have identified themselves as living with disabilities. That is 22% of our population. Fifty-nine per cent of those individuals living with disabilities are working, whereas 80% of other Canadians are working. Those numbers are the reason we are bringing forward this bill today. It is time. It is a must, and we need to continue that leadership today.

I want to talk about the process here. Consultation started over a year ago with various organizations representing people with disabilities. We have been talking with people with disabilities right across the country. That process needs to continue, because we cannot finish the work without having their feedback and without understanding fully the challenges they face and what solutions can be brought to the table.

The second part of consultation that is extremely important is with the provinces and territories. As we know and some members might make references to, the issue of people with disabilities is under the jurisdiction of the provincial governments. However, once again, the federal government must step up and support people with disabilities, as we did with health care and with education, etc.

• (1725)

It is important to note that in these discussions with the provinces and territories that this funding is a supplement and not a replacement of funds. There would be no clawbacks, which is crucial. That is why consultation is so important to find ways of making this work for people with disabilities who have those challenges and are living in poverty. That way, we can eliminate some of those challenges, and it is not by clawbacks.

I want to share something from Rick Hansen. He said that the Canadian disability benefit is precisely the tool that is required at this time to address poverty among people with disabilities and the hardships that they face every day. He also stated that the Canadian disability benefit would enable access to the workforce for some and an increased participation in Canadian culture for many others.

I will now talk about some of the programs out there, nationally and locally. One is Ready, Willing and Able. It is a partnership between the Canadian Association for Community Living and the Canadian Autism Spectrum Disorder Alliance and its partners. This organization has conversations and partnerships with over 10,000 businesses in this country, 4,000 of which are active discussions taking place as we speak. There are 3,000 people with disabilities who are working because of the partnership built with these businesses across the country, which is a success story that our government has been working on and funding through this program.

Also, in my riding of Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, we have Building Futures, which is an organization that I have had the opportunity to visit on many occasions. It has four social enterprises that it has built, and people with disabilities are working and controlling all four. One is Assembly Plus, which is assembling various electronics, equipment and manufacturing parts for businesses, and it is a very important piece of the finished product. There is the Futures Birds, which is custom artwork. It is another business that creates jobs and opportunities. Another is the Futures Impressions, or copy shop, which is a successful printing shop that has been opened for over 30 years. At times, I have been able to get some of my printing done there as well. Of course, when I go to visit the Futures Café, which started in 2015, I enjoy the great meal it provides and I continue to support the great work that it does. These are the types of things that are important.

In the few minutes I have left, I want to explain to Canadians the process. We are in second reading debate on the bill, which will be followed by a vote. If the vote is successful, the bill will go to the HUMA committee, and I am expecting all members to support it. The committee will come back with a report. There will be debate and then a vote, and if successful, which it should be, it will go to the Senate where the same process will take place. Then, of course, there is royal assent.

I will finish my remarks by reading from an article by André Picard who wrote, “Canada has a remarkable opportunity to lift hundreds of thousands—perhaps millions—of people out of poverty”, and this legislation would help in that area.

[Translation]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, allow me to acknowledge my hon. colleague. I am glad we are meeting again in Ottawa instead of Edmonton.

Let us consider the nature of this bill. As a man of rigour, does he not feel that, in being asked to vote in favour of this bill, we are being asked to vote for a principle?

Voting for a principle when it comes to people with functional limitations and disabilities is something everyone can obviously agree on, but what is the actual substance of this bill? I find it lacks rigour. Who is it really for? Is it a temporary, band-aid solution, or are we going to see long-term solutions?

Can the government revamp its relationship with Quebeckers and Canadians with disabilities? It has a responsibility to provide these people with a better quality of life.

I think this bill lacks long-term vision, but I do not think that was the government's intention. Can the member help me understand?

• (1730)

Mr. Darrell Samson: Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague with whom I spent a few days in Edmonton for the most recent meeting of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie. We were able to get some work done there to advance the Francophonie.

However, I want to point out to him that, while it is certainly good to be rigorous, we also need to hold consultations. Our government is not introducing a bill and announcing that it does not

need any changes and that no amendments should be presented because they will not be accepted. That is the difference.

What is more, as I mentioned earlier, consultations will be held with people on the ground, as well as with the provinces and territories. We will achieve our goal by working together.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. It is nice to see him back here in the House.

Obviously, people with disabilities are suffering. They are struggling, and that has been even more true over the past two years since the beginning of the pandemic. They deserve to get help quickly. This bill sets out some good intentions and makes some nice statements, but it does not contain anything specific or concrete. Who will be helped? How will these people be helped? How much money will they be given? When will they get that money?

One of his cabinet colleagues said that it could take three years before people get these benefits. Can people with disabilities wait another three years?

Mr. Darrell Samson: Madam Speaker, I too would like to thank my friend. I hope he had a great summer in his riding. I am always happy to discuss these very important issues with him.

We are debating the issue of people living in poverty. With this bill, we are looking to support some of these individuals living in poverty. I hope that parliamentarians in the House will work together so that we can finish the debates, send the bill to committee, study it at third reading and send it to the Senate so that it can then receive royal assent. That is the important thing. We are working together as a team, and we will reach that goal. Let us hope that it happens sooner rather than later.

[English]

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, I can tell the parliamentary secretary has good intentions from his speech, but good intentions on their own do not pay the bills.

I know he is aware the text of this bill is exactly the same as the text from back in 2021, while Canadians with disabilities are still living in poverty. Can he share evidence that demonstrates the governing party is serious about funding this benefit with the urgency the disability community deserves?

Government Orders

Mr. Darrell Samson: Madam Speaker, I can tell my colleague we are definitely serious about bringing this quickly across the finish line. The best example I can give him is that it is the first legislation we have brought forward. Today is the first day we have returned to the House of Commons, and this is the first debate of our government. That is a clear sign that we want this done and that we want it done quickly.

[Translation]

Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to Bill C-22. I will be sharing my time with my dear colleague, the member for Shefford.

Bill C-22 seeks to reduce poverty and to support the financial security of persons with disabilities by establishing the Canada disability benefit and making a consequential amendment to the Income Tax Act.

I would like to begin by acknowledging all the people in my beautiful and great riding of Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou. I would also like to acknowledge the exceptional work of all the organizations in Abitibi-Témiscamingue. A special acknowledgement goes out to the organizations in the Vallée-de-l'Or RCM that help or provide services to persons with disabilities: Ressource pour personnes handicapées Abitibi-Témiscamingue/Nord-du-Québec — hello to Rémy Mailloux, the organization's director for the past 25 years — the Centre la Mésange in Senneterre, the Centre d'Intégration Physique de l'Envol Val-d'Or and the Club des handicapés de Val-d'Or.

First and foremost, we must think about those who are living with a disability. We cannot lose sight of the fact that their condition is permanent, that this is their reality for the rest of their lives. People complain if they have to use crutches because of a sprain or a break, but that is only temporary. We need to put ourselves in their shoes. Unfortunately, these people are often cast aside by society or forgotten by governments. As I often say, a single gesture can make all the difference, and so can this bill.

In Quebec, 37% of people living with a disability have to survive on less than \$15,000. Of course, there is already a federal benefit to help minors living with a disability, namely the Canada child benefit. Seniors receive the old age security pension. However, there is a gap that Bill C-22 aims to fill, and that is the gap that people with disabilities find themselves in when they reach the age of majority, that is, the age of entry into the labour market, until they retire. There are some measures already in place to alleviate the financial burden of people living with a disability, but they are insufficient to ensure a good quality of life.

According to the latest Canadian Survey on Disability, the CSD, an estimated 1,053,350 Quebecers aged 15 years and over has one or more disabilities. That is a lot. That is 16.1% of Quebec's population aged 15 and up. Disabilities can be related to vision, hearing, mobility, flexibility, dexterity, pain, learning, development, mental health and memory.

Many people who live with one or more disabilities are willing and able to work and be financially independent. Unfortunately, many are discriminated against in the job market. In Quebec, 8.8%

believe they were denied an interview because of their disability in the previous five years, 14.1% believe they were turned down for a job because of their disability in the previous five years, and 11% believe they were passed over for a promotion because of their disability in the previous five years. This kind of discrimination does nothing to improve these people's financial health and quality of life. These people need help.

Bill C-22's objective is noble since it aims to provide financial support to people with disabilities in Quebec and Canada and, more specifically, to improve the financial situation of working-age Canadians living with disabilities. It seeks to fill some of the gaps in Canada's social safety net, which includes old age security, the guaranteed income supplement and the Canada child benefit.

One problem in Quebec is that many Quebecers do not identify as living with a disability and therefore do not claim the assistance provided to people living with a disability. There are several reasons for this. For instance, some people who have never had a health problem might find themselves ill all of a sudden and they do not know where to look for help or do not even want it. Others may not realize that their condition is considered a disability. Some people think the application process is too complex. Since the tax credits are non-refundable, some people do not have sufficient income to claim them. Another important thing to point out is that the French words “handicap” and “invalidité” are not interchangeable.

● (1735)

There is some confusion about the definition of disability among francophones. This was raised by Guillaume Parent, director of the Centre d'expertise finances et handicap of Finautonome. Mr. Parent applauds the introduction of Bill C-22, but has some concerns. He underscores the cultural and linguistic differences between Quebec and Canada, which threaten to create confusion about the application of the bill.

Mr. Parent had questions about the terms and conditions of the benefit, which have not yet been established, and outlined them in an open letter printed in *La Presse*, as follows:

Who will be included? Establishing eligibility for such a measure is a priority. Linguistically and culturally, in francophone Canada the French term “handicap” does not have the same scope as the term “disability” used in English Canada.

That is one reason why fewer people self-identify as having a disability in Quebec. Our population claims half the amount of federal disability tax credits claimed in the other provinces.

He also criticizes the fact that the federal government plans to conduct consultations over three years to establish the terms of the benefit. He believes that the needs are immediate and that such lengthy consultations are not necessary.

Mr. Parent is not the only one to raise this issue. In a June 2021 press release, the Regroupement d'organismes en DI/TSA issued a statement that welcomed the bill but expressed the community's concerns about it, much like Mr. Parent did. It reads as follows:

Canadians have mixed feelings about the promise of a new benefit for people with disabilities. Most of them are enthusiastic about the idea and approve of the initiative, but many doubt that it will go ahead as planned. Some of them also feel as though there is too long of a wait before the benefit becomes a reality. With the House of Commons adjourned for the summer, those who are eligible will be not be able to receive the benefit until at least the fall. Some people are concerned that this measure comes too late, particularly for people who are experiencing financial hardship related to the current pandemic.

Canada's unions and many advocacy groups for people with disabilities are skeptical about how effective the benefit will be because the legislation lacks specificity and implementation timelines.

Nonetheless, everyone agrees that more financial assistance for working-age people with disabilities is needed....

I can see other problems with Bill C-22. The broad principles are stated in the bill, but all the terms and conditions, criteria and amounts of money will be decided through ministerial regulations. We have no clear idea of the terms of the benefit other than it will be intended for persons of working age and will be considered an income supplement.

As drafted, Bill C-22 does not specify whether Ottawa will administer the benefit or whether the federal government plans to transfer the money to Quebec and the other provinces so that they can administer it. These terms and conditions will be spelled out in the relevant regulations and so are not outlined in the legislation. Essentially, we do not know under which constitutional authority this benefit is being created.

There are other gaps in Bill C-22. When the time comes to study the terms around sending the cheque, the bill does not provide any answers to several questions. What are the eligibility criteria? What are the terms and conditions for the payment? What is the amount of the benefit and how will that amount be calculated? What are the payment periods? How can we avoid the clawback of benefits currently being paid to persons with disabilities?

To conclude, Bill C-22 helps implement the Canadian Accessibility Act, which calls for the removal of barriers experienced by people with disabilities in the following areas: employment, the built environment, communications, information and communications technology, the procurement of goods, services and facilities, the design and delivery of programs and services, and transportation.

Given that Quebec has a social safety net that is the envy of many nations, it goes without saying that the Bloc Québécois supports all efforts to improve the conditions of people living with a disability. I will vote in favour of the bill so that it can be studied in committee with a view to improving it and making certain clarifications.

• (1740)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I asked the previous Conservative speaker about the possibility of recognizing the fact that there seems to be universal support. All political entities inside the House are supporting Bill C-22. When we talk about the principle of the legislation, it seems that everyone will be voting in favour of it.

Government Orders

In a legislative agenda, things get fairly busy, whether it is the GST, the dental plan or opposition days. Here we have a wonderful opportunity to try to pass the legislation, given that everyone is in favour of the principle of it.

Why would we not allow it to go to committee, where it could be thoroughly discussed in detail to look at possible amendments, and then maybe have a greater debate at third reading?

Would she support and would the Bloc support its quick passage?

• (1745)

[Translation]

Ms. Sylvie Bérubé: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

As it stands, the bill is promising. However, there are some shortcomings, as was mentioned earlier and as I said in my speech, including a timeline, ineligibility and the benefit amounts, which should be paid out monthly.

It is important that we go to committee quickly to resolve this situation, and I hope that the government will support this request.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her speech. I think she touched on a very important point. Lofty principles and grand intentions are all well and good, but as they say, it is all sizzle and no steak. This bill falls short in the substance department.

Persons with disabilities are living in extremely painful and difficult circumstances, but this bill has nothing to offer. There is no telling if the government is contemplating a guaranteed basic income or targeted benefits. When will it happen? Who will be included? Who will be excluded?

Persons with disabilities who are waiting for help from the federal government will be left hanging with this bill. I think the government could have put a little more meat on these bones.

Ms. Sylvie Bérubé: Madam Speaker, my colleague just made a very interesting point.

These individuals do need assistance and support. They have been waiting for several years. The time has come for the government to take action and provide them with financial support every month. They need to be given benefits to help them avoid poverty. Because of the pandemic, these individuals are currently facing enormous difficulties.

Let us get serious about helping these people in need.

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, I was very proud that my colleague highlighted the work of our friend Rémy Mailloux. The 25th edition of the telethon raised over \$700,000 last year, all donated by the people of Abitibi—Témiscamingue and Nord-du-Québec to provide complementary services.

Government Orders

Various governments, especially the federal government, have cut back on their commitments to people with disabilities, particularly regarding in-home accommodations so they can remain at home.

Does my colleague not believe that, instead of cobbling this bill together and saying that further reflection and consultation is needed, the government should act now, especially in a context where inflation is hitting hard, in order to help people stay in their homes much more than it does now?

Ms. Sylvie Bérubé: Madam Speaker, Mr. Mailloux is indeed a true role model. He himself lives with a disability. Speaking with him helps others understand exactly what people with disabilities need, where they are coming from and where they want to go. Yes, we need to take action with this bill, and above all support them with the requests that have been made. The bill needs to be much clearer.

Ms. Andrée Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, I have many concerns as I rise to speak to Bill C-22 to provide financial support to Canadians with disabilities, as proposed by the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion in June 2022.

My uncle Denis became disabled at the age of 19 following a serious motorcycle accident. He passed away last year, in September 2021, and I am thinking of him. I am very sensitive to the situation of persons with disabilities and their caregivers because my family took care of my uncle.

Furthermore, my partner works for a community organization, the Association des personnes handicapées physiques de Brome-Missisquoi, which advocates for universal accessibility. To quote the slogan created by University of Montreal students for persons with disabilities, “that’s not asking for much”.

This was confirmed by the director of Dynamique des handicapés de Granby et région, Marie-Christine Hon, whom I salute. According to her, far too many persons with disabilities are still very vulnerable and live in poverty, and they need more than just words. My speech has three components: a summary of Bill C-22, a few interesting statistics, and some elements that need clarification.

On September 23, 2020, the government made a commitment in the throne speech to establish Canada’s first-ever disability inclusion action plan, which includes a new Canada disability benefit for people with disabilities, modelled on the guaranteed income supplement for seniors; a robust employment strategy for Canadians with disabilities, with a focus on training, employment supports, barrier removal and the business case for disability inclusion; and a new, inclusive process to determine eligibility for federal government disability programs and benefits, one that reflects a modern understanding of disability. It looks good on paper, but there is no concrete plan in place.

The objective of Bill C-22 is to improve the financial situation of working-age Canadians with disabilities and to fix some holes in Canada’s social safety net, which includes old age security, the guaranteed income supplement—which I talk about a lot as the critic for seniors—and the Canada child benefit.

Bill C-22 also helps Canada meet its international obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and helps position Canada as a leader in the area of protecting people with disabilities. with disabilities. Again, it looks good on paper, but there is still a lot of work to do to get there.

Let us not forget that in June 2021, in the 43rd Parliament, the Liberals introduced Bill C-35. Bill C-22 is the reintroduction of Bill C-35, which was scrapped when the election was called by the Liberals themselves, one year ago.

Bill C-35 did not make it past first reading. Nevertheless, for the purposes of bringing in a benefit for persons with disabilities, meeting the objectives of Bill C-35 and setting out the terms of this benefit, the government unblocked a \$11.9-million budget to lay the foundation to reform an eligibility process for federal benefits and programs for persons with disabilities. Round tables were organized among various organizations and representatives of disability communities and an online poll was created to poll the interested public. Still, organizations back home said that they had not been informed of the existence of this bill.

Canada already has a benefit to help minor persons with disabilities, in other words the family benefit. As others have said, there are also measures to help seniors. Bill C-22 seeks to fill the gap persons with disabilities find themselves in when they reach the age of majority. They fall into this gap when they enter the workforce until the day they retire.

Some measures have already been put in place to ease the financial burden of people with disabilities, but those measures are often woefully inadequate to give them a decent standard of living. There are still far too many grey areas that need clarifying, including the much-talked-about issue of working-age persons with disabilities. Ms. Hon talked to me about it again this morning on the phone.

The disability tax credit is a non-refundable tax credit that enables the recipient to reduce their income taxes. The problem is that, in Quebec, so many people do not see themselves as having a disability and therefore do not claim the assistance available to them. There are many reasons for this reality that we see at our office. As my assistant can attest, people who have gone their whole lives without having health problems and who end up sick all of a sudden do not know where to go to get help or do not want help. Some do not know that their state of health is recognized as a disability. Some think that the process is much too complicated because the tax credits are non-refundable, and others are not even entitled to the tax credits because they do not earn enough to claim them.

• (1750)

Ms. Hon condemned these situations when she spoke with me. I remind members that just one automatic \$600 payment was made in 2020 during the pandemic, even though people with disabilities were disproportionately affected by the health crisis. There are programs, but they are not well known, especially in Quebec.

Allow me to share some figures. Twenty-two per cent of Canadians live with a disability. In Quebec, 37% of people with disabilities have an annual income of less than \$15,000, which does not go very far. One in four Canadians with disabilities live below the poverty line and 41% of Canadians living in poverty are people with disabilities.

Eighty-nine per cent of Canadians and 91% of Quebecers say they are in favour of a disability benefit. Fifty-nine per cent of Canadians believe that people with disabilities do not have access to sufficient resources to afford them a good quality of life.

Just 59% of Canadians with disabilities between the ages of 25 to 64 are employed, compared to 80% of Canadians without a disability. Canadians with disabilities aged 25 to 64 earn less than Canadians without a disability. Canadians with mild disabilities earn 12% less and Canadians with more serious disabilities earn 51% less. These figures speak for themselves.

I also appreciate the Association Granby pour la déficience intellectuelle et l'autisme, which works very hard to help people with intellectual disabilities and autism perform tasks, keep busy, and do meaningful work that gives them a sense of accomplishment every day. I applaud the whole team.

As the status of women critic, I am well aware that living with a disability adds another challenging layer to the lives of women, indigenous individuals and members of cultural and minority communities. Figuring out how to ensure their financial security is urgent, especially in light of the fact that the rising cost of living, inflation and the housing shortage are making the day-to-day lives of people with disabilities even harder.

As my colleague mentioned, Guillaume Parent, director of the Centre d'expertise finances et handicap Finautonome, is pleased with the announcement of Bill C-22, but he does have some concerns about it, including the cultural and linguistic differences between Quebec and Canada. That leads to confusion in the application of the bill. My colleague from Thérèse-De Blainville did a good job of explaining that this morning.

A number of other details still need to be worked out regarding how the benefit will be applied. Quebecers claim half as much of the federal disability tax credit as other provinces. All of this means that Canadians have mixed feelings about the promise of a new disability benefit.

Although we are excited about and support this initiative, we are wondering when it will actually see the light of day. There is talk of another three years of consultations. Three years is a long time, especially when the previous bill was delayed because the government sabotaged it by calling an election. On top of that, the House of Commons shut down for the summer.

Government Orders

There are concerns that these measures are being introduced too late, especially for those in financial difficulty who are still caught up in the aftermath of the pandemic. Some unions in Canada and several disability rights groups are also skeptical about the effectiveness of the benefit because of the lack of detail in the bill and how long it is going to take to implement it.

In conclusion, we could say that we will vote for the principle of Bill C-22. However, we must be aware of the fact that the bill is still very problematic. We want to support people with disabilities, but the lack of information about the details of the benefit is very problematic. In a recent survey, 89% of Canadians responded that introducing a Canadian benefit for persons with disabilities is a good thing, and that the country should take action to drastically reduce poverty among the disabled. I would go further. Personally, that is my political commitment. I am a big believer in equality of opportunity.

I would like to say one last little thing. Let us help persons with disabilities keep their head above water. We must absolutely avoid piecemeal measures. Let us work to ensure that persons with disabilities have a decent income that lets them live with dignity and fully take their place in our society.

• (1755)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, one of the things the member really emphasizes from my perspective is just how important it is that, as a government, we continue to work with the stakeholders and in particular our provinces. Today, it is a patchwork in terms of support. People with disabilities do not know what type of support they are getting. At the end of the day, we have one system in one area of the country and another in a different region of the country.

One of the objectives of bringing in a truly national program is not only to lift many people with disabilities out of poverty but also to, as much as possible, ensure that there is a sense of fairness and equity. Could my colleague provide her thoughts in regard to the role that Ottawa has to play in working with the provinces to ensure that there is that sense of equity and support for people with disabilities?

[Translation]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

I will remind him once again, as did my colleague from Thérèse-De Blainville, that it is important that the bill respect provincial jurisdictions. It must complement and not take away from provincial programs. Quite frankly, it is about time that the federal government respect the fact that many of these aspects fall under Quebec's jurisdiction and that this province is a model in terms of equal opportunity and social safety net.

*Private Members' Business***PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

● (1800)

*[English]***REUNITING FAMILIES ACT**

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-242, An Act to amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (temporary resident visas for parents and grandparents), as reported (with amendments) from the committee.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): There being no motions at report stage, the House will now proceed, without debate, to the putting of the question on the motion to concur in the bill at report stage.

Mr. Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC) moved that the bill be concurred in.

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.

I therefore declare the motion carried on division.

When shall the bill be read a third time? By leave, now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Kyle Seeback moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

He said: Madam Speaker, some will say that imitation is the finest form of flattery, so I feel exceptionally flattered that the government decided to take two sections of my bill and issue ministerial instructions, which are going to be of enormous benefit to those who are seeking to reunite their families under the super visa. What they did not do, though, is adopt the part with respect to producing a report to reduce the LICO, the low income cut-off, and that is actually a very significant and important part of my bill.

It is wonderful that we are going to extend the time someone can stay under a super visa. That has been done through ministerial instruction. It is also wonderful they are now going to look at ways to allow foreign insurance companies to provide the health insurance coverage to lower the cost to families that qualify for the visa. Those are all wonderful things. They are, however, ministerial instructions.

The great thing about ministerial instructions is that they can happen quickly, which they did. They criticized my bill for a long period of time, had it going through committee and then suddenly said they saw the light. They said these two parts of the bill are fantastic and that they were going to grab them and do them through ministerial instructions. The downside of a ministerial instruction is that just as easily as it can be done, it can be taken away.

This is one of the reasons I am continuing to move forward with this piece of legislation. If it is actually in legislation, and if a government wants to change it, this government or a subsequent government, it will actually have to do it through legislation. If we want to ensure that families can continue to access these fantastic improvements that I have put forward with respect to the super

visa, we should actually pass this legislation, so that it is enshrined in law and future governments cannot choose to make those changes.

However, what I do want to go back to is the part the Liberals omitted, and that is having a report produced to reduce the low income cut-off. That is so important because reducing the low income cut-off, which is the amount of income a family in Canada has to have to support a parent or grandparent coming here, would allow more families to qualify for a super visa. In particular it would help families that are newer to Canada, when the challenges are actually a bit tougher. If someone has been here for 20 years, is well established, meets the low income cut-off and wants their parent or grandparent to come and stay with their family, that is wonderful. They may want them here, but they may not necessarily need them here.

If someone is in a new family to Canada, has been here only a few years and might not be working a high-paying job, and could actually use their parent or grandparent to be here, they are not going to qualify because they do not have the income to qualify. What we heard repeatedly at committee, both in the study of this bill and when this was studied in 2017, is that the low income cut-off should be dramatically reduced or eliminated in its entirety.

My bill is only proposing to lower the low income cut-off, and there is a fundamental misunderstanding by the government on this. It was actually told to study the economics of this in 2017, to look into the economic benefits of having more families bring their parents or grandparents here. They never did that study, so I am going to talk a bit about that.

What the evidence is clear on, both in the study in 2017 at committee and through the study on this bill, is that bringing a parent or grandparent here to the country is an economic boon to the family. It does not cost the family anything. What are they providing for that parent or grandparent? They are staying in their home and maybe they are consuming some food, but there is no real cost. In fact, what it does is allow someone in the family, one parent or maybe both, to pick up an extra shift at work to increase their income. They also, in a lot of communities, provide child care, which is a cost-saving for families, which allows them to improve their economic standing.

There is a fundamental misunderstanding by the government of the importance of lowering the low income cut-off to allow more families to access the super visa. I urge the government, which can pass this bill, to get it passed quickly and get that report done. Let us get the low income cut-off lowered so that more families can access the super visa.

● (1805)

This will add to the economic productivity of the country, which is a good thing. It is going to help the affordability crisis that Canadians are going through right now. We all know it. Inflation is high. The cost of living is increasingly going up. It is getting even tougher for families to make ends meet.

The government thinks, well, if one brought one's parent over, that is going to cause this further economic burden, therefore one should not do it. That is absolutely the wrong mindset. The government should actually do something about it.

We are going to be voting on this bill shortly to have it moved to the Senate. I am going to urge the members of the government to support the bill. They did not support it at committee. They tried to kill it at committee. They took two parts of it, claimed it as their own and then tried to kill the bill in committee.

They did not succeed, thanks to the support of the Bloc Québécois and the NDP, and I thank both of those parties for that support. They recognize the importance of making sure that this is actually legislation, not ministerial instruction, as well as how beneficial it will be to have the low income cut-off reduced.

I urge the government to support this legislation. Let us get that report done, a report that should have been done in 2017. Let us get it done, so that we can expand the super visa to far more families all across the country and help them with the affordability crisis that is going on in the country.

Not only that, but parents and grandparents provide so much other support for families. If families are suffering economically now, they are going to be helped by that, but also, when one is new to a country and one is building one's life, parents provide a great source of stability, transfer of culture, and all of these kinds of things. More Canadians should have access to that, not fewer. I ask members to please vote for this bill.

• (1810)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, for many of my constituents over the years who have required that super visa, one of the obligations, in fact, has been the insurance. As much as the member likes to talk about his initiative, I think we will find that there are members on all sides of the House, myself included, who have been arguing that the insurance cost was very prohibitive in terms of allowing and facilitating more parents and grandparents to come to Canada. There has been a strong advocacy on this area that predates the last summer.

I was quite pleased that we finally had a ministry that had looked at and investigated the situation, done its homework and recognized the value of opening it up to foreign insurance companies.

Does the member believe that there is any sort of due diligence required by the federal government to ensure the credibility of some of these foreign insurance companies?

Mr. Kyle Seeback: Madam Speaker, yes, I guess one could say that the government was working on this, except nobody heard a peep about it until I passed my bill, so I am going to take the credit for it.

The government has been the government since 2015. It has done nothing to enhance the super visa, but suddenly, once an opposition member's bill is working its way through, it has seen the light, hallelujah, and now it is something that it has been working on for a long time.

Private Members' Business

Right now, one has to have a clean bill of health if one is going to come under a super visa as a parent or grandparent, and the government selects certain doctors in foreign countries and says that their medical wellness certificate is accepted. If it can do that for the myriad of doctors in all the countries around the world, it can certainly do it for a few large international insurance companies or one or two insurance companies in the world.

The government is more than capable of doing the due diligence. It is one of the arguments I made at committee as to why that part of the bill should not be struck, because it seemed to me that the government wanted to strike it.

Yes, I think even the Liberal government can handle that.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Dufferin—Caledon for his speech. I also thank him for his hard work on this bill. He has been working on it for a long time, and he can be proud of what he has accomplished.

Let me play devil's advocate so he can say a few more words. Some people are watching this debate because they plan to criticize Bill C-242. They wonder why we should bother proceeding with the bill if there are ministerial instructions that are essentially the same as what is in Bill C-242.

Would my colleague please comment on that?

[English]

Mr. Kyle Seeback: Madam Speaker, that is a great question from the member and I briefly touched on that in my speech. The great thing about ministerial instructions is how they can be quickly and nimbly done, which is what happened. Actually, it happened when we were about to debate my bill at committee and vote on it clause by clause.

Yes, that is wonderful, but the problem with that is the same thing can happen. The government could get cold feet and say it actually does not think it is a good idea anymore and, guess what, ministerial instructions get done and the enhancements to the super visa are gone. That would be a massive shame for Canadians.

If we proceed with the bill and it becomes law, it is much more difficult to change. These enhancements are so important that we should legislate them and not go with ministerial instructions.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for tabling this private member's bill, as it brings to the forefront the importance of parents and grandparents in this country.

With that being said, one of the issues I raised at committee was around the appeal process, or lack thereof. In fact, there is no appeal process for super visas that are rejected. The only option is for people to go to judicial review.

Private Members' Business

I wonder if the member could speak to the issue of ensuring that there is a process to evaluate an appeal that would save money, not through a judicial review process, so applicants have the opportunity to table concerns about the rejection and have it reconsidered.

• (1815)

Mr. Kyle Seeback: Madam Speaker, I know the member is very passionate about this and spoke very eloquently at committee about it. Someone in her riding had gone on maternity leave and, because of the three-year requirement for the income, missed the income requirement for the low-income cut-off. An appeal process would have been great for the bill. I know the member tried to have that added to the bill. It is something that I wanted, but unfortunately it did not make it through committee.

I think we can address that in another way, which is by moving forward with this bill to get that low-income cut-off lowered substantially, because that would address most of the concerns. Maybe the appeal process is something we can look at down the road.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, this is an issue I am quite familiar with. In fact, I can go back a number of years to the days I was the critic for immigration and a number of actions were taken by Stephen Harper.

Within the Liberal Party, we have always recognized the true value of parents and grandparents, even when Stephen Harper was the prime minister and he literally cancelled the sponsorship of parents and grandparents. He shut the door to Canada for parents and grandparents. Then he established a program to try to compensate by saying that we were now going to have a super visa.

Some of the concerns that the member has made reference to are concerns I raised many years ago, even when Stephen Harper was the prime minister. The Conservatives did not do anything regarding it. Yes, they eventually opened the program for sponsorship, but it was this government, back in 2015, that not only recognized it but showed it in our actions by more than doubling the number of sponsorships coming into Canada. We continue to increase the number of sponsorships.

The demand for parents and grandparents continues to increase. We in the Liberal caucus are very much aware of that. We have caucus groups that have dialogue and try to come up with alternatives, ideas and policy changes that would have a positive impact on immigration.

We have seen a record number of changes in immigration over the last number of years, with dramatic increases in a whole spectrum of streams. We have seen new, unique streams created, such as for Ukraine immigrants coming to Canada, and for Afghanistan, Syria and the many other streams that are there year in, year out. What about the provincial nominee program? We have all of these changes, and the numbers are very impressive as we continue to land a record number of immigrants coming here.

We as a caucus, and many of my colleagues who have spent so much time on the immigration file, understand the true value of the super visa. That is why there was a great deal of advocacy, and we were all pleased when the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and

Citizenship came out before the summer to announce some of the changes that many of us wanted to see.

We understand the role that parents and grandparents play today and yesterday in our communities. They support society in many different ways, whether it is by being that foundational rock within homes or supporting young families who are growing.

We understand that many seniors are like uncles. I say that as something I am greatly proud of in terms of how communities identify with families and associate the word “uncle” with someone who might be a bit older and continues to contribute. This is not only for families, but they are often there to support small businesses in our community. I know this because I see it every day.

The idea of the super visa is a good idea. There were some issues, and the minister brought forward some changes to two of the biggest ones.

I have always been concerned about the cost of insurance. If a person wants their mom or dad to come to Canada, they have to pay the insurance. Keep in mind that we may have 30,000 applicants coming in. We may have over 100,000 who want to come in and be sponsored. That is why the super visa is such a good idea. It enables more families to be reunited.

• (1820)

As a government, measures were taken to enhance the support of this particular program, one of which was to extend the number of years someone could stay in Canada without having to leave. Initially, that was at two years. In essence, a parent used to get a 10-year multiple entry visa to come to Canada for a visit, but they had to leave within two years. That has been extended. It is a very strong positive.

This other issue has really bothered me because it affects, in my opinion, a number of people who would be able to come to Canada. I encourage constituents, where they can, to be reunited with their parents. I know I am not alone among my caucus colleagues in this. As I said, if there is one issue that gets a great deal of debate, whether in caucus, a side room or in the mini caucus on immigration, it is the issue of immigration.

The cost of insurance is an issue. Opening it up to say that we are going to have foreign insurance companies participate in this process will, I genuinely believe, make it more affordable. That is something we will all benefit by. I do believe, given the work load that immigration and citizenship has had over the last number of years, that it has accomplished a great deal. Yes, maybe I too would have maybe liked to have seen this earlier, but we have it now. That is a good thing.

The member made reference to the low-income cut-off. The low-income cut-off is an issue that goes beyond just a super visa. If the member, for example, was to have introduced a motion or a bill that had the standing committee on immigration taking a look at the principles of the low-income cut-off, not only on the super visa, but also on other aspects of immigration, I think it would be something worthy of our taking a serious look at the standing committee on immigration.

I used to be on that standing committee. In fact, if I were on that standing committee today, it would likely be one of the recommendations I would support bringing forward, having a study that could assist policy-makers and members of Parliament on all sides of the House to be engaged in.

The issue of visitor visas is of critical importance to Canada as a nation. We get millions of people who come here every year. I do not know how many for the last year or so, but I do know that at one point it was somewhere in the neighbourhood of 26 million people internationally who had entered Canada.

An hon. member: That is not a lot.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, that is a lot, contrary to what the member may be trying to imply.

Many of those people who visit Canada come here because they want to visit family. They are international visitors from countries such as India, the Philippines, Pakistan and many other countries around the world where a visa is required. I write letters of support. Prepandemic, it was likely hundreds every month. I think we are getting close to that same number today. It is coming back.

The number of people who want to come to Canada is high. I believe we will continue to look at ways in which we can enhance that to make sure that those who want to come to Canada, and where we are confident that they meet the basic criteria, are able to come to Canada. That is what I know my colleagues within the Liberal caucus want to see. We constantly advocate for it.

Nothing frustrates me more as a parliamentarian than when I get some of these visas that were rejected when someone wanted to come for a funeral, a graduation or a special family event. What that tells me is that we need to continue to push and work on this file, as I know many, if not virtually all, of my caucus colleagues want to do. We recognize the importance of families. We recognize the importance that visitors have on our economy and our society as a whole.

• (1825)

[Translation]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to see you again after such a lovely summer. I hope you were able to meet with your constituents and all the people participating in this debate in the House this evening.

I do not know if the member for Saint-Jean is listening this evening, but I must commend her for the thorough job she has done. She gave a remarkable speech during the previous reading of this bill, which has greatly inspired my speech today.

Private Members' Business

I also want to acknowledge the patience of the member for Dufferin—Caledon, who has been waiting many months for his bill to move forward.

First, I will quickly explain what a super visa is. I believe that everyone who rises to speak to this debate will do so. It is a visa, a travel document, for parents and grandparents. Someone who gets this visa is not allowed to work here, but they are allowed enter multiple times and stay for a maximum of two years at a time. There are certain requirements, and I will talk about the two most important ones. First, the person needs to have medical insurance coverage from a Canadian company. Second, the child or grandchild bringing in the parent or grandparent must provide proof of their ability to support them financially. There is a minimum income threshold that has to be proven by the child or grandchild in order for the parent or grandparent to receive the visa.

Spoiler alert: Let me just say that the Bloc Québécois is in favour of this bill.

For many families wishing to bring in parents and grandparents, the logistics, the paperwork and the wait times are an immeasurable administrative burden. Often, these families want to sponsor their parents or grandparents to come here permanently.

The super visa being considered provides the opportunity to have one's parents here in Canada while the sponsorship and permanent residence application is being processed. It is also another option for those not picked in the lottery.

That system is very restrictive. Few people manage to get a sponsorship application for parents or grandparents. I would like to add one thing: Right now, every time we check, the government has a backlog for almost all immigration programs. As all members of Parliament know, in our constituency offices across Canada and Quebec, about 80% to 85% of our most complicated cases are immigration cases. It needs to be said. This should not be allowed to continue across multiple programs. It would be a good idea to fast-track and streamline the process for those who in all likelihood would receive a favourable decision anyway. It seems to me that it might not be a bad thing.

The bill also makes some overall minor but specific changes to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act. We know this will apply to a relatively small number of the temporary residence visas granted every year. We also know that, because they have temporary status, these immigrants will not end up costing the federal or provincial governments anything. Lastly, we know that the few thousand people who are granted the existing super visa are generally people of significant financial means. The applicants have proof of funds, and the parents and grandparents have prepaid health insurance. In essence, they have to be financially secure. They pose no risk to anybody.

What exactly is a super visa? What will this bill change?

Bill C-242 makes four practical changes. First, visitors may purchase private health insurance from an insurance company located outside Canada. The current eligibility criteria require applicants to purchase insurance from a Canadian company.

Private Members' Business

Yesterday, I was talking about supply and demand, and it is the same idea. This could expand the pool of insurance companies, which will probably reduce insurance costs for super visa applicants.

As my colleague, the member for Saint-Jean, mentioned, all it takes is a quick search to see that this kind of insurance coverage is extremely expensive. For a young person in their forties with no known health issues, the premium can cost between \$1,000 and \$1,500. For people slightly older or with known health problems, insurance coverage can cost up to \$6,000 or \$7,000 a year. For two parents or grandparents, the cost must come to about \$10,000 annually on top of all of the costs associated with the immigration process. Well, these people do have resources, as I said, but that is no reason to stop them from shopping around for insurance.

The bill requires that the foreign insurance company be approved by the minister, ensuring that the company is legitimate and that its coverage is compatible with our health care systems. By opening up the market to competition, we take away Canadian companies' monopoly over this type of insurance coverage. I am not an economist, but this seems to me like a rather basic way to reduce the cost of coverage.

It will also allow some foreign nationals to combine this insurance coverage with a policy they already have for their home or vehicle.

• (1830)

I imagine that this could help them save money that they can use to get settled here, purchase goods and services, and contribute to our economy.

The second thing is that Bill C-242 extends the period of time a person can stay in Canada without having to renew the document from two to five years. This measure would help eliminate some existing irritants.

The super visa is a multiple-entry visa that is valid for a maximum of 10 years. The number of round trips that parents and grandparents have to make between Canada and their country of origin increases airfare costs. This measure alone would significantly reduce those costs. As well, renewing the permit every two years currently requires a medical exam for the insurance premium. It is obvious that, over a total span of 10 years, the grandparents' health could change, which could result in higher premiums and, more importantly, add some unpredictability to their stay in the country.

Going back to what I was saying, it is clear to me that as long as these people do not pose a financial risk to taxpayers, we should try to make life easier for them and their children and grandchildren who are hosting them and taking responsibility for them.

As I said earlier, children who are either permanent residents or citizens must meet a minimum financial threshold. Bill C-242 does not relax or eliminate the requirement for proof of financial means to support their parents or grandparents. Instead, it would have the minister study whether the minimum income requirement should be

maintained. As I learned from my colleague from Saint-Jean, many people are suggesting it should be eliminated altogether.

If, within the next two years, the minister wants to maintain the minimum income requirement as is, they will have to explain why. Ministerial instructions changed everything though, so parliamentarians have not taken much of an interest in this bill.

The bill calls for a review of whether a particular measure is appropriate, which is reasonable. The committee covered this, and it went very well. The committee members were in agreement. Simply put, the Bloc Québécois supports this bill. It is all good. We have nothing bad to say about it.

There were ministerial instructions, but I think that this will make the measure permanent and ensure that it goes further in time. The member for Dufferin—Caledon did outstanding work on this. He has the support of the NDP and the Bloc Québécois. I think that this bill will move forward one way or another, even if one party on the other side of the House opposes it.

[English]

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am happy to rise and speak to Bill C-242.

The heart of the issue of Bill C-242 is reuniting families. It is about ensuring that parents and grandparents can come to Canada to be with their loved ones. We know the value of that and cherish it as individuals. Like other people with children, I value the moments that my daughter and son spend with their grandmother and grandfather. Of course, my parents are immigrants here, so they get to enjoy that, but so many newcomers, so many immigrants who come to this country, are not in that fortunate situation. They did not bring their parents and grandparents here to Canada, and they cannot enjoy those moments. What Bill C-242 is trying to do is facilitate a process for those families to be reunited through the super visa process.

The super visa process is already in place, and the bill before us seeks to enhance it by addressing the high cost of the issue with respect to insurance coverage particularly, and then extending the period to which parents and grandparents can come to Canada under a super visa.

Interestingly, and because of petty politics, in my view, after the bill was tabled, we saw the government, through committee, literally in the ninth hour, bring forward ministerial instructions to try to kill the bill, which is exactly what happened. Despite government members saying that they have advocated for this for a very long time, the reality is that they did not act on it. I remember, because back in 2015 as a new member of Parliament, this was one of the issues that we studied. We studied parents and grandparents reunification, and there was a whole host of recommendations that were tabled, but then it just sat on a shelf and nothing happened. I express my congratulations to the member for actually pushing the government in this regard and getting this done.

With that being said, I do think there are flaws within the bill. Of course, my first choice would be for the government to lift the cap on parents and grandparents reunification so that all those family members could seek permanent residence status here in Canada in an expeditious way. Now, that did not happen.

However, the issue I have with Bill C-242 is that I was hoping, through the bill, to have an amendment so there would be an appeal process for rejections of super visas, which the member did support, but it did not get government support. It did not go through, which is very unfortunate, because as members can imagine, a person whose application has been turned down would actually have to go through judicial review, which is a very onerous and expensive process that should not, in my view, be required. There should be a simple appeal process for the review officers, the government and the minister to take into consideration the extenuating circumstances of why an application is being rejected and then make compassionate decisions.

I cited an example of one family whose application was rejected because they missed the income requirement in the final stages. Their child came early and they had to go on maternity leave. As a result, their income dipped every so slightly for a short period of time. After the child was born, their income went back up, but then it was already too late, because they had already failed the program and they were rejected in the application. To me, that is a shame.

The government would say that they can reapply, which is true, but why make a family reapply? It is costly for the family. It delays the process, and equally important, it actually jams up IRCC and its staff, because they have to reprocess the same application yet again. Why go through that process when we could save the administrative cost on the government side?

That amendment, unfortunately, did not go through, but Bill C-242 would require the minister to report on it and review the issue around the review process, as well as report back on the income cut-off. I do think that reunification should not be based on one's ability to pay. Family reunification should be valued for what it is. Therefore, we should actually have a fulsome review of the costs that the government is imposing with respect to that and really examine whether or not we should be imposing it.

● (1835)

One thing that people often misconceive is the reality that when parents and grandparents come to Canada through family reunification, they contribute to our economy. They support the family, as both parents can get out into the workforce, as an example, and they can help with child care. They help with the growth of the children by teaching them their cultural and family history, language and so on. All of that contributes to building a multicultural Canada, one we are very proud of.

When we put up these barriers that block family reunification and only talk about their income, for example, saying that if their incomes dip ever so slightly, they are somehow disqualified, we are sending the clear message that family reunification needs to be bought. Just imagine that for one minute. If any one of us sitting in this chamber was told that we have to buy the ability to see our parents or grandparents, what would we say to that? I do not think that

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is who we are as a country and as a nation. I do not think that is who we are as people. Humanitarian actions acting on the basis of humanity mean that we cherish and value what we have and that we want to expand that to other people as well.

When it comes to family, I wish all families would be able to reunite. I wish that people would have the opportunity to be with their loved ones, create memories and then preserve those memories. The only way they can do that is for people to be able to reunite with each other.

I hope the government and the minister will take this to heart and examine the parents and grandparents sponsorship program and lift the cap to honour reunification in that way. In the interim, they should enhance the super visa program with an appeal process to ensure that there is an appeal process in place, and should lower the cost requirements. When we do that, we are respecting the families, and I think that is ultimately what we all want to see.

I will close by congratulating the member for bringing this bill forward. It is better to have legislation than ministerial instructions. It is petty for the government to play petty politics and bring in ministerial instructions at the last moment to usurp this bill. In the life of politics, at the end of the day what we all want to do, no matter which side we are on or which bench we are on, is make sure that policies are brought in to support and benefit the community.

There is no doubt in the minds of the New Democrats that ensuring family reunification for parents and grandparents is a laudable goal. It is a goal we support. We want to see this measure come to fruition, at least in the interim as a super visa. Let us reduce the cost of it for families and say that reuniting with loved ones should not be something we need to buy, but something we all honour and respect.

The New Democrats are happy to support this bill, and I look forward to seeing its full passage through the Senate.

● (1840)

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today in support of my colleague's bill. First and foremost, I want to congratulate my colleague from Dufferin—Caledon for bringing forward such a compassionate, sympathetic and common-sense bill that will help many new immigrants to this country and help our economy at the same time.

Before I get into the speech, I would also like to thank my NDP and Bloc colleagues for supporting the bill, making all kinds of great recommendations all the way along, and helping to get it through our immigration committee, without the support of the Liberals of course. I find it quite funny that the government loved the bill so much that it ended up taking it from my colleague and claiming it as its own.

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I find it even more interesting and ironic that at second reading of the bill, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration said in this place, “The government does not support the member’s proposal to allow...applicants to purchase private health insurance from foreign companies.” It is interesting enough that when the Liberals were taking the bill from my colleague, they also took that part of it, one of the most common-sense parts of the bill, which would help low-income families and those who need the help the most. However, they did not support that part. They still do not support that part.

I find it quite ironic and interesting that the woke government, which claims to be there for Canadians and have their backs, is not there. It is not there for low-income families, especially newcomers, who need the support from their parents and grandparents. We know how important it is to have grandparents and parents here. We saw that throughout the entire pandemic. People needed help. People were struggling with mental health and all sorts of problems.

In my office I see all sorts of troubles caused by the Liberal-made backlog in immigration. As my Bloc colleague said, 80% to 90% of the cases that come through our offices are immigration cases. The immigration system today is broken under the Liberal government. In my opinion, this common-sense bill, Bill C-242, would help to reduce that backlog. These are the common-sense solutions our party is putting forward because the government is not addressing the Liberal-made backlogs it has created itself.

I will keep it short because we have debated enough. All of my colleagues have put great points forward. I urge the government to support this bill. Let us get the help right away that people need now. Let us put it into legislation and let us get the job done.

• (1845)

Ms. Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Dufferin—Caledon for the time he has dedicated to this legislation.

As we know, our government has made a strong commitment to bring newcomers with their family members from overseas. Maintaining the bonds of family is not only essential to our immigration system. It is paramount to the well-being of Canadian society in general and, perhaps, most importantly, family reunification is a fundamental Canadian value.

For me, I was also raised by my grandparents. I would not be who I am without them as I stand here today.

Canada has one of the most generous family reunification programs in the world. We strive to keep families connected wherever possible.

With families by their sides, newcomers can better integrate into Canadian society and contribute to the success of communities from coast to coast to coast. The last two years have been tough for everyone. After the uncertainty and isolation of the pandemic, people are especially keen to reconnect with their loved ones. The love and support of parents and grandparents in particular are factors in the success of newcomers and those who are well-established here as permanent residents or Canadian citizens. This is why Canada has a special class of visa available for parents and grandparents

who wish to visit their family for longer periods of time. The parent and grandparent super visa is a multiple-entry visa, valid for entry for up to 10 years.

In June of this year, the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship announced that the visa would be enhanced to allow for stays of up to five years at a time. That is an increase from two years. The super visa also holds the possibility of multiple extensions so that now a parent or grandparent can stay up to seven consecutive years. A long-term, flexible visa means that applicants and their families might be subject to additional criteria before their applications are approved. This includes undergoing an immigration medical exam, purchasing private medical insurance and making sure that the applicant will receive minimum financial support from their Canadian or permanent resident child or grandchild.

As previously mentioned, the minister announced enhancements to the super visa in June of 2022 and, as part of those changes, the minister is now able to designate foreign medical insurance providers to provide insurance coverage for super visa applications.

It is important to ensure that these visitors, who are more at risk of changing health circumstances, are protected with reliable and secure emergency medical coverage while visiting Canada for a long period of time so that they are not denied medical treatment or asked to pay hospital bills right out of pocket. The minister made this change to provide more flexibility to super visa holders while also ensuring that these parents and grandparents have adequate coverage while in Canada. I am confident that any foreign insurance companies designated by the minister will undergo a robust verification process to ensure that super visa holders are adequately protected.

Bill C-242 also requires the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship to table a report on reducing the income requirement that the child or grandchild must meet for the parent or grandparent to qualify for a super visa. As we affirmed during debate in the last stage of the bill, the government supports these changes. As I have already said, the necessary steps to implement them were taken in June 2022 through ministerial instruction, which came into force in July.

Along with many other members here, I would be glad to see a report tabled in Parliament on the income requirements for the super visa. The minimum necessary income requirement is in place to ensure that the host child or grandchild is able to provide for the basic requirements of their visiting parent or grandparent while they are in Canada. That said, we must always be willing to look for opportunities that may lead to greater program flexibility and, ultimately, more families being able to reunite with one another.

● (1850)

What needs to be clarified is the fact that Bill C-242 proposes to amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, effectively enshrining these changes to the super visa in law. We continue to believe that entrenching changes to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act would hamper the ability to be responsive to potentially different needs of parents and grandparents in the future. Any future enhancement to the super visa could potentially take years to go through a legislative process.

The changes that were made in June exemplify how effective and rapid this instrument is when an improvement is needed. Setting things in stone in IRPA would completely negate this expediency. Ministerial instructions allow the government to respond rapidly to the needs of clients as opposed to a slow-moving legislative procedure.

In closing, the government strongly recognizes family reunification as an integral part of our immigration system. Helping families reunite with loved ones is a priority for our government. Canadians have asked for this, and we have responded. Thanks to the changes brought into force last June, parents and grandparents may now stay in Canada for many, many years without having to leave the country. With approximately 17,000 super visas issued every year, the super visa is an accessible option for the parents and grandparents of Canadian citizens and permanent residents to reunite in Canada. I remain confident that the super visa in its current form maximizes benefits to families.

For this reason, while the Government of Canada supports many of the principles outlined in private member's bill, Bill C-242, we recommend that the authorities remain under ministerial instruction and not in legislation. This would preserve our ability to best serve our current clients and those who are to come in the future.

Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Fredericton, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is great to see you back in the chair and to see all of my colleagues in this wonderful place. It is, of course, an honour to rise on behalf of the residents of Fredericton and to join our voice in this debate this evening.

I would like just to begin with my wish for this fall session on behalf of our colleagues here in this place. I hope for a session of collaboration, of collegiality and, dare I say, of kindness and compassion. I know that is what Canadians want to see from us on all issues, even difficult ones. Even on issues where we may disagree, there is a place for us to show our respect for one another. Really, Canadians want us to work together. I hope to see rhetoric toned down. I hope to see a little less polarization, understanding that our behaviours in this place are reflected in our communities.

This evening we are discussing Bill C-242, which is the reuniting families act. In Fredericton, inquiries regarding immigration, refugee status and visas are the highest number that we have as far as constituency files go. I would like to thank my incredible staff for the work that they do on behalf of our residents as well. It is difficult work and we hear a lot about the need for family reunification. None of us can imagine the difficulty of being separated from our loved ones for long periods of time, but it certainly continues to happen, and I am happy to see that there are measures being taken to address these long absences.

Private Members' Business

The super visa is extremely popular. Our government recognizes that having parents and grandparents being able to visit Canada for longer periods of time will bring substantial benefits for families living in Canada and, by extension, the Canadian economy as well.

After extensive consultation with caucus, stakeholders and experts, it was determined that the fundamental program changes sought in this bill would be in the best interests of Canadians and Canadian permanent residents. For this reason, in June the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship used his authority under ministerial instructions to make changes to the length of stay for a super visa holder and he committed to designate certain international medical insurance companies as authorized to provide coverage to super visa applicants. These changes will strengthen family reunification in Canada, which is, of course, a priority for our government.

What this shows is a demonstration of working together with opposition members on some of the issues that they also see in their constituencies. It also shows a willingness to listen to what Canadians and other members in the House are telling us, and the commitment to work together to solve these problems. It may not be exactly what we saw in the private member's bill. It shows kind of a tweaking of the message there, but our minister has been doing an excellent job of really responding to the high needs that we see in each constituency.

Again, it is an honour to rise. I did not realize I would be participating in tonight's debate, so I am happy to have my voice on the record. It is a complicated issue, but we have found the best pieces to work together on. I am sure there are still places we can improve, but the goal is to focus on family reunification and ensuring that those long absences do not add to the stress that those families are feeling and do not add to the mental health issues that we are seeing with those who are separated from loved ones for long periods of time. It is something that we are going to continue to work on, listening to Canadians and hoping to deliver.

● (1855)

Mr. Maninder Sidhu (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am rising for the first time after our summer break, so I would like to thank my constituents for a wonderful summer of meetings, Canada Day celebrations and really just reconnecting with constituents. It felt really good to be back out and about.

I also want to thank my constituency team, which worked really hard throughout the summer. We are talking about TRVs and immigration, and my case work team has been incredible. They have been there for families hoping to reunite.

Adjournment Proceedings

We are also talking about the super visa program, which is extremely popular in my riding. We have a lot of first-generation immigrants who have family back home, whether that is in India or another region. When we talk about super visa programs, we talk about the changes the minister made back in June 2022 and how extremely important they were.

We heard from constituents who came back to us and said it is hard for their grandparents to travel back home every couple of years so they can come back again to the country. When we took this back to the minister, it was nice that he heard us out and made a change to the system so they would not have to go back and were able to stay for several years in this country.

It also helps families. We now have the child care program. Before we had this child care program, a lot of the families in my riding really relied on their grandparents and parents, who stayed home to take care of their children so they could participate in our economy, give back and learn from their careers.

When we talk about TRVs and family reunification, it is very important for our government. It is very promising that processing times are starting to come down as well, whether we are talking about spousal sponsorships, super visas or even TRVs for families to be together during very difficult times.

It is an honour for me to rise today to talk about the importance of the TRV process, the super visa process and the changes the minister made to insurance. Families can go to many different providers now, not just a few, to provide medical insurance so they can participate in the super visa program and have their grandparents and parents come to this country.

Going along with what my colleague said, we are very positive about the change by the minister back in June. It was well received by the community. Families know that they will be able to see their grandparents and parents here in this country for much longer than a few years and then come back.

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

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

• (1900)

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Madam Speaker, on April 26, I asked a question in the House. I said, "Mr. Speaker," because it was a "mister" at that time, "inflation hit 6.7% last month". I wish that had been the worst of it, but unfortunately it went to 8.1% in June.

I continued:

...a 31-year high and well above the Bank of Canada's predictions. Canadians are already struggling to pay their bills, fill up at the pump and put food on the table.

Unfortunately, budget 2022 failed to provide any credible solutions, and with the extensive, unfocused spending, it is only going to get worse. The simple fact is that Canadians cannot afford this Liberal-NDP government.

When will the minister acknowledge this cost-of-living crisis we are living in and work on real solutions?

Five months later, I wish I could say things are better, but they are, in fact, worse. A story published today by CTV News indicates that nearly a quarter of Canadians are cutting back on food purchases amid high inflation, and that amid soaring prices at the grocery stores, a new survey has found that 23.6% of Canadians have had to cut back on the amount of food they are buying. This survey, as conducted by Dalhousie University's Agri-Food Analytics Lab in partnership with Caddle, was conducted between September 8 and September 10 and involved 5,000 Canadians from coast to coast.

Over the last year, 8.2% said they have had to change their diet to save money on food, and 7.1% said they had skipped meals because of the cost of groceries; 24% of Canadians are literally buying less food due to higher prices. Of that number, 70% are women, so it is highly likely that children are also impacted by what is going on with this high inflation. The survey also found that nearly three-quarters of consumers were changing their buying habits in order to snag better deals at the grocery store, and of the respondents, 33.7% said they were using more loyalty program points to pay for groceries in the last year.

In addition, 32.1% said they were reading flyers more often, and 23.9% said they were using more coupons at the grocery store.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I apologize to the hon. member, but I would like to ask the people who are in the outer courtyard to please lower the tone of their conversations. We can barely hear what is happening here in the chamber.

The hon. member for Calgary Midnapore.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Madam Speaker, today the job vacancies for the second quarter report came out for 2022, and the following was determined. Overall, average offered hourly wages increased 5.3% to \$24.05 in the second quarter, yet the consumer price index increased by 7.5% in the second quarter. Simply put, wages are not keeping up with inflation. With the cost of food, bakery products increased by 13.6%, sugar and confectionary by 9.7%, fresh fruit by 11.7% and eggs by 15.8%.

I asked the government to find solutions for the economy, and five months later it is clear it has still failed.

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am very happy to be here to discuss this topic, and I thank the member opposite for raising it.

Canadians are seeing higher inflation rates and higher costs of living in Canada and, frankly, right around the world as the result of many factors, which include the war in Ukraine, global supply chain bottlenecks and global energy market uncertainty.

Despite these challenges, Canada's rate of inflation continues to be well below that of the G7, the United States and the OECD. I would like to remind my colleague across the aisle that our lower rate is in part due to the measures taken by our government, including in budget 2022, which put forward targeted measures to ensure that key expenses like housing, child care and dental care would be more affordable for more Canadians. Prior to that, we lowered taxes for the middle class on two occasions, tax decreases that the member and her party voted against.

While we could not foresee a global pandemic or a war in Europe, when it comes to the finances of our country, Canadians can rest assured that our net debt to GDP is the lowest in the G7 and we have improved our relative position over the course of the pandemic. Our government is fully aware that Canadians are feeling the effects of elevated inflation, particularly at the gas pumps and in grocery stores, but we also understand that inflation is a global phenomenon, driven in large part by the lasting impacts of a once-in-several-generations pandemic and, of course, Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine.

While this is not a unique Canadian problem, we have a good plan to make life more affordable, especially for those Canadians who need it the most. Our affordability plan includes a suite of measures totalling \$12.1 billion in new support for 2022. We have enhanced the Canada workers benefit, which now supports an estimated three million low-income workers. We have increased OAS for seniors 75 years and older by 10%, starting in July 2022.

By the end of this year, we will be cutting child care fees in half. That will deliver thousands of dollars for Canadian families while investing in their children and allowing more parents to get back to work. In addition, earlier today our government introduced legislation to implement new dental, housing and GST credit affordability measures that are also part of our affordability plan.

Now the new Conservative leader, and I congratulate him on his new position, said that today's announcement prints cash. That is a quote.

Let us be absolutely clear. These two pieces of legislation provide targeted relief for the middle-class Canadians who need it the most. He says this is inflationary spending. Multiple economists, including our former deputy parliamentary budget officer and the University of Calgary's Lindsay Tedds, have pointed out that these supports for Canadians are not inflationary.

The Conservative leader's solution to help with the cost of living is to make cuts to government programs without telling us what he would cut. He has also encouraged Canadians to invest in speculative assets. Sadly some Canadians listened to the Leader of the Opposition and have since lost their life savings as a result.

A more responsible approach to governance and more responsible approach to solving the affordability challenges of Canadians is required. Our government is continuing to focus on making life

more affordable, and we are continuing to focus on making an economy that works for all Canadians.

● (1905)

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Madam Speaker, I would point out that the affordability bill of 2022 has measures that are set to cost \$4.5 billion. Of that \$4.5 billion, \$1.4 billion was previously announced in budget 2022. This bill actually adds another \$3.5 billion on top of the \$53-billion deficit projected in 2022.

A rent subsidy of \$40 would not pay for a tank of gas, let alone help Canadians afford a more secure place to live. Every province in Canada with the exception of Manitoba has existing dental support programs for children. Conservatives are concerned about the duplication of programs interfering with provincial jurisdiction.

In summary, Conservatives are focused on fighting, not fuelling inflation, and are opposed to any new spending. I would encourage my colleague and his government that, for any new dollar in spending, it must be matched with a dollar in savings—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Terry Beech: Madam Speaker, that is not the first time a Conservative has risen in this House to say that we were spending too much and not enough in the same sentence.

By doubling the GST credit for six months, we would provide \$2.5 billion in additional targeted support to the roughly 11 million individuals and families who need it the most. This includes about half of Canadian families with children and more than half of Canadian seniors. We are also creating the Canada dental benefit. I think we could both agree that it is important that kids can get their teeth fixed, and that there are affordability and economic benefits as well.

We are providing a new one-time top-up to the Canada housing benefit, which would deliver a \$500 payment to 1.8 million struggling renters, effectively doubling the commitment we made in budget 2022. Our government is focused on providing real solutions to make life more affordable. I look forward to working with the member opposite to find more ways to work together to make life more affordable for Canadian families.

● (1910)

GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to be here tonight.

Adjournment Proceedings

Objective International analysis shows that Canada faces democratic decline. Our democracy in Canada is not about to cease to exist, but it is weakening under pressure from the Prime Minister.

The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, or IDEA, in Stockholm is the global authority on democracy evaluation. Its data underlines that Canada's score on key variables has dropped precipitously since 2015 when the Liberal government took office. This is not just what Conservatives are saying. The Objective International monitor shows that the Liberal Prime Minister is bad for democracy.

According to IDEA, Canada's performance is particularly dropping as it relates to checks on government, which are the constraints on arbitrary executive power. On this metric, we are now lower than the United States and every single country in western Europe. It may be that we have always had a strong executive branch in Canada, but the Prime Minister is presiding over a dramatic increase in his own ability to exercise arbitrary power, regardless of the concerns raised by citizens and other institutions.

This data particularly shows that the weakening of Parliament and the capacity for Parliament to scrutinize government action is driving that democratic decline. The government increasingly sees Parliament as a rubber-stamp body instead of a meaningful check on government power and the beating heart of a genuinely deliberative democracy.

There are many specific events that underline this decline and the ability of Parliament and other institutions to constrain arbitrary executive power: the SNC-Lavalin scandal, where the Prime Minister's Office sought to influence then attorney general Jody Wilson-Raybould; the suspension of debate and committee study on key legislative items; the prolonged suspension of Parliament during the early phase of the COVID-19 pandemic; the refusal of the government to hand over documents ordered by parliamentary committees; and the use of the Emergencies Act by the government to freeze the bank accounts of citizens they disagreed with without due process. These are some of the examples that mark the clear expansion of the use of arbitrary executive power and, therefore, the weakening of democracy.

The key institutions that check government power in healthy democracies are Parliament, the media and the courts. The Liberal government is undermining Parliament through its abuses of process here and the NDP has been complicit along the way. Liberals are also undermining the independence of the media through public subsidy and through efforts of social media control. The media play a critical role in a free democracy, yet the government is trying to bring the media under its influence by introducing state subsidies for private media and proposing legislation to control social media algorithms. Needless to say, the government's efforts to co-opt and control the media are a much greater threat to democracy than simple media criticism.

Trust is being lost in our institutions precisely because, according to the international data, our institutions are losing their ability to constrain government and a particular executive action. The threat to democracy in Canada is from those who are causing this phenomenon, not from those who are pointing it out. Trust in our institutions is declining because our institutions themselves are weaken-

ing in their ability to check government power under increasing pressure from the growing arbitrary power of an undemocratic Prime Minister's Office.

The Liberals need to face up to the problems they are causing. We cannot solve the problems we are facing together if we do not have a functioning independent Parliament and free media that depends on viewers instead of on the state for its support.

Therefore, I ask these questions tonight: Is the government prepared to recognize the damage it has done in the last seven years? Is it prepared to change course and support the strengthening of Parliament, free media and Canadian democracy?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I disagree entirely with the member's comments. With respect to that destructive force, he underestimates the part his own political party has played.

When he talks about institutions, one of the greatest institutions we have is Elections Canada, for example, and the way in which, in an apolitical fashion, it has attempted to engage Canadians in the democratic process. The Conservative Party undermined some of the issues dealing with Elections Canada in the sense of a fair election.

When the member talks about the institution of Parliament, he claims that the NDP and Liberals working together undermines a sense of accountability. The party inside the House where I see the most resistance to modernizing the House of Commons is the Conservative Party of Canada. There are many things we can do by changing our Standing Orders to enable additional accountability. However, the Conservative Party consistently does nothing to see the modernization of parliamentary rules.

During the pandemic, the member was critical because we had an extended period of time. What he does not make reference to is the opportunity we had to sit for the first time in a long time during the summer, in the month of July. During the time we sat, we had the opportunity for additional accountability, where members of the opposition were able to hold ministers to account, not just in one question and answer and then on to the next MP, but in a series of questions based on time, where we could see 10 second or one and a half minute questions.

There have been opportunities for us to ensure there is a higher sense of accountability inside the House of Commons, but the real challenge has been to get the Conservative Party to recognize that, to support our institutions and to look at ways in which we can reform the House of Commons and the chamber, whether here or at our standing committees, as opposed to being a destructive force. If they are genuinely concerned about the democratic decline, first and foremost they have to accept some of the responsibility for that.

As I was yesterday, I continue to be very much open to ways in which we can make this chamber more functional because, as I have argued in the past and will continue to argue, we should never take our democracy for granted here in Canada. There are things that we collectively, political partisanship aside, can do to ensure a higher sense of accountability.

The member has concerns with respect to the media, which is a fundamental pillar of democracy. He takes objection to some of the manner in which subsidies are handed out and has said that we should not subsidize. We are very much concerned about fake news and indirectly, not with a political arm, are ensuring that some of our community and rural newspapers, and even those in urban centres, are able to maintain and support a media, which is so—

● (1915)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, respectfully, that was a particularly insubstantive response to some very serious and legitimate concerns.

What I said in my introductory comments was that international monitors have identified democratic decline, particularly around the ability of institutions to check the power of the executive, as being a key concern in Canada. The parliamentary secretary made no mention of the increasing power of the executive to exercise arbitrary power at the expense of key institutions like Parliament. He made no mention of specific issues.

He talked about how the government cancelled Parliament for a while, but had a Zoom call going on where ministers could be asked questions. That I think precisely demonstrates the problem. The government thought that cancelling Parliament and having Zoom-call questions was somehow a replacement for democracy.

Now he said the reason the government is subsidizing some media outlets is that it is concerned about fake news. This is a government that, like former president Trump, persistently calls those who disagree with it “fake news”. On the one hand, the Liberals say they want to address fake news through social media regulation, and on the other hand they accuse the opposition of fake news any time we disagree with them. This is the problem. This is the authoritarian tool kit the government is using. It is threatening our democracy.

The parliamentary secretary should take stock of the problems we face. He should take stock of what international independent monitors are saying, what the objective analysis is showing, which is that on the checks on government metric, that is on the ability of institutions to check the arbitrary power of government, Canada is in decline.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the member is being very selective in what he is saying. Everything that I indicated in my four-minute response deals exactly with what the member is talking about. In good part, it demonstrates that the Conservatives, the official opposition, also have a role to play but choose to ignore that role.

The member referenced that we took a break. Well, when we took the first break of Parliament back in April 2020, every opposition party agreed to it. The member needs to be consistent. If he

genuinely has concerns regarding democratic decline, then let us talk about ways we can improve it. Numerous members, including me, are genuinely interested in changing our Standing Orders and making this chamber more functional. By doing that, we will have more accountability.

● (1920)

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, on April 8, 2022, I rose to ask the government when it would invest in a “for indigenous, by indigenous” urban, rural and northern housing strategy, which it has promised since 2017 but has failed to deliver. After the NDP pushed for action, the Liberals proposed just \$300 million to initiate a strategy over five years. This is hardly a drop in the bucket and is not good enough. We need a federal government response that meets the gravity of this national crisis.

The situation in my community is so dire that it literally keeps me up at night. People are dying and lives are at stake. On July 25, fire officials issued an order to immediately disperse an encampment of the unhoused, who are disproportionately represented by indigenous people seeking shelter and community together in tents along East Hastings Street, citing serious fire safety concerns. When these tents come down, there will be nowhere for people to go. Meanwhile, residents are being increasingly targeted by threats of violence and criminalized by authorities.

There are simply not enough safe and affordable homes for people to move into. There are currently more than 2,000 identified homeless individuals in the city, and this number is likely an undercounting. About 40% are indigenous, meaning that indigenous people are nearly 18 times more likely to be homeless in Vancouver compared with the rest of the population.

Unhoused people also face serious health concerns and challenges. Many have chronic substance use issues and physical or mental illness. Health needs cannot be met while surviving on the streets. At least 225 unhoused people have died in Vancouver over the last five years. This is the reality today in Canada, and the government needs to face this truth.

In August 2020, I joined the B.C. provincial government and the mayor of Vancouver to call on the government to urgently enter into a fifty-fifty cost-sharing agreement with the province to build more supportive housing and acquire new housing stock, yet the government did not even respond to this call. On August 3, 2022, I wrote to the minister again with an urgent call for action. Again there was no response.

Adjournment Proceedings

On August 23, I wrote a letter, jointly with the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs, to the minister. A month later, there was not even an acknowledgement that the minister received the letter. Instead of responding to the crisis, the minister is choosing to just ignore the plight of the unhoused. It is as though they do not exist, that their lives do not matter.

The NDP has been raising the alarm on the housing crisis for decades, but the government continues the pattern of previous Liberal and Conservative inaction. In fact, it was the Liberals under Paul Martin who cancelled the national housing strategy in 1993. Since that time, both the Liberals and the Conservatives have allowed displacements caused by real estate developers, renovations, demolitions and the financialization of housing by landlords, REITs and private equity firms looking to maximize profits by driving up rents.

The housing and homelessness crisis is not inevitable. It is a failure of policy, resources and political will. Through immediate intervention, through action and through a human rights-based approach, it can be solved.

Therefore, I am asking this once again: Will the government commit today to adopting a human rights approach and adequately investing in a “for indigenous, by indigenous” urban, rural and northern housing strategy?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, in so many ways, the member is wrong. We have seen a government, under the leadership of the current Prime Minister, virtually from the very beginning back in 2015, that has taken a very progressive and aggressive attitude both in legislation and in the form of budgetary measures to support housing, in essence bringing forward a national housing strategy, billions of dollars overall.

It is having an impact. I would challenge the member to indicate what government in the last 50 or 60 years has invested more in housing in Canada. I will give some help to the member in terms of the answer: She will not find a government that has invested more than the current government has done over the last six years. We have made significant investments. Let me highlight a few when it comes to the important issue of indigenous people.

In collaboration with ISC and the CMHC, as of December 31, 2021, first nations have been able to support the construction, renovation and retrofitting of 25,102 homes on reserves, of which 17,432 have been completed. To support housing in Inuit and Métis communities, \$980 million has been announced by our government since 2016. These investments have been provided to partners, and thousands of Inuit and Métis families are now living in new and renovated homes via strategies led by indigenous partners.

In the 2022 budget, we announced an additional \$4 billion in funding for indigenous housing over seven years to accelerate work in closing indigenous housing gaps, including \$2.4 billion over five years to support first nation housing on reserves, \$845 million over seven years for housing in Inuit communities, \$190 million over seven years for housing in Métis communities and \$565 million over five years for housing in self-governing and modern treaty first nation communities.

Lastly, through the indigenous homes innovation initiative, we are supporting creative projects led by indigenous people to design and build more effective, sustainable and culturally inspired living spaces, some of which will specifically support indigenous women and girls from other vulnerable populations.

This government has committed and followed through on a wide spectrum of dealings in terms of Canada's housing crisis. I could easily spend the next 20 or 30 minutes just talking about some of those initiatives. We would have to go back many years, if in fact one could find a year, to find a government that has invested more in housing. If one does a comparison with the NDP platform back in 2015, we have out-measured and outdone that platform by a country mile.

This is a government that understands the value of housing to Canadians from coast to coast to coast and continues to work with indigenous leadership to ensure that wherever the federal government can play a role, it is, in fact, playing a role. We understand the importance of reconciliation and the way in which housing plays a critical role in it.

● (1925)

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Madam Speaker, I do not know what rock this member has been living under. The truth of the matter is this: It was the Liberals who cancelled the national affordable housing program back in 1993. The NDP called for the government to build 500,000 units of true affordable housing to meet that need, a gap that the Liberals created when they cancelled the national affordable housing program.

The member can talk all he wants. All he has to do is open his eyes. I invite him and the minister and the Prime Minister to come to Vancouver East and see for themselves the people who are unhoused in our community today, who are dying today, who are being criminalized today, and for him to say those words to their faces, that somehow their lives do not matter and that the Liberals are doing all that needs to be done to address the housing crisis.

Shame on the member. He has not paid any attention to the truth nor faced the truth.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, shame on that member. The member can come over to Winnipeg and I can tell her that after 15 years of New Democratic rule, and it is the provinces that play a critical role in housing development, the provincial NDP failed the citizens of Manitoba. They completely failed.

Take a look and take a drive in Winnipeg Centre or Winnipeg North. Members will see the severity of the housing crisis, where we have indigenous people and others living in bus shelters because the NDP, for 15 years, failed to address the issue of housing. That is the reality of it.

If we want to deal with the housing crisis, we need to work with the different levels of government and indigenous people. That is something that this government has been doing since 2015-16 under the leadership of the Prime Minister. We do not need to be lectured by the New Democrats when it comes to housing. The member can talk about 1993 and other years. As I indicated, show me a year when we have seen this much investment and support for housing in Canada.

Adjournment Proceedings

• (1930)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):

The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:31 p.m.)

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