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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, June 17, 2020

The House met at 2:30 p.m.

Prayer

• (1435)

[*English*]

The Speaker: Traditionally, on the first Wednesday in June, the pages lead the singing of the national anthem in the chamber to start the sitting for that day. This has not been an ordinary year for anyone, including for this year's group of pages. Although the pages were not able to sing in person this year, all those who could participate have collaborated virtually from across the country to maintain this tradition.

[*Translation*]

Since this may be the last Wednesday in June when the House will sit, I would like to present to you the results of this extraordinary teamwork. The 2019-20 class of pages will lead us in the singing of the national anthem.

[*Pages sang the national anthem*]

[*English*]

The Speaker: Colleagues, before we begin our proceedings, I would like to say a few words regarding the special measures in place today.

[*Translation*]

Pursuant to order made Tuesday, May 26, the application of Standing Order 17 will be suspended for the current sitting to allow members to practise physical distancing. Members desiring to speak and address the Chair may do so from any seat in the House.

[*English*]

Finally, I ask that all members tabling a document or moving a motion sign the document and bring it to the table themselves.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (A), 2020-21

The Speaker: Since we are meeting today for the sole purpose of considering the business of supply for the period ending June 23,

the House will go through the usual procedures to consider and dispose of the supply bills. In view of recent practices, do hon. members agree that the bills be distributed now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

UKRAINIAN INTERNATIONAL AIRLINES FLIGHT PS752

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties and if you seek it, I hope you will find there is unanimous support for the following motion:

WHEREAS Ukrainian International Airlines Flight PS752 was unlawfully shot down on January 8th, 2020 near Tehran, taking the innocent lives of all 176 people on board, including 55 Canadian citizens and 30 permanent residents, as well as others from Iran, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, Sweden and Afghanistan;

WHEREAS the government of Iran has publicly acknowledged that its military forces fired the missiles that caused these deaths, that it is legally obligated to conduct appropriate and transparent safety and criminal investigations to bring those responsible to justice and to safeguard civil aviation, and that it is obliged to make reparations to the affected States, including in the form of compensation to the families of all the victims, in accordance with international law;

[*Translation*]

Whereas the flight recorders from PS752 have been recovered by Iran, but have not yet been downloaded to allow their data to be analyzed, which should have been done “without delay”, according to international standards, immediately following January 8th (long before any limitations imposed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic); and

Whereas the families of the victims — in Canada, in Iran and in other countries around the world — continue to grieve the tragic and senseless loss of their loved-ones and are anxious to learn the whole truth about what happened to PS752, who was responsible, and how they are being held to account, in addition to seeking honourable treatment with respect to compensation from both the airline and Iran, and in matters related to their ongoing safety and peace of mind;

[*English*]

NOW BE IT RESOLVED THAT THIS HOUSE:

1. Express its deep condolences to the families of the victims who lost their lives in the horrific downing of PS725, condemn the perpetrators, and stand in solidarity with the families in the pursuit of transparency, accountability and justice for those families;

2. Support steps taken thus far, including the implementation of a whole-of-government approach to addressing the needs of the families, the provision of consular services, immigration and travel supports, the identification and repatriation of remains, financial support (directly from the government in the form of emergency financial assistance and by matching private donations to the Canada Strong Campaign), mental health and counselling services, a regular ongoing flow of information and replies to inquiries, investigative work, the formation of a Canada-led International Coordination and Response Group, the launch of the “Safer Skies” initiative at the Munich Security Conference, and Canada's representations to the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO);

Business of Supply

[Translation]

3. Call upon all relevant departments and agencies of the Government of Canada to exercise all necessary diligence, persistence and determination to grapple effectively with the complexities inherent in international disasters of this magnitude, as well as the additional impediments created by the COVID-19 pandemic, so the families can ultimately know the truth about what happened, notwithstanding the time and effort such pursuit of justice may require;

● (1440)

[English]

4. Call upon the Government of Canada in the meantime:

(a) to pursue, with the other affected States of the Coordination Group, negotiations on reparations with Iran to obtain appropriate compensation for the families of the victims from the state of Iran, in addition to the obligations of the airline industry;

(b) to resolve outstanding immigration issues in a fair, equitable and compassionate manner;

(c) to implement appropriate means of honouring and commemorating the precious lives lost; and

(d) to help protect families from foreign interference, intimidation, harassment and cyber threats.

[Translation]

5. Support the work of the Government of Canada, in partnership with the international community through the CG and ICAO, and otherwise, to expose as much as possible the sequence of events and the decision-making chain that resulted in deadly missiles being launched against this civilian aircraft contrary to international law, and to determine how and why civilian aircraft were allowed to be in that airspace over a dangerous conflict zone, all in an effort to avoid repetitions of this disastrous set of circumstances.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[English]

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there have also been discussions among the parties and if you seek it, I think you will find unanimous consent for the following motion:

That the membership of the Standing Committee of Citizenship and Immigration be amended as follows: Mr. Dhaliwal, Surrey—Newton, for Mr. Tabbara, Kitchener South—Hespeler, and that the name of Mr. Zuberi, Pierrefonds—Dollard, be added to the list of associate members of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there have also been discussions among the parties and, if you seek it, I think you will find unanimous consent for the following motion:

That, during the debate today on the Business of Supply pursuant to the order adopted on May 26, 2020:

a) within each 15-minute period, each party may allocate time to one or more of its members for speeches or for questions and answers, provided that, in the case of questions and answers, the minister's answer approximately reflect the time taken by the question, and provided that, in the case of speeches, members of the party to which the period is allocated may speak one after the other; and

b) the Speaker may preside in committee of the whole.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Mr. Speaker, I also have a unanimous consent motion.

There have been discussions and I hope if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent for the following motion: That, the House recognize that there is systemic racism in the RCMP as several indigenous people have died at the hands of the RCMP in recent months, and call on the government to do the following: a) review the nearly \$10 million per day RCMP budget and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Act, increase non-police investments in non-violent intervention, de-escalation, and mental health and addictions supports; b) ensure that the RCMP is truly accountable to the public; c) release all RCMP incidents of use-of-force reports and the associated settlement costs; and d) immediately launch a full review of the use of force by the RCMP, including reviewing the tactics and the training that is given to RCMP officers in dealing with the public.

● (1445)

The Speaker: Does the hon. member for Burnaby South have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed

Some hon. members: No.

The Speaker: Pursuant to order made on Tuesday, May 26, the House will now resolve itself into committee of the whole to study all votes in the supplementary estimates (A) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2021.

Business of Supply

[Translation]

I do now leave the chair for the House to go into committee of the whole.

[English]

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (A), 2020-21

(Consideration in committee of the whole of all votes in the supplementary estimates (A), Mrs. Carol Hughes in the chair)

The Deputy Chair: We will now consider all votes in the supplementary estimates (A) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2021. Time can be shared.

* * *

[Translation]

POINT OF ORDER

COMMENTS BY THE MEMBER FOR BURNABY SOUTH

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member for Salaberry—Suroît on a point of order.

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ): Madam Speaker, I hope you will restore order to the House because the NDP leader insulted a member of my party.

The Deputy Chair: Could you please repeat what you just said? We did not understand what you said.

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: Madam Speaker, we are gathered here as parliamentarians in the House of Commons. Every member has a right to their opinion. However, I do not believe a party leader is entitled to call another member of the House racist simply because that member does not agree with the motion we just discussed.

The NDP leader shamelessly called the member for La Prairie racist. That is unacceptable in the House.

The Deputy Chair: I did not personally hear that comment.

We will listen to the recording and then discuss it.

Does the NDP leader wish to comment?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Madam Speaker, yes, I did call him a racist, and I do believe he is.

The Deputy Chair: I would ask the member for Burnaby South to apologize for his remarks.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Madam Speaker, I will not.

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member for Salaberry—Suroît.

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: Madam Speaker, what we are seeing today is unacceptable.

You asked the member to apologize, and he needs to do so. He cannot refuse to apologize, since what he did was completely unacceptable and unparliamentary.

● (1450)

The Deputy Chair: I have noted your comments. I asked the member to apologize. I will take this under advisement and return to the House shortly.

Does the hon. member wish to rise again?

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: Yes, Madam Speaker, I have one last thing to say.

I am completely shocked that this member has so openly and publicly attacked your authority as Chair. I would like him to leave the chamber immediately.

The Deputy Chair: I have asked the member to apologize. Until he does, he will be unable to address the House.

The Speaker will deliberate on the question and will comment on it as soon as possible.

We will now go into committee of the whole.

* * *

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (A), 2020-21

(Consideration in committee of the whole of all votes in the supplementary estimates (A), Mrs. Carol Hughes in the chair)

The Deputy Chair: We will now resume consideration of all votes in the supplementary estimates (A) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2021. Time can be shared.

Today's debate is a general one on all votes tabled before the House on Tuesday, June 2, 2020. Pursuant to the provisions in the motion adopted on Tuesday, May 26, 2020, the total length of time for debate will not exceed four hours, during which time no quorum calls or dilatory motions shall be received by the Chair.

The first round will begin with the official opposition, followed by the government, the Bloc Québécois and the New Democratic Party. After that, we will follow the agreed-upon rotation.

[Translation]

Each member will be allocated 15 minutes at a time. Members may split their time with one or more members by so indicating to the Chair. This time may be used for both debate or for posing questions. Members wishing to use this time to make a speech have a maximum of 10 minutes, which leaves at least 5 minutes for questions to the minister.

When a member is recognized, he or she must indicate to the Chair how the 15-minute period will be used, meaning how much time will be spent on the speech and how much time will be used for questions and answers.

Members should also note that they will need unanimous consent if they wish to split their 15 minutes with other members. When the time is to be used for questions and comments, the minister's response should reflect approximately the time taken to pose the question, as that time counts toward the member's allotted time.

*Business of Supply**[English]*

I also wish to indicate that in committee of the whole, comments should be addressed to the Chair. I ask for everyone's co-operation in upholding all established standards of decorum, parliamentary language and behaviour. In addition, please note that we will suspend the sitting every 45 minutes, if needed, for a short period to allow employees who provide support for the sitting to substitute with each other safely.

We will now begin today's session. The House is in committee of the whole, pursuant to the order made Tuesday, May 26, 2020, for consideration of all votes in the supplementary estimates (A) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2021.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

• (1455)

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Madam Chair, I would like to indicate that I am sharing my time with the hon. member for Richmond—Arthabaska.

The government would have us believe that it is doing its best during this difficult time, yet despite calling for a team Canada approach in the early days of this pandemic, the government has ignored many of the reasonable, common-sense proposals that the opposition has put forward to make the programs better and to ensure that Canadians do not fall through the cracks. Unfortunately, the government has let people down from the beginning of the health crisis, and this continues, even though the economic effects of the lockdown have caused so much hardship and misery to Canadians.

For example, when other countries were closing down their borders, the government refused to do so, which allowed more people who had the virus to enter the country, obviously leading to more Canadians acquiring it. As the pandemic continued, the government was slow to act, giving PPE away to other countries and dumping stockpiles here at home just months before the coronavirus hit Canada.

As I mentioned, we have proposed common-sense solutions to help more Canadians during this crisis, and the government has refused to act. We are now on the last sitting day of the House before the summer break.

On April 20, we first raised, with the Minister of Finance, an issue relating to companies that have acquired the assets of another company. They are unable to show a significant enough loss to qualify for the wage subsidy. As a result, thousands of Canadians across the country are losing their jobs.

We proposed a solution to the government. Actually, the Minister of Finance's officials came up with a solution: applying an existing provision under the Excise Tax Act to the wage subsidy.

I have a very simple question. Will the government make this change to allow more Canadians to keep their jobs?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Madam Chair, taking a team Canada approach is exactly what we have done in the last few weeks. We have engaged with the provinces and territories, with municipalities, with communities

and with people across Canada. This has included the businesses that needed our help.

In many cases, the measures were not only debated by the opposition but supported by the opposition. There was unanimous support from the House when it came to providing the Canada emergency response benefit, which is helping and has helped millions of Canadians, and the emergency loans of \$40,000 that are helping almost 700,000 small businesses.

We are grateful to opposition members for their help and support in this crisis.

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Madam Chair, will the government make the change to the wage subsidy program to allow companies that have acquired another company to receive the subsidy so we can keep more Canadians working, yes or no?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Madam Chair, the opposition leader is again very right in insisting on the value of the wage subsidy. We are pleased to see that millions of Canadians have been supported by it. Almost 300,000 businesses have applied for it.

We look forward to continuing to support the wages of millions of Canadians.

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Madam Chair, the Liberals still cannot answer a yes-or-no question.

The government has racked up unprecedented debt in the last few months. Before the coronavirus hit, the Bank of Canada had approximately \$120 billion on its asset sheet. It now has over \$500 billion. In other words, it has purchased almost 400 billion dollars' worth of additional debt.

Could the minister tell Canadians where the Bank of Canada got the money to buy that debt?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Madam Chair, the member is correct in highlighting that we have provided different types of support, including liquidity support to businesses and Canadians across Canada. Liquidity is rare in these sorts of crises, and it makes a big difference when it comes to helping Canadians make ends meet.

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Madam Chair, the Bank of Canada is buying up to \$5 billion a week in bonds. Where is the Bank of Canada getting the money to buy those bonds?

• (1500)

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Madam Chair, let me take advantage of this important question to highlight the fact that we started from a very strong position, including a very strong financial institution position, in Canada before the crisis that made all sorts of institutions, including the Bank of Canada—

The Deputy Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Madam Chair, nobody believes that. This is the government that gave \$50 million to Mastercard and \$12 million to Loblaws, a government that racked up 80 billion dollars' worth of new deficits before the pandemic hit. Nobody is buying what the minister is selling.

However, the Bank of Canada is buying a lot of debt that other institutions are selling. It is buying government bonds and corporate bonds, at \$5 billion a week. Where is the Bank of Canada getting the money to buy all of those bonds?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Madam Chair, I am thankful for the opportunity to add a bit more to my earlier answers.

We started with three very important strengths: an economic strength, as we were one of the countries in the world growing the fastest; a fiscal strength, as we have one of the best fiscal positions; and an institutional financial strength, which we have been glad to use in the last few weeks.

The Deputy Chair: I just want to remind members that the length of the answers and questions should be about the same. I am mindful of the time.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Madam Chair, the minister talked about a balance sheet. The balance sheet of the government racked up 80 billion dollars' worth of debt before the health pandemic hit. Now the Bank of Canada's balance sheet has quadrupled. It has gone from \$120 billion to \$500 billion because it has bought debt; it has bought bonds.

Again, where is the Bank of Canada getting the money to buy the bonds?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Madam Chair, I am sure the member opposite will agree that we are fortunate in Canada to be able to count on the support of an important institution like the Bank of Canada, which in normal times does a great number of important things and in times of crisis is even more important.

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Madam Chair, the Bank of Canada is buying all kinds of different bonds. In fact, it is doing so in a secondary market, which means the first people to get the new money the Bank of Canada is creating are bondholders, hedge fund managers and corporate institutions. The Bank of Canada is also buying record amounts of corporate bonds.

Many of these companies are facing significant hardships. Who pays if the corporations go bankrupt?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Madam Chair, I want to remind the member about something he knows really well. In Canada we are fortunate to have very strong financial and banking institutions, which we are all proud of in normal times and depend on very much in times of crisis.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Chair: We will suspend the sitting for a few moments because I am having computer problems.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 3:03 p.m.)

Business of Supply

• (1515)

SITTING RESUMED

(The House resumed at 3:17 p.m.)

The Deputy Chair: I will report the matter of decorum that was raised to the Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to share with you a point of order that has been raised. The hon. member for Burnaby South called another hon. member a racist and did not want to apologize. I submit this point of order for your consideration.

* * *

POINT OF ORDER

COMMENTS BY THE MEMBER FOR BURNABY SOUTH—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Singh, I must name you for disregarding the authority of the Chair.

[*English*]

Pursuant to the authority granted to me by Standing Order 11, I order you to withdraw from the House for the remainder of this sitting day.

I will now leave the chair and the House will resume the work of the committee.

* * *

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (A), 2020-21

The House resumed consideration in committee of the whole of all votes in the supplementary estimates (A) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2021, Mrs. Carol Hughes in the chair.

The Deputy Chair: We are now returning to the committee of the whole.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Richmond—Arthabaska.

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Madam Chair, today we are in the House for a relatively short amount of time since we have only four hours to talk about the government's \$87 billion in spending.

Before getting into the questions I have for the government, I thought I would crunch some numbers. We are going to spend four hours discussing \$87 billion. That represents \$362.5 million a minute or roughly \$6 million a second. That is how much time we have to talk about the Prime Minister's announcements and all the questions on the minds of Canadians, businesses, organizations and all parliamentarians across the country. I am sure the Liberals across the way get asked the same questions by constituents. Unfortunately, they are unable to provide any answers.

Business of Supply

Earlier today, during the sitting of the Special Committee on the COVID-19 Pandemic, I asked the Minister of Finance some questions on the economic update, or economic snapshot, as the Prime Minister calls it. Apparently the Canadian Parliament is incapable of doing as other countries or provinces have done and present a real economic update or a budget so that we can see where we stand after all of the announcements that have been made in the past three months.

In what little time we have every day to ask questions, we cannot even get basic information, such as the amount of the deficit or the debt, or the amount associated with a government announcement. I think that this shows a lack of respect for the parliamentarians here in this House and for Canadians who work hard to earn a living and support their families. Canadians pay taxes, which are used to provide services to the public and to those who are most vulnerable or in need.

Today I am relating the comments of the Parliamentary Budget Officer. The Conservatives are not making any of this up. For weeks now, we have been asking for an economic update. We are going to vote supply without knowing any of the details. Actually, we just learned that we will get all the facts in a few weeks, on July 8, so we have a bit of time today to ask some questions.

Even the Parliamentary Budget Officer has said that the Liberals' estimates are incomplete. The Prime Minister is talking about some really big numbers, in the billions of dollars, on the steps of his cottage instead of convening Parliament so we can debate the issues and legislation or ask questions. We are being left on our own to do our work as MPs in our ridings and help our constituents. The last three weeks have been extremely frustrating. We have received little information and we cannot meet with anyone in the halls of Parliament to get some help to do our work as MPs in our ridings. We do not have the opportunity to speak with the right people who might be able to get answers for our constituents and the businesses in need.

My first question is rather simple and I hope someone will be able to answer it. A month ago, following pressure from the Conservative Party, the Prime Minister stood on the steps of his cottage and announced that businesses that have just one employee or that pay themselves in dividends would finally have access to \$40,000 in loans through the Canada emergency business account.

As much as we have gotten some answers during briefing calls, we still do not know when this information will be communicated to the financial institutions and credit unions so that businesses can receive that emergency assistance.

When will those \$40,000 loans be available to businesses with just one employee or that pay themselves in dividends?

• (1520)

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Madam Chair, my colleague's question was a long one, which gives me an opportunity to provide a fulsome response to his fundamental concerns.

The first point he raised, and I want to emphasize this, is that Canadians are working hard and are struggling under the very complex circumstances we have been experiencing for many weeks.

The second thing he said is that MPs' work is also very demanding under the circumstances.

Because of the situation, our measures were both urgent and implemented transparently. Every two weeks, the Minister of Finance makes a complete report available to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance. The Standing Committee on Finance and the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates meet regularly. An open data portal is also available. It proactively makes information available to MPs. About 150 COVID-19 files have been proactively disclosed. Lastly, there is the Government of Canada's InfoBase, which provides detailed information about all the measures we have announced.

• (1525)

Mr. Alain Rayes: Madam Chair, unfortunately, my question was not answered.

Some businesses are trying to get the emergency loan. The Prime Minister announced it a month ago in front of his home. This information is still not available and is not found on any official site. There is not one financial institution that can provide answers to businesses that need this money today when provinces are fully reopening.

There is another question that I would like to ask the government. It is now mid-June. On April 22, there was a major announcement about helping students, and that if they wanted to volunteer to help the vulnerable dealing with COVID-19 they would receive up to \$5,000 in grants. I checked the website again this morning. There is no information about this.

When will the information be available?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Madam Chair, indeed, I did not have time to answer the last part of the opposition member's question. The site for the Canada emergency business account will be available on Friday and will contain the updates that the member would like to see.

As for youth, I obviously do not have time to provide all the details, but we have put in place significant measures to help youth living under very difficult circumstances. I invite the member to note the statistic of 40%, as that is the unemployment rate of students who want to continue their studies in the coming weeks. Even though the member is not listening, I would add that that is why it is important to continue working hard for youth, to ensure that they can continue their studies and have everything they need to succeed.

The Deputy Chair: With only nine seconds remaining, there is not enough time for another question.

[English]

The hon. President of the Treasury Board.

Business of Supply

[Translation]

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Madam Chair, I am delighted and honoured to address the House today in an extraordinary context.

[English]

Thank you for, Madam Chair, for this opportunity to discuss, in particular, supplementary estimates (A) for 2020-21.

[Translation]

As committee members know, every year, the government tables the supplementary estimates, which sets out its spending plan.

[English]

These supplementary estimates present information on spending requirements across federal organizations that were either not sufficiently developed in time for inclusion in the main estimates or have since been updated to reflect new developments.

[Translation]

This is the first supplementary estimates to be tabled this fiscal year. It includes a summary of the government's additional financial requirements and an overview of the main funding requests and horizontal initiatives.

The supplementary estimates (A), 2020-21, also shows that the government is continuing to invest in people, in workers, in the economy and in support related to COVID-19 to ensure the country's success and economic recovery.

[English]

Parliamentarians will have the opportunity to review and vote on these allocations, which seek to provide important services to indigenous communities, safe and secure transportation for travellers and support for Canada's armed forces. This is in addition to COVID-related expenditures.

Specifically, these supplementary estimates include \$6 billion in operating and capital expenditures, grants and contributions to be voted on by Parliament for 42 different federal organizations. These voted measures represent a 5% increase over those included in the main estimates for 2020-21 that I tabled on February 27, including more than \$1 billion for the government's response to the COVID crisis.

[Translation]

For the purposes of parliamentary information and transparency, the supplementary estimates also includes forecasts of statutory expenditures totalling \$81.1 billion. It is important to note the key difference between voted spending and statutory spending. Voted spending requires the annual approval of Parliament through what is called a supply bill, whereas statutory spending is approved through other laws. The current estimates contains information on statutory spending to enable parliamentarians to have the most comprehensive information available on the spending planned by the government.

• (1530)

[English]

Canadians and the parliamentarians who represent them have the right to know how public funds are being spent and to hold the government to account. Estimates are brought forward to ensure that Parliament can review and approve the new spending needs of the Government of Canada.

The supplementary estimates (A) for 2020-21 include \$6 billion in new funding across the government, including \$1 billion in continued support for COVID-19 relief.

For maximum transparency, the estimates documents also provide information on spending authorized through the COVID-19 Emergency Response Act and the COVID-19 Emergency Response Act, No. 2, which have already been negotiated, discussed and unanimously approved by parliamentarians.

We know that Canadians want maximum transparency from Parliament. These estimates include statutory information on spending that was first authorized through the COVID-19 emergency response acts that were presented, debated and passed in the House. This spending is now helping Canadians.

[Translation]

The health, security and well-being of all Canadians remain critical to our government. As a result, these supplementary estimates include a request for an additional \$1.3 billion in voted expenditures to deal with the impact of COVID-19 on Canadians.

[English]

This includes \$405 million for the national medical research strategy to fund tracking and testing of COVID-19, to develop vaccines and therapies, and to enhance clinical trials and biomanufacturing capacity in Canada.

There is also \$302 million to support small and medium-sized businesses.

[Translation]

This also includes \$274 million for urgent research and innovation on medical countermeasures, \$87 million for the Community Futures Network, and \$59 million to help the Canadian Red Cross Society support individuals, families and communities during the pandemic.

*Business of Supply**[English]*

Here are some of the other key initiatives included in these estimates that support a variety of Canadian priorities: \$585 million for the Department of National Defence to fund the joint support ship project to replace vessels that have reached the end of their lifespans, and \$481 million for the Department of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs to fund the federal Indian day schools settlement agreement.

[Translation]

In addition, \$468 million is allocated to the Department of Indigenous Services to support the safety and well-being of first nations children and families living on reserve.

There is also \$312 million for the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority and Department of Transport, which will fund aviation security screening services.

[English]

For my own department, called the Treasury Board Secretariat, the estimates include \$396 million for the disability insurance plan; \$82 million for previous requirements, in this case to cover the cost of negotiated wage adjustments; and \$9 million to continue the Canadian Digital Service's operations.

[Translation]

The supplementary estimates enable the government to be transparent and accountable for how we plan to use public funds to provide the programs and services Canadians need. In accordance with the government's commitment to transparency, we continue to provide additional important information online regarding these supplementary estimates.

[English]

For example, we have published a detailed listing of legislated amounts reported through these estimates and a complete breakdown of planned expenditures by standard objects such as personnel, professional services and transfer payments. Our online information tools reflect our commitment to give Canadians a clear explanation of where public funds are going and how they are going to be spent.

[Translation]

Furthermore, the Minister of Finance committed to reporting to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance every two weeks about the key measures taken by the government to help Canadians.

Lastly, the government remains firmly committed throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, as these supplementary estimates show.

The new spending plans in these supplementary estimates will help support people affected by the pandemic and maintain support for the economy and Canadians.

• (1535)

[English]

As we advance these plans, I would like to acknowledge the crucial work of all parliamentarians as we continue to work together

for the future of our country and the wellness of all Canadians. Canadians are counting on us and expect all parliamentarians to be steady in their support as we navigate through these very challenging times. Let us honour their trust.

I would now be happy to answer any questions that members of this House may have.

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon (Kanata—Carleton, Lib.): Madam Chair, I would like to ask the hon. minister if he could tell us more about the difference between the voted amounts and the statutory or legislated amounts that are contained in these estimates and explain for Canadians exactly what are the votes that are taking place today.

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Madam Chair, that is a very important question. This is unfortunately confusing some members of this House.

There are indeed two types of expenditures: the voted and the legislated expenditures.

Of the \$87 billion that we are currently discussing, \$81 billion has already been discussed, debated and agreed upon by this House. These are called legislated expenditures.

The voted expenditures are a total of \$6 billion. They come in addition to the main expenditures, and \$1.3 billion of those additional expenditures are completely focused on the COVID-19 crisis.

Ms. Anita Vandenbeld (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Chair, the minister mentioned in his speech that Canadians want maximum transparency from Parliament. I think we all agree that openness and transparency are always important, but even more so during this challenging time caused by COVID-19. How has the minister ensured transparency for Canadians and parliamentarians throughout the supply process? Can the minister explain to Canadians how they can find more information about these estimates?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Madam Chair, I thank the member for asking about both the urgency and the transparency of our measures in the last few weeks. We are going through a crisis that Canadians have never seen in their lives, and that is a challenge both on the health and the economic side. That is why we needed to act quickly and transparently at the same time.

Business of Supply

As we delivered those important measures, to which I will come back in a moment, we made sure that they would be not only communicated but in many cases adjusted as we proceeded through the crisis. These measures are detailed in various ways: through the bi-weekly reports that the Minister of Finance provides for the House Committee on Finance; through the open portal, which provides proactive disclosure of a large number of COVID-19 measures; and, finally, through the InfoBase website, which gives, in detail, all the measures that we are discussing this afternoon.

Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Longueuil—Charles-LeMoine, Lib.): Madam Chair, the supply process has looked different this year than in past years. We are voting today on a second interim supply bill in lieu of full supply, due to the extraordinary circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. How was the COVID-19 pandemic taken into account in these estimates, both through the exceptional structure of the supply process and the content of the supplementary estimates? How much of the planned spending presented in the supplementary estimates (A) is for measures associated with the COVID-19 pandemic?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Madam Chair, we have two types of expenditures we are discussing today.

The first type, called legislated expenditures, deal, for instance, with the Canada emergency response benefit, which has helped eight million Canadians in the last few weeks. We also have additional expenditures, called voted expenditures, to develop, for instance, vaccines, treatments and testing procedures, and also to support indigenous people and our Canadian Forces personnel. We are helping communities through important investments.

These are two types of essential expenditures that are helping both Canadians and communities.

• (1540)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Chair, I appreciate the job and the work that the minister has been doing. Given the environment we face today, in all regions of our country there has been a great deal of concern in regard to making sure we do not leave people behind. It seems to be a very important priority for the government.

Could the minister provide his thoughts on how important it is that, as a government, we try to be there as best we can for our citizens as a whole?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Madam Chair, to be there together to help each other is absolutely essential in a crisis like this one. If we want to get through the crisis, we need to be there to support each other.

That is why we have the Canada emergency response benefit, emergency wage subsidies, and emergency loans for small businesses. That is why we have investments in personal protective equipment, in medical services, in fighting homelessness, in helping vulnerable Canadians such as seniors and helping students and families.

All of these investments not only make us stronger, but also more united as we go through the crisis.

Ms. Anita Vandenbeld: Madam Chair, the minister mentioned that the Treasury Board is seeking \$9.3 million to continue the operations of the Canadian Digital Service. Could the minister expand on the role of the Canadian Digital Service in making the Government of Canada a leader in digital innovation?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Madam Chair, to be fair to that question, I would need a lot more time. However, let me be very brief.

We have seen how the Government of Canada and public servants can be extremely agile because of the speed and quality of services that they can deliver digitally. The Canadian Digital Service is an example of that, providing information to Canadians in a manner that is fair and useful, as well as helping to deliver those services and informing Canadians about the various benefits they are able to receive.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Chair, could the minister provide his thoughts on how important it is that the federal government work with its provincial counterparts and other stakeholders to ensure that Canadians are protected?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Madam Chair, it is team Canada. That is what we have been doing over the last few weeks.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Madam Chair, I wish to inform you that I will be sharing my time with my esteemed colleague and friend, the hon. member for Montarville.

Beyond that, I am a bit unclear about the rules, but I will trust your good judgment. I do not know how allocation of speaking time works, but I get the impression we are attending a Liberal Party caucus meeting. I did not want to bother the Liberals, so I decided to politely allow them to talk among themselves.

I was surprised that the NDP did not join them, but that's fine. Speaking of that, I will digress slightly at this moment of heightened tensions in the House, where the temperature indoors is higher than the temperature outdoors, which is already quite high.

Yesterday I had the great privilege of reading a statement by Ghislain Picard, Chief of the Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador. That in itself is a rather clear indication of our position. Yesterday we also accepted the NDP's request to recall the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security to address the issue of systemic racism. We agreed to that request, even though I believe there needs to be some distance between partisan politics and an extremely sensitive topic that is currently in the news.

The motion seemed to be dictating the findings of the committee that would ultimately be recalled. It did not make sense to us to support the tabling of the motion and it seemed more logical to allow the committee to do its work. If anyone is looking for the person who is largely responsible for rejecting this motion, it is me.

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: Oh, you are the racist.

Business of Supply

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet: That would be me, Madam Chair. However, I am deeply convinced that there is nothing here that cannot be easily resolved with a simple and sincere apology. Then we can move on to another debate, and that will be on the votes. Things may get heated again. In fact, I am convinced that the government House leader's blood may suddenly come to a boil. It happens.

The votes seem to be a foregone conclusion, unless all the NDP members are expelled one by one. The votes seem to be a foregone conclusion, and the Liberals will essentially talk about programs that have already been funded by legislation, and so on, and for which spending is generally done or allocated. This makes the exercise almost a mere formality, but it is still relevant. It allows us to take some time to look back on government commitments and programs and evaluate their effectiveness.

As part of an exercise that should have taken place last week, we hope to be able to improve the programs. That is our job. We are parliamentarians. We were all elected the same way, and that is what we do. We simply want to do our job, but we were refused the opportunity. I am worried about the kind of message that sends.

Let us look at the list of requests, recommendations and proposals. In particular there is the issue of enhancing the Canada emergency response benefit to make it easier for Canadians to return and transition to work, an express request by the Quebec government. The Leader of the Opposition will probably tell us that Quebec is very happy with the CERB. I have my doubts. The answer was no. We also asked for increased health transfers. All the Liberals said was that they spoke every Thursday and their answer was no. We asked for a First Ministers' conference on health transfers. The answer was no. We asked that political parties be excluded from the wage subsidy, because it is rather despicable for a political party to dip into its own program. The answer was no.

Before that, we had talked about a commitment on fixed costs. The government made a commitment through a motion addressing fixed costs for small businesses. It ended up changing its mind. Its answer was ultimately no. We proposed a tax credit for fixed costs for small businesses. The answer was no. We asked for adjustments to the CERB on several fronts, especially with regard to employment. The answer was no. This week, we made a few proposals. Once again, we talked about health transfers and, once again, the answer was no. We talked about paying compensation to supply-managed farmers now. The answer was no. We asked for a second cheque for seniors, because they will be receiving a cheque after the end of the first period for which they received a cheque without even knowing whether they will be receiving a cheque, even if the crisis persists for them. The answer was no. We asked that the bill be split and that we again consider giving assistance to people with disabilities. Without a shadow of a doubt, we support doing so. The answer was no. We asked that the bill dealing with delays in the justice system be brought back and split. It was a good idea, but the answer was no.

Instead, they said that they would invest \$14 billion in personal protective equipment, child care, municipalities, sick leave, initiatives in long-term care facilities and so on. However, these are all areas under provincial jurisdiction.

• (1545)

There is a rather broad consensus in Quebec and the other provinces that this constitutes interference. They do not agree. There is something to be learned from that.

This morning, I brought this up. Around noon, the Prime Minister's advisers wrote something for him to say. He rose to thank us for our extraordinary collaboration. We are always ready to accept thanks, but they did not always seem so sincere—

The Deputy Chair: I am sorry, but I must interrupt the hon. member to say that he has exceeded the time allotted for his speech. It is now time for questions.

The hon. member has two and a half minutes for questions.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet: Madam Chair, the Leader of the Government does not even want me to ask him a question.

What is happening then? Nothing?

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member must ask questions if he is to get answers from the government.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet: Madam Chair, has the government said no to the request made repeatedly by Quebec, since 2017, to transfer some \$1.5 billion for social housing, for which not a penny has yet been sent?

[*English*]

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Madam Chair, as the member opposite noted, we have been with the provinces and territories from the very beginning, from the initial tranche of \$500 million, to ensure they had the necessary supplies, equipment and personnel, and were ready to deal with any influx of cases and changes to their medical—

• (1550)

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member for Beloeil—Chambly.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet: Madam Chair, something tells me that someone strayed far from the question, but no matter. This has been on people's minds for a number of days, and many people have a lot to say.

Did the government say yes to artists when they requested that the CERB be adjusted to help them survive until 2021?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Madam Chair, I would like to reassure my colleague that we have invested \$2.5 billion in the cultural sector because we believe it is important to support our artists, who, of course, are affected by the closure of entertainment venues.

I know that my colleague, who used to work in the sector, is very aware of these issues. So, yes, we are there for them, for the next eight weeks—

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member for Beloeil—Chambly.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet: Madam Chair, someone is beginning to answer a question. Let's celebrate.

Can the minister tell me whether these measures will include a variation on the Canada emergency response benefit for artists and artisans in the arts community?

Hon. Mélanie Joly: Madam Chair, as the Prime Minister announced, we will be there for them, with the CERB, for the next eight weeks.

We know that artists have been calling for the CERB and that they are very pleased to know that they will have access to this money at a time when they need the social safety net—

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member for Beloeil—Chambly can ask one last question.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet: Madam Chair, it will be the same question.

Did the government say yes to the agricultural community's request to adapt the Canada emergency benefit to facilitate the transition to employment for CERB recipients?

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Madam Chair, we will not take away work incentives. It would have been easier had we decided to provide a benefit that covered two weeks next week, but of course, people would not have agreed to work.

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Montarville, BQ): Madam Chair, I am very happy and honoured that the leader of the Bloc Québécois and hon. member for Beloeil—Chambly agreed to share his time with me. It is almost too great an honour, but, given that this is an opportunity to continue what I passionately started this afternoon, I will certainly not turn it down.

Like the leader of the Bloc Québécois, I pointed out yesterday that the government offered \$14 billion to Quebec and the provinces to cover some of the expenses incurred as a result of the current pandemic. Beyond the obvious fact that this amount is hugely inadequate, there is also another issue: The \$14 billion come with certain conditions.

Quebec and the provinces have rejected these conditions, and as a result, the money is not being paid. The funds were to be used to purchase masks, among other things. Meanwhile, the pandemic continues, and the masks have not been purchased because the federal government insists on imposing conditions. It does not manage any hospitals, long-term care facilities, child care networks or public transportation networks, but it claims to know all about them.

When we asked that the government provide money without strings attached, a genius across the aisle said we were asking for a blank cheque. It so happens that our friends across the aisle know all about blank cheques. Despite having a minority government, for weeks now the Liberals have been asking Parliament to give them blank cheques.

At first, realizing that we needed to help people, we decided to work in a spirit of collaboration to help our fellow citizens who have been sorely affected by the pandemic. We collaborated, because we believed that was our role, as parliamentarians.

Business of Supply

Some people think that, because we are the opposition, we always have to oppose the government. Like my colleagues from Beloeil—Chambly and La Prairie, I once sat in an assembly where almost 80% of bills were passed unanimously. Contrary to what the government House leader says, the opposition is not only there to oppose and squabble. On the contrary, we have collaborated from the very beginning. However, when those with whom we have been collaborating do not keep their word and prefer to use the powers we gave them to do pretty much anything they want, regardless of the commitments they made to us, we are less inclined to keep on collaborating.

We did not close the door. Last week we proposed that we suspend the sitting so that the party leaders could agree on how to proceed with passing the bill to grant more money for people with disabilities. It was the Liberal Party that said no. The Liberals did not want to have to negotiate. They are acting as if they were a majority government that can demand blank cheques and they do not care about anyone else. If we do not give them a blank cheque, that is it. There is no negotiation.

In the end, all kinds of people, and especially people with disabilities, should have been getting more money, but they are not getting it. We ended up in this situation because the Liberal Party decided not to allow leaders to negotiate and because it shut down Parliament.

Since Parliament is not sitting, aside from the Special Committee on the COVID-19 Pandemic, we cannot pass legislation. The government cannot introduce a bill because Parliament has been shut down. That, right there, is the truth.

Today, the government is asking for yet another blank cheque. This time, the cheque is for the supplementary estimates, so that the government can continue its weeks-long spending spree. The way the process works is that we initially have to give the government permission to spend some funds before we finish considering the votes, so that government operations can continue.

• (1555)

Canada is not like the United States, where people get laid off for stretches of time until the budget is agreed upon.

That would be how the process works normally, but we are not proceeding normally. The debate on the supply bill, which we have to vote on, is happening under highly extraordinary circumstances.

As the Bloc Québécois leader said moments ago, the government seems to have once again negotiated support so that it can keep spending like it wants to and so the Prime Minister can keep putting on a show in front of his cottage every day without worrying about Parliament. He was given the power to spend, so he takes the money, talks it over with his ministers—

Business of Supply

The Deputy Chair: Pardon the interruption, but your time is up. You must ask your question now.

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: Madam Chair, someone has to ask our Liberal Party colleagues a few questions, so I will.

The government thinks it can tell provincial governments and the Government of Quebec what to do even though it cannot even pay its own employees properly without making all kinds of mistakes on their paycheques.

Should the government not start by paying attention to its own responsibilities and try to do its work properly before telling others how to do theirs?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Chair, that reminds me of the lyrics of the song *Paroles, paroles* by Alain Delon and Dalida: “just words, always words”.

The Government of Canada is working closely with the Government of Quebec. We are not collaborating just once a week, but rather every day and on a number of files. We are very pleased to do so. We will continue to work with the Government of Quebec.

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: Madam Chair, I get the feeling that the government House leader's Latin roots are coming out in the House. We keep being reminded that the government is negotiating, talking and discussing things with the Government of Quebec, but nothing ever comes of it.

As I said yesterday, it is almost July, and the construction season has begun.

When will you finally give Quebec the \$1.4 billion intended for social housing? Work has not yet started, the needs are there—

• (1600)

The Deputy Chair: Order. I remind the hon. member to address his comments through the Chair.

Also, since he is out of time, I call on the hon. government House leader to reply.

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez: Madam Chair, despite my Latin roots, I am going to remain very calm.

I would simply point out to my hon. colleague that the Bloc Québécois has spent its entire existence telling Quebecers that they should say yes, but now all the Bloc can say is no.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Chair, I will be sharing my time with my hon. colleague from London—Fanshawe.

I will make a brief introduction and then I will ask some questions.

As New Democrats, as a progressive party, we have worked constructively on finding solutions to help people from the start of the pandemic. We proposed an emergency benefit of \$2,000 and successfully made it happen. Initially, self-employed workers, students and freelancers were excluded, but we pushed to have them included. This really helped people.

In light of the current situation, we asked that the CERB be extended for people who still need help, including those who work in tourism, arts and entertainment and hospitality. The government partially answered our call. At least we made progress and managed to get eight more weeks.

We have come to realize that our social safety net is full of holes. At the beginning of the crisis, employment insurance was inadequate for meeting the needs of people who were losing their jobs. The emergency benefit was launched. However, some day we will have to consider improving the social safety net so that no one slips through the cracks. We have to look at having a broader, more robust employment insurance system that would cover more workers.

At the beginning of the pandemic, only 40% of workers who contribute to employment insurance were getting enough hours to collect employment insurance benefits.

I would like the government to say a few words about its intention to expand the program to make it far more inclusive and target all sectors as well as every worker who needs help when they lose their job.

[English]

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Madam Chair, as we tried to help all workers it became very clear that the employment insurance system was not set up to handle a pandemic situation. It obviously does not help those who do not pay into EI, but also people who cannot work because of child care responsibilities or people who are sick because of a national pandemic virus. When we took all of the workers out of EI for the period of the CERB, we did so knowing that eventually everybody would have to transition back into the EI system and that, at that point, we would have to tackle the very real challenges associated with getting millions of people back into a system that does not cover millions of other people.

Absolutely, we are looking at ways to transition those people back into the EI system who are EI-eligible and to continue to support workers who do not currently fall within the EI system as we look to a September date when, for many people, their CERB will have run out.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Madam Chair, many freelancers and self-employed workers are both their own employees and employers, which means that they are not eligible for employment insurance.

Does the government intend to expand the program to cover self-employed workers?

Given the circumstances, does the government also intend to extend sickness benefits from 15 to 50 weeks?

*Business of Supply**[English]*

Hon. Carla Qualtrough: Madam Chair, we committed to extend the EI sickness benefits from the current 15 weeks to 26 weeks.

With respect to self-employed individuals, we know that there is an option currently within the EI system for self-employed workers to contribute to and get special benefits, like maternity and parental leave, but not regular benefits. Of course, as we look to transition workers and continue to support workers—

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

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Madam Chair, I would like to share with the government a message that I received yesterday from a dozen community groups in the Montreal area.

It seems many people are unhappy with the emergency community support fund. Here is what they are saying: The structure of the program is complex, the eligibility criteria are unclear, the application forms and accountability requirements are too onerous, and private foundations are refusing to establish consultation processes. The program does not meet the needs of groups that help vulnerable populations.

What does the government intend to do to make the necessary changes to meet the needs of these groups that take care of the most vulnerable?

- (1605)

[English]

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Madam Chair, we set up the emergency response fund to do precisely that: to help the most vulnerable, to increase the capacity of non-profits and charitable organizations to continue to deliver the services that are needed now more than ever to vulnerable Canadians, but in fact also to increase their capacity to deliver even more services to more people. We have used the services of three national, well-respected and well-trusted organizations to act as intermediaries to disburse that money. We have sought disaggregated data up front, not after the fact, in order to see what gaps were missed and to ensure that we address those gaps. We are getting the job done.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: There is sand in the gears, Madam Chair.

Even though the minister's words are meant to be reassuring, I do not think that they will reassure these groups.

Will changes be made?

If so, when exactly will that happen?

[English]

Hon. Ahmed Hussen: Madam Chair, the fact of the matter is this fund is not only going to the big groups. It is also going to small community-based organizations. We know that because we will have rolling reports. We will be able to see what gaps emerge and we have the capacity to address and fill those gaps.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Madam Chair, last week the government introduced Bill C-17, which included assistance for people with disabilities.

Unfortunately, this assistance required that recipients be entitled to the disability tax credit. However, one must pay taxes to be entitled to the tax credit. This automatically excluded the vast majority, or 60% of people living with a disability in Canada. That is completely unacceptable to the NDP.

Will the government take action to help people with disabilities, that is to say all people living with disabilities, and not just a minority?

[English]

Hon. Carla Qualtrough: Madam Chair, I can assure every Canadian and everyone in the House that, as we looked at all the measures we were delivering for Canadians, we made sure that we put a disability inclusion lens not only on what specific help we would give to people with disabilities but on every single measure. I can say that the result in the student benefit was an additional \$750 a month for students with disabilities and students with dependants.

We know that last week we hit a major hiccup, without the unanimous consent of the House, in delivering a benefit we promised to people with disabilities. Rest assured, we are still going to deliver for Canadians with disabilities. We are looking at alternate means and we hope to eventually find a different path forward that does not require the legislative changes—

[Translation]

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie has 15 seconds to ask his question.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: That is perfect, Madam Chair.

There is a tremendous need for social housing in Quebec. The federal government has come to an agreement with all provinces except Quebec. There is a terrific program called AccèsLogis Québec.

When will the \$1.4 billion owed Quebec be invested so we can build social housing?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Chair, we are currently having discussions with the Government of Quebec.

This is an absolute priority for both governments.

*Business of Supply**[English]*

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Madam Chair, I would like to begin by saying that in every promise that is made by the House, there are people behind it. There are families. There are seniors. There are students. There are parents desperately trying to keep roofs over their heads and food on the table. I urge government members to remember that when they talk about people falling through the cracks. There are people at the base of it. When we push for these programs we are pushing for more, because there are so many people I hear from every day who are being left behind.

Something that we were pushing for, that we got a commitment from the government on, was paid sick leave. Many of those in low-wage, precarious jobs are the most affected by this pandemic. Those jobs do not come with benefits, and they do not come with the security that people need. There is a worry that, in a second wave of COVID-19, those workers will return to work sick.

When will the government deliver on providing paid sick leave as it promised?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Madam Chair, I would like to thank the member for London—Fanshawe for that important question and for pointing out that we are talking about real people. We are talking about Canadians who are really suffering and struggling in what is the deepest economic crisis since the Great Depression.

Our government is absolutely committed to providing 10 days of paid sick leave to every single Canadian. That will be paid for fully by the federal government, and that is part of the safe restart discussion we are having with the provinces right now.

Clearly, it would be helpful for workers to have a provincial commitment to ensure that they do not lose their jobs as a consequence of taking this sick leave, which we are prepared to provide. Having that effective conversation with the provinces and territories is very much in the interest of the workers, who I think all of us in the House believe we need to support.

• (1610)

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen: Madam Chair, I was glad that the minister spoke about students. Certainly, we are working hard to put forward better benefits for students who have been left behind by the CERB.

On April 22, the government announced supports for students. Two months later, details about the student service grant are still unknown. Community organizations have been reaching out to me and a lot of other MPs. They have been given no indication about the hours they can give for this grant. Students do not know if their volunteering counts, and we are well into the summer. The government has dropped the ball on this rollout.

The minister bragged about this program. When will the government actually deliver on it?

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Madam Chair, a big part of our \$9 billion commitment to students was, in fact, the es-

tablishment of the Canada student service grant. I am excited to inform the House that, within days, the “I Want to Help” platform will be available for students to connect to service opportunities. This will allow them to accumulate hours toward the service grant, which they will get from the government at the end of their summer service. We know that this is all coming fast and furious, but students were very clear to us that they wanted meaningful service opportunities, and we will be happy to provide them.

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen: Madam Chair, I am glad to hear that. I know that a lot of organizations in our community, and students, will be very eagerly watching for that rollout.

Public funding of universities and colleges makes up less than half of their revenues, and because of the long decline in public funding for this sector, at least one-third of academic staff are working contract to contract with limited, if any, access to benefits. They are vulnerable to any downturn in enrolment and other revenue losses as a result of this pandemic.

Will the minister commit to extending the wage subsidy to universities and colleges to help support this vital industry?

[Translation]

Hon. Mona Fortier (Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Chair, I thank the member for her question.

The emergency wage subsidy is available to businesses, non-profit organizations and charities. It is not available to public institutions. However, we have held consultations on how we can improve the emergency wage subsidy. We will soon be reviewing and modifying the criteria, and the emergency wage subsidy will be available until the end of August.

[English]

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen: Madam Chair, one of the programs for students that was put forward, and that the NDP pushed for, was additional funding for students with dependants and students with disabilities. The CRA definition of a dependant, for which this is being rolled out, is 18 years of age. However, the government has decided to put forward a dependant at 12 years of age. Why did it decide to do that, and why will it not extend it to students who have dependants over that age limit?

Hon. Carla Qualtrough: Madam Chair, I can assure everyone in the House that we wanted to mirror, as closely as possible, our student financial aid policy. We went with age 12 with the understanding that there was a greater need for child care under that age. I am certainly happy to get any feedback on that. The point is to make these programs as good as possible.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: Madam Chair, it is disappointing, because I know a lot of students who are struggling. There are single mothers desperately trying to go to school who have 13-year-olds, and they simply cannot get the additional help they so desperately need.

One more question I have is about women's organizations. They are continuing to struggle with funding and capacity gaps. Fundraising remains a particular challenge for gender-equality groups, especially those that are trying to cobble together short-term project funding just to operate. Project funding alone was not sufficient before COVID. It certainly is not now, and they are in a crisis.

Will the government commit to converting capacity-building funding grants to permanent core funding that will allow women's organizations to break down the systemic barriers women face across this country?

• (1615)

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Rural Economic Development, Lib.): Madam Chair, I want to thank my hon. colleague for her effective advocacy. As she mentioned, our government has been the first to invest in the sustainability and capacity of women's organizations and equality-seeking organizations in this country. Why? Because it is the most effective way to advance gender equality. Today, over 500 organizations have received multi-year funding and are doing incredibly important work, saving and transforming lives every day. As part of our COVID response, 700-plus organizations received funding to immediately support them with the critical needs they were outlining.

However, we are far from equal and we have much work to do. I am looking forward to my hon. colleague's partnership in that effort.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Madam Chair, thank you for giving me the opportunity to appear before this committee of the whole to discuss the supplementary estimates (A) for Public Services and Procurement Canada.

We are going through a truly unprecedented time. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected every single Canadian. It is affecting our health, our lifestyle and the economy.

[*English*]

It has changed our lives completely. While the potential for a second wave or a spike in cases is very real, we are now entering an economic recovery and a cautious reopening.

We all appreciate the measures Canadians have taken to curb the spread of the virus, and we are especially proud of the doctors, nurses and health care providers on the front lines. Their work is critical, and that is why my department remains so focused on procuring the personal protective equipment and the medical supplies they need.

As the government's central purchasing agent, Public Services and Procurement Canada is working aggressively to support

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Canada's response to the evolving pandemic. It is buying equipment and supplies for the immediate term, as well as preparing for the medium to long term by ensuring Canada has enough PPE, testing components and other required supplies as our economy recovers.

At the same time, my department continues its critical work in other areas, including eliminating the backlog of pay issues and stabilizing the Phoenix pay system to ensure our extremely hard-working public servants are paid accurately and on time.

To support its overall operations, the department is requesting \$745 million in aggregate in supplementary estimates (A).

To begin, I will address procurement during COVID-19. This comprises our largest request, which is \$500 million for COVID-19 procurement. This funding would allow us to continue to be proactive in aggressively acquiring critical PPE and health supplies, both at home and abroad.

Our aggressive approach to COVID-19 procurement is working. While we face ongoing challenges and risks, particularly with international supply chains, we have seen significant progress since the early days of Canada's response. We now have flights carrying critical PPE and other supplies arriving daily. We have supplies coming to us from partners in the United States and elsewhere. We are now transporting supplies by sea as well.

At the same time, our government has called on Canadian companies to ramp up domestic manufacturing, to retool and produce right here at home. As a result, companies from across the country have answered the call and, in some cases, have completely retooled their production lines. My department, in conjunction with ISED, is working to continue to increase domestic production.

For example, Medicom will be making tens of millions of N95 respirators and surgical masks annually, right here in Canada. Bauer Hockey, out of Blainville, Quebec, has retooled from making hockey equipment and is providing us with face shields for front-line health care workers, along with Sterling Industries and The Canadian Shield, which are both based in Ontario.

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GM in Oshawa will be making 10 million surgical masks and face coverings for Canadians over the coming year. Fluid Energy Group in Calgary, as well as Irving Oil in Atlantic Canada, are providing us with millions of litres of hand sanitizer. LuminUltra, a company from New Brunswick, is producing enough reagent for half a million COVID-19 tests per week through to March 2021.

These domestic manufacturers are playing a critical role in the fight against COVID-19 while sustaining and even creating jobs for Canadians when we need them most.

We are also making it faster and easier for all Canadians to purchase PPE. We've recently launched our new PPE supply hub, a web-based platform with important resources to connect buyers and sellers of PPE right across Canada.

We are meeting the need when it comes to the federal procurement of PPE, but we cannot stop now. As our economy reopens, more Canadians will be returning to work and the need will continue, including if a second wave occurs. In particular, we know Canada may face spikes in COVID-19 infections, and we must be prepared for all eventualities.

Today's request for funds will allow us to do just that.

I will move now to pay stabilization.

● (1620)

[*Translation*]

That brings me to our request for \$203.5 million to continue our work on stabilizing the Phoenix pay system. Even in this crisis, the Phoenix pay system remains a priority for our government because Canada's public servants deserve to be paid accurately and on time.

[*English*]

Even throughout the crisis, we have not lost sight of the hardships and the frustrations employees face, and we know there is still much work to be done to stabilize the Phoenix pay system. However, PSPC continues to work every day to improve service and eliminate the backlog of outstanding pay issues.

Our efforts are paying off. Since January 2018, the backlog of financial transactions has decreased by 64%. The hard work of our pay centre employees has led to a steady decline in the backlog, even over the last couple of months, despite the complexities the pandemic has brought to the workplace.

I want to take a moment during this National Public Service Week to thank those public servants for their hard work and dedication during this difficult and challenging time. Because of their efforts over April and May alone, we have been able to reduce the queue by about 29,000 transactions, while also administering pay every two weeks for the close to 300,000 public servants right across the country.

While we are trending in the right direction, the task will not be complete until the backlog is cleared. The funds we are requesting today will allow us to continue our progress by sustaining employee capacity, increasing our processing rate and increasing the automation of as many transactions as possible through system enhancements.

[*Translation*]

At this crucial time, Canadians need our services more than ever, and we are here for them. These requests for funds cover two of our most pressing issues. Essential work needs to be done on these files, and PSPC is ready to rise to the challenge.

[*English*]

As minister, I am proud of our department's work to support the federal government and the needs of all Canadians, especially during this global crisis.

During this National Public Service Week, I am especially thankful for the public servants, including those at PSPC, who are continuing to deliver critical services to Canadians from coast to coast.

● (1625)

Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Chair, I would first like to echo the hon. minister's comment about hard-working public servants.

The National Capital Commission plays a vital role in preserving our heritage, conserving our green spaces and building a vision of a national capital region that all Canadians can be proud of. I note that the NCC has requested \$52.4 million in funding in these estimates.

Can the minister let this House know what, specifically, this funding is for?

Hon. Anita Anand: Madam Chair, the NCC is an independent crown corporation. It has requested this money to go toward the repair and the maintenance of existing infrastructure to ensure that this infrastructure remains safe and enjoyable for the residents of the national capital region.

I will give some examples: the maintenance of the NCC's two interprovincial bridges, the repairs to assets—

The Deputy Chair: I am sorry. The time is up to answer the question, but I am sure the minister will be able to continue.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Kanata—Carleton.

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon (Kanata—Carleton, Lib.): Madam Chair, I would like to follow up on my hon. colleague's question stating the importance of the NCC. We would like to know what specific projects are being lined up here in Ottawa.

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Hon. Anita Anand: Madam Chair, the National Capital Commission will engage in work to maintain existing infrastructure. We all recall the damage from the flooding that occurred a couple of years ago. We will make sure that the funding, if approved, will go to the NCC to repair existing—

The Deputy Chair: Questions and comments, the hon. member for Vimy.

Ms. Annie Koutrakis (Vimy, Lib.): Madam Chair, in regard to the Phoenix pay system, we are seeing a continuous reduction in the backlog of cases. The supplementary estimates list an amount of \$203.5 million for the government pay system. Why is this funding necessary if the backlog is consistently being reduced?

Hon. Anita Anand: Madam Chair, it is very important to understand that the pay issues that have created stress and hardship for employees have not been eradicated and they must continue to be reduced. As a result of the funding that has already been provided to the Phoenix pay system, the backlog of transactions has been reduced, but more must be done and, as minister, I will not stop until that backlog is eliminated.

Ms. Annie Koutrakis: Madam Chair, what are we doing with these allocations to ensure that public servants are being paid accurately and on time, while also resolving the queue of cases?

Hon. Anita Anand: Madam Chair, we have taken significant steps to help stabilize the Phoenix pay system. We are working with all stakeholders. Thanks to their efforts, we have been meeting standards more often while reducing the overall queue. The funding will help to achieve that steady state of backlog reduction and pay administration—

The Deputy Chair: Questions and comments, the hon. member for Vimy.

Ms. Annie Koutrakis: Madam Chair, can the minister tell us what the funding for pay services will go toward? What will be the benefit of these funds?

Hon. Anita Anand: Madam Chair, the pay would be going toward achieving a steady state of the administration by ensuring that services that are currently offered will continue to be offered. The department has taken new initiatives to further accelerate progress, including technical systems to improve how Phoenix functions and new work models to create further efficiencies.

Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Longueuil—Charles-LeMoyne, Lib.): Madam Chair, the supplementary estimates list an amount of \$500 million for Public Services and Procurement Canada for statutory appropriations under the public health events of national concern. Can the minister please provide us more information on the nature of those funds?

Hon. Anita Anand: Madam Chair, the funding has been requested to expand PSPC's procurement scope and to purchase supplies as quickly as possible.

The pandemic has meant that we need to have multiple supply chains operating in tandem, both domestically and internationally. As a result, our resources would go toward ensuring—

• (1630)

The Deputy Chair: Questions and comments, the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Chair, I wonder if the minister could provide her thoughts on the many Canadian companies and corporations across the country that have really stepped up. They have retooled and assisted in making sure that there has been a growth of Canadian content in this very important area.

Hon. Anita Anand: Madam Chair, our domestic capacity has most definitely been incredibly retooled and revamped, so that we now have companies right across the country providing PPE. Just one example is that over half of our face shields are now being produced by Canadian companies.

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Madam Chair, I will be using my time to make a five-minute statement today and splitting it with the member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola and the member for Regina—Lewvan.

It's an honour to be back in the House representing my Kildonan—St. Paul constituents on the very last day of the parliamentary session. Although the Liberal government has decided to shut down Parliament during the worst crisis Canadians have faced in living memory, I will do my best to speak and advocate on their behalf with the little time we have remaining.

Unfortunately, the Prime Minister has only allowed parliamentarians four hours to debate and approve \$87 billion in spending, or roughly \$362 million every minute, which may be a record in the history of the Canadian Parliament.

If the member opposite were listening, he might learn something.

This is truly unprecedented. The very purpose of Parliament is to provide checks and balances on government power. If we do not have the opportunity to question the government, to study emerging issues at committee, or to put forward alternative solutions, how are we supposed to do our job and be that check on power if we are not sitting?

In effect, the government is telling Canadians that they have nothing to worry about, but that they just to trust the government, that there is no need for Parliament to meet or to provide oversight on the massive spending that's been going on for three months. Unfortunately, between the Liberals power grabs and long history of ethics violations, to say that opposition parties are skeptical would be an understatement. In fact, there has not been this great a need for parliamentary oversight since the Second World War.

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The last few months have not been easy for anyone. Some have been far more severely impacted than others. Thus far, three million people have lost their jobs and 13% of the working population remains unemployed. We know that women have been impacted to a greater degree than men and that rates of human trafficking and spousal abuse have reportedly gone up. Eight thousand people have lost their lives to COVID-19, and the well-being of countless others has been impacted from the thousands of delayed surgeries and the severe mental health impacts that isolation has had on the nation.

To be a member of Parliament during this unprecedented time has been an unforgettable experience with many challenges and difficult days. Speaking with hundreds of constituents and small businesses in my community who have been deeply and negatively impacted by the pandemic has been very heartbreaking, but they will not be forgotten by the Conservative team. We are all working tirelessly on their behalf and we will represent every Canadian left behind by the government's inadequate response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The possibility of a second wave of the pandemic is of great concern to me and the constituents of Kildonan—St. Paul, and the Liberal government, frankly, has provided very little to Canadians to give them confidence that we will be prepared and financially equipped to handle a second wave, since we barely made it through the first one. We are seeing this first-hand in the Prime Minister's refusal to provide an economic and fiscal update during this sitting, despite the Parliamentary Budget Officer's call for one.

It is critical that Canadians know whether we have any financial flexibility to extend programs before they are indeed extended. That is key. Otherwise, we are just guessing and hoping that it will all work out and that the country does not go bankrupt, which is really not a great strategy.

As one of 338 MPs and one of only 121 official opposition MPs in Canada, I ask the Liberal government with all sincerity to use its three-month hiatus from oversight and accountability to prepare tirelessly for the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic: to prepare PPE, testing, contact tracing capacity, and whatever is necessary to give Canadians the confidence that the government can actually do this job. Beyond that, it needs to acknowledge that Canadian small businesses and the millions of Canadian workers they employ cannot afford to go back into isolation, neither financially nor for their mental health. Moreover, neither can the taxpayer afford to subsidize the pandemic response effort of nearly \$100 billion per month without serious tax increases and financial consequences at the family kitchen table.

The Liberal government has the responsibility to present a plan and to communicate it effectively to Canadians, so they can prepare in the coming months. Canadians deserve answers on how prepared we are and what the financial outlook for Canada is, so I implore the government to be transparent, honest and accountable. It is its duty to Canadians.

To conclude, I sincerely thank the front-line workers in every industry in Kildonan—St. Paul, from health care workers to grocery store clerks and gas station attendants, for quickly adapting to the first wave of this pandemic and physical distancing requirements, and even organizations that, despite being forced to drastically

change their daily routines, rose to the occasion in service of our community. Churches, gurdwaras, synagogues, elder care homes, grocery stores, schools and hundreds of small businesses in Kildonan—St. Paul rallied with a true Canadian spirit of resilience and innovation to get the community through the first wave of the pandemic.

That honestly gives me real hope for the second wave and whatever comes after that. I do believe we will get through this together.

• (1635)

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Madam Chair, I will be directing my questions to the Minister of Employment.

The estimates show \$155 million for the Canada summer jobs program. The cost of the program is typically much more. Does this figure indicate a reduction or is it an increase to the original cost of the program?

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Madam Chair, the \$155 million is the first amount that is going to be put in the estimates. The remaining, I believe, \$130 million will be in the supplementary estimates in the fall once we determine exactly how many jobs were filled.

Mr. Dan Albas: Madam Chair, we are hearing from Conservative members of Parliament right across this country that their constituents are telling them that the program is underfunded. Why would this be the case?

Hon. Carla Qualtrough: Madam Chair, I can assure everyone in the House that the program is not in fact underfunded. We committed to fund 70,000 jobs, and that is exactly what we are going to do. In fact, this Friday, the last wave of jobs is being put in the jobs bank. I can assure everyone that this program, because of the flexibilities we introduced this year, is going to be maxed out and that's good news—

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola.

Mr. Dan Albas: Madam Chair, there is \$728 million for payments to support students and youth impacted by COVID-19 pursuant to the Public Health Events of National Concern Payments Act. This is a serious amount of money with zero specifics. What is this for?

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Hon. Carla Qualtrough: Madam Chair, it is in fact part of the \$9-billion commitment to support students and to create 116,000 jobs across the country through the youth employment and skills strategy.

Mr. Dan Albas: Madam Chair, what oversight will there be of this specific fund?

Hon. Carla Qualtrough: Madam Chair, I can assure the member opposite that we are making sure that every dollar invested in these jobs goes to good quality work experiences for students to gain skills and experience and for them to contribute the way we know they want to.

Mr. Dan Albas: Madam Chair, without specifics, it's very hard for us to do anything other than to consider it a slush fund.

Moving on, what is the \$37 million for funding to increase old age security workload capacity?

Hon. Carla Qualtrough: I believe, Madam Chair, that is because the number of seniors that we are paying through OAS has increased and because of the cost of living increase that seniors got through the OAS.

Mr. Dan Albas: Madam Chair, the youth employment and skills strategy was promised a \$153.7-million increase, but in these estimates, it only shows a \$5.25-million boost. Why is this the case?

Hon. Carla Qualtrough: Madam Chair, I can assure you that everything we promised to spend through the youth employment and skills strategy will be spent on good quality summer job experiences for young people. In fact, those experiences will go into next February as a result of the flexibilities we introduced.

Mr. Dan Albas: Madam Chair, I will give the minister another opportunity. Why is it the case there is only \$5.25 million for this program?

Hon. Carla Qualtrough: Madam Chair, I believe, and I will follow up with the member if I am wrong, that we have parcelled out the youth employment and skills strategy through a number of budget items on this and we can add them all up. I can get him the math. I apologize that I do not have it all in my head, but it is all reflected in these main estimates in detail.

Mr. Dan Albas: I would appreciate getting those details, Madam Chair.

The government announced \$9.2 million for agricultural jobs under this program, but the program is only getting \$5.25 million. How is this possible?

• (1640)

Hon. Carla Qualtrough: Madam Chair, I can assure you that we announced that we would employ 7,000 young people across the country in agricultural jobs, and that is exactly what we are doing. We had some money already that was going to be moved from agriculture and, as a result, we only had to spend this much money to deliver that many jobs.

Mr. Dan Albas: Madam Chair, similarly, the student work placement program is getting \$5 million despite \$80 million being promised. What is going on here?

Hon. Carla Qualtrough: Madam Chair, this \$5 million will allow us to reach our overall goal of 85,000 work placements. We

will put the remainder of the money, as I said in the first answer, in the supplementary estimates when we have a better understanding of exactly how much money—

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola has 18 seconds left.

Mr. Dan Albas: Madam Chair, does the minister not understand that when members of Parliament review the estimates and have these questions in their minds, if the government is not clear on them, we are not mind readers. I would hope the government would be more forthcoming on these programs and in letting us know.

Hon. Carla Qualtrough: Madam Chair, we have to understand that in this pandemic we have made major announcements that will be reflected in supplementary estimates, as we deliver these programs over the coming weeks and months.

Members will have better, stronger data at that point.

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Madam Chair, I will be opening with a few comments and ending with a round of questions.

This is my first opportunity to be in the chamber since the pandemic struck in March, and I am happy to be here to represent my constituents in Regina—Lewvan. They have had a lot of questions over the last 12 weeks and want to know exactly what the government's plan is to re-launch our economy, and these estimates are going to be a big part of that.

As a member of the public accounts committee, I was wondering if any of the funding in these supplementary estimates is going toward ensuring that the Auditor General's office has the funding it needs to do audits after COVID-19 is over.

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Madam Chair, I am pleased that the member suggests the important role of the Auditor General. We are pleased with her new nomination, and, as she knows fully well and is worth repeating, we are there to support her important work.

Mr. Warren Steinley: Madam Chair, I am on that committee, and she has requested several times now that her funding be increased over the next few years, so that she will be able to perform her audits. They are doing half the audits they were doing a few years ago.

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Will the funding be there so she can do her job successfully?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Madam Chair, I am grateful for the additional time. It enables me to let the member know something that he already knows, which is how important her job is, particularly in this particular context.

We were pleased to welcome her as a new Auditor General. I will be pleased to receive any comments and suggestions she would like to make on her new position.

Mr. Warren Steinley: Madam Chair, it is nice to be back in Ottawa. There is never really an honest, straightforward answer to any question asked. Some things have not changed since I have been gone for about 12 weeks.

I have a simple question. There is a business in Regina that is not receiving CEBA funding, and the reason is that it changed its financial institution in March; it had nothing to do with COVID-19. It is a baby and lady-wear company in Regina called Nico, which has contacted the minister's office several times.

They are wondering if there is an appeal process coming for the CEBA program for these applications, and if not, can there not be a bit of leeway for a company that has just changed. They have nine years of financial records, but only because they changed their financial institution in March, their application was denied and they are not to receiving the CEBA benefit.

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Madam Chair, it is great to see my colleague back in the House, and it is also great to have a good answer for him, because if that company does not have access to the CEBA account, let us definitely work together to make sure they will get access to funding through WD, Western Economic Diversification Canada, which is in Saskatchewan and helping thousands of companies in the Prairies, in particular in Saskatchewan.

Let us work together to make that happen.

Mr. Warren Steinley: Madam Chair, I appreciate that offer. Our office will be in touch with WD.

They should be able to receive the CEBA program, though. It is simple. All they have to do to fix it simply is to give banking institutions a bit of discretion, and I believe that would fix a lot of the problems that our companies and businesses are having in Saskatchewan. There are a few falling through the cracks.

Another example is a father and son company. The father gave ownership to the son in January. It's the same company, same location, same services, and the same staff, but because the son does not have a large enough payroll, he cannot get the CEBA application approved.

Are we looking at changing something so that companies, family businesses, are not going to fall through the cracks any longer?

• (1645)

Hon. Mona Fortier (Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Chair, I thank my hon. colleague for sharing the realities of these businesses in his riding. We have been providing the CEBA program for over 669,000 businesses across the country. They can apply through their credit union or their financial institutions, and we have made

sure that we have monitored the CEBA and changed eligibility to make sure that we respond to the needs of businesses across the country.

We will continue to do that, and I invite the hon. member to contact the office of Minister Ng so we can maybe look at this specific case.

Mr. Warren Steinley: Madam Chair, I have contacted the minister's office a few times. I am putting forward a suggestion right now. If we gave the financial lending institutions a bit of discretion, it would solve a lot of problems. All we have to do is change a few words in the CEBA criteria to add "or at the lending institution's discretion". They do not want to lose money either.

That is a straightforward solution, a western Canadian common-sense solution. If we gave the banks a bit of discretion, a lot of those businesses would not fall through the cracks.

Hon. Mona Fortier: Madam Chair, credit unions and financial institutions have been responding to help businesses get access to the CEBA. We continue to work with these financial institutions to make sure that businesses have access to these loans.

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Madam Chair, it is an honour to rise in the House today to speak to the government's supplementary estimates and highlight some of the important programs we have funded to support Canadians in these challenging times of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Parliament has already approved the purpose of the statutory expenditures, and the terms and conditions under which they may be made, through other legislation. Therefore, the changes to statutory items are presented in the supplementary estimates for information purposes only. These priorities are supported by the appropriations requested in my department's main estimates for the years 2020-21. The majority of these adjustments in the supplementary estimates are for COVID measures, students, youth and seniors.

[*Translation*]

I want to start by going back to March 2020, when the Canadian economy shut down practically overnight. It quickly became clear that our normal safety net would not support the number of people losing their jobs. Canadians needed their government to act quickly, and that is what we did. We passed the Canada Emergency Response Benefit Act and created the Canada emergency response benefit.

[English]

For eligible workers, the CERB has been providing temporary income support of \$500 a week for up to 16 weeks. To give members a sense of the scope of the need, more than 8 million workers have been paid more than \$40 billion in benefits.

Then, as May turned to June, we knew we needed to make adjustments to the program. We knew that many people's benefits would soon be coming to an end. We were also aware that the economy was beginning to reopen slowly and unevenly across the country. We knew that approximately 1.2 million Canadians who had been getting financial help through the CERB no longer needed it.

Because we know that many Canadians still need help, yesterday we announced the extension of the Canada emergency response benefit. We extended it by eight weeks at the current rate of \$500 per week. We know this will go a long way for Canadians who simply do not have a job to return to and for workplaces and industries that have not yet reopened. Extending the CERB will give workers greater confidence that they will continue to get the support they need as they face ongoing disruptions to their work and home situations due to COVID-19.

The CERB will continue to be available from March 15 to October 3. In that time period, workers will now have 24 weeks of the CERB available to them.

While the CERB has been helping millions of Canadian workers get through this difficult time, we know that this benefit is not a long-term solution.

• (1650)

[Translation]

We are transitioning from a phase of the pandemic in which everyone was asked to stay at home to a phase in which workers are returning to work when it is safe and possible for them to do so.

[English]

We want to ensure that our programs continue to support Canadians and our economy. That is why we will continue to monitor the situation and ensure that we are able to adapt our existing systems to support Canadian workers as more and more people continue to return to the labour market.

We know that Canadians are ready and eager to do their part. We expect that workers will be seeking work opportunities or returning to work when their employers reach out to them, provided they are able and it is reasonable to do so. We encourage Canadians to consult the Job Bank, Canada's national employment service that offers tools to help Canadians with job searches. These additional weeks will ensure that Canadians have the support they need as they transition back to work.

I will turn now to students and youth.

In April, we recognized that students and youth were facing unique challenges and that many were not eligible for the CERB. That is why we announced, on April 22, comprehensive support for post-secondary students and recent grads. We passed legislation, on April 29, that enabled the four-month Canada emergency student benefit. Students who are not receiving the CERB are eligible to re-

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ceive \$1,250 per month between May and August. Students with disabilities and students with dependants would be eligible to receive an additional \$750 per month. We expect the Canada emergency student benefit to cost \$5.25 billion.

We also heard very clearly from students that they want to work and they want to serve in their communities in this time of crisis. That is why our measures did not end with the CESB. We announced the creation of thousands of additional jobs and training opportunities, including jobs in the agricultural and processing sectors, through mechanisms like our youth employment and skills strategy and the Canada summer jobs program. The additional funding required for the Canada summer jobs program is \$155.4 million.

[Translation]

The jobs funded through the Canada summer jobs program are especially important for young people who face obstacles and those who are looking for their first work experience. These jobs give young people the opportunity to gain the skills, knowledge and experience they need to enter the workforce.

[English]

This additional \$155.4 million will allow employers to hire approximately 70,000 young people in quality jobs.

We also know that seniors are the most vulnerable to COVID-19. The current situation brings terrible economic stress and anxiety to seniors. That is why our government has introduced measures to help protect their financial security during these uncertain times, measures for which we require additional funding.

First, seniors who have stopped working because of COVID are eligible for the CERB. They can collect the CERB even if they receive the Canada pension plan, old age security or the guaranteed income supplement, without interruption to these benefits. To help seniors cover increased costs caused by COVID-19, seniors eligible for the OAS will receive a one-time, tax-free payment of \$300, with an additional \$200 for seniors eligible for the GIS. About 6.7 million seniors are eligible for the OAS and will benefit from this one-time payment.

ESDC is requesting \$37.2 million in funding for 2020-21 to support ongoing work related to processing demographically driven OAS workload increases.

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[Translation]

This funding would also help support organizations that are proposing community-based projects to combat isolation, improve seniors' quality of life, and help seniors maintain a social support network.

[English]

The federal government will expand the new horizons for seniors program, with an additional investment of \$20 million to support organizations that offer community-based projects that provide the opportunity to further help seniors during this pandemic. It will also provide \$9 million for local organizations through United Way Centraide Canada and invest \$350 million in a new emergency community support fund that will help all vulnerable Canadians, including seniors in need.

These combined measures to help Canadians, students, youth and seniors get through COVID-19 have been and still are necessary to support Canadians during this crisis, and have helped stabilize the economy.

[Translation]

I am now ready to take questions.

• (1655)

[English]

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon (Kanata—Carleton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking the minister and her amazing team for the work they have done over these last weeks of unprecedented uncertainty. I want to tell her what a relief it was for many Canadians to know they were not going to have to worry about paying their bills or putting food on the table.

I am very grateful that our government was there right from the very beginning. The uptake of the emergency response benefit was almost eight million Canadians, which is a huge number. My constituents have come to me and shared their stories. They told me what a difference it has made.

People are slowly getting back to work, but there are still some whose jobs have not returned, so yesterday the government announced the extension of the CERB by eight weeks.

As we aim to relaunch our economy, can the minister explain to the House our government's decision to extend the CERB and what it will mean for Canadians who are still struggling with the impacts of COVID?

Hon. Carla Qualtrough: Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to thank the public servants at CRA and ESDC for delivering for Canadians. There is no better success story in this time of crisis than these groups of people working tirelessly under difficult conditions to deliver this for Canadians.

We extended the CERB yesterday, as was said, because, despite the fact that we saw some positive job numbers last month, the reality is there are many, many Canadians who remain unemployed, who do not have child care this summer and who may still be sick or taking care of someone who is sick, and they need our ongoing support. That is why we are doing this.

I can assure members that by responding the way we are with a changed attestation, we are trying to do our very best to not disincentivize work. The message for all Canadians is that we know they want to work, we know they are having trouble finding work and we are here for them.

Ms. Annie Koutrakis (Vimy, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for many students, the jobs they were counting on to help pay for their education in the fall have disappeared. For others, the career they were looking to start after their graduation has been postponed.

Our government was there to support young Canadians when it announced \$9 billion for a range of supports designed to ensure students have the help they need to continue their studies and gain essential workplace experience to start their careers.

One of the important supports our government launched is the Canada emergency student benefit, which is helping hundreds of thousands of students who are unable to work or whose jobs disappeared by providing them with direct financial support.

In addition, the Canada summer jobs program has been adapted to the realities of COVID-19 so the program can continue to support young Canadians as they begin to look for summer employment, save for their education and gain invaluable experience.

Can the minister please explain to the House how the Canada emergency student benefit and the changes to the Canada summer jobs program are helping young Canadians and students during this pandemic?

Hon. Carla Qualtrough: Mr. Speaker, we know how hard this summer has been on students and how hard it will continue to be. We heard very clearly from student organizations and from students across the country that they want direct income support, but they also want opportunities to work and opportunities to serve in their communities. This is why our \$9-billion package was a complete, comprehensive attempt to address all the needs of students for this summer.

In addition, we added flexibilities to the Canada summer jobs program that will allow students to work part time, allow students to work through February of 2021, allow employers to reorient the jobs they had planned to provide toward essential services and allow us to onboard new employers in this time of crisis.

As a result, we have maxed out the Canada summer jobs program, with over 300,000 students on the Canada emergency student benefit, positive stories of students giving back in their communities and many more students with the opportunity ahead of them to go back to school or continue their studies in September.

Business of Supply

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when I think of the CERB program, I see the creation of a program to support Canadians at a time when Canadians needed to be supported by government. It is no easy accomplishment to put together a program to literally serve eight million plus Canadians.

Could the minister give us some of the numbers and reinforce why, with the sheer number of Canadians being served through this program, it was so important that we bring forward this program? Tied into that are also the additional jobs saved through the wage compensation program, which I believe was over two million jobs.

• (1700)

Hon. Carla Qualtrough: Mr. Speaker, when we asked Canadians to do something really tough in March and we asked many of them to stop working and stay home, which was in our collective best interest, we also knew that we had to support them in their efforts. We did this by the creation of the Canada emergency response benefit, partially because we knew that our employment insurance system would not be able to do what we needed to do very quickly and for the number of people who needed our support.

Very quickly, over the span of a week, we announced the benefit, legislated the benefit and delivered it two weeks later, which is quite extraordinary. Eight million people have now accessed the CERB. We have spent about \$44 billion on the CERB to date. Many people who are on the CERB are still working because of the ability to earn \$1,000 and be on the CERB. As I said, 1.2 million people have transitioned off the CERB. Many workers, 2.6 million, are now on the Canada emergency wage subsidy. Right now, we are figuring out how many of those were receiving the CERB. That will be an exciting number to share when we have that information.

We know times are tough; we knew that times would be tough, and we tried to make sure we made times a little easier for Canadians in these extraordinary times.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to be splitting my time with the member for Mégantic—L'Érable.

[*English*]

It is a sad day for Canada. Canada has again lost its bid for the Security Council seat at the UN. The responsibility for the loss is the Prime Minister's and the Prime Minister's alone. Does the government believe the Prime Minister's actions have contributed to this loss? He confused China and Japan on a number of occasions. Could the government share its thoughts on this?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we first wish to congratulate Norway and Ireland, as well as India, Mexico and Kenya on their election. We look forward to continuing to work closely with them.

Although we are disappointed by the outcome, we have no regrets. Team Canada members have been working hard during the past four years. We would like to thank them for their dedication, and we are extraordinarily proud of the campaign they ran. Throughout the campaign, we listened and learned from other

countries, and we have opened new doors for co-operation to address global challenges. This will serve Canada well moving forward.

Canada will continue to be a champion of diversity and inclusion, supporting the global fight against COVID-19, addressing climate change, leading peace and security efforts, and helping the most vulnerable. Canada will continue to believe in multilateralism, work constructively within the UN and be actively engaged on the world stage.

Ms. Leona Alleslev: Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister should not be proud of the way this has been handled. The Prime Minister confused China and Japan repeatedly. The Prime Minister misunderstood that the Baltics were actually a group of countries. Could the government outline how this contributed to the loss?

Hon. Karina Gould: Mr. Speaker, Canada has stood firm in its values. We led with our values and campaigned hard. We listened and engaged with partners right around the world. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the incredible diplomats, the members of team Canada, for giving it their all these past five years. We are so proud of them, and we know we will continue to do—

• (1705)

The Speaker: Now we will go back to the hon. member for Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill.

Ms. Leona Alleslev: Mr. Speaker, is it Canadian values to embarrass Asian-Pacific partners by not showing up at a trade agreement negotiation?

Hon. Karina Gould: Mr. Speaker, it is Canadian values to stand up for human rights. It is Canadian values to stand up for democracy. It is Canadian values to stand up for gender equality. It is Canadian values to stand up for the world's poorest—

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

Ms. Leona Alleslev: Mr. Speaker, is it Canadian values to fail to condemn anti-gay laws in Senegal and Uganda? Is it Canadian values to encourage and condone modern-day slavery used to build soccer stadiums in Qatar?

Hon. Karina Gould: Mr. Speaker, Canada is known around the world as a champion for LGBTQ2+ rights. In fact, our current Deputy Prime Minister has made incredible strides when it comes to moving those rights forward, and we are continuing—

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

Business of Supply

Ms. Leona Alleslev: Mr. Speaker, the failure to condemn human rights abuses and stand up against anti-gay laws confuses the world and does not show that we are principled with values. What about the failure to behave appropriately in India? Can the government outline how that contributed to our loss of a UN security seat?

Hon. Karina Gould: Mr. Speaker, I would like to outline that the bedrock of our feminist foreign policy and our feminist international assistance policy is taking a human rights-based approach to the work that we do everywhere in the world.

I would also reiterate that right from the beginning of this pandemic, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and I issued a statement calling on governments to respect human rights in their responses to COVID-19, recognizing that this is—

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

Ms. Leona Alleslev: Mr. Speaker, it is not those values that we have seen represented. The government committed to peacekeeping and to putting Canada back on the world stage, and yet the one peacekeeping mission that the United Nations asked us to do, we have already withdrawn from.

Can the government outline why that would have contributed to the loss of the UN security seat?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to peacekeeping, we are working with the United Nations and also multilateral organizations on how to bring proper support. Working with the United Nations on its reform is about modernizing peacekeeping when it comes to smart pledges.

We are very proud of the work that our troops have done.

Ms. Leona Alleslev: Mr. Speaker, our allies cannot count on us to be there for peacekeeping missions.

What about our failing diplomatic relations with China, to the extent that we have a situation where China will not buy our canola, will not buy our ginseng and is failing to buy our soybeans and other products? This, too, has contributed.

Could the government outline why we have a failed diplomatic relationship with China and its impact on our UN security bid?

Hon. Karina Gould: Mr. Speaker, Canada has a complex relationship with China and many other countries around the world, but we will continuously stand up for human rights and the values that are important to Canadians. Our top priority is the safety and security of the two Michaels, making sure they have access to consular support and ensuring that they do come home.

Canada will continue to engage, will continue to speak on behalf of Canadians and to seek out and support Canadian interests in all of our relationships.

Ms. Leona Alleslev: Mr. Speaker, what about the concessions that this country has made with respect to the United States-Mexico-Canada agreement and the national security tariffs that were imposed on Canada for steel and aluminum? Is that a contributing factor to our loss of the UN Security Council vote as well, because our allies do not depend on us to be there when they need us and do not trust our national security stance?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am quite certain that Canadians and our allies admire the work that we did as a country in renegotiating the new NAFTA. Canada is today the only G7 country that has a trade agreement with every other G7 country. At a time of rising protectionism, at a time when our economy is going through a crisis created by the coronavirus, the fact that we have secured—

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: We will now hear from the hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable.

● (1710)

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill for her efforts.

This is a terrible day for Canada. The Prime Minister bet his reputation, and Canada's as well, on pulling out all the diplomatic stops to get a seat on the UN Security Council, but he lost. After spending millions of taxpayer dollars, after trying to convince dictators around the world to support Canada, and after setting aside the vital Canadian values of protecting rights and freedoms and protecting homosexual people, the Prime Minister has shown the world how little influence he had on the outcome of this vote.

Most unfortunately, the Prime Minister must take personal responsibility for this failure. I do not want Canadians to bear the blame for this failure, because Canadians are well regarded around the world. Canada is a good country that everyone can be proud of. Unfortunately, through his actions and his deeply flawed foreign policy, the Prime Minister created today's outcome, which was the result of all the years of embarrassment he has caused us on the international stage.

I can cite several examples. He managed to mix up Japan and China at a very important meeting. The Prime Minister embarrassed our allies at the signing of the Trans-Pacific Partnership. I remember the pictures vividly. The leaders of all of the TPP signatory countries were waiting for the Prime Minister of Canada to attend a crucial signing meeting. The Prime Minister of Canada never showed up. He failed miserably at representing Canada's interests in China.

Business of Supply

At the time, I was the agriculture critic, and I can say that it was utterly tragic to see how little energy Canada was putting into finding a solution. We were working very hard, we were creating committees, but the Prime Minister himself would never defend the Canadian farmers caught in this predicament. Should I take a moment to remind everyone of his disastrous trip to India?

It got the whole world talking. People everywhere were talking about our Prime Minister and his trip to India, but for all the wrong reasons. That was the beginning of the end for the Prime Minister of Canada's brief flirtation with international diplomacy. When they saw how he acted in India, several countries decided to turn their backs on this Prime Minister, who is more concerned about his image than his own country's interests and values.

Although he promoted Canada far and wide, saying that we would play a major role in the UN's efforts to protect people and countries in difficulty, Canada has already withdrawn from a peace-keeping mission in Mali that it had been asked to join. We do not know why.

With respect to our relations with the United States, need I remind the House of the concessions that were made, to the detriment of the dairy industry, and the government's inability to find acceptable solutions for softwood lumber? The government was not able to include that. It set the issue aside, and we are still having problems today. It was unable to resolve that situation. During the negotiations, the government failed to reach a proper agreement that would protect Canadian aluminum workers. It is one failure after another. Canada lost the vote, but not because Canada is Canada. I certainly do not want Canadians to think that this failure is their fault. It is the fault of the Prime Minister himself. He is the one who channelled all his efforts, all his influence and Canadian taxpayer money and brushed aside Canadian values to speak with dictators in Qatar, Oman, Rwanda and Uganda during the pandemic, rather than defending Canadian values.

• (1715)

It is good to want a seat on the UN Security Council, but it is also good to stand up for Canadian values. We have seen what it costs when the government sets aside those values and everything we believe in and uses Canadian taxpayer money to promote itself. Our allies turned their backs on Canada. That is what happened.

We want to be able to build a relationship of trust with other countries on the international stage. However, some countries hoping to negotiate on the international stage and trying to push the boundaries a little further try to do it with Canada first, because they know that Canada will not react. We saw this with China, with Italy in the case of durum wheat, and with India. This was the Prime Minister's failure, and we are extremely disappointed that today's loss is tarnishing Canada's international reputation.

Does the Minister of International Development regret jeopardizing Canada's reputation, abandoning Canadian values and making it so that, today, Canada is no longer seen as a country worth consulting? She pulled out all the stops to get a seat on the UN Security Council. Today we are seeing the result: Canada came in third.

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I completely disagree with my hon. colleague.

We acted in accordance with our values. I will give my hon. colleague a few examples.

With regard to women's rights, we created new programs that seek to recognize a woman's right to choose, unlike the opposition. With regard to LGBTQ2 rights, we created a specific program to help people—

The Speaker: We will now go to the Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages.

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be here today to talk about the work being done by Canada's six regional economic development agencies and what they have done to support Canadian businesses in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The pandemic is having a huge impact on Canadians from coast to coast to coast. Because of the lockdown, a big part of our economy has had to be put on hold. Everyone's lives have been turned upside down, and that is especially true for the owners and employees of small and medium-sized businesses.

Since the crisis began, I have spoken, mainly virtually, with thousands of business and association leaders from across the country. They all talk about different day-to-day realities, but there is a common thread. They are working very hard for their employees, their communities and their families. After several weeks of lockdown and, for many of them, after temporarily closing their businesses, they are now reaching their limit. These businesses provide good local jobs and are a source of local pride. They form the foundation of a strong middle class. They are the backbone of our economy and, above all, our communities.

Our government realized very quickly that it was important to help businesses through the crisis, and we quickly implemented measures. We launched the largest economic assistance program in Canadian history. The measures we implemented include the Canada emergency wage subsidy, which helps businesses retain workers and rehire the ones they had to lay off. We also allowed businesses to defer GST/HST and customs duty payments. We created the Canada emergency business account, which basically provides \$40,000 loans. This measure includes a \$10,000 subsidy if the loan is repaid within two years. We remained responsive to needs, and we adjusted and improved the assistance to ensure that it would help as many Canadians as possible. In short, we expanded the social safety net.

Business of Supply

However, one thing I heard from business owners is that despite the scope of the economic and social safety net in place, the situation remains difficult for small businesses. We asked ourselves two questions. Number one, how can we help businesses that are slipping through the cracks? Number two, what tools can we use to provide that help, knowing that, as they said, business owners prefer to turn to institutions close to home, ones that they trust?

To address those two concerns, we developed a special assistance program delivered by our six regional economic development agencies. These agencies are on the ground. They are in the best position to help the workers and SMEs at the heart of our communities. They know them.

That is how we came up with the regional relief and recovery fund, or RRRF, which has a total budget of \$962 million. This fund is administered by our economic development agencies, either directly or indirectly through key partners such as CFDCs or the PME MTL network, as I recently had the opportunity to announce in Montreal. We made sure to be where businesses need us to be.

The purpose of this fund is to support businesses that are central to their local economy, that do not qualify for existing federal programs and that have needs that are not covered by these programs. It offers SMEs and organizations that are having cash flow problems emergency financial support to help them stay in business, including by helping them pay their employees and their fixed costs.

We must protect our main streets and our local businesses, and this new fund gives us the means to do that.

● (1720)

[*English*]

As I mentioned, the challenges faced by small businesses are not felt equally in all regions. This is particularly true in our Canadian northern territories. That is why in addition to the regional relief and recovery fund, \$15 million was allocated for the creation of the northern business relief fund. With this fund, we target further needs for immediate relief for SMEs and ensure the stability of businesses and sectors that are vital to the recovery of our northern economy.

As members know, main street businesses are the lifeblood of a community. COVID-19 hit them hard. Many businesses responded by broadening their offerings and complementing traditional storefronts with online shops to attract new customers and reach new markets. This created an opportunity.

We have a unique chance to help them now, and moving forward, to not just recover but come back stronger and better equipped to compete in tomorrow's economy. This is why we launched a new "Digital Main Street" platform, which will support almost 23,000 businesses across Ontario, helping them not just survive in the new economy but thrive. Thanks to over \$42 million in federal funding through FedDev Ontario, this innovative program will help businesses go digital.

We also know that challenges do not stop at main street. That is why we also provided \$7.5 million for the recovery activation program delivered by the Toronto Region Board of Trade. This program will provide customized training for more than 1,000 small

and medium-sized businesses to digitize their operations and bring their business online.

Our response to the challenges small businesses are facing in the current crisis would have been incomplete without acknowledging that certain sectors have been more directly weakened and require special attention.

The tourism sector, which employs 1.89 million people in Canada, has been hit hard, and we are working tirelessly to mitigate the impacts on the Canadian economy. While the sector can benefit from the strong support measures the government has put in place, we knew that additional efforts would be required as the summer season approached and the economy was reopening.

On May 31, I announced an investment of over \$40 million in the tourism sector. This investment will directly support more than 30 high-potential projects, such as the Point Grondine eco park development, which will offer visitors a new indigenous tourism experience in northern Ontario, a region you know very well, Mr. Speaker. The \$40 million will also support more than 100 tourism organizations in southern and northern Ontario, as well as in western Canada, to help them adapt their operations to this new reality and drive visitors back into local communities as the economy reopens.

We know that the indigenous tourism sector is particularly vulnerable to the effects of the pandemic. To bolster this industry, our government has also announced a new stimulus development fund that will provide \$16 million to support the indigenous tourism sector.

We continue to work with economic stakeholders in the tourism industry in Quebec, the Maritimes and Atlantic Canada to make a real difference in the tourism sector in eastern Canada as well.

Investments and initiatives like the ones I have presented today are crucial to the success not just of our businesses but of our communities. The decisions we make now will have a major impact on future prosperity, and we choose to invest.

Our message to workers and businesses is clear: We have been here for them with measures and support, and we will get through this together.

● (1725)

[*Translation*]

I encourage businesses and organizations to make use of the measures that the Government of Canada has put in place to help employers, workers and individuals across the country.

Business of Supply

I also invite my fellow MPs to tell business people in their ridings about the wide range of support programs available and encourage them to apply.

We are working with you, and we will keep working with you to create good local jobs and build a stronger economy in our communities and greater prosperity for everyone despite these difficult times.

Mr. William Amos (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry (Science), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for her comments and her hard work for our regions and their small businesses.

MPs who represent regions like mine, the Pontiac, can see exactly what kind of damage the COVID-19 pandemic is doing to our small businesses. We need to help our SMEs and our regions. The recovery fund that our government created is certainly very important, and I am grateful to our minister for creating it.

In addition, everything that the government has done to invest in our CFDCs is very important. Pontiac has three, namely the Vallée-de-la-Gatineau CFDC, the Pontiac CFDC and the Papineau CFDC. We have worked hard to make this a success, and I credit our minister with fostering collaboration between the entire CFDC network and Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions. It goes to show that, from the very beginning, our government has always been there for our regions, worked with our regions and cared about our regions.

I would like to invite the minister to tell us more about what she has done with CFDCs across Quebec.

Hon. Mélanie Joly: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, the member for Pontiac. He is a strong advocate for regional economic development and the CFDC network.

When we started looking at what was happening on the ground, we realized just how much of an impact the pandemic was having on our businesses and our workers. We wanted to work with the best networks, the best professionals, to be sure we could provide assistance.

That is why we turned to the CFDC network, which has expertise and experience on the ground. It is a reliable network. It deserves our trust. That is why we invested \$71 million in CFDCs in Quebec. We basically doubled the budget of these CFDCs, which are present not only in the beautiful Outaouais region, in the Pontiac riding, but also in the ridings of many members who come from rural and remote regions.

We will continue to support our CFDC network to provide direct assistance to businesses, as well as loans to our business owners who really need our help during this difficult period.

Mr. William Amos: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for that comprehensive answer.

I know that our CFDCs really appreciate the \$71 million. That means over \$1 million for each CFDC. In concrete terms, this means there are businesses in every sector that might not otherwise have gotten any assistance from the federal or provincial governments and that were able to ask for help from our CFDCs. As the minister noted, our CFDCs understand our regions very well. For

example, the Vallée-de-la-Gatineau CFDC has been serving the public for 40 years, which means it has been working with our SMEs for 40 years.

I would like to know more about the intent behind the investment in CFDCs.

How can it provide assistance if other programs are not available to our SMEs?

• (1730)

Hon. Mélanie Joly: Mr. Speaker, we have invested \$71 million in our CFDCs in Quebec. When we include the Community Futures Network outside of Quebec, we have invested \$267 million.

These are good investments because entrepreneurs in the regions often have difficulty accessing a bank or financial institution. Sometimes, the bank or credit union branch may be hundreds of kilometres from where the business is located. That is why we wanted to find a way to reach them. The CFDCs have a strong presence in the field.

I had the opportunity to speak with Héléne Deslauriers, the executive director of the Quebec CFDC network, and all board members of network last Friday. We can be proud of their efforts. They are changing the lives of entrepreneurs and our rural areas every day, especially in these times.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know the minister has been a very strong advocate for the western economic diversification fund, something that has been of great value to the prairie provinces in particular. I am wondering if she could indicate her sense of commitment to that program from this government.

Hon. Mélanie Joly: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, who is a strong advocate for western economic diversification and for the Prairies in general.

Definitely, we wanted to help entrepreneurs and business owners all across the west. We know they have been hard hit by the pandemic and the economic crisis, but also by the drop in oil prices. That is why we doubled the budget for western economic diversification. Of all the \$962 million of funding, we are giving the biggest allocation to—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Edmonton Mill Woods.

Hon. Tim Uppal (Edmonton Mill Woods, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the members for Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek and Edmonton West.

Business of Supply

The Liberals have shut down the regular proceedings of Parliament. They refuse to fully fund the Auditor General, which has resulted in fewer audits of their spending, and now the Liberals are only allowing four hours of scrutiny to review \$87 billion in spending. As my colleague pointed out, that's over \$360 million to review per minute, and that does not even include \$70 billion of spending that is not included in these estimates.

Why is the government trying so hard to avoid scrutiny on its spending?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member as this allows me to try to clarify some level of confusion on his part. I do not think it is deliberate, but I certainly want to clarify the confusion.

Out of the \$87 billion in the estimates, 90% has already been debated, voted upon and approved unanimously by the House.

Hon. Tim Uppal: Mr. Speaker, even the Parliamentary Budget Officer said that four hours to scrutinize \$87 billion is certainly not what one would expect in exceptional times.

The government is spending \$200 million and has allocated it to Citizenship and Immigration Canada as a grant for the interim housing assistance program.

How much of that money is being used to pay for housing for illegal border crossers?

• (1735)

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Mr. Speaker, I am glad to be able to answer this question. As the member knows, our country has a reputation and ability to welcome people from across the world. We are stronger because we welcome these immigrants. Our economic growth, reputation and ability to be stronger together depends on these investments.

Hon. Tim Uppal: Mr. Speaker, our global reputation definitely took a hit today.

The minister of border security announced on March 20 that Canada would turn away asylum seekers. Then, on April 20, he announced that fewer than 10 asylum seekers had crossed the border.

Why are the Liberals spending \$200 million to house asylum claimants if they successfully closed the border?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud of the work the government has done to welcome the most vulnerable: those fleeing persecution, war, conflict and, increasingly, climate change. We invested in interim housing in partnership with the provinces and municipalities, which are doing tremendous work by integrating those who have fled those very difficult circumstances.

Hon. Tim Uppal: Mr. Speaker, in addition to the \$200 million the Liberals are spending on housing for asylum seekers, what other support are they providing?

Hon. Marco Mendicino: Mr. Speaker, in addition to providing the housing that my hon. colleague has referred to, those who have had to flee the most difficult adversity, war, conflict and climate change are receiving support from those communities that are sponsoring, ordinary Canadians who—

The Speaker: The member for Edmonton Mill Woods.

Hon. Tim Uppal: Mr. Speaker, the Privy Council Office received an additional \$48.7 million of funding for communications and marketing. Can the Liberals please explain what this money is for?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as Canadians know, we are going through an unprecedented global pandemic and it has been incredibly important to communicate clearly with Canadians the measures we all need to take to stay safe—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Edmonton Mill Woods.

Hon. Tim Uppal: Mr. Speaker, out of this almost \$15 million that is being provided to the Privy Council Office for communications, how much is being spent to cover the Prime Minister's morning press conferences from his cottage?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Speaker, the money is being spent to communicate clearly with Canadians the extraordinary measures we all need to be safe and to stay safe and well—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Edmonton Mill Woods.

Hon. Tim Uppal: Mr. Speaker, on April 11, Finance Canada told Canadians that the CERB would cost \$24 billion. The supplementary estimates now say the CERB will cost \$60 billion, and that does not include the two-month extension the Prime Minister announced yesterday.

Can the Liberals tell us what the total cost of the CERB will be?

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the \$60 billion represents an estimated \$15 billion for each four-week period. We know that as of June 4, for about two and a half months or two and a half four-week periods, we were at \$44 billion. As people transition off the CERB to the wage subsidy, we anticipate the cost of the CERB to go down for two more four-week periods. It is difficult to tell right now, because we do not know how many more jobs there will be, but I assure the House that we will give that information in real time as we—

The Speaker: We will now go to the hon. member for Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek.

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be participating in the debate today on the estimates, and I look forward to the minister's answers with regard to the funding her department is requesting.

Business of Supply

Yesterday at committee, the deputy minister of PSPC told us that the \$500 million being requested for PPE in these estimates was for contracts for itself, and not for contracts on behalf of other clients or departments.

Can the minister briefly detail what PPE is being purchased with this \$500 million?

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for the question.

We are purchasing a broad range of PPE and other supplies to meet Canada's needs in the short and long-term. We are purchasing in bulk, because we are unsure of the way in which this pandemic will roll out.

I am unsure of what my deputy minister said exactly at committee as I was not in attendance, but I would be happy to answer further questions if the member opposite would elucidate.

• (1740)

Mrs. Kelly Block: Mr. Speaker, I would encourage the minister to have a conversation with her deputy minister to find out just what information was shared with the committee.

Yesterday, the deputy minister also indicated that most of these funds were already under contract. Additionally, he indicated that many contracts for PPE include an advance payment provision, often depending on the commodity.

How many, or what percentage, of the contracts related to the \$500-million request in the estimates contain an advance payment provision?

Hon. Anita Anand: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for the question.

The contracts with which we have been fulfilling Canada's needs for PPE across the country are varied in terms, in scope and in extent. As a result, it is impossible for me to provide, with specificity, the precise percentage that the member requires.

I will say that we are very transparent, where possible, with the contracts we have executed. If the member would take a look at the PSPC website, as well as at my testimony twice before OGGO, she would have that transparency.

Mrs. Kelly Block: Mr. Speaker, I will advise the minister that I have the opportunity of getting briefings every week from her parliamentary secretary, who is quite forthcoming in giving answers to the questions that we ask. I just wish she would be, specifically to this \$500-million request.

What is the average percentage of prepayments of all the contracts already entered into?

Hon. Anita Anand: Mr. Speaker, as I just mentioned, we have executed hundreds of contracts with suppliers domestically and internationally. Answering that question with precision at this point is not possible, first, because we need to protect our supply chains, and second, because our contractual relationships are continually advancing and changing due to the high demand for PPE across the country and around the world.

Mrs. Kelly Block: Mr. Speaker, we know that PSPC is trying to extract itself from a contract with a company that sold us millions of substandard KN95 masks. Yesterday, the deputy minister told the OGGO committee that other contracted companies are struggling with timeliness, and that at least one more is having quality issues.

Can the minister assure Canadians that none of the \$500 million requested in these estimates will be going, or has gone, to one of these companies struggling with timeliness or quality?

Hon. Anita Anand: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for the question.

In my debrief with my deputy minister last night about this particular issue, he did mention that he had referenced one other contract. I will say with regard to that contract that, of any amount requested in the supplementary estimates, Canadians will not be paying for masks that did not meet the standards of the Public Health Agency of Canada. That is my commitment, and that has been our Prime Minister's commitment also.

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there are eight and a half million Canadians on CERB, taxpayers who are struggling to pay bills and work, yet in these estimates the government is gifting \$48 million more to wealthy people to buy electric vehicles.

Why is that a priority for the government?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thought we would have made it abundantly clear that we are committed to zero net emissions by 2050 and improving, in fact, on our targets by 2030 for the Paris Agreement. That's why we are putting in place electric vehicle incentives.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Mr. Speaker, how is subsidizing wealthy people to buy Teslas with \$50 million, \$5,000 a car, and making seniors wait months and months and months for a mere \$500, a priority for the government?

• (1745)

Hon. Marc Garneau: Mr. Speaker, obviously COVID-19 is the top priority at this moment, but let us not forget that one of the great global priorities that Canada is committed to is the very real issue of climate change. We are keeping that in mind as we go forward.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Mr. Speaker, year to date, \$182 million in taxpayers' money is being proposed to subsidize wealthy car owners. Why is the government continuing to subsidize car owners? Has it run out of refrigerators to buy for Loblaw's?

Business of Supply

Hon. Marc Garneau: Mr. Speaker, in 2019, when we approved \$319 million in the budget, it was for three years, but this program has been overwhelmingly successful, which is very encouraging. Not only are we providing incentives to purchase electric vehicles which do not—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Mr. Speaker, through you to the Minister of Middle Class Prosperity, the cheapest electric vehicle in Canada is about \$1,000 per month to buy or to finance. How many middle-class Canadians can afford \$1,000 a month and will qualify for such a loan?

Hon. Marc Garneau: Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of models that are eligible for the \$5,000 electric vehicle incentive, or \$2,500 for hybrid vehicles, either to purchase or to lease. In fact, we are also spending money on building the network charging infrastructure. We are committed to this plan.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Mr. Speaker, the cheapest one is \$1,000 a month to finance. Not many middle-class Canadians can afford that, if any.

None of these cars are made in Canada. Why is the government making this subsidy available to create middle-class jobs in the United States?

Hon. Marc Garneau: Mr. Speaker, as I said, we are committed to the transition toward cleaner vehicles because light-duty vehicles are responsible for 50% of all greenhouse gas that is generated in the transportation sector. That is one-eighth of all greenhouse gases in the country.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Mr. Speaker, not a single light-duty vehicle is eligible for the government's subsidy program. I suggest that the minister learn his file.

Will the Minister of National Defence commit to providing a comprehensive update on the strong, secure and engaged costing platform as the PBO has requested?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we always look forward to working with the PBO's office when it comes to strong, secure and engaged, especially with the unprecedented investments that we are making in our defence.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Mr. Speaker, DND has delivered data covering just 10% of the projects, covering just 5% of the half trillion dollars in spending. Why?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Mr. Speaker, we are committed to making sure that within our SSE, the investments we have committed as a government is a fully funded defence policy. We are also making—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Mr. Speaker, I will answer for him. DND has told the PBO that the update does not actually exist. It does not have the other information on the other 90% of the projects. Why is DND continuing to fail Canadians on strong, secure and engaged?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Mr. Speaker, when it comes to SSE, the majority of our projects are not only under way, but we are very transparent with our costing. In fact, we worked with the defence industry where we actually put out our defence investment plan as well, in addition to making sure that all of our costing is demonstrated in a transparent way.

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge my presence today on the traditional territory of the Algonquin people.

I would like to say a few words on the current social climate in Canada. Right now is a moment when Canadians are recognizing that there is unfairness built into our systems. These systems have always been unfair toward indigenous people.

I look to my colleagues in the House to reflect on why injustice toward indigenous people still happens and how we can move forward in the short, medium and long term. I know that in my capacity as Minister of Indigenous Services, I face those questions every day, as does my ministry. These are difficult and uncomfortable conversations, but important ones to have.

With that, I welcome this opportunity to provide the House with an update on our continuing effort to confront the evolving COVID-19 pandemic. I can assure members that the top priority of the Government of Canada during this time remains the safety and physical and mental health of all Canadians and indigenous people living in Canada.

As of June 16, Indigenous Services Canada is aware of 255 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in first nations. Of those, 210 individuals are considered to have recovered.

Indigenous Services Canada continues to work closely with communities to identify a surge in health infrastructure needs, supporting efforts to screen, triage and isolate individuals in the event of a possible COVID-19 outbreak. We will continue to work closely with communities and partners to coordinate resources and keep people and communities safe.

● (1750)

[Translation]

To date, the Government of Canada has provided indigenous peoples and northern communities with approximately \$1.5 billion in funding to successfully fight COVID-19.

A large portion of this funding is found in the supplementary estimates (A), 2020-21. These estimates include more than \$280 million to support health measures provided by Indigenous Services Canada in first nation and Inuit communities.

This is essential funding that will be used primarily to provide first nation and Inuit communities with the following: the services of additional health care providers; personal protective equipment; health infrastructure, in particular the repurposing of existing community spaces or the purchase of mobile structures to support isolation, assessment and shelter measures; and prevention and infection control measures at the community level.

[English]

In addition, these estimates reflect \$305 million for the distinctions-based indigenous community support fund. Of this amount, \$215 million was dedicated to first nations, \$45 million to Inuit and \$30 million to Métis nation communities, plus \$15 million in proposal-based funding for first nations off reserve and urban indigenous organizations and communities.

An additional \$75 million was also sought for organizations supporting first nations individuals off reserve and Inuit and Métis living in urban areas, as well as \$10 million in funding for emergency, family violence prevention, shelters on reserve and in the Yukon.

As part of our COVID-19 response, we are also providing \$270 million to respond to financial pressures on income assistance for essential living expenses due to COVID-19.

[Translation]

In addition to funding for our COVID-19 response, these estimates include funding to ensure that first nations children and families receive the services they need and to which they are entitled. We have committed \$468.2 million to maintain the first nations child and family services program, which brings the program's total annual budget to \$1.7 billion.

This includes support to implement the decisions by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal issued before September 2019 and connected to the complaint by first nations child and family services regarding child and family services and Jordan's principle; coverage of expected maintenance costs for service providers; operating costs for the new agencies; response to pressure from provincial agreements; and implementation of a reserve fund to ensure that money is available should the actual numbers call for reimbursement.

The Government of Canada is committed to implementing Jordan's principle and ensuring that first nations children have access to the products, services and support they need in the areas of health, social services and education.

The Government of Canada is committed to implementing Jordan's principle and is taking action to ensure that first nations children receive the products, services and support they need in health, social services and education. The supplementary estimates also include \$230 million to respond to the year-long financial pressures arising from the implementation of Jordan's principle.

Every year since its implementation, Jordan's principle has led to a significant increase in the number of approved applications submitted by individuals and groups. As a result, associated spending has increased significantly.

Business of Supply

Since 2016, the Government of Canada has adopted an interim approach to Jordan's principle that has allowed it to inject more than \$1 billion to meet the needs of first nations children. We are determined to continue to meet those needs and work to keep our promise on implementing the principle.

[English]

To further safeguard food security in the north, our government has committed up to \$25 million to support temporary enhancements to nutrition north Canada in these estimates. This funding will help ensure nutrition north Canada fulfills its mandate to improve access to healthy food through additional education and subsidies during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We have also invested up to \$72.6 million to address urgent health care and social support needs in the territories in response to COVID-19, with \$18.4 million allocated to Yukon, \$23.4 million to the Northwest Territories and \$30.8 million to Nunavut. In addition, we have provided up to \$17.3 million to enable the continuation of northern air services to support essential resupply and medical services in the north. We do recognize the essential role that a focused and reliable air network plays in enabling the movement of essential goods and services to respond to the pandemic. Funding has already been disbursed for the urgent health care and social support needs in the territories in response to COVID-19 and to enable the continuation of northern air service supporting essential resupply and medical services in the north.

We have also committed to a needs-based funding approach that involves \$23.4 million in Vote 10 grants and contributions, including \$9.9 million to support research and higher education in Canada's north; \$6 million to support planning activities of the Government of the Northwest Territories, for the proposed Taltson hydroelectricity expansion project; \$6 million to respond to the final report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and \$1.5 million toward indigenous consultation and capacity support activities.

I thank members for the opportunity to speak about this crucial and important work. *Meegwetch, nakurmiik, mahsi cho.*

Business of Supply

• (1755)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Robillard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, National Chief Bellegarde and countless other indigenous partners explained to the committee how indigenous youth are the segment of the population that is growing the fastest.

What measures is the government taking to ensure that indigenous youth have the supports they need to succeed in their education and career during the current pandemic and beyond?

Hon. Marc Miller: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for that very relevant question.

Ever since our government took office in 2015, we have used our budgets to close the gap for indigenous peoples and their future, their youth, with respect to education and the economy. Indigenous youth are the fastest-growing segment of Canada's population, which means they are Canada's future.

This group of people is facing intense pressure because of COVID-19. That is why we have invested \$75 million in post-secondary education during the pandemic. We have multiplied our efforts to support children who have to stay home. This is an ongoing effort.

We know this is putting pressure on young people's mental health. That is why we are continuing to invest resources in communities so they can make decisions about their future and the future of their youngest members.

[*English*]

Ms. Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in 2016, the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal determined that the Government of Canada's approach to services for first nations children was discriminatory. One way we are addressing this is through the full implementation of Jordan's principle.

Can the Minister of Indigenous Services please tell the House more about how new funding committed to Jordan's principle through these supplementary estimates will support its continued implementation?

Hon. Marc Miller: Mr. Speaker, indeed, members will note that over \$20 million are in the supplementary estimates that reflect the attribution of funds to fulfill this most important principle to closing the gap and ensuring equity for first nations children. The budgetary expenses are now at over \$600 million.

Over and above, and more important than the number, we are speaking about children and the supports they need. I have been able to go into many communities, obviously prior to COVID-19 outbreak, and see some of the incredible work that is being done. That work continues. On equity, we are still working excessively hard to reach that by making those crucial investments. It is something we will continue to do year over year.

We have seen that increase particularly during COVID as to the needs and fulfilling Jordan's principle most notably. These investments help. Behind everyone is a child and it is very important to highlight that as we look at these large but crucial budgetary numbers in ensuring we are who we think we are in Canada.

• (1800)

Ms. Anju Dhillon: Mr. Speaker, we know that when indigenous communities move toward self-governance and self-determination, they have better outcomes across the board in terms of health, education and much more. Part of this involves supporting effective community governance in first nations.

How will the \$24 million allocated to the band support program in these supplementary estimates help first nations move toward self-determination?

Hon. Marc Miller: Madam Chair, this is again a crucial question. The responsibility obviously falls on the entirety of government, but it falls most notably in the ministry of the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations. In moving our relationship progressively forward with indigenous peoples, we have seen some of the challenges we have faced in the last two years in ensuring this will be done in the most respectful way, listening, engaging, speaking, acknowledging differences and moving forward despite those differences.

One of the measures the member has alluded to is the interim measure for band support, which is allocated in the estimates in the approximate amount of \$24 million. This allows to bolster the cornerstones of community and nation building by attributing crucial funds to band governance.

Ms. Anju Dhillon: Madam Chair, the estimates reflect the \$305 million that was announced in March for the indigenous community support fund, which provided funds directly to indigenous communities to allow them to respond to COVID-19.

How specifically did this additional allocation allow communities to respond quickly and effectively?

Hon. Marc Miller: Madam Chair, the preparation that the indigenous communities were able to do so well was not only to look at the patterns that were forming around the world, but to adapt their local communities quickly by closing communities, ensuring the supports were in the community to ensure the message of public health was getting across and that everyone had the financial support they needed. One of the key elements was getting money into the communities and ensuring they had the backing of the Government of Canada.

This distinctions-based funding of \$305 million, which was very much the beginning of the discussion from a financial resources perspective, and indeed we have announced many after that, was key in ensuring communities had the flexibility and discretion to invest where they saw it fit and ensuring their communities were well protected and well prepared. We will ensure we will be there for second and third waves, as the case may be.

Business of Supply

[Translation]

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Madam Chair, I will be splitting my time with the member for Saint-Jean.

First of all, I would like to say that I am pleased to rise in the House today. As some of my colleagues mentioned earlier, we are here not just to serve as the opposition but also to propose ideas. In a democratic institution, I would not want to see intellectual laziness, bad faith or partisanship, which are ultimately unproductive.

I would like to talk a little about my experience yesterday at the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, which has resumed its meetings. During that meeting, I could see the gaps in what is currently being provided. I was obviously aware of these gaps, but I will elaborate in my comments.

I often say that I am proud to be an MP because I represent people who have different lives and experiences. My riding is a remote region with natural resources, fisheries, seasonal work and mines, and it covers a vast area.

At present, the work of the House is suspended. We should not fool ourselves by claiming that the House is fully operational. Most of the work we should be doing is not getting done and this is not working. I will give you an example.

Yesterday, a witness from my riding was unable to appear before the committee because we are currently receiving witnesses virtually. Unfortunately, in part of my riding, which is roughly 50,000 square kilometres, people do not have access to high-speed Internet and that is causing them a lot of problems. They are being denied the democratic right of being able to participate in the debate and present their own reality. That witness was unable to testify as a fisher from an area in eastern Quebec, a very isolated region where there are no roads or bridges and where everything is covered in snow in winter.

In thinking of those witnesses who speak in committee or who cannot come testify, I would have liked this budget to make mention of the Internet. We have been talking about it for years and we depend on it, as I see every day in my own work, and also in my riding. I would have liked the government to think about these people in remote communities, but also those who live near urban centres and who also do not have Internet access.

The majority of the additional funding that will be provided has to do with COVID-19. However, no matter how many waves are coming our way, pressing needs remain. We have to prepare for the future, which means being in tune with the present and having the necessary infrastructure.

I would have liked to hear that witness talk about another subject that is not mentioned in these estimates, namely seasonal workers. Those who know seasonal workers in the fishing, forestry or tourism industries know that these sectors have been hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, there is no mention of these workers, even if we have heard that there might be something for them and that it might go through employment insurance.

We do not know what tomorrow will bring and these people are concerned. They want to hear the government talking about this and to know what exactly is going to happen to them. I am very

pleased that the CERB has been extended. I would have liked for it to be adapted like we asked in order to encourage people to return to work even if they are getting it.

Meanwhile, these people do not even know if they will have a job this summer because they depend on a seasonal industry. I would also like them to know that they will be able to make it through the year. I am not just talking about a few individuals here, even though that in itself would be good. I am talking about entire communities, an industry and a territory that all need to survive the coming years.

In my riding, some communities rely solely on the fishing industry. That is their only industry and they have the right to survive. People are worried right now and I would have liked to see the government talk about their situation and find an immediate solution.

• (1805)

Finally, in that same committee, we also talked about indigenous people. We just talked extensively about them. The minister talked about them, but they told me that they were not—

The Deputy Chair: Excuse me. I just wanted to let you know that you have been speaking for five minutes. You are entitled to two and a half minutes to ask questions unless your colleague does not use the five minutes for questions.

Mrs. Marilène Gill: Madam Chair, can we each have two and a half minutes? Is that possible? We are very fair.

The Deputy Chair: You can, but you have to proceed with the questions now, if you want to take your two and a half minutes.

Mrs. Marilène Gill: Madam Chair, I would like to know what the Liberals plan to do with respect to the three topics I mentioned, namely seasonal work, Internet access and indigenous peoples who do not currently have access to the fisheries program. Mr. Paul, from the Mi'kmaq nation mentioned this yesterday.

Why is this not addressed? Tourism, fisheries, seasonal workers, the Internet, the vitality of democracy and the first nations are all urgent matters.

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Madam Chair, I thank my colleague for her speech.

It goes without saying that we support the people of Côte-Nord. We understand that they are clearly struggling right now, whether it is in the natural resources sector, in the fisheries sector, or in the various sectors found on the main streets of Sept-Îles or Baie-Comeau. I actually had the opportunity to discuss this issue last week with Yves Porlier, the mayor of Sept-Îles.

I simply want to tell my colleague that we are here to help her and to help the people of Côte-Nord through CFDCs, with money—

• (1810)

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member for Manicouagan.

Business of Supply

Mrs. Marilène Gill: Madam Chair, I thank my hon. colleague for her response. When I speak, obviously it is for the Côte-Nord, but I am also speaking for Quebec as a whole.

When it comes to tourism, she knows very well that this and other sectors are just as vibrant in Montreal as they are in my region. At the same time, Réjean Porlier and Yves Montigny, the mayors of Sept-Îles and Baie-Comeau, are of course having difficulties. There is also the reality of the immensity of the territory.

Once again, I am not getting an answer to my question. I am talking about the Internet and seasonal workers, which have nothing to do with CFDCs. I am also talking about first nations, which would like to access, without discrimination, the same programs as other fishers.

Hon. Mélanie Joly: Madam Chair, I know Yves Montigny and Réjean Porlier very well. It seems to be getting late.

What I was trying to say to the member is that my colleague, the Minister of Rural Economic Development is well aware of the Internet issues. She has been given a strong mandate in that regard. We will be able to work with her to properly serve the people of Côte-Nord and across Quebec. She certainly has her priorities in the right place, as the saying goes. The Internet issue is also very important to our colleague, the Minister of Innovation.

Let us work to find solutions to improve the lives of the people of Côte-Nord and all the regions of Quebec.

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Chair, I would like to talk to you about agriculture, which is an issue that matters to me because I grew up in the country.

I am going to go back in time to the month of March, when the crisis started. Technically, we should have voted on a budget in March, but, of course, the crisis happened. That was out of our control. However, what was under our control was how we could have chosen to conduct our parliamentary business.

Technologically speaking, nothing would prevent us from having a committee with a much broader mandate than that of the current Special Committee on the COVID-19 Pandemic.

I would like to take a moment to talk about the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons' math. He said that we now have four nice two-hour question periods, so we should be satisfied. Imagine the week's question period as the cherry on the parliamentary sundae. Take away my sundae and give me two cherries, and I might not find that so satisfying.

We were unable to work on a budget. We were also unable to work on tabling private members' bills. If there were a vote on the budget, the Bloc's condition was to ensure that dairy producers would be compensated for the losses caused by a weakened supply management system.

We also intended to table a bill to prevent future breaches in supply management. What is happening is that, given that the CUSMA was ratified a little earlier this year than we hoped, dairy producers have only one month to compensate for a full year of quotas that have been affected. At the very least, losses will total \$100 million, excluding future losses.

That is what I wanted to say about agriculture.

With regard to health, Quebec has spent up to \$3 billion on health and only \$500 million has been provided to help out all of Canada. There has been talk of conditional transfers in the future. There is no guarantee that there will not be a second wave requiring additional money.

I will start with my questions on agriculture as I cannot find any mention in the budget of support for farmers. I would like to know what the government will do for them given that they are having a horrible year and have also incurred losses because of reduced quotas and milk that was dumped.

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Madam Chair, in the supplementary estimates, amounts are allocated to various groups of producers, including meat processors. That helps our producers indirectly.

Regarding dairy farmers more specifically, our commitment remains firm. We will provide \$1.75 billion for the first two agreements with Europe and the trans-Pacific region. The first payment was made at the beginning of the year or the very end of the previous year for some farmers. The rest is coming. Now that we have ratified our agreement with the United States, we will be able to finalize compensation for this third agreement.

• (1815)

Ms. Christine Normandin: Madam Chair, producers are suffering losses now. They are suffering losses because of the COVID-19 crisis, which resulted in a drop in milk consumption, mainly because of the closure of restaurants and schools. Producers are also suffering losses right now as a result of the ratification of CUSMA, which happened earlier than expected.

I want to know what will happen now that CUSMA has been signed and is already causing losses. I understand that we were talking about the other two agreements and the related compensation, but what is happening now to address the losses related to COVID-19 and CUSMA?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau: Madam Chair, we gave dairy farmers exactly what they wanted, which was to increase the loan capacity of the Canadian Dairy Commission by \$200 million. Thanks to supply management, the commission is a very experienced organization and perfectly capable of adapting to the situation. The increased loan capacity will enable the commission to buy greater quantities of butter and cheese to compensate for the drop in demand, mainly from restaurants.

Business of Supply

Ms. Christine Normandin: Madam Chair, I would be much happier to get money than a credit card. That is what happened in the case of the Canadian Dairy Commission. It got an increase in its line of credit, which is good in a way. However, it is not a direct subsidy and it does not directly cover the losses that dairy producers have suffered. I am not saying that the measure is bad. I am saying that it is insufficient.

I would like to know what direct compensation has been planned for dairy producers that are suffering losses because of COVID-19 and the hasty ratification of CUSMA.

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau: Madam Chair, I will repeat what we said to dairy producers who were asking us to provide more resources to the Canadian Dairy Commission. It is not a mortgage. In fact, it gives them the possibility of buying additional quantities of milk-based products, namely butter and cheese, store them and resell that cheese and butter at the same price when demand resumes. That is exactly what the producers asked us to do.

Our commitment remains strong when it comes to compensation related to the agreement with the United States.

Ms. Christine Normandin: Madam Chair, I believe I still have a minute—

The Deputy Chair: You have 36 seconds remaining.

Ms. Christine Normandin: Madam Chair, I understand that there may be a second wave in this pandemic and that we will not necessarily have the time to return to the House in the meantime to consider new votes. I would therefore like to know where is the money that the provinces and Quebec will need to deal with a second wave.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Madam Chair, we are in talks with Quebec and the provinces to decide what we must do together to prepare for a second wave and to ensure a safe and healthy recovery for all Canadians and Quebeckers.

Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Longueuil—Charles-LeMoine, Lib.): Madam Chair, I am pleased to rise in the House today to speak to these supplementary estimates and to the health portfolio.

It is no surprise that the supplementary estimates (A), 2020-21, were largely influenced by our government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This unprecedented crisis called for an unprecedented, timely, global and coordinated response. Our government took action on several fronts, but public health was one of our top priorities. The organizations in the health portfolio were instrumental in these efforts.

[*English*]

Early in the crisis, Health Canada responded quickly to support the Government of Canada's response. In total, these initial measures cost more than \$9.2 million dollars and included support for specialized health services, drugs and medical devices, and funding for operations and coordination.

Since that time, the department's response has expanded and evolved. One of its top priorities has been keeping Canadians informed and helping them protect themselves during the pandemic. To do this, Health Canada has developed a number of digital tools

to provide timely, reliable information to Canadians where and when they need it. This includes the Canada COVID-19 app, which provides up-to-date information on the pandemic, a symptom tracker and a self-assessment tool. It also includes the Wellness Together Canada portal, which links Canadians to mental health and substance use supports.

Innovative tools like these empower Canadians to stay healthy and to stop the spread of COVID-19. Health Canada is requesting a total of \$240.5 million in additional funds to support these initiatives.

● (1820)

[*Translation*]

Right now, there is nothing more important than making sure Canada's health care system has the right tools to fight COVID-19. Throughout the pandemic, medication and essential equipment, such as personal protective equipment, have been in high demand around the world. As a regulatory body, Health Canada has found innovative solutions to source and ensure access to these essential supplies.

The department implemented a temporary measure to facilitate access to hand sanitizer, disinfectant and other PPE. In addition, the Minister of Health signed a number of emergency orders that facilitated access to tests, drugs and medical supplies.

Health Canada will continue to take measures like these if necessary, to ensure that Canada has the drugs and medical equipment it needs to fight the pandemic. The department will also continue to do the operational work needed to coordinate our COVID-19 response.

In total, Health Canada is requesting \$12.8 billion in additional funding for this work.

[*English*]

Of course, even during the pandemic, Health Canada continues to carry out its regular activities, as it works to protect the health of Canadians. That includes supporting medical research. As part of these supplementary estimates, Health Canada is requesting more than \$15 million for the Terry Fox Research Institute and Ovarian Cancer Canada. This investment will advance precision medicine in cancer, including ovarian cancer, for which there is still no reliable screening test and no vaccine to prevent it, even though it has the lowest survival rate of all other cancers in women, a fact that my family unfortunately knows too well.

The department is also requesting an additional \$1.5 million to support a safe and non-discriminatory approach to plasma donation. Specifically, this funding will go toward research on reducing barriers to plasma donation by men who have sex with men.

Business of Supply

Altogether, these supplementary estimates will increase Health Canada's statutory spending forecast by \$262.6 million and its voted spending authorities by \$16.6 million.

I will now turn to the Public Health Agency of Canada, or PHAC.

As members will recall, on March 11, the Prime Minister outlined Canada's whole-of-government response to COVID-19 by establishing the COVID-19 response fund.

As the agency responsible for preparing for and responding to public health emergencies, PHAC has played a key role in this response. As such, these supplementary estimates increase PHAC's statutory spending forecast by \$2.3 billion and its voted spending authorities by \$42.3 million. Of this, \$177.1 million will support PHAC's early work to respond to COVID-19. This includes the immediate public health response and the acquisition of supplies for the provinces and territories. It also includes support for communication and public education initiatives.

[Translation]

An additional \$74.7 million will be allocated to a more long-term response to the pandemic, which includes isolating travellers entering the country and strengthening the testing capacity of the National Microbiology Laboratory. Furthermore, \$7.5 million will be allocated to the Kids Help Phone, which is providing mental health support to young Canadians during this difficult time. The Public Health Agency of Canada is also asking for \$1.8 billion to procure protective gear and medical equipment.

With regard to the new funding, PHAC is asking for support to prepare for future pandemic-related challenges. For example, \$37 million will be used to establish a Canadian supply of respirators and surgical masks. An additional \$5 million will be allocated to the national medical research strategy. This initiative includes COVID-19 tracking and testing and the development of vaccines and treatments. It also includes strengthening Canada's capabilities in biomanufacturing, vaccine research and clinical trials, in co-operation with Health Canada; Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada; the National Research Council of Canada; and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research.

Of course, the effects of COVID-19 are not limited to health care. This pandemic has had an impact on almost every aspect of our society. That includes the agri-food industry, which is dealing with unique pressures.

● (1825)

[English]

Throughout this crisis, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, or CFIA, has been working diligently to protect the integrity of the food system to ensure that Canadians continue to have access to safe, high-quality foods. These supplementary estimates include just under \$20 million in additional funding for the CFIA to carry out this important work. For example, the CFIA has been increasing the number of inspectors, reassigning staff to high-priority areas and finding innovative ways to conduct remote inspections.

As the organization responsible for supporting critical research to inform governments' actions in public health crises such as

COVID-19, CIHR is receiving over \$151 million in 2020-21 from the fiscal framework for COVID-19-related initiatives. Of this amount, over \$147 million is being funded through these supplementary estimates, while CIHR is also allocating close to \$4 million of existing funding. Following the Prime Minister's announcement of March 11, and in partnership with a number of provinces, CIHR was able to invest an additional \$25.8 million in 53 more research grants.

[Translation]

We understood that we needed to do more to guarantee the best health outcomes for all Canadians dealing with the pandemic. That is why, on April 23, the Prime Minister announced additional funding for a solid research plan, a response to the pandemic and health emergencies.

[English]

Almost overnight, the COVID-19 pandemic has changed how we live our lives and put exceptional demands on our health care system and institutions. It is a challenge unlike any we have seen in our lifetime, but together we are rising to meet it. It has never been more important for us to work together as a government and as a country.

The Deputy Chair: Questions and comments.

Mrs. Sherry Romanado: Madam Chair, we hear a lot in the House about antibody testing.

The Deputy Chair: No, you cannot ask your own question.

Mrs. Sherry Romanado: Actually, Madam Chair, I am asking this question of the minister.

The Deputy Chair: Yes, indeed, you are able to pose questions to the minister.

Mrs. Sherry Romanado: Exactly, Madam Chair, thank you very much. I will be asking this question of the Minister of Health.

We hear a lot in the House about antibody testing. I know that some weeks ago, the Prime Minister announced research initiatives and, with that, announced some \$200 million in funding for the serosurveillance consortium. Can the Minister of Health please tell the House what this funding is for and what the consortium is going to do?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Madam Chair, I thank the member for highlighting the incredible work of both Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada in responding to the coronavirus outbreak in Canada.

Business of Supply

Part of the mystery of coronavirus is what does having coronavirus mean for people's future immunity to the disease? In fact, it is something that researchers around the world are working on. We knew that Canada needed to have its own immunity task force, its own approach to understanding serosurveillance in our own country.

Therefore, \$200 million in funding is going to support the consortium that will ensure that we can actually move forward with blood tests that will provide better understanding of what having been a positive case with COVID means and whether antibodies can be used in possible future treatments.

The serosurveillance consortium is doing important work as part of the immunity task force and, again, we are so grateful to the excellent researchers and scientists who are contributing their time and energy to this work.

● (1830)

Mrs. Sherry Romanado: Madam Chair, we all know too well that COVID-19 is taking a toll on Canadians' mental health, whether it is the isolation of quarantine or the stress caused by losing a job or getting sick. We know that our constituents need our support, but there is a specific group that needs special attention: children and young Canadians, some of whom did not get to have their graduation ceremonies this June.

In the supplementary estimates, the Public Health Agency of Canada is requesting \$7.5 million in funding for Kids Help Phone to provide support for counselling services to children and youth.

Can the Minister of Health please explain to the House how this funding will be used to support our young people?

Hon. Patty Hajdu: Madam Chair, as we know, COVID-19 has had a number of ancillary effects on people who, despite not acquiring COVID, are significantly disrupted in their daily lives. This includes, of course, young people. We know that young people with reduced access to community centres, with school closures, with limits on who they can socialize with and oftentimes with challenging situations in their own personal lives need the support that many excellent organizations provide. One of those organizations is Kids Help Phone. Because it had such a high number of calls from young people and children across the country, we provided it with an additional \$7.5 million so that it can continue to meet the demand of calls.

We have to act to help children and young people in our communities. These are stressful and scary times for adults, so I can only imagine the anxiety that young people are feeling. This investment is a very important part of connecting young Canadians to the mental health supports they need.

Mrs. Sherry Romanado: Madam Chair, in my home province of Quebec, COVID-19 has had a devastating impact, especially in our CHSLDs and with our senior population. I, myself, lost an aunt in May to COVID-19 in a CHSLD. While we mourn the thousands of Canadians whose lives we have lost through this pandemic and remember those families that were affected, as we all are, I ask the minister if she can talk about moving forward on the path.

Hon. Patty Hajdu: Madam Chair, my heart goes out to the member and all Canadians who have lost a loved one through the

tragedy of COVID-19. We know that this tragedy has been most profound for seniors who are living in long-term care homes across the country. In fact, the support that we have been giving to provinces and territories to strengthen their response no doubt will have saved countless lives. Those we cannot count. However, we do have to remember the number of lives that we have lost.

As the Prime Minister has said, this is a national tragedy. We stand with the provinces and territories as they do that important work to protect seniors, our loved grandparents and parents, who are living in these facilities now, and strengthen the dignity and safety they all deserve in the future.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Madam Chair, when the government claimed that Canada was back, we did not realize how far back it expected to take us.

Today, Canada was trounced under this leadership by both Ireland and Norway at the UN, so I would ask any minister responsible for this failure to tell us: How much did the government spend on its diplomatic campaign to lose a seat on the Security Council?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of International Development, Lib.): Madam Chair, as I have already expressed, Canada can be extremely proud of the campaign that we ran over the past five years. I want to continue to express my gratitude to the officials, diplomats and everyone on Team Canada who worked so hard and was able to showcase Canada's values and our commitment on the world stage.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Chair, I will be splitting my time with the members for Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon and Huron—Bruce.

That was not the question. The question was: How much did Canada spend on its failed campaign to secure a Security Council seat? How much?

● (1835)

Hon. Karina Gould: Madam Chair, the work that Canada does diplomatically is to advance our interests and our values, and to share what Canada is doing on the world stage. We are committed to multilateralism. We are committed to continuing to work in the UN system to make sure that we can advance the interests of peace and security globally.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Chair, how much did the government spend on travel and hospitality as part of its global failed campaign for a security council seat?

Hon. Karina Gould: Madam Chair, as the hon. member knows, Canada's work internationally is to advance human rights, advance gender equality and to fight climate change. We do this work because we believe in a—

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member for Carleton.

Business of Supply

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Chair, the government spent prodigious fortunes travelling around, splashing dollars in all directions, trying to win over dictators and their diplomats at snazzy cocktail parties around the world.

Canadian taxpayers deserve to know how much was spent on this global boondoggle. How much?

Hon. Karina Gould: Madam Chair, diplomatic efforts are done to advance Canadian interest, to advance Canadian values when it comes to fighting climate change, when it comes to advancing human rights, when it comes to standing up for LGBTQ2I individuals around the world and when it comes to advancing gender equality and ensuring local women's organizations have the support they need. That is what Canada is doing.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Chair, how many tax dollars did the government spend for each vote it got?

Hon. Karina Gould: Madam Chair, I think the hon. member does not quite understand diplomacy and does not understand that Canada engaging in the world means that we ensure we engage and listen with—

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member for Carleton.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Chair, the question was how much per vote?

Hon. Karina Gould: Madam Chair, again, the hon. member could seek to explore how diplomacy works. It is about engaging, it is about communicating, it is about—

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member for Carleton.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Chair, how much did the government spend trying to win votes in South America and how many South American votes did it get?

Hon. Karina Gould: Madam Chair, Canada engages with regions all around the world. We try to advance those interests because it is important for Canadians, it is important for Canadian businesses, it is important for—

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member for Carleton.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Chair, the question was how much the government spent. We know it splashed money around in all directions in order to win, in addition to throwing away all of Canada's traditional principles. It will not tell us how much it spent on this failed enterprise to lose votes vis-à-vis our last time.

We know how much of our moral authority the government squandered. It stood beside the Iranian totalitarian regime in Tehran, bowed before that regime, apologized to that regime after it shot down a plane killing Canadians.

We know the government abandoned Israel, voting against it at the United Nations after only months earlier promising to do the contrary. It refused to list the terrorist Iranian revolutionary armed guard of Canada. It refused to stand up to the dictators around the world and in Asia in order to try to win some votes. It gave up all of this moral authority in exchange for absolutely nothing.

It is bad enough when one gives up one's principles. It is even worse when one gives up one's principles and loses anyway.

Given that massive failure, will the government at least tell Canadian taxpayers how much is squandered on this failed global campaign?

Hon. Karina Gould: Madam Chair, I believe that when Canada provides support to local women's organizations, that is not squandering money. I believe that when Canada provides funding for neonatal care in the Palestinian territories, that is not squandered funding. I believe that when we are engaging on LGBTQ2 issues, when we are engaging on climate change, when we are engaging on human rights around the world, that is not squandering Canadian resources.

I have to sincerely and completely disagree with my hon. colleague. When it comes to defending Israel, when it comes to defending a two-state solution in the Middle East, Canada has been there and has been firm in that commitment. When it comes to defending and seeking justice and transparency for the victims of the Iranian plane crash, Canada has been there.

Canada has not compromised on its values and in fact we continue to lead with them day in and day out.

● (1840)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Chair, those are lovely words.

In how many countries where dictators ban the rights of gays and lesbians did the government attempt to win security council votes?

Hon. Karina Gould: Madam Chair, I ask my hon. colleague whether he believes that when the government is spending money on local organizations that stand up for LGBTQ2 issues, it is squandering money. That is the kind of action that the Canadian government is taking. Those are the kinds of principles and values that we have been leading on around the world, and we will continue—

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member for Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon.

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Madam Chair, I must reiterate the points made by my opposition colleagues and add my voice in protest to the current process we find ourselves in.

Normally, standing committees of the House of Commons would meet to discuss the portion of the estimates relevant to their portfolios. Committee members can then approve, reduce or deny any provision in the estimates. Indeed, this is a foundational element of why we have Parliament in the first place.

Now we are in committee of the whole, for a maximum of four hours, where no amendments are possible. We are forced to vote yes or no to the entire package the Liberal government has thrust upon us. I find it completely unacceptable that the President of the Treasury Board said in his remarks today that we have maximum transparency.

Before us are some of the most important decisions in the history of our country. Indeed, look at what happened at the UN today. This is not how our parliamentary democracy is supposed to work. The disregard from the government today, and, by extension, the disregard it has shown all Canadians, cannot be understated.

Business of Supply

Let us meet all summer. Let us restore Canadians' faith in our federal legislature. Let us do the job we were elected to do. I wanted to make that point before turning to my questions.

My first question relates to public safety in the estimates.

I noticed that Canada's CORCAN revolving fund is aimed to draw from the consolidated revenue fund. It has increased from \$5 million to \$20 million. This fund is intended to provide employment and training opportunities to reintegrate offenders into Canadian society.

From the time this fund was created in 1992 until present, Canada's total prison population has not increased by more than 10,000 inmates. Fortunately, on a per capita basis, Canada's prison numbers are steadily decreasing. Why, then, does the funding envelope need to be quadrupled?

Could the Minister of Public Safety speak to this matter directly as it relates to the federal institutions in my riding? I am not saying I am opposed to this. I am just seeking some clarification on why the funding quadrupled.

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Madam Chair, the Correctional Service of Canada is committed to protecting the safety and health of staff, inmates and the public during these unprecedented times. CORCAN operates through a revolving fund. This provides it with a line of credit so that it can buy inventory ahead of time that will allow it to fulfill contracts with clients. This line of credit is currently set at \$5 million. Given the COVID-19 situation, we need to increase that line of credit to up to \$20 million because the Correctional Service of Canada has more inventory on hand that it has not yet sold.

Mr. Brad Vis: Madam Chair, I am thankful for that clarification.

My second question relates to the student summer grant.

The student service grant is slated to get almost \$1 billion, but despite being announced in April, the program is still not available. Is it the government's intention to wait until summer is over before allowing students to apply for summer volunteer jobs?

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Madam Chair, as I have said previously, in the upcoming days we are going to open up the I Want to Help Platform, which will give students the opportunity to be paired with summer service opportunities. We wanted to make sure that we did not burden non-profits. Obviously, in this time of the COVID pandemic their resources are stretched. We wanted to make sure that we had a strong support network for non-profits and students so that—

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member for Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon has time for one more question before we go to his colleague.

Mr. Brad Vis: Madam Chair, I see a \$418-million fund for payments to establish a COVID-19 emergency support fund for cultural, heritage and sports organizations. How much of this fund has been used? Are phase one funds fully allocated? What is the state of the phase two rollout? Will the government commit to tabling a breakdown by riding of the organizations that receive funding?

• (1845)

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Madam Chair, obviously we believe in the importance of arts and culture. Contrary to the past government, we decided to really help the sector because artists right now do not necessarily have jobs and a lot of theatres are closed, so \$500 million is there to help them, and they also have access to CERB as they do not have access to a job right now.

Mr. Ben Lobb (Huron—Bruce, CPC): Madam Chair, I have a question for the Minister of Transport, for whom I have a lot of respect.

The expenditure here is listed as \$264.6 million for Via Rail. I was just wondering if the minister could give us an idea of what that would cover in this period of time.

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Madam Chair, it is a standard procedure that we provide initially, at the beginning of the year, funding that we then supplement. It is merely to cover its operating costs.

Mr. Ben Lobb: Madam Chair, in addition to that, there is \$312 million to CATSA. There are a number of little notes there. Can the minister provide a breakdown of what that would cover as well?

Hon. Marc Garneau: Madam Chair, it is a very similar situation. It is to cover operating expenses as the year goes on. Some of it will be used to purchase full-body scanners, something that CATSA requires for security purposes.

Mr. Ben Lobb: Madam Chair, there were announcements on March 11 and April 23 in regard to dollars allocated for research, such as \$29 million to human health therapeutics. With all of those, does the Government of Canada own any of the proprietary rights that may come out of the research, a possible vaccine, etc.?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Madam Chair, I would suggest to the member opposite that it is in Canada's best interests that we work with pharmaceutical companies and with researchers to ensure that we are at the cutting edge of research. That is why we have been making these investments, to make sure that Canada is well prepared to take advantage of what comes forward.

Mr. Ben Lobb: Madam Chair, at this point in the whole process I, like others, am frustrated by this. It has been going on for a long time. The fact is that I have asked three questions and got zero answers. I think I asked them in a polite manner. My colleague from Ottawa asked the minister a question in regard to the UN Security Council and did not get any answers.

Business of Supply

All I can say is that if it is a good investment, they can tell us what it is. If it is \$40 million to get a UN security seat, let us know. If we are putting money into Via Rail, let us know. How much is for new trains? How much is for maintenance? How much is for labour?

That is all we are trying to ask here. It is not that we are trying to slip anyone up or anything. It is just a respectful question to try to get a good answer, so if we are going to go through the process, how about we just get some real answers? I think we can handle them, and if they are good investments, let us support them.

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Madam Chair, I want to thank the hon. member for the way he presented his questions. He is absolutely correct. The investments we have made, particularly when it comes to vaccines and therapeutics, are designed to support Canadian solutions.

That is why we invested \$175 million for AbCellera, a biotech company out of Vancouver that is working on identifying antibodies. Ultimately, it actually identified one antibody for a drug therapy.

That is the type of investment that we are making, which will benefit not only Canadians but many people outside of Canada as well.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Chair, I thank you and the members who have gathered here to study the supplementary estimates. I am particularly grateful for the opportunity to participate in this.

I want to begin by acknowledging we are on Algonquin territory, and I say *meegwetch* to the Algonquin peoples.

Before I begin, because this is probably the last time I will have in a while to address my friends here, and I like to think we are all friends, I want to start by saying that when we look around the world, the countries that have had the least partisan approach to COVID-19 are the countries that have done the best. In fact, it is often pointed out in the media these days that the countries with women leaders have done particularly well: Iceland, Finland, Norway, Denmark, New Zealand, Germany and Taiwan. On top of the fact that those countries happen to have women leaders, all of them also use some form of proportional representation in electing their governments. There is something significant about the non-partisanship that occurs in a system where one does not vote using first past the post.

Over my years in this place and my years in politics, I have come to believe that first past the post tends to encourage the worst instincts in politics. I think the worst instinct in politics at this moment when Canadians are looking to us, as elected members, to work together would be for me to not thank the people I stand looking at, at this time. That is why I came to this side of the House, because I want to thank them.

I do not imagine any of them have had a day off in a long time. If Canadians think we are not working, we are working. I know my colleague from Edmonton and I are working wherever we are. Since March 13, when we adjourned, and I am not looking for sympathy, my one day off was Mother's Day.

I am hoping that all of us will be back here on July 8, but I know these government members, their senior civil servants and their families have been feeling this. When members are on the front bench of the government, they are working darn hard to try to help all Canadians.

Yes, to the extent the government has fallen short, we do have to make it accountable. However, I cannot say I think the people sitting in front of me here today have not been working their hearts out to try to help Canadians, and for that I thank them. It has not been easy for anyone. I know when we can be less partisan, we will do a better job.

I want to reflect, as many members of the opposition have, on the sliding concept, which has been falling out of favour for a very long time. This is what I want to talk about with my unfortunately very long and good memory.

Parliament is supposed to control the public purse. There is no question the Parliamentary Budget Officer was correct that four hours is not enough to study the supplementary estimates.

The other day I wondered when it was that I last felt like this. It was when I was first elected, and it was my first Speech from the Throne on June 3, 2011. How would I remember that? I remember because some weeks later what came to be discussed in the media was how Parliament could have approved billions of dollars in supplementary estimates without studying them at all. There was a hue and cry.

I knew I was diligent and I could not have missed that. How could there have been a unanimous consent motion that I had missed when I was always here? How could it have happened?

This is what happened. On June 3, it was the Speech from the Throne and we were in Centre Block. Other members, like the Minister of Transport, will remember those days. I had not yet had my hip replacement, so in the time it took me to walk back down the Hall of Honour from the Senate to get back to my desk in this place, \$6 billion in supplementary estimates had been deemed studied, deemed passed, and deemed toasted, dusted and done by unanimous consent.

Had I been here, rather than limping down the hall on my cane, I would have said, "Hold your horses. We're not going to approve \$6 billion in supplementary estimates without studying them." I am offering that up to say that the fact that happened then does not make four hours right now.

Business of Supply

We were not in a pandemic then, so I will say we have a few more excuses for having different kinds of procedures. I will hold the government to account and make sure that when we resume, and I gather we will look at the main estimates again and will have more time to study them, that we really will have the opportunity to study. A pandemic is also no excuse to not have a real Parliament.

● (1850)

I have never been part of the House leaders' discussions, obviously, but I would prefer that we had not come up with a COVID-19 committee format, because, quite honestly, we were doing most of what gets to happen in the House of Commons. If we had seen this coming, we should have created two sets of Standing Orders: one for when things are normal and one for when we cannot meet.

I take the point that has been made by the Leader of the Official Opposition that this Parliament met right through the Second World War. Well, sure, there was no reason not to sit right through the Second World War; we were not all contagious. We cannot all sit here side by side and go back and forth to our ridings without risking being disease vectors and contaminating our communities, but it is still not adequate, and so I am on both sides of the fence on this.

However, before we get through much more of the pandemic, I hope we can have a full House of Commons at a distance. The only missing piece is the voting at a distance, which we could easily do. Once we add that piece in, we can take on the legislation that needs to be studied. We could have full, long studies of every single aspect of every budget in committee meetings. Indeed, the finance committee has been meeting. I attend it regularly. It is hearing from dozens of witnesses. We have the technology to allow Parliament to meet, and that is what I hope we will do, because we need to see democracy in action; and for democracy to be in action, every single Canadian needs to be represented by their own member of Parliament, not by proxy, not by party whips. Everybody needs to be engaged, and that is what happens when we have the hybrid model, in which we have shown that this technology works.

Our only problem is that we are not using the Standing Orders for Parliament. We are using committee rules, because it is a COVID-19 committee. It does hold people to account, and I have to say that I think the five-minute rounds are far more interesting and bring more interesting information to light than the 30 seconds back and forth in our normal Standing Orders for question period.

In any case, I want to turn to the questions that I have about the supplementary estimates, and I will turn to the ministers.

My first question would normally be for the Minister of Public Safety. I am not sure who is taking questions related to the RCMP. It is the Minister of Transport.

To the hon. minister, on page 2-59, I am wondering if we can get some detail on this. On the record, obviously, the Green Party is very much in favour of the new \$380 million to compensate members of the RCMP for injuries received during the performance of their duty, but there is an unexplained item here of \$18 million.

For people watching from home, the total budget of the RCMP is in the order of \$3.7 billion, and so \$18 million is a pretty trifling amount out of a \$3.7 billion budget. However, since it is not explained, I wonder if the hon. minister can assure us that none of the \$18 million in this line item is for anything, in the context of our current deep concern about systemic racism within the RCMP, for a militarized response to peaceful protesters and the things that are now current in our conversation through Parliament and the media.

What is this \$18 million for? I am hoping it might be for de-escalation training.

● (1855)

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Madam Chair, I want to reassure my colleague that it is not for any of the things she was asking about.

This \$18.1 million is the balance of the funding announced in budget 2019 to strengthen the policing operations of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, as it is described. Very specifically, this \$18.1 million will be used to ensure that we have a sufficient number of RCMP cadets going to the Depot, which is where they train. It will also include elements such as recruitment, cultural awareness and de-escalation specifically. This funding is integral to ensuring that we meet our commitments to government priorities.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Chair, I turn now to the minister responsible for indigenous services.

We have been waiting a long time for a response from the government, more than a year. As a matter of fact, the day that the missing and murdered indigenous women and girls inquiry was delivered, it was close quarters at the Museum of History, and I was actually sitting with the hon. minister as that report was released. It has been a long wait. The minister today was not the minister then, and I cannot address him directly, but it has been a long wait for a response.

I see three different funding items in three different pockets for responding to the final report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. Some of it is from CMHC, some of it is from the parallel agency Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, and some from the Department of Indigenous Services.

I wonder, since we have not yet had a political response, what is the funding response.

Business of Supply

• (1900)

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Madam Chair, I must confess I am having some difficulty seeing the member opposite on the other side of the House. It is much more comforting to have her here, although she does keep us quite heavily to account, as people paying attention can clearly hear.

The member will have noticed, and underlining her point is the fact that the national action plan is not a static document. Vote 10 in particular has \$6 million appropriated to continue engagement with members, including families and subscribers, for the calls to justice.

The member will also have noted last week that we announced \$40 million for 10 new shelters across Canada. This is not a static document.

I will take the time to also say that this is not a federal document. This is a document that involves input from provinces, from territories and, most importantly, from indigenous peoples who guide the way forward as to how we move forward as a nation. The funding response is one element. We did not wait to do so.

There is a legislative response that is embodied in Bill C-91 on indigenous languages and in Bill C-92 on child and family services. These are all part of what we call a whole-of-government approach, but underscoring that, more important should be the fact that this is about keeping people safe and keeping the most vulnerable people, indigenous women and children, safe in our country as we move forward. Again, the document is not a static document. It will be a guide for how we move forward as a nation.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Chair, this is for the hon. minister again. It is probably because there is not this level of specificity or maybe I have missed it, but I do think friendship centres are terribly important, particularly for urban indigenous peoples.

I wonder if there is anything in the supplementary estimates that speaks to the needs of friendship centres across Canada.

Hon. Marc Miller: Madam Chair, that is an exceedingly important question.

In budget 2019, there were tens of millions of dollars invested in infrastructure and support for friendship centres. This was a historic amount. As we have seen, we have received pressure from urban indigenous groups that are serving indigenous peoples, indeed half of the indigenous population off reserve. Clearly that pressure from a financial perspective has been seen and felt. We deployed \$15 million on an emergency basis to supply indigenous communities or service organizations that needed it to help people in urban settings. We also recently allocated \$75 million to further respond to the overwhelming demand that we received at Indigenous Services Canada.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Chair, turning my attention to tourism, I am looking at the document and see within the economic development portfolio certain amounts of money. I wonder if there is a single figure that one can look at because at this point the businesses I am particularly worried about, that are still falling between the cracks, are in the tourism sector.

I wonder if the hon. minister can point to a single number out of these documents, because I think perhaps tourism funding is found in a few different pockets.

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Madam Chair, indeed, tourism support is across the economic development portfolio. We have already announced \$70 million. That is \$30 million to Destination Canada to support destination marketing organizations, which we call DMOs, all across the country. We are also supporting businesses directly, but if the member would like to have more information and it would be useful, of course we can send the information to her.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Chair, the Minister of Transport was earlier asked by my colleague about the funding for Via Rail. In the last few moments, did any further details surface in briefing notes? I am very supportive of Via Rail and I wonder where the money is going.

Hon. Marc Garneau: Madam Chair, my answer that I gave before is the most recent answer for my colleague.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Chair, there is a crisis going on in my community. At CRAB Park, the encampment has just been displaced and the people have been forced to move to yet another park. Moving the homeless from one encampment to another is not the solution to addressing the homelessness crisis. Will the minister commit to 50-50 cost sharing with the province so that we can buy the assets necessary to house the homeless population?

• (1905)

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Madam Chair, we provided \$13.5 million for Vancouver as part of its portion of Reaching Home federal dollars to house the homeless population in this time of the COVID-19 pandemic. We will continue to work with the Government of British Columbia as well as the municipal government of Vancouver to ensure we address this issue.

The Deputy Chair: It being 7:04 p.m., pursuant to an order made Tuesday, May 26, all votes are deemed reported. The committee will rise and I will now leave the chair.

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: Order.

Pursuant to an order made on Tuesday, May 26, all questions necessary to dispose of the business of supply shall be put forthwith and successively, without debate or amendment, and, if a recorded division is requested, it shall not be deferred.

Business of Supply

[English]

INTERIM SUPPLY

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): moved:

That this House do concur in additional interim supply as follows:

That a sum not exceeding \$55,143,895,167 being composed of the following amounts, each item rounded to the dollar:

(1) six twelfths (\$34,859,234,573) of the total of the amounts of the items set forth in the Proposed Schedule 1 and Schedule 2 of the Main Estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2021, except for those items below:

(2) eight twelfths of the total of the amounts of Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21 Vote 1, Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food Vote 10, Department of Canadian Heritage Vote 5, Department of Citizenship and Immigration Vote 1, Department of Fisheries and Oceans Vote 10, Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Votes 1 and 5, Department of Health Vote 1, Department of Justice Vote 5, National Museum of Science and Technology Vote 1, Parks Canada Agency Vote 1, and Treasury Board Secretariat Votes 25 and 30, of the said estimates, \$6,580,175,147;

(3) seven twelfths of the total of the amounts of Canada Council for the Arts Vote 1, Department of Industry Vote 1, Department of Public Works and Government Services Vote 1, Royal Canadian Mounted Police Vote 1, Shared Services Canada Vote 1, and Treasury Board Secretariat Vote 20, of the said estimates, \$5,597,472,857;

(4) five twelfths of the total of the amounts of Department for Women and Gender Equality Vote 5, Department of Employment and Social Development Vote 5, Department of Health Vote 10, Department of Indigenous Services Vote 1, Department of Industry Vote 10, House of Commons Vote 1, Library of Parliament Vote 1, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council Vote 5, Privy Council Office Vote 1, Public Service Commission Vote 1, Shared Services Canada Vote 5, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Vote 5, and Treasury Board Secretariat Vote 1, of the said estimates, \$5,256,778,672;

(5) four twelfths of the total of the amounts of Canadian Air Transport Security Authority Vote 1, Canadian High Arctic Research Station Vote 1, Canadian Space Agency Vote 10, Department of Veterans Affairs Vote 5, Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer Vote 1, and VIA Rail Canada Inc. Vote 1, of the said estimates, \$1,752,723,244;

(6) three twelfths of the total of the amounts of Administrative Tribunals Support Service of Canada Vote 1, Department of Transport Vote 15, Office of Infrastructure of Canada Vote 1, Public Health Agency of Canada Vote 10, and Royal Canadian Mounted Police External Review Committee Vote 1, of the said estimates, \$147,410,846;

(7) two twelfths of the total of the amounts of Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety Vote 1, Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission Vote 1, and Marine Atlantic Inc. Vote 1, of the said estimates, \$16,835,514;

(8) one twelfth of the total of the amounts of Department of Indigenous Services Vote 10, Department of Justice Vote 1, and Royal Canadian Mounted Police Vote 10, of the said estimates, \$933,264,314;

(9) no additional amount of Department of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Votes 1, 5 and 10, Department of Finance Vote 5, Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Votes 20 and L25, Leaders' Debates Commission Vote 1, National Security and Intelligence Review Agency Secretariat Vote 1, Office of Infrastructure of Canada Vote 5, and Treasury Board Secretariat Votes 5 and 35, of the said estimates, \$0;

be granted to Her Majesty on account of the fiscal year ending March 31, 2021.

The Speaker: The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

(Motion agreed to)

[Translation]

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.) moved that Bill C-18, An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2021, be now read the first time and printed.

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

[English]

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos moved that the bill be read a second time and referred to committee of the whole.

The Speaker: The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and the House went into committee of the whole thereon, Mrs. Carol Hughes in the chair)

(On clause 2)

[Translation]

The Deputy Chair: Order. The House is in committee of the whole on Bill C-18.

The hon. member for Edmonton Mill Woods.

[English]

Hon. Tim Uppal (Edmonton Mill Woods, CPC): Madam Chair, I have a question for the President of the Treasury Board. Could he assure the House that the bill is in its usual form?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Madam Chair, my colleague seems a little nervous and emotional. I want to reassure him that the motion is in its usual form.

• (1910)

[English]

The Deputy Chair: Shall clause 2 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause 2 agreed to)

The Deputy Chair: Shall clause 3 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause 3 agreed to)

[Translation]

The Deputy Chair: Shall clause 4 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

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(Clause 4 agreed to)

The Deputy Chair: Shall clause 5 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause 5 agreed to)

The Deputy Chair: Shall clause 6 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause 6 agreed to)

[*English*]

The Deputy Chair: Shall schedule 1.1 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Schedule 1.1 agreed to)

The Deputy Chair: Shall schedule 1.2 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Schedule 1.2 agreed to)

The Deputy Chair: Shall schedule 1.3 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Schedule 1.3 agreed to)

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Chair: Shall schedule 1.4 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Schedule 1.4 agreed to)

The Deputy Chair: Shall schedule 1.5 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Schedule 1.5 agreed to)

The Deputy Chair: Shall schedule 1.6 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Schedule 1.6 agreed to)

[*English*]

The Deputy Chair: Shall schedule 1.7 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Schedule 1.7 agreed to)

The Deputy Chair: Shall schedule 2.1 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Schedule 2.1 agreed to)

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Chair: Shall schedule 2.2 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Schedule 2.2 agreed to)

The Deputy Chair: Shall clause 1, the short title, carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause 1 agreed to)

The Deputy Chair: Shall the title carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Title agreed to)

The Deputy Chair: Shall the bill carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Bill agreed to)

[*English*]

The Deputy Chair: Shall I rise and report the bill?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Bill reported)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos moved that the bill be concurred in.

[*English*]

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Motion agreed to)

The Speaker: When shall the bill be read a third time? By leave, now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

• (1915)

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.
(Bill read the third time and passed)

* * *

[*Translation*]

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, 2020-21

The Speaker: The next question is on the supplementary estimates (A) for 2020-21.

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.) moved:

That the Supplementary Estimates (A) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2021, be concurred in.

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.
(Motion agreed to)

[*English*]

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-19, An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2021.

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

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos moved that the bill be read the second time and referred to a committee.

[*English*]

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

The Speaker: Accordingly, the bill stands referred to a committee of the whole. I do now leave the chair for the House to go into committee of the whole.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and the House went into committee of the whole thereon, Mrs. Carol Hughes in the chair)

(On clause 2)

Hon. Tim Uppal (Edmonton Mill Woods, CPC): I have another important question for the President of the Treasury Board. Can he please assure the House that this bill is definitely in its usual form?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Madam Chair, I am glad to have this occasion to congratulate the member for being one of the best opposition MPs and for

Business of Supply

asking a very relevant question. The answer is yes, it is in its usual form.

The Deputy Chair: Shall clause 2 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.
(Clause 2 agreed to)

The Deputy Chair: Shall clause 3 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.
(Clause 3 agreed to)

The Deputy Chair: Shall clause 4 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.
(Clause 4 agreed to)

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Chair: Shall clause 5 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.
(Clause 5 agreed to)

The Deputy Chair: Shall clause 6 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.
(Clause 6 agreed to)

The Deputy Chair: Shall schedule 1 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.
(Schedule 1 agreed to)

The Deputy Chair: Shall schedule 2 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.
(Schedule 2 agreed to)

[*English*]

The Deputy Chair: Shall clause 1, the short title, carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.
(Clause 1 agreed to)

The Deputy Chair: Shall the preamble carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

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(Preamble agreed to)

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Chair: Shall the title carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Title agreed to)

The Deputy Chair: Shall the bill carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Bill agreed to)

The Deputy Chair: Shall I rise and report the bill?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Bill reported)

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.) moved that Bill C-19, An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2021, be concurred in at report stage.

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Motion agreed to)

[*English*]

The Speaker: When shall the bill be read a third time? By leave, now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos moved that C-19, An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2021, be read the third time and passed.

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the third time and passed)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. This concludes the sitting.

[*English*]

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you, Mr. Speaker, thank your team, and thank the people working really hard at the table. I want to thank all MPs, including the House leaders from the other parties, their teams, and our team in my House leader office.

I would like to thank the whips and their teams, all the staff helping all of us to work day after day, and all the branches of the House administration. Of course, the pages have provided us with a great song today, even though we did not have the chance to meet too much.

[*Translation*]

I want to thank everyone. Our points of view and sometimes our principles do not always align, but we are all here for the same reason, which is to do our best to represent our constituents. I think that we all do so with courage and dignity, and we are all better for it. I want to thank all members of the House of Commons. I wish each and every one of you a wonderful summer.

• (1920)

[*English*]

Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise on the same point of order.

[*Translation*]

On behalf of the official opposition, I want to thank everyone who supports our work as members of Parliament.

[*English*]

I think when all of us took our seats here in the 43rd Parliament, we did not exactly foresee how this Parliament would unfold. I want to thank all those who have supported us as parliamentarians so far, certainly the Parliamentary Protective Service, the food service and staff, and the clerks and interpreters at the table. Certainly, given the context, the IT staff have been exceptional in supporting us as parliamentarians, as well as the cleaning and janitorial staff who keep all of our offices and this building clean as we do our duty.

I also want to thank, on behalf of all members of Parliament, the staff who serve us in our offices here on Parliament Hill, but also in our ridings. They have done exceptional work for each of us, from every party, at this time when we are facing some challenging situations.

To echo what the government House leader said about our pages, it was unfortunate that we did not get to meet this crop of pages as much as we would have liked, but I think their lasting tribute to this Parliament was that wonderful rendition of *O Canada*, which I think will echo for all of us here.

Finally, I would like to thank all of our families. None of us could do the job that we have as parliamentarians without the love and support of our families back at home and all they do for us, so I thank them.

To all of my colleagues, I hope everyone has a wonderful summer, supporting constituents, serving our communities and serving this great country that we all love.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, apparently I need to say that I am speaking to the same point of order as my esteemed colleagues. I will therefore say that I am speaking to the same point of order as my esteemed colleagues.

We are a pretty unruly bunch, and yet we get impeccable services. Everyone has been extremely polite in this place. Truthfully, I admit that I did not know what to expect, because in the Parliament of Canada, we are a bit of an unknown factor. Our goal is perfectly friendly, but at times, it can also be somewhat disruptive.

Nevertheless, I have never heard a cross word from the staff. I am not referring to the Conservatives or the Liberals, but to the staff. I have never heard a cross word or saw any attitude. It never ceases to amaze me. The Speaker and all the other Chair occupants are as strict as they are affable, and this is very much appreciated by our people, who say so. From the cafeteria to the security staff, from the pages to the interpreters, everything is always impeccable.

Sometimes, though not consistently or all the time, our adversaries can even be nice. It happens, and for all these reasons, it is a pleasure that we hope is relatively temporary over the years.

We hope everyone enjoys the summer for a few weeks before we meet again soon, as soon as possible, with as many of us as possible present and with as much business as possible to conduct.

[*English*]

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the New Democrats listened to the pages speak and then sing, and it brought us to where we need to go as our future; the future of our country.

I want to thank not only those who have made this institution function during COVID-19, but those who were involved in the lead up to that. It is important to recognize many people do a lot of extra work here, which takes them away from their families, friends and loved ones.

God bless the health care workers and front-line workers across our country for all they have done.

I come from a region where we still have issues relating to the border. We have a number of issues around immigrant workers and their safety and our own personal safety. These challenges still face us, but in these halls here, we have been well served in our democracy by the people who have made it run. I am very grateful for that.

The New Democrats want to thank very much those who have continued to make this place a hallowed ground to continue to have voices. Sometimes we do not agree, and that is okay. That is supposed to happen in an open democracy that means something. There should be dissent and discussion in a way that is meaningful for the people we represent across a wide nation, which is one of the largest of the world.

We want to very much thank those who have ensured that our voices are carried, which we will continue through July and through August.

Last, we thank the constituency assistants and the support staff who have helped us during this entire issue. The amount of information, content and volumes of emails and phone calls have been unbelievable. We are very grateful for all the people who have been reaching out to our offices. We are grateful for that contact. It is difficult to get back to everybody, but we are grateful for that connection because that truly is our democracy continuing to work.

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Finally, I want to thank you, Mr. Speaker, as well as your staff and the whole group that has made this possible. Without that, we have nothing.

• (1925)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I will not be long.

[*Translation*]

All my colleagues had some very moving comments, and I completely agree with what they said.

[*English*]

In this extraordinary time, which no one could have imagined, the people who work in IT in the House of Commons have been significantly stretched and have allowed us to have standing committees at work.

All of us have been working pretty hard, but we know we could not do it, as my hon. colleague from Windsor West said, without the people in our constituency offices who work so hard. We could not do this without the House of Commons staff.

I particularly want to thank the translators, the interpretation team, the IT teams as well as protective services, all the people, the Clerk and the table officers. Everybody who supports our work here has gone above and beyond, and we will be back over the course of the summer.

For everyone, please stay safe, take no chances, stay well, stay home and God bless.

The Speaker: I just want to say a few words myself.

Since March 13, one of my favourite sayings, one of the things I say the most, is that this is not what I signed up for. However, I also want to say that it has certainly been one of the most interesting times of my life.

It has been amazing, right from my team of Chair occupants, the Deputy Speaker and the Assistant Deputy Speaker, who are an amazing team who are always there to help, to our clerks who are sitting here at the table with a wealth of knowledge who steer us in the right direction so we do not look too terrible up here in this chair and, of course, everyone who is here today who is taking part in our national democracy.

[*Translation*]

In Canada, democracy is very important, and we care a great deal about it. It is because of you that it exists. As the hon. member for Beloeil—Chambly said earlier, during debates, we do not always agree, but we discuss possibilities and try to arrive at something. That is very important. We think of Canadians, and we help them better themselves.

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I also want to take this time to thank the pages whom we heard sing, which is something that I had not heard in person up until today. I heard the tape earlier, but today we heard the beautiful voices and saw the work that went into that and the spirit they had to make our national anthem come across and come alive. I had a tear in my eye of pride from being a Canadian.

[Translation]

I wish you all a fun and healthy summer.

[English]

Please be careful and enjoy yourselves.

[Translation]

We shall see one another in three weeks.

Thank you very much.

Pursuant to an order made on Tuesday, May 26, the House stands adjourned until Wednesday, July 8, at noon.

(The House adjourned at 7:29 p.m.)

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