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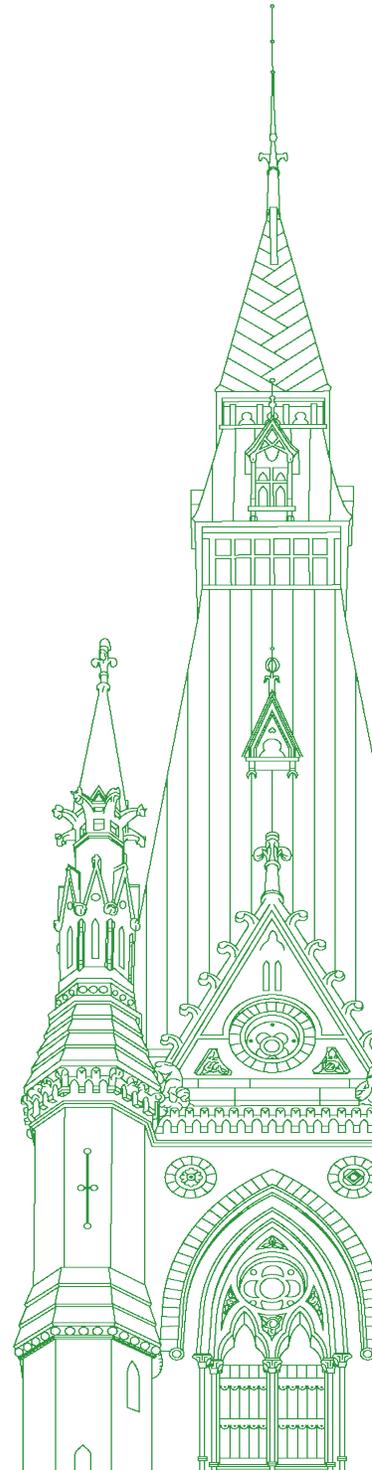
# House of Commons Debates

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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, November 16, 2020

The House met at 11 a.m.

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*Prayer*

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## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1105)

[*English*]

### ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION INCENTIVE ACT

**Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC)** moved that Bill C-221, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (oil and gas wells), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am really pleased to speak about my private members bill, Bill C-221, the environmental restoration incentive act, which I introduced on February 25, earlier this year.

Although the world has changed in many ways over the past nine months, the Canadian oil and gas sector continues to face a state of uncertainty. The families whose livelihoods depend on the sector still face what many say is an unprecedented struggle, with major anxiety about their futures and complete financial despair. Entire communities are at risk because of the steady decline of oil and gas activity and historic levels of bankruptcies and investment losses in Canadian oil and gas, and that damage has rippled across the country.

Since 2015, more than 200,000 jobs have been lost in the Canadian energy sector. It has devastated families and entire communities. There are many social consequences. A recent study from the University of Calgary's school of public policy said that for every 1% increase in unemployment, 16 Albertans will die by suicide.

Never has a Canadian industry faced such a severe triple threat: global oversupply and demand drops, a collapse of global prices and a lack of market access. Even before COVID-19, a combination of economic policy and legislative and regulatory factors in Canada led to a historic and major collapse in investment, small businesses and jobs, while energy sectors in the United States and across the country were thriving. COVID-19 only exasperated what energy workers in my backyard of Lakeland would characterize as "carnage", a dire situation shared by energy workers across Canada from B.C. to Ontario to Come By Chance in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Canadian oil and gas producers are world leaders in environmental remediation and reclamation, but one consequence of this perfect storm of challenges is that the record numbers of business bankruptcies have caused the number of orphan wells to increase by over 300% since 2015. It is an urgent economic and environmental challenge for rural municipal governments, for landowners, on Crown land and in indigenous communities.

Mark Dorin's family farm in Didsbury, Alberta, is at risk. He said that the value of the land is at stake and is rendered literally worthless. Michelle Levasseur, economic development officer for the Town of Calmar says that it is a financial burden that is "not fiscally responsible...to ask our current residents to fund".

Normally, orphaned wells become the responsibility of the provincial orphan well associations and funds. In strong economic conditions, they are remediated on schedule through levies on all the other active producers, but these orphan well funds are being overwhelmed, putting taxpayers at risk of eventually having to bear 100% of the cost for decommissioning, closure, remediation and reclamation. Between 2015 and 2018 in Alberta alone, the number of orphan wells skyrocketed from 768 to over 3,400. Today there are a total of 97,000 inactive wells in Alberta. The Alberta Orphan Well Association has an inventory of 2,983 orphan wells for abandonment and 3,284 sites for reclamation.

In B.C., there are over 300 orphan wells that need to be decommissioned. Half of those wells are on protected farmlands and there are over 7,000 more inactive wells. B.C.'s auditor general estimates that it could cost up to \$3 billion to reclaim all the orphan wells and facilities in B.C. By percentage, B.C. actually has the largest increase of orphan wells since 2015, at 600%. Saskatchewan has more than 600 orphan wells and 30,000 inactive wells. The province's auditor general estimates that it would cost \$4 billion to decommission all of their existing wells. In Ontario, there are almost 900 inactive wells that could become orphaned if more companies go bankrupt, mostly throughout the southwestern part of the province.

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Overall, there are more than 130,000 inactive, orphaned and abandoned wells in Canada. It is estimated that it could cost between \$30 billion and \$70 billion to fully decommission all current active and inactive oil and gas wells in Canada. That is why it is so crucial for the federal government to lead and to continue to take action on this national environmental and fiscal challenge. There is no doubt that it is complex and it requires a multipronged effort from provincial and federal governments and, importantly, from the private sector.

This year, the Alberta government announced an additional \$100 million loan to the provincial orphan well fund to remediate 1,000 wells. In April, the federal government announced \$1 billion for Alberta, \$400 million for Saskatchewan and \$120 million for B.C. for abandoned and orphaned wells.

• (1110)

I supported that one-time funding as a first step, but I think the government must adopt a permanent fiscal incentive to enable the private sector to raise funds dedicated solely to reclamation and remediation. Such an initiative recognizes the financial and economic reality that Canadian oil and gas producers face, while it emphasizes the primary role of the private sector to fulfill the environmental duties inherent in their responsible development of oil and gas resources in Canada.

What Bill C-221 proposes is a non-refundable tax credit that could eventually enable a flow-through share provision to encourage small and medium-sized producers to take action on the pressing challenge of suspended and inactive wells, and immediately create service jobs in communities and regions that need them most. I hope Canadians will note that my bill applies only to small and medium-sized producers that are struggling the most, which are responsible for about one-quarter of total Canadian oil production. These producers have, on average, one well for every 10 wells of the large multinational operators, which will not qualify for this tax credit. In 2017 and 2018, more than two-thirds of those small and medium-sized companies lost money, so it is urgent.

The first part of Bill C-221 creates a non-refundable tax credit that will help small and medium-sized oil and gas producers right away. The second part makes the case for this credit to qualify for the flow-through share provisions of the Income Tax Act, which is the government's part to do, so that when a producer wants to raise money from private investors, the producer can attach the value of this tax credit to a share of the company, which is sold to an investor.

The investor buys the share and the tax credit, and in this way the value of the tax credit flows through to the shareholder. What this means is that the tax credit the producer gives up becomes the profit margin for the investor who purchases these shares. That is a big incentive for outside private investors to contribute funds and capital to companies specifically for the purpose of decommissioning wells, even when the company's share price is not expected to increase.

Another reason this federal leadership is necessary is the 2019 Redwater Supreme Court decision, which was the right ruling but at a very challenging time. It says that when an oil and gas company goes bankrupt, the assets from that company have to go toward

paying for the company's environmental liabilities first, such as oil and gas wells, before lenders and investors are paid back. One consequence, of course, is that the ruling dried up private sector sources of investment, compounding all the other challenges that are harming small and medium-sized producers in Canada. Oil and gas producers are cutting spending and capital investment plans aggressively just to try to survive.

I want to stress that, from my perspective, the growing number of suspended and inactive wells awaiting decommissioning is not evasion nor neglect by small and medium-sized oil and gas producers in Canada. It is in fact a stark reality of their precarious economic positions. It is a consequence of all of the damaging policies that have undermined competitiveness and tanked Canadian oil and gas investment. Therefore, it is the duty of the federal government to help figure this out. Smaller producers simply do not have the money left in their businesses, and if the status quo continues, they simply cannot raise the money needed to proactively address their inactive wells in the current conditions.

In 2009, the previous Conservative government committed to ending inefficient and wrong-headed subsidies to oil and gas. Despite the rhetoric from others, the current Liberals removed any remaining, as well as some benchmark industry tax treatment from oil and gas, but not other industries. I support those measures.

The previous Conservative government advanced the polluter-pay principle in Canadian law. Bill C-221 reinforces the standard of polluter pay and protects taxpayers from the potential burden of billions of public dollars needed for remediation and reclamation. The federal government's finance department confirms that this proposal is not a subsidy. The department defines a subsidy as "federal tax expenditures that provide preferential tax treatment that specifically supports the production or consumption of fossil fuels."

The International Energy Agency does not consider this measure to be a subsidy either. Its definition of a subsidy is "any government action that lowers the cost of energy production, raises the revenues of energy producers or lowers the price paid by energy consumers".

It is not unprecedented. For example, in the mining sector, flow-through share financing contributes over 65% of the funds raised for mining exploration across Canada, a measure Conservatives have always supported and the Liberals recently extended. Provinces have called for action on the growing challenge of orphaned and abandoned wells, but the \$1.7 billion from the federal government is, unfortunately, a drop in the bucket compared to the overall up to \$70 billion liability in active and inactive wells in Canada right now.

*Private Members' Business*

• (1115)

Alberta is calling for flow-through shares in order to allow the private sector to accelerate oil and gas well reclamation. Premier Scott Moe of Saskatchewan has also made similar calls.

Premier Jason Kenney advocates it to get the oil field service sector back to work while reducing an environmental liability. Alberta finance minister Travis Toews supports the proposal. He says, “Bill C-221 builds on the work Alberta has undertaken,” and “Flow-through shares are a game-changer for helping producers raise money from the private sector to decommission oil and gas wells.”

The industry wants to do its part to continue being a world leader in environmental stewardship and innovation.

Mark Scholz, the president and CEO of the Canadian Association of Oilwell Drilling Contractors also supports the environmental restoration incentive act. He said, “Programs designed to incentivize private investment in well reclamation, for instance, would help provide consistent work over time, which is the foundation for building a steady labour force again in the oilfield services sector.”

The Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers says, “Tools to temporarily or more permanently find ways to encourage these companies to raise capital would be exceptionally welcome at this point in time. Things such as flow-through shares...to help assist with reclamation and remediation are...tools”.

The Lloydminster Oilfield Technical Society in Lakeland says that it believes Bill C-221, combined with changes to share structures within Canada, will represent another avenue for the oil and gas industry to repair the damage with which it has been inflicted, and that any positive environmental impact, in the form of asset retirement, will always be looked upon favourably by its group and by the industry. The ability to achieve multi-party support of this initiative is indicative of Canadian society’s aim to maintain our oil and gas industry as the world leader in responsible development.

In my view, the solution to this environmental and financial challenge must prioritize the private sector and should not be solely dependent on taxpayers through big government programs. As a federal MP, this is just one thing I can do to bring forward a solution now.

It would not fix every issue overnight, but Bill C-221 is good for the environment, would help struggling small and medium-sized producers and would build an opportunity for immediate job creation for experienced, highly skilled workers in the oil and gas service sector now.

In order to make the greatest impact and to actually implement the flow-through shares part, I am asking all members to partner with me. This must be a collaborative effort with all members of Parliament to succeed.

During the last Parliament, I had the opportunity to bring forward Motion No. 167, which called for action to combat rural crime. I worked with all parties and secured support from hundreds of organizations and thousands of Canadians across the country. We accepted amendments and ultimately it passed the House of Commons with unanimous support.

My first goal is always to do what is in the best interests of the people I represent, for Alberta and for all Canadians. What ultimately matters most to me is doing the right thing and helping to advance meaningful initiatives for people, not politics and not partisanship.

Similarly, the current situation with orphan wells is escalating with many different impacts in western Canada, but I believe the objectives of Bill C-221 are important to all Canadians. The choice members of Parliament from all parties will have to make is whether the federal government creates a path for the private sector to address the surge in inactive and suspended wells to prevent adding to the number of orphaned wells, or leaves it to the Canadian taxpayers to foot the bill.

I want to close by saying Alberta has a long history, an unmatched history, of leadership on environmental stewardship and innovation in Canada. This is just another small but creative way to generate jobs, address environmental concerns and protect taxpayers in Alberta and across the country.

**Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I know my colleague from Lakeland is very concerned about the problem of orphaned wells. We are talking about inactive wells here today. I am particularly concerned about the flow-through share aspect. We use flow-through shares a lot in the mining industry to incentivize investment in exploration and development of mines at a very risky time in that development. We want our resources to be developed, but it is risky so we give investors that incentive.

Here we have an obligation companies have, which they have had since they started drilling the well. We know it is there, they know it is there and we should not have to incentivize them to put aside that money ahead of time so that taxpayers are not obliged to do it. I am just wondering why Canadian taxpayers should come in and foot the bill for companies that are just—

• (1120)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** There are only five minutes of questions and comments, so I want to get in as many as I can.

The hon. member for Lakeland.

**Mrs. Shannon Stubbs:** Madam Speaker, I enjoyed working with the member on the natural resources committee in the last term.

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My perspective on this is “woulda, coulda, shoulda”. We need to address the situation we are in now. This challenge is complex. It is primarily the regulatory legislative responsibility of provinces. I did work in the department of energy for the Government of Alberta, and as I have said internally and publicly, I think there have been lots of missed opportunities in the past regarding regulatory and financial incentives, business development rules and determining the definitions and outcomes desired for reclamation and remediation.

In the reality we are in now, because of the drop in investment, there is an increase of hundreds of percentages of orphaned and abandoned wells. It is therefore our duty to partner with provinces to figure out how to solve this problem. Industry says flow-through share provisions are a tool that will—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Questions and comments, the hon. member for Jonquière.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ):** Madam Speaker, much of what my Conservative colleagues have been saying just does not add up. I remember a conversation I had with a Conservative colleague a while ago. He told me that what the Conservatives want when it comes to oil is not more federal money but less legislation. They want the government to get out of the way.

This morning, however, it seems very clear to me that my colleague's bill is not about making the government get out of the way. It is about tax credits. Once again, the Conservatives are asking for more financial support for the oil industry, which has probably received more financial support than any other industry in Canada.

In my opinion, this bill is at odds with the polluter pays principle. My colleague says the bill is compatible with that principle, but that is not even remotely the case.

[*English*]

**Mrs. Shannon Stubbs:** Madam Speaker, the member must have missed the first part of my speech when I said that this is not a subsidy and is not about taxpayers' money being given to oil and gas companies. In fact, that is exactly what we are seeking to prevent. It is the Conservatives who are leading on this issue to ensure reclamation and remediation of all the outstanding oil and gas wells by enabling the private sector to use an incentive to raise funds from investors to meet these responsibilities. I would love to see any Ontario or Quebec MP stand up and say they do not support this measure for the mining sector, for example, or for other industries in Canada.

The government needs to get rid of its anti-energy legislation, remove red tape, remove regulation and allow the Canadian oil and gas sector to thrive. However, because of consequences from global factors and its domestic decisions, this issue has been created. It is an enormous—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Questions and comments, the hon. parliamentary secretary.

**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 Speaker, it is interesting to look at the reality of the situation. We have a national government today that is investing hundreds of mil-

lions of dollars in orphaned wells in an attempt to work with our prairie provinces to actually make a difference for the environment and industry as a whole.

The member made a comparison: Ottawa has spent about a billion dollars in the Province of Alberta and the Province of Alberta has spent about \$100 million. Does the member not recognize or believe that Ottawa and Alberta need to work together to achieve good results?

• (1125)

**Mrs. Shannon Stubbs:** Madam Speaker, I do, which is exactly why I am bringing forward this legislation. I look forward to the member working with this Albertan to help get the private sector funding into the industry that is required for full remediation and reclamation of oil and gas wells in Canada, and to protect taxpayers.

However, the member is not correct. The federal government has not invested hundreds of millions of dollars in oil and gas well remediation and reclamation, aside from, if that is all he is talking about, the \$1.7 billion that was split among three provinces.

The outstanding liability for all active and inactive oil and gas wells in Canada stands to potentially be between \$30 billion and \$70 billion. The reality is that oil and gas investment, because of the government's policies in this country, is plummeting, and companies can no longer get private sector investment to meet their environmental responsibilities while they develop the resource. It is the government's job to help fix that.

**Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is an absolute pleasure for me to rise in this venerable House to speak to Bill C-221, an act to amend the Income Tax Act, a private member's bill sponsored by the hon. member for Lakeland. Not only do I appreciate the opportunity to participate in today's debate, but I would like to thank the hon. member for raising the important issue of support for Canada's oil and gas sector.

The federal government knows that COVID-19 has been a profound shock to our economy and has dramatically changed the way we go about our daily lives, especially for those working in Canada's energy sector. Right now, oil and gas workers and their families are struggling because of things that are beyond their control. Both the devastating effects of the pandemic and the low prices caused by a surge in global crude oil supplies are a challenge. As a result, companies have had to slow down or pause their operations, leaving far too many people out of work.

That is why the Prime Minister announced earlier this year, in April, that the federal government would provide up to \$1.72 billion to the Governments of Alberta, Saskatchewan and British Columbia, as well as to Alberta's Orphan Well Association, to clean up orphan and inactive oil and gas wells. These wells, which are no longer in use, can be detrimental not only to our environment, but also to people's health.

Think of the farmer whose family cannot grow anything on their land because of an abandoned well a few steps away from their home. Think of the small towns or indigenous communities struggling with this issue, which has been festering for years and even in some cases for decades. Cleaning them up will bring people back to work and help many landowners who have had these wells on their property for years but have not been able to get them cleaned up and get their lands restored. By investing in the remediation of inactive oil and gas wells, our goal is to create immediate jobs in these provinces while helping companies avoid bankruptcy and supporting our environmental targets.

Alberta estimates that its share of the federal support, up to \$1.2 billion, will help the province maintain 5,200 jobs and clean up 30,000 wells. The cleanup cost per well can range from \$100,000 to several million dollars, but actual costs can vary significantly depending on the complexity and size of the well or facility, or the amount of contamination that is present.

As part of the funding agreement, the Governments of Alberta and Saskatchewan have committed to implementing strengthened regulatory systems to significantly reduce the future prospects of new orphan wells. The goal is that these improvements will lead to sustainably funded systems that ensure companies are bearing the costs of their environmental responsibilities. Federal-provincial monitoring committees have been established to track the progress of provincial programs as part of these agreements, and these committees will work with local governments and indigenous organizations to ensure that important stakeholders are engaged in each process.

There has been widespread support for the \$1.2 billion announcement, and I want to share quotes from a few people that relate the importance of this funding and its anticipated impacts.

In a statement, the Business Council of Alberta said that the funding announcement is “welcome news for energy companies, working Albertans, and for the environment.” It said this is a “win-win that will keep thousands of Albertans working in some of our hardest-hit industries, while also improving the environment.” However, they believe “considerable support is still needed, specifically liquidity, for some of Canada’s most significant energy companies”.

We also heard from the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, which echoed positive sentiments. It said, “Reducing environmental liabilities is a priority for the oil and natural gas industry and this initiative will allow important work to accelerate, while supporting thousands of jobs.”

Alberta's NDP environment critic, Marlin Schmidt, said the funding will help “put thousands of Albertans back to work while supporting responsible resource development,” and added that the

### *Private Members' Business*

UCP government must use its money in a way that ensures polluters will pay for the cleanup of their sites. He said, “They must also set clear targets and timelines for well cleanup now and into the future. I also hope the UCP will ensure landowners and municipalities are compensated for wells on their land.”

As we can tell, there is widespread support for this. It is a really wonderful example of federal and provincial co-operation.

● (1130)

It is also important to mention that the provinces, as well as the Alberta Orphan Well Association, are responsible for the detailed design and implementation of inactive and orphan-well cleanup programming. Detailed information on these programs will be provided by the recipients. Since April, Alberta, British Columbia and Saskatchewan have all announced programs to clean up orphan and inactive oil and gas wells.

It may also interest the hon. member for Lakeland to know that the government has previously provided indirect support to the Alberta Orphan Well Association, also known as OWA. In budget 2017, the government provided \$30 million as a grant to the Government of Alberta to stimulate economic activity and employment during that challenging period. Alberta used the funds to pay the OWA's interest expenses on a \$235-million loan extended by Alberta to the OWA. The OWA has a good track record of generating employment in the service sector by cleaning up orphan wells. The OWA estimates that the loan has supported the cleanup of approximately 637 wells and created 225 jobs. This proves that federal support to help clean up orphan and inactive wells is helping to stimulate employment and economic activity in the energy sector, and ensures that it can continue to support middle-class families and communities.

We have listened to the concerns of landowners, municipalities and indigenous communities that want to make sure that the polluter-pay principle is strengthened and that their voices are heard. I want to thank the Government of Alberta for working with us and for listening to their concerns. Appropriately cleaning up well sites will prevent methane leakage and ensure that the sites are remediated and returned to their original state.

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I should also mention that the federal government has established a \$750 million emission reduction fund, with a focus on methane, to create and maintain jobs through pollution reduction efforts. This includes \$75 million to help the offshore industry cut emissions in Newfoundland and Labrador. This fund will primarily provide repayable contributions to firms to make them more competitive, reduce waste and pollution and, most importantly, protect jobs. Right now, many energy firms are experiencing a cash crunch, so they do not have the funds to invest in technologies to reduce emissions or fix methane leaks. The fund will allow for this kind of work to be done and create jobs that people need during this difficult time. Through the wells and the methane initiative, we estimate that we will maintain more than 8,800 jobs across the country. Just because we are in a health crisis does not mean we can neglect the environmental crisis.

When the Prime Minister announced support to help clean up orphan and inactive wells in April, he also announced that Export Development Canada was increasing its financial capacity to support Canada's small and medium-sized oil and gas companies. This added capacity is available to eligible companies so they can access the liquidity they need to keep their operations running and support their employees during this crisis. Many businesses have already taken advantage of the program. The added business support is being provided through various financing and insurance solutions, including risk-bearing guarantees for loans obtained through the company's bank and guaranteed by the EDC, and through EDC's bonding and accounts receivable insurance products. This commercial support is aimed at bringing liquidity into the market and helping Canadian companies during the crisis.

We know that the second wave is even harder for those who get hit, and that is why our response needs to be targeted and effective. Small and large businesses create jobs, drive our economy and make our communities stronger. The government will continue to do whatever it takes to support them. These measures are part of the Government of Canada's comprehensive economic plan to help Canadians and businesses through this period of uncertainty. We will continue to monitor this evolving situation closely, and we will take additional actions as needed to protect our health and safety and stabilize the economy.

I want to thank you, Madam Speaker, and I thank again the hon. member for Lakeland for raising this important issue of support for Canada's oil and gas sector and for allowing me to comment on it.

• (1135)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ):** Madam Speaker, this will come as no surprise, but I do not see how my party can support this bill, especially since it flies in the face of one of the guiding principles of environmental policy, namely the polluter pays principle. This is miles away from that principle.

Before I begin, I want to set the record straight. If I am told I will be given a \$10,000 tax credit or a \$10,000 subsidy, at the end of the day, it amounts to the same thing. My colleague argued that this is not support for the oil industry because it is not a subsidy but rather a tax credit. It amounts to six of one and half a dozen of the other,

since this provides more financial support to one of the industries that already receives the most in Canada.

Getting back to what I was saying, it would be difficult for us to support this bill because it flies in the face of one of the guiding principles of environmental policy, namely the polluter pays principle. As everyone knows, it is up to businesses to cover these kinds of costs. The forestry industry did so in Quebec by paying for the remediation of sites where it operates. I do not see why it should be any different for the oil and gas industry.

There is something about this bill that surprises me. It seems to me that a typical Conservative would think that businesses must be the ones to bear the risk. It seems like that is part of the Conservatives' ideology. However, in this bill, they are trying to socialize the risks without socializing the profits. Businesses do not want to assume the environmental risk because it would cost too much, so it would be up to the government to do so; yet, it is the businesses that would benefit from the profits. I think there is a contradiction there. A red light should have gone off for a typical Conservative.

Simply put, this bill would fund what is likely the most environmentally damaging industry in Canada rather than funding the energy transition. We need to take the energy transition into account in today's discussion, and I think that massive support for the oil industry harkens back to another era, especially today.

I would like to remind the House that the federal government has already announced \$1.7 billion in funding to clean up and decommission orphan wells. That is a lot of money. I would like to maybe come back to that and say what bothers me the most about this bill. My colleague from Lakeland was asking why it should be up to Alberta to pay 100% of the cost of decommissioning orphan wells. That question bothers me a bit because about 22% of Canada's fiscal capacity comes from Quebec taxes.

There is a number that I like to quote and that keeps coming up. Between the early 1980s and 2015, the Government of Canada invested \$70 billion in the oil sands. If I go back to the well-known figure of 22%, that means that approximately \$14 billion from Quebec was used to fund the oil sands. I feel like asking my colleague how much money from Alberta was used to fund Hydro-Québec, but I believe the answer to that question is zero dollars. I therefore do not see why Quebeckers should have to take responsibility for the environmental fiasco currently happening in Alberta.

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My colleague told the Liberals that they have done nothing for the oil sector. That is amazing. Just for fun, I asked research services to find out how much was invested in oil and gas between 2017 and 2020. The Liberals spent \$24 billion, including \$17 billion on buying the pipeline, but my colleague finds that the Liberals have done nothing for the oil and gas industry. If they did any more it would be obscene.

● (1140)

Allow me to make a comparison. During the same period, Quebec's forestry industry received \$950 million, 75% of which was in the form of loans only. In my opinion, these are not direct investments.

My colleague tells us that it is not Alberta's responsibility to cover the entirety of the cost of capping the wells. However, it should be noted that the oil sands are causing other types of adverse consequences that some of our Conservative friends might not want to hear about.

As an example, let's talk about the famous Dutch disease that is well documented by many economists. When the Canadian dollar rises, Quebec's manufacturing industry completely falls apart. From 2002 to 2007, that industry lost 55,000 jobs with the currency rise caused by the Canadian extractive industry.

I am told that Alberta takes on the lion's share of the risk and that Quebec and the other provinces should take a bite out of it. However, if I add up everything I just mentioned, it seems like we have already taken more than a bite and we are starting to get full. We are losing out to this very troublesome industry.

We could propose solutions, since orphan wells are a significant environmental concern. However, before we come up with a solution, we must set the conditions for its implementation. If the government adopts a policy of closing wells, the first condition must focus on an energy transition.

This policy must not become a type of subsidy for an industry that has already gotten too much. We need to focus on the polluter pays principle, and nothing will convince me that tax credits would help us achieve this. That is certainly not the case. We also need clear regulatory measures that do not perpetuate the problem we are seeing now. Ultimately, this policy must be consistent with Canada's greenhouse gas reduction targets.

In my opinion, companies should be responsible, in all cases. I do not see why oil companies should not have to pay a security deposit before embarking on an oil sands extraction project, as is the case in the mining sector.

Let me touch on what I think is the major issue. Before the pandemic, oil prices had dropped rather significantly, and a barrel of oil was priced between \$60 and \$70. During the pandemic, the price per barrel has dropped as low as \$40 or \$45.

Members will recall Teck Resources' Frontier mine project. This project depended on a price per barrel of \$80 or \$90 to be profitable. Since all experts agreed that the price of Canadian oil would never get back to \$80 or \$90, the Frontier mine project was abandoned.

This shows that the Canadian oil industry is under pressure, because it is not profitable at the current price per barrel, which sits between \$50 and \$60. Why would we continue to invest in this lame duck? It would be completely irresponsible, especially from an environmental perspective.

In conclusion, orphan wells are obviously a real problem, but it is not up to taxpayers to foot the bill. It is certainly not up to Quebec taxpayers to do so, because they have paid the price in past years. I think we can justify spending public money to deal with the orphan well problem, but only if certain conditions are met, as I said earlier.

The Bloc Québécois will stand by western Canadian taxpayers, workers and families as long as efforts start to be made to free the Canadian economy from its dependence on fossil fuel. I do not think a bill like this one will put us on that path.

● (1145)

[English]

**Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I am happy to rise today to speak to Bill C-221, a private member's bill tabled by my colleague for Lakeland.

Bill C-221 would provide a tax credit to qualifying corporations for expenses incurred for the closure of an oil or gas well. The bill would also require the Minister of Finance to assess whether the implementation of a flow-through share program would increase private sector funds available to close oil or gas wells.

I will cut to the chase and say that I do not think that the bill before us is the way forward. The NDP believes in the polluter pays principle, and that is theoretically the way the well drilling system is set up right now. Companies are obliged to clean up their wells when they become inactive. Providing incentives for companies to not break the law is a waste of taxpayers' money. Despite what the member said, it is a textbook case of an inefficient subsidy. It flies in the face of government promises that date back to the Harper era to end subsidies to the fossil fuel sector. However, I would also admit that the bill does have the good intention of dealing with the significant problem of inactive wells across Canada, especially in western Canada.

Right now, there are 91,000 inactive oil and gas wells in Alberta, 36,000 in Saskatchewan and 12,000 in British Columbia, and these are the wells that Bill C-221 is seeking to address. These wells are not cleaned up. When the companies that own them become insolvent, they become orphan wells and the taxpayer is on the hook to pay for the cleanup. That scenario has played out again and again.

*Private Members' Business*

There are more than 2,500 orphan wells in Alberta right now, 356 in B.C. and 159 in Saskatchewan. It can cost \$100,000 or more to clean up a well. Members can do the math: It is a big bill for taxpayers to deal with orphan wells, and the bill could get bigger. The Alberta Energy Regulator has predicted that the number of inactive wells in Alberta could easily rise, could easily double, to 180,000 over the next 10 years, and so it is a serious problem. I would agree with the member on that.

We cannot leave these wells and do nothing. There are impacts on the environment, as they will leak methane into the air and contaminants into the ground. There is an impact for landowners and farmers who receive lease payments while these wells are active and even when they are inactive. Until they are cleaned up, those lease payments are made, but, increasingly, oil companies have simply informed landowners that they will not be making lease payments, with no discussions, no negotiations. Many Canadians wish they had that kind of power over their landowners. Landowners have had to take companies to court to make them live up to their obligations.

The Alberta provincial government has told oil companies that they do not have to pay municipal taxes during these tough times, but there is no compensation given to local governments that are already struggling through COVID. Municipalities have not only lost a valuable tax base, but many have been left with contaminated sites that they cannot afford to clean up; and the member for Lakeland mentioned one of these, and so development opportunities are squandered.

What has caused this problem, and how can we fix it?

Clearly, the problem is that companies do not have the ability to pay for cleanup. We all know that times are very difficult in the oil patch. One could argue that companies did not see this downturn coming and were caught unaware by these tough times. The trouble is, the number of inactive wells and orphan wells was steadily rising even when times were good, when oil was \$80 a barrel. Companies were not saving for the future then. They were not cleaning up their wells then.

Will this proposed legislation help fix the problem? Would it incentivize companies to live up to their obligations so that taxpayers are not on the hook?

When companies drill a well, they know that they are going to have to clean it up once it has stopped producing. When it is producing, they should be putting aside those funds for that obligation. The problem is, many of those companies are not doing this. They are not planning for that rainy day, and they have not been doing this for years.

The regulators are partly at fault for not properly ensuring that companies do this. Regulators should be putting limits on how long a well can remain inactive before it must be cleaned up. Only the B.C. regulator has rules about that right now.

• (1150)

Regulators could create a steadily rising inactive well fee, such as we see in California, that could go into a fund to help orphan well cleanup. Regulators could demand that companies pay a secu-

rity up front, and the member for Jonquière mentioned this, so that when a well is drilled, the remediation costs would be automatically covered. That bond would be a small amount compared to the price of buying drilling rights and actually drilling the well. However, these regulatory solutions are largely in provincial hands, as the member for Lakeland mentioned.

I am not a tax accountant, but it seems logical that if a company did not put away enough money to cover legal obligations and now is not making enough profit to cover those costs, a tax break will not fix things. Tax writeoffs only work when enough money is being made to have to pay some tax. If tax credits are being provided to cover these costs, then it is the taxpayer who is funding these activities.

The idea of creating a flow-through share structure to encourage people to invest to clean up oil wells does not seem like a good idea either. Flow-through shares are used extensively in the mining industry to encourage investment in mine exploration and mine development. That is obviously a risky investment, so it makes sense, if we are to develop our resources, that we should provide incentives to investors to help companies at that critical stage.

However, cleaning up oil and gas wells is not a risky business. Companies' investors know years ahead of time that they will have to do it, and they have a pretty good idea of how much it is going to cost. Providing incentives to corporations or investors is completely inappropriate at this stage.

This is a straight subsidy to the fossil fuel industry. We would be paying them to do something that they are legally obliged to do. It is like giving drivers a tax break for staying on the right-hand side of the road or coming to a stop at a stop sign. The Parliamentary Budget Officer estimates that this tax credit would cost \$264 million.

Canada's natural resources are shared resources owned by the people of Canada. Former premier of Alberta Peter Lougheed once said that, when it comes to resources, we have to act like owners. That means getting the best price for our resources. It also means making sure that the corporations that pay for access to those resources abide by our laws in how they treat the environment when extracting them.

Governments across this country have not done a very good job of upholding that pact with the people of Canada. Regulators for the oil and gas industry, whether it is the Canada Energy Regulator, the Alberta Energy Regulator, the B.C. Oil and Gas Commission or any other of a number of such bodies, have too often acted like cheerleaders for the industry instead of regulators acting as stewards on behalf of the Canadian public.

Companies are obliged by law to clean up after themselves. When they drill a well, they know how much that cleanup will cost. They should act responsibly and put away sufficient money in a trust fund while a well is productive, so that when the well reaches the end of its productive life, the money is there to clean up their mess.

That is what we find in another Conservative private member's bill from the member for Calgary Centre, Bill C-214. I would be happy to support that bill when it comes up for debate. However, this bill before us today is not an incentive for companies to do the right thing, to put aside money to pay for future obligations. It is an incentive for companies to put off that obligation until the last minute, forcing taxpayers to help them pay for cleanup or, if it is too late, to pay all the costs for that cleanup.

Unfortunately, I will not be supporting this bill.

**Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I join this debate on the second reading of Bill C-221. I am very honoured to support my friend and colleague, the member for Lakeland. As this is my first speech over Zoom through the virtual Parliament, it will take a little while to get used to, but I am looking forward to adding my voice to those who think this bill should be supported by all parties.

I will go through a couple of discussions on why this is a bill that should unify members of Parliament to come together to support this option of doing the right thing environmentally and making sure we have an idea of how we are going to clean up orphaned and abandoned wells.

I have listened intently to my colleague's speech, as well as those of the members from the Bloc, the NDP and the Liberal Party, on what should have been done and the now growing issue of abandoned wells. Obviously we can look to the past and say some things were not done right, but as the government is famous for saying, we need to take a team Canada approach. What we need to do now is look at options for getting these orphaned and abandoned wells cleaned up.

One thing that has come to light that shows why a bill like this should be pursued is the recent Redwater decision of the Supreme Court. None of my colleagues from the opposition parties have mentioned this, so I will mention it. As a result of the Redwater Supreme Court ruling in 2019, federal bankruptcy laws do not supersede provincial environment obligations. This results in many companies no longer being able to find the financing to drill wells to increase their cash flow because, in the case of bankruptcy, investors and creditors would only get paid after all well closures and reclamation costs were incurred.

What we have to do now is figure out how oil and gas companies are going to get access to liquidity in order to continue operating, so these wells can be cleaned up in the long run, as it comes to the environmental part of Bill C-221, an act to amend the Income Tax Act or the environmental restorative incentive act.

For a quick overview, Bill C-221 aims to provide support for the energy industry by implementing a 13% non-refundable tax credit for oil and gas well decommissioning costs. It also instructs government to evaluate the feasibility of flow-through shares.

### *Private Members' Business*

The bill has received support from many key energy industry and government stakeholders that are focused on orphan well cleanup instead of new extraction projects. Opposition from environmental groups has been minimal. This bill is an attempt at a win-win for energy and the environment. It is being presented as a Conservative solution to an environmental crisis, as well as a way to help energy companies survive and create new jobs.

The member from the Bloc talked about unemployment rates. Right now unemployment rates in Saskatchewan and Alberta continue to climb because of new proposals and policies brought forward by the government. I listened to the member for Lakeland talk about two of the main issues behind the oil and gas sector not doing well. She forgot the third and fourth issues, but she said the two issues were oversupply and pricing during COVID-19.

However, a third and, I would say, more prominent issue that explains why the energy sector is not doing well is the government putting in place policies that have been damaging. We can talk about Bill C-69 and Bill C-48, as well as the continued overburdening with regulations, which energy sectors have continued to meet.

My Bloc colleague brought up the fact that the government bought a \$7-billion pipeline. I would respond to the member by saying the government would not have had to buy a \$7-billion pipeline if the regulations had been in place and it had not kept moving the goalposts.

A private company would have built that pipeline at zero cost to taxpayers across our country. If those regulations had not been changed, we would have had a private proponent building the pipeline and allowing our energy sector more options on how to transport goods to market.

Another thing about the environmental restoration incentive act is that it is for small and medium-sized producers. As we have talked about already, through no fault of their own, some of the policies that have been put in place have really hamstrung their ability to make ends meet and continue to work and employ people across our country.

• (1155)

The reality is that oil and gas wells that companies intend to decommission are now being suspended, so I think all members in the House can come together and say that we need to ensure we are able to clean up oil and gas wells. I do not think that is a debate among members of Parliament. I know they have been talked about many times.

I think our NDP, Bloc and Green party colleagues should take long look at this bill to make sure that the environmental measures are going to be met and that we will have the ability to clean up these wells once they are decommissioned and abandoned.

I will read a couple of quotes from either late shows or things that have been said in the House of Commons. The NDP member for South Okanagan—West Kootenay rose in the House on February 21, 2019, and stated:

### Government Orders

There are over 122,000 inactive wells across western Canada, and most of those wells have absolutely no prospect of ever operating again. That is almost a quarter of the wells out there. Most will require cleanup and reclamation in the near future. Many are on private land, on farms, where they impact the work and lives of farmers who are no longer receiving rental payments for those wells.

That is absolutely true. I agree with his statement. So far there have not been many proposals from the NDP on how we are going to make sure these wells get reclaimed, and I would ask the member for South Okanagan—West Kootenay to take a look at this bill once again, because it does bring forward a reasonable approach to ensuring some of these wells get cleaned up and the land goes back to its original state of being.

The former member for Edmonton—Strathcona rose in the House on February 20, 2019, and said, “[the] government did commit \$30 million in budget 2017, when the cost, according to some people, is \$260 billion, in support of Alberta’s efforts to advance the reclamation of orphan wells.” The former member Linda Duncan is in favour of work to reclaim these wells, and I would like to have an idea of where she would be on this. I think she would be in support of this private member’s bill.

The member for Saanich—Gulf Islands on June 17, 2019, during the climate emergency debate, stated:

We must, in that process, include a transition for the skills of workers.

One great example that I will give are the orphan oil wells. There are thousands of them throughout Alberta and northern B.C., which have tremendous potential for geothermal energy production.

Therefore, there are ways to work together on this. Many MPs from across political stripes know that we need to have a policy in place to ensure these orphan wells are cleaned up, and I am looking forward to working with them on Bill C-221, so we do have the ability to ensure that the Government of Canada is coming together for the environmental purpose of making sure these orphan wells are cleaned up.

The other side of this is that it also has the ability to create jobs and employment in the hard-hit sectors across Alberta right now. I want to say that this bill would allow friends and families across western Canada to go back to work and help provide for their families once again. I need to know that the federal government is going to be there and is in support of the energy sector.

The Liberal MP who was on her feet today spoke about the support her government has shown to energy and oil workers in the energy sector, and I would like to see that support continue. It has been a minuscule amount of support at this point in time, but with this bill we could put in place the opportunity for companies across Saskatchewan, Alberta, Manitoba and B.C. to continue to stay afloat. We are looking for the ability of these companies to have options to keep their people employed and keep people working across our sector.

On one final note, I realize that a couple of my colleagues have said that the energy companies need to step up and they need to be responsible. I do want our colleagues to stop looking backward. That was in the past. We need to have these companies stay in business and work together to allow them to clean up the orphan and abandoned wells.

I am proud to support the hard work of the member for Lakeland. She is a tireless advocate for her constituents and I am happy to be able to be seconding this bill, Bill C-221.

• (1200)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The time provided for the consideration of private members’ business has now expired. The order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### JUDGES ACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-3, An Act to amend the Judges Act and the Criminal Code, as reported (with amendments) from the committee.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The hon. parliamentary secretary is rising on a point of order.

**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 Speaker, there have been some discussions among the parties, and if you seek it, I think you will find the unanimous consent for the following motion:

That, notwithstanding any standing order, special order or usual practice of the House, report stage motions nos. 1 and 2 in amendment to Bill C-3, An Act to amend the Judges Act and the Criminal Code, standing on the Notice Paper in the name of the Minister of Justice, be deemed adopted and that the House proceed immediately to the putting of the question on the motion for concurrence at report stage, provided that if a recorded division is requested, it shall not be deferred and the bill may be debated at third reading stage during the same sitting.

• (1205)

[Translation]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** This being a hybrid sitting of the House, for the sake of clarity, I will only ask those who are opposed to the request to express their disagreement.

[English]

Accordingly, all those opposed to the hon. member’s motion will please say nay.

There being no dissenting voices, I declare Motion No. 1 and Motion No. 2 adopted.

(Motion agreed to)

[Translation]

Pursuant to order made earlier today, the House will now proceed, without debate, to the putting of the question of the motion to concur in the bill at report stage.

[English]

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault (for the Minister of Justice)** moved that the bill be concurred in.

(Motion agreed to on division)

*Government Orders*

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault (for the Minister of Justice)** moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

**Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to speak today as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice in support of moving Bill C-3 to the next stage of review.

I wanted to start by recognizing the work of my colleagues on the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights in conducting the clause-by-clause study of Bill C-3 in an expeditious and efficient manner so this important bill can continue to move forward. The version we have before the House today reflects a number of amendments that were adopted by the justice committee, and I will speak to those amendments in due course.

At the outset, I would like to acknowledge the important work that was done on a previous iteration of this bill during the 42nd Parliament by Ms. Rona Ambrose, the then interim leader of the Conservative Party of Canada. She presented this bill as a private member's bill, which gathered support of all members of Parliament and proceeded expeditiously through the House of Commons at that time.

It is unfortunate that it was not able to be passed in the 42nd Parliament and, as a result, has ended up before this current Parliament. In light of our belief in and support of this bill, we committed to tabling this legislation as government legislation, which is what we have done. We have seen it through now to this third reading debate.

[*Translation*]

The end goal of Bill C-3 is to bolster public confidence, particularly among survivors of sexual assault, that our criminal justice system will treat all individuals fairly. This fundamental objective was unanimously agreed to at second reading by the members, with a number of them speaking about painful personal experiences or their work with survivors of sexual assault.

These important statements bear witness to the fact that the sexual assault of women remains a scourge that is an affront to our society's reputation. It is a thorny and pervasive problem that every member of society must take seriously and that requires us to commit to making changes.

• (1210)

[*English*]

The bill, importantly, is not a panacea to this complex problem. However, Bill C-3 represents a small but important step toward transforming our justice system into one in which survivors of sexual assault are treated with dignity and respect at all stages of the justice system process.

I strongly believe that as parliamentarians it behooves us to take whatever steps we can to move toward a fairer, more just and more accessible criminal justice system. If passed, the bill will enhance public confidence. It will demonstrate to survivors of sexual assault and to all Canadians Parliament's commitment to ensure they are treated fairly and with dignity and respect, and that the proceeding will be decided in accordance with the legal framework provided

by Parliament, not influenced by misguided or outdated myths or stereotypes.

To this end, Bill C-3 proposes three key measures relating to judicial education and one relating to the Criminal Code of Canada. Let me outline these provisions.

First, the Judges Act would be amended to require that to be eligible to be appointed to a provincial superior court, candidates must commit to participate, following their appointment, in education on matters relating to sexual assault law and social context. It is important, and I want to open a parenthesis here, that we are dealing as a federal Parliament with judges that are within federal jurisdiction. The bill does not purport to direct, indicate or outline aspects of judges who are nominated by provincial attorneys general and provincial governments in provincial courts.

This remains an important point. The notion of sexual assault law and awareness of social context is important for all judges. However, we are committed to leading by example on this important legislation and also continuing to work at federal, provincial and territorial tables to ensure the concept of the importance of this kind of sensitization is imparted upon judges at all levels within Canada and by all provinces.

The second point is that Bill C-3 would amend the Judges Act to provide that sexual assault and social context training established by the Canadian Judicial Council be developed after consultation with survivors, the groups that support them or with other groups and individuals who the council considers appropriate.

The third key element in Bill C-3, touching on judicial education, is the provision that would seek to have the Canadian Judicial Council provide an annual report to the Minister of Justice, for tabling in Parliament, containing details relating to the judicial education offered. This is intended to enhance accountability in the education of sitting judges on these matters and act as an incentive to encourage their participation.

The final element in Bill C-3 is an amendment to the Criminal Code of Canada that would require judges to provide reasons in writing or on the record of proceedings for their decision in sexual assault matters. This provision would help to prevent the misapplication of sexual assault law. It would also help to improve the transparency of sexual assault decisions, because recorded and written decisions can be reviewed. We heard about this extensively during the course of the two iterations of the bill and in the various committee studies. Not only must justice be done but it must be seen to be done, and a record of the proceedings and reasons provided help ensure this critical objective is obtained.

*Government Orders*

[Translation]

Taken together, these amendments would increase the confidence of the public and survivors in our criminal justice system's ability to handle sexual assault matters in a fair and respectful manner, by treating the victims with dignity and, above all, by respecting the law that has been carefully designed to that end.

Just as importantly, the bill will send Canadians, especially survivors of sexual assault, the message that Parliament is committed and ready to take action so that all Canadians, especially the most vulnerable, can have confidence in our justice system.

[English]

With this outline in mind, I would like to now turn to the amendments adopted at committee, which I am very happy to say our government is pleased to support.

The first key amendment made by the committee was to include the terms “systemic racism” and “systemic discrimination” within the idea of social context. Colleagues will recall that in 2017, in its consideration of Bill C-337, the private member's bill by Ms. Rona Ambrose which I mentioned at the outset, our government proposed an amendment in the House of Commons to include social context education within the scope of that bill in the 42nd Parliament. That amendment ended up being passed unanimously by the House of Commons.

Adding social context to the judicial education provisions of the old Bill C-337 was considered essential to ensuring that important institutions like the judiciary be able to respond to the realities, needs and concerns of all Canadians. This was intended as explicit recognition that knowledge of substantive law was insufficient on its own. Individuals aspiring to appointment to Canada's superior courts must also be willing to undergo continued education following their appointment to ensure they are sensitive to and informed about the evolving nature of Canadian society, particularly marginalized and vulnerable groups. The language that was chosen was very deliberately drafted to be as encompassing as possible without going down a path of enumerating certain concepts, classes, groups or demographics, which could open up parliamentarians to the possibility of having unwittingly or, indeed, inadvertently excluded some persons or groups.

This is not an idle concern. As I noted earlier, it is imperative that all Canadians see themselves in the institutions that are created to serve them and support our democracy. It is our role as parliamentarians to ensure this when considering legislation. I also fully expect that this issue will receive careful consideration in the Senate. I look forward to hearing the views of all Canadians and stakeholders to ensure we meet the expectations of Canadians and get this accurate.

It is important to outline for the members of the House that Canada's superior court judiciary was one of the first in the world to insist on the importance of integrating awareness of social context into all its substantive programming. Going back to 2018, the Canadian Judicial Council explicitly mandated that the professional development of judges include awareness of the social context in which they performed their functions.

I will quote from the Canadian Judicial Council's professional development policies and guidelines, which can be found on the council's website. The document states:

Judges must ensure that personal or societal biases, myths and stereotypes do not influence judicial decision-making. This requires awareness and knowledge of the realities of individuals who appear in court, including an understanding of circumstances related to gender, race, ethnicity, religion, culture, sexual orientation, differing mental or physical abilities, age, socio-economic background, children and family violence.

This being said, the bill is a nuanced bill and an important one. We need to be careful in our approach. I say this because judicial independence is constitutionally protected. If I am allowed to digress a moment, this is an area in which I spent a large amount of my practice litigating in the 15 years I spent as a constitutional lawyer prior to entering Parliament.

• (1215)

Judicial independence is sacrosanct in any westernized democracy. It contains tenets that are obvious but often go unstated. We cannot influence the financial security of members of the bench. We cannot influence their tenure or seek to remove them of their tenure as a way of exercising influence. We also cannot, as a third hallmark of judicial independence, affect their administrative independence. A tangible example would be the government inserting itself in electing which judges hear what types of cases. That would clearly be offside our notion of democracy, but also offside the charter and the Constitution Act, 1867.

The administrative component of judicial independence requires judicial control over the training and education of judges. This ensures that judges in our country are not, and are not perceived to be, subject to arbitrary interference or influence in their decision-making. This is a critical concept, and that is why it is entrenched in the Constitution.

Bill C-3 and its predecessor, Bill C-5, were carefully drafted to ensure ultimate judicial control over judicial education.

I will turn to the amendment that was proposed, expressing Parliament's view that systemic racism and systemic discrimination are included within the idea of social context does not upset this very careful balance. The judiciary would still retain the direction and delivery of judicial education in a manner that fully respects judicial independence. At the same time, Parliament is able to fulfill Canadians' expectations that it has a role in addressing issues of pressing public importance. The issues of systemic racism and systemic discrimination are long standing, particularly with respect to our justice system. However, it goes without saying that public awareness of these concepts has clearly come to the fore during this pandemic.

*Government Orders*

I want to outline two specific instances and thank two specific members who participated in those committee proceedings: the member for Hull—Aylmer and the member for Sydney—Victoria. They talked eloquently about the pernicious aspects of systemic racism and systemic discrimination vis-à-vis Black people and indigenous people in Canada. I salute them for their work in with respect to the Black caucus and the indigenous caucus, but also for their contributions at the committee by suggesting amendments that are very targeted but very necessary in expanding out the idea of what social context includes.

I will now turn to the next set of amendments that were proposed by members of the third party, the Bloc Québécois. Members will note that some of the provisions have been slightly altered. For example, the word “shall” has been changed to “should” in certain contexts. Minor changes have also been made in relation to other provisions. These amendments were intended to address the possible perception that Parliament, in potentially enacting Bill C-3, could be purporting to direct the judiciary in respect of judicial education. While this perception, in my view, is improbable, our government is prepared to support these amendments out of an abundance of caution.

At this point, I want to briefly bring the attention of members to the government motion to amend Bill C-3 at the report stage to correct an unintended inconsistency between the English and the French versions of the amendments proposed by the Bloc members. These amendments are clearly necessary and uncontroversial, and I would expect all hon. members to vote to support them to ensure the amendments intended by the committee are reflected in both our official languages.

Again, the principle of judicial independence cannot be overstated. As I have emphasized, Parliament's efforts to bolster public confidence in our justice system cannot at the same time undermine this constitutionally protected principle. I fully expect that our esteemed colleagues in the Senate will likewise give this issue their careful attention, and I look forward to that for two reasons: first, because a vigorous public debate is essential to a healthy democracy; and, second, because in this instance such a debate will, in and of itself, serve to reassure the public of the strength of judicial independence in the country and the regard that our Parliament has for this important constitutional principle.

We are very fortunate in Canada to have one of the most, if not the most, robustly independent and highly regarded judiciaries in the world. This is in no small part due to the availability of the excellent publicly funded but judicially controlled continuing education to which the superior court judiciary has access.

Members heard me refer to some of the contours of what that education looked like as of 2018. This is a step in the same vein and direction to ensuring that education continues to be robust and indeed among the best standards, literally on the planet, for the judiciary in a westernized democracy.

• (1220)

I also applaud those parliamentarians before us who had the foresight to embed the availability of funding for judicial education in the Judges Act, and the Canadian Judicial Council for its leadership in recognizing that professional development and lifelong learning

are critical to ensuring a judiciary that is well-educated, professional and, indeed critically, independent.

The commitment of the Canadian Judicial Council to excellent continuing education is manifested in its professional development policies and guidelines, which I know explicitly recognize that the public rightfully expects judges to be competent and knowledgeable in the law. Bill C-3 seeks only to support and build on this notion and thereby move toward a better, more humane and more inclusive justice system.

I am going to conclude my remarks where I started: by acknowledging the challenges faced by survivors of sexual assault. Those challenges go well beyond the scope of the bill. We must recognize that in order to effect meaningful and substantial changes to the manner in which survivors of sexual assault are treated in our criminal justice system, every actor in the justice system, and every level of government, must take responsibility. That is what I referred to regarding the passage of the bill in the context of working with federal, provincial and territorial partners, and ensuring that the actions we may take through the bill, with respect to judges appointed to Superior Courts, are replicated in actions we may see, and hope to see, in provincial appointments to the bench.

It also goes without saying that the bill would not have had its genesis without the leadership of Ms. Rona Ambrose. It is important to note that when a member of the official opposition presents a bill that the government gets behind, it truly demonstrates the non-partisan nature of what we are speaking about when we speak about sexual assault law, the importance of ensuring public confidence in our judiciary, social context, and confronting systemic racism and systemic discrimination. These concepts should never be partisan. I am thankful that in the context of the bill in its current iteration, partisanship has not entered into the discussion. This is representative of how important these concepts are for all of us as parliamentarians. I would urge all members to take the small but important next step to vote to move the bill into the next phase so that it can be addressed by the Senate. On that note, I conclude my remarks.

• (1225)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his comprehensive presentation on the bill before the House. We in the Bloc Québécois have already taken a position on this, but I would still like to ask my colleague a question.

Yes, it is a good bill, and I think it sends a clear message that we need to make the justice system less intimidating for victims. In Canada, 5% of female sexual assault victims will file a report, and only three out of every 1,000 reported cases will result in charges being laid. Clearly, the justice system is intimidating.

I want to ask my hon. colleague about what comes after this bill. For now, this is a first step, and it sends the right message, but what is the next step for ensuring that women feel supported by the justice system?

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Arif Virani:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. He raised a very important point. Looking at training for judges is just the first step towards the broader objective of making the justice system more responsive to women who are victims of sexual assault.

Efforts must be made on an ongoing basis and at various stages. For instance, women's associations must be supported, including financially. We need to set aside funding for education and better training for other justice system stakeholders, such as police officers and Crown attorneys.

I would like to point out that in his mandate letters to the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Public Safety, the Prime Minister included education and better training for police officers. The justice minister added that Crown attorneys working for the Justice Department would also get more training.

The member asked a good question. It shows that a lot more effort is needed beyond what is in this bill.

[*English*]

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Madam Speaker, as the member noted in his speech, Conservatives are supportive of this legislation. I want to ask him a specific question about some of the egregious cases of really terrible comments that have been made to women in a court setting.

Do we know if those judges and others who made comments like this to women went through any kind of training? It would be interesting to know whether those people had no training, or received training but did not respond to it in some way.

Does the member have any thoughts on the additional steps that could be taken in cases where individuals may have received training yet still make problematic comments in spite of having been through a training course?

**Mr. Arif Virani:** Madam Speaker, that question really does drive at the heart of the accountability piece that informs people's confidence in the administration of justice, and whether it is in repute or disrepute.

What I can say very specifically is that it is a sensitive matter but not one we are not aware of, in terms of being able to determine who has received training.

The bill purports to indicate, in the annual report that would be provided to the minister and then tabled in Parliament, that training was provided in certain areas of the law, and the number of judges who were provided with it. For example, it would say 250 out of 300 judges in the superior court around the country received the training. Enumerating the specific names of the judges who received it is not a part of this bill. I think parliamentarians should be aware of that. Also, the bill is prospective in the main: Prospectively, people who put forward their names as applicants for a judicial appointment must undertake to take this training. It is only recommended for those who are currently on the bench. That is out of regard for the very important notion of judicial independence.

We have a lot of confidence, however, that given the step that Parliament would take in enacting this bill, given the importance of societal awareness, and given the public clamouring for this kind of

accountability, that most if not all judges would participate in the training. As to whether it is ultimately efficacious in rendering judgments—

• (1230)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** We have to allow for other questions, and the hon. member could add to his response, hopefully.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I enjoyed working with the parliamentary secretary at the justice committee. The bill that we see before us today is a testament to the great work that was done at committee. It appropriately follows the many recommendations we heard from witnesses.

I would say that this bill is an example of parliamentary leadership. Parliamentarians from all stripes have come together, and I believe we have a good bill.

The question I want to ask the parliamentary secretary is specifically regarding his comments about our provincial colleagues. How confident is he that when we establish this bill we may see provincial jurisdictions follow suit?

Does he feel confident that various provinces may in fact put in place their own statutory requirements for judicial training, given that so many cases of this nature are in fact heard by provincial judges under provincial jurisdiction?

**Mr. Arif Virani:** Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford for his contributions in this go-around and also in the last Parliament. I would also highlight the contributions of the member for Oakville North—Burlington, a Liberal member who did the same thing, participating in the last Parliament and again in this study, showing tangible commitment to the bill.

I would say to the member that I am somewhat confident, in terms of provincial leadership. I was trying to consult my notes, and we have had indications. I believe at least one province has put in place this kind of training. It may be P.E.I., if memory serves. I also have confidence that other members, in their commitment to this legislation, will be encouraging their provincial counterparts around the country to really be thinking about this and how it could be implemented on a provincial level.

I think the sensitization to this issue, social context, systemic racism, systemic discrimination and, above all else, sexual assault law and the importance of understanding it and getting the application of the law right, is something that is not lost in any area or region of the country.

I am confident that this can be advanced going forward.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoulo, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I have a simple question.

How can we ensure that this training does not become a convention where a bunch of pals get together once a year? How can we ensure that the training has a tangible, visible impact on both the Crown and the judge, so that we never again hear questions like, “What were you wearing that evening?” or “Did you look his way?” or “Did you approach him?” or “Did you scream?”

What will we do to ensure that this training has a real impact?

**Mr. Arif Virani:** Madam Speaker, I understand the passion of the hon. member across the way. She is asking a very good question. I thank her.

The text of Bill C-3 mentions the importance of fighting myths and stereotypes. It also includes directions for judges, a recommendation to consult with women and organizations that work with women on sexual assault matters regarding how to establish and run these courses.

[English]

The curriculum itself would be designed, ideally, in consultation with those women's groups that spend their entire mandate ensuring they confront the very myths and stereotypes that the member for Beauport—Limoilou just mentioned.

**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 Speaker, I wonder if my colleague could provide his thoughts in terms of the manner in which the bill originated and the co-operation it took among the different parties to get it to the point it is today.

**Mr. Arif Virani:** Madam Speaker, the spirit of co-operation has been quite astounding. In my five years in Parliament, I have rarely seen such unanimous support for a bill. It has been useful, and it has been encouraging.

Obviously, what happens in the House is different from what happens in the Senate. I will note, with a bit of disappointment, what transpired in the Senate in the last Parliament, but we are confident that this will have a fair review and a good, rigorous analysis. We are hoping that this piece of legislation will see the light of day, because so many parliamentarians of all stripes, including independents, are behind the bill. That is a good sign for women and for all those who are concerned with having confidence in the justice system.

● (1235)

[Translation]

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC):** Madam Speaker, today is my third attempt to speak to Bill C-3 in the House. The first time, there was not enough time and I was interrupted. The second time, there was a technical problem, unfortunately. This time, I finally have enough time.

[English]

On our side of the House, we have certainly made a good effort to indicate the challenges females face when they are in positions of power and the judgments they face on a daily basis in terms of what they wear, their makeup and how they express themselves.

### *Government Orders*

This is something my colleagues in the House are not unfamiliar with. They are very aware of it, and my colleagues on this side of the House have done a very good job of expressing that and noting the challenges they have faced throughout their political careers as they have attempted to express who they are and represent their constituents in the most authentic way possible.

Sometimes I get comments on Facebook or Twitter. People say that my eyelashes are too big or my makeup is too dark. It does not bother me, because inside I know who I am. I know my family loves me and my friends love me.

One of those special friends is a woman by the name of Rona Ambrose. I first met her at the Conservative Party convention in 2005 in Montreal. It was really something to meet her. I thought, “Oh my goodness, I am meeting Rona Ambrose.” Fortunately, I have a friend who is a family relative of hers, so I would see her from time to time in Ottawa during my time at Global Affairs. I would run into her on a street corner downtown and it was always lovely to see her.

Throughout my nomination she was incredibly supportive, as she was during the election campaign, and I have one special memory of her. My campaign office was set up, and all the media were there because she was visiting. I recall that right before we walked into the office together, she took a moment and said, “Stop”. She said she had to think about what she was going to say and needed to collect her thoughts. For me, that was such an incredible lesson: We should be clear and concise in the words being communicated in the House of Commons as official representatives of the people.

I will never forget this time she came to my campaign office. That moment really sticks with me. We were in the back of a strip mall and she just said, “Stop”. It was such a pivotal moment in my political career.

My other dear memory of Rona is when I won the by-election and she walked me into the House of Commons. That is a moment I will never forget. I remember being in the antechamber waiting. My husband and son were there, and there were other federal cabinet ministers ready to walk us in. She turned to me and said, “Put on the biggest smile you possibly can because this is a moment that will go down in your history. This is the single moment that will be seen over and over again.” She was absolutely correct. When I look at all of my videos from the three and a half years since being elected to the House, that video stands out.

There are many special things about Rona, and I would like to think she and I are similar. We both speak more than two languages, we both have a master's degree and we both display a class and decorum that the House deserves. However, what I think is most special about her is that she recognized something in me and encouraged me in seeing that something special.

● (1240)

This is something Rona Ambrose has now dedicated her life to: She is mentoring, encouraging and promoting women all around the world. It is therefore no surprise to me that she introduced this significant piece of legislation.

*Government Orders*

I was very fortunate to attend an event in Calgary last year with SOS Children's Villages Canada, at which she was the guest speaker. She had incredible stories about her time in the House.

She talked about one time when, as minister of the environment, she was meeting her U.S. counterpart. She was in a room waiting for her U.S. counterpart to arrive and a secret security agent told her, "Listen here little lady; you have to clear this room. There are important people who are about to meet here, two ministers." She said, "I am one of the ministers." It is astounding that in this day and age, a conversation like that would happen, but it did.

What is so special about her and this legislation is that it would allow people to tell their stories. Is that not really what justice and truth are about? It is about the opportunity for people to share their stories.

I want to give a special shout-out to all of the participants at the Results Canada conference this weekend. Yesterday morning I woke up at nine o'clock and looked at my calendar. I turned to my husband and said, "Oh, my goodness, I'm scheduled to be a keynote speaker for Results Canada in half an hour." I wondered why I put myself through this at 9:30 on a Sunday morning, and it became very apparent to me that I do it for myself because it is so inspiring to share stories and motivate young people. That is really what Rona Ambrose is about. She allows people to tell their stories.

Last March, right before the pandemic hit and before the shut-down, I was very fortunate to attend an incredible event that happens every year in Calgary, where people have an opportunity to tell their stories. This past year it was about women telling their stories. It is called the YWHISPER Gala, and it is put on by the local YWCA.

I want to give a special shout-out to the CEO, Sue Tomney, who does an incredible job. I also want to give a shout-out to Nesreen, who has always been incredibly instrumental in my relationship with that organization, and its incredible board of directors, including wonderful women such as Shannon Young. In my previous portfolio, I was shadow minister for families, children and social development, and I hope the minister sticks to his commitments to the YWCA.

Last year, the YWHISPER Gala had incredible guests Jodi Kantor and Megan Twohey, two women who won the Pulitzer Prize for breaking the sexual harassment story that helped ignite the movement. If ever anyone has an opportunity to read their book, *She Said*, it is filled with incredible stories that I believe are relevant to this piece of legislation today.

It notes what they went through to get the stories from women. The most telling story for me was about the first house they went to. They knocked on the door of a woman they were hoping to get insight and perspective from. She answered and said she had waited 25 years for them to knock on her door. She waited 25 years to tell her story. That is another reason this piece of legislation is so incredible. It speaks to Rona's foresight to allow people the opportunity to tell their stories.

These are not always bad, horrible, terrible stories, the kind we might hear in courtrooms or at the YWCA about horrific situations that women are escaping from. There are also good stories.

• (1245)

When I was preparing for this speech, the United States was looking to confirm the appointment of Amy Coney Barrett. There was so much light being shed on this potential justice, yet we do not focus on the incredible women within our own judicial system. I therefore want to take a moment to highlight the incredible women of our Supreme Court. Of course, to get into their entire resumés would take hours, so here is an overview.

There is the Honourable Rosalie Silberman Abella. She is the first Jewish woman appointed to the Supreme Court. Previous to her appointment, she did significant work on equality, discrimination and disabilities.

There is the Honourable Andromache Karakatsanis. She served as Ontario's secretary of the cabinet and as clerk of the executive council from July 2000 to November 2002. As the province's senior public servant, she provided leadership to the Ontario public service and the deputy ministers. She was also involved in a lot of issues related to education, which is what the bill is about as well, so it is incredible to recognize her.

There is also the Honourable Suzanne Côté. She was a partner at Osler, Hoskin & Harcourt LLP, where she was head of the Montreal office's litigation group. Before that she was at Stikeman Elliott, where she was head of the litigation group as well. She is another incredible woman on our Supreme Court.

Finally, there is the Honourable Sheilah Martin, who, prior to being a Supreme Court justice, fought for equal justice for all. Of course, very dear to me is the fact that Justice Martin worked as a researcher and law professor at the University of Calgary from 1982 to 1986. She is another incredible woman that I want to shine a light on as we talk about Bill C-3, which would no doubt have significant implications for our justice system.

I will now go back to Rona Ambrose, who is another incredible individual. She had the vision and foresight for this legislation as a result of all the work she has done, and continues to do, with women and girls. I am sure members are aware that very recently she published her first book on girls, entitled *The International Day of the Girl: Celebrating Girls Around the World*, which is very special.

I remind members that Rona Ambrose is a Conservative woman and that Conservative women have really led the way here in the House of Commons. Since we are talking about stories of survivors and victims, who are often women, I will run through some of the incredible accomplishments of Conservative women in the House of Commons.

We had Ellen Fairclough, who was the first female cabinet minister and the first acting prime minister. That is no small feat.

*Government Orders*

Of course there is Flora MacDonald, who is very dear to my heart. She was the first female foreign affairs minister. As I was at Global Affairs for a significant period of time prior to being in the House of Commons, she really means a lot to me and touches my heart. I am not sure if I have shared this with the House, but oddly enough, on my first diplomatic trip to Washington, I was on the same flight as the Right Hon. Joe Clark, which I thought was significant.

• (1250)

Moving back to the incredible women from the Conservative movement, who can forget Deb Grey? I would like to think we have Deb Grey reincarnated in the member for Lakeland, another woman who shows that fire and passion for her constituents, for her party and for Canada. Deb Grey was the first woman to lead the official opposition, so another significant Conservative woman there. Of course, I would mention the first female Prime Minister of Canada, Kim Campbell.

I genuinely believe that the Liberals often feel that they own compassion, that they own the rights to people's stories. I am saying here today that they do not. This piece of legislation was brought forward by a prominent Conservative woman and former minister. I am very glad that the government took this legislation and moved forward with it from Minister Ambrose. I want to point out it really was upon former minister Ambrose to come up with this legislation and to say what we are hearing at this special time in history, which is "I see you and I believe you". That is what Rona was thinking of when she came up with the idea for this piece of legislation.

Believing people's story is what this legislation is about. All that the bill is asking us to do is listen to people's stories and believe them, no matter what they are. I made this point to the Results Canada group yesterday, to be open-minded to the thoughts of Conservative women and to all young women and to see themselves as Conservative women. I was very happy to have that conversation. We are not told in our party what to think or what to believe. When I say, "I see you, I believe you", I see everyone and we believe everyone. These are the messages we are giving.

If any young women are thinking of putting their name forward for Conservative nominations, they will not get a phone call from the local party representative saying sorry, there will not be a nomination race, the position is being filled by another individual who is being appointed. This is because we believe in fair and democratic processes, but we also believe in women. We believe that women have it within them to run, to compete and to win. That is another thing that Rona Ambrose taught me.

As I said, the Liberals like to believe that they own compassion. They do not. They like to believe that they own the rights to people's stories. That is not true. I know this. Rona Ambrose knew this. That is the reason that she brought forth this legislation and that is all the bill is asking for, that those who have been entrusted with the greatest responsibility in our society be open to all of these stories, listen to all of these stories. That is really what this training is about: "I see you and I believe you". I am grateful that Rona Ambrose put forward this legislation.

• (1255)

**Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the member for Calgary Midnapore spent some time outlining the achievements of Conservative women, most notably, those of Ms. Ambrose, to which she will find no objection on this side of the House. There is no doubt her leadership is strong with respect to the bill.

I wonder if the member opposite might comment on Conservative men. Ms. Ambrose was quite public in her criticism of Conservative men who form part of the Conservative caucus in the Senate not expeditiously pursuing the passage of the bill in the last Parliament. Further to that, could she comment on Conservative men who are premiers in other parts of this country, including the province that my colleague represents, Alberta, and about this notion of getting provincial training replicated at the provincial level including by the government of Premier Kenney?

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:** Madam Speaker, I think Ms. Ambrose would very much be in support of men contributing to the process. Men were implicated in allowing her to become a member of Parliament, minister and interim leader. The parliamentary secretary's point goes right back to my point with respect to this. The wonderful thing about being a Conservative is we are allowed to disagree with our colleagues. We are allowed to hold other views. This is not permitted in the current governing party, so I think it is something important to hold out. Conservatives have open discussions all the time within our caucus. We absolutely challenge each other's ideas and viewpoints in a way that I think is unprecedented in the Liberal caucus. Therefore, I would say she very much appreciates and is open to the ideas of all elected officials and parliamentarians. The wonderful thing about our party is that it allows for this wonderful scale of views.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I too would like to echo the part of the speech by the member for Calgary Midnapore that acknowledged the leadership of Rona Ambrose.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Ms. Ambrose for her leadership in bringing this bill forward. The fact we are still debating it today I think speaks to that.

I want to ask the member this. There was some specific debate at the justice committee on how to broaden the term "social context", and there was debate over the term "systemic", so we now have in this bill reference to systemic racism and systemic discrimination. I would like to hear not only the member's comments on why it is important that this federal statute now acknowledge systemic racism and systemic discrimination in the justice system, but also her thoughts on what we need to do beyond legislation to ensure that everyone, no matter their background, who goes through the justice system feels accepted, that their experience is going to be valued and that they will get the justice they deserve.

*Government Orders*

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:** Madam Speaker, I go back to what I believe is the fundamental beauty of this bill, which is to provide all Canadians and all individuals within the justice system the opportunity to share their stories no matter what those stories are.

The hon. member is correct. I did focus mostly on women and Rona's commitment and contributions to women and girls. This is an incredible time in history of recognizing ourselves as individuals, as free thinkers, as being authentically who we are. That is fundamentally a conservative principle to me, recognizing the individual, believing in oneself and expressing who one is, so I would say that applies to all Canadians.

• (1300)

**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 Speaker, the degree to which political parties have been put to the side as we deal with this very important issue is encouraging. The role the provinces play was raised by one of my colleagues. It is important. My daughter, an MLA, is dealing with this very issue. I am anticipating that sometime before Christmas there will be an act to try to move forward with it. Would my colleague be prepared to share her thoughts with the premier of Manitoba on giving support to any potential legislation of this nature?

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:** Madam Speaker, I will always have love and respect for Manitoba. My husband is from Winnipeg.

Certainly, as a federal member of Parliament, I am not in the business of providing direction to my provincial colleagues, no matter what their station or position. I just speak to the appreciation I have for this bill and, more importantly, its creator today.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Madam Speaker, I want to salute the member for Calgary Midnapore, because I know that she played a role in Equal Voice in Calgary and has done a lot for women in politics. In light of that and, again, celebrating the many wonderful women judges of the Supreme Court of Canada, including the former chief justice Beverley McLachlin, our first woman justice Bertha Wilson and current members of the court, I do feel that non-partisanship is important. It is important to recognize that Rona Ambrose did a lot of non-partisan things in the House, including supporting my bill for Lyme disease action.

Please forgive me, but with deep respect for someone who as well as being my personal hero became a dear friend, the late Flora MacDonald would never have wanted to be associated with the current version of the Conservative Party. She was unable to join it once it ceased to be the Progressive Conservative Party. My wish for members on that side of the House is that they strive to be the kind of party that the Right Hon. Joe Clark would join again.

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:** Madam Speaker, my thanks to the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands for the compliment, although it was, as always, a little double-sided and a little backhanded. Apparently, she has an ability to speak to the dead. If she could teach me how to do that, I would be interested.

• (1305)

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Madam Speaker, we see many substantial contributions by Conservative women in various countries throughout the world. It

is striking to me that in some corners of the commentary, those contributions are often not recognized. There is legitimate celebration around the achievements of women on the left side of the spectrum, and yet, some of the great heroes of the Conservative movement who are women are ignored.

Does the member have thoughts on that and the steps we can take to better celebrate and recognize the immense contributions of Conservative women?

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:** Madam Speaker, my colleague from Sherwood Park has incredible knowledge and is very much implicated in world affairs. I would not know where to begin in terms of the incredible world leaders who are women beyond our borders, but I am very grateful to have worked with former minister Ambrose and to still call her a friend. I will save my recognition for another speech.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my colleague, the member for Salaberry—Suroît.

As far as we are concerned—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Order.

We must ask for unanimous consent of the House to split your time given that this is the first part of the debate.

Does the member have the unanimous consent of the House to share his time with the member for Salaberry—Suroît?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** There is no opposition.

The hon. member for Rivière-du-Nord.

**Mr. Rhéal Fortin:** Madam Speaker, the Bloc Québécois will support this bill with enthusiasm, just as we supported all its previous iterations.

We believe that victims of sexual assault must be well supported. The judicial process must be followed and, in our opinion, the only way to ensure that victims come forward and that there is due process, as our justice system requires, is to support the victims. We must ensure that judges who hear these cases do so with an open mind in order to be able to recognize the credibility of the victims and to examine the facts objectively and carefully.

In the past, there have been too many examples of situations where victims refused to come forward out of fear or a lack of trust in the judicial process. I believe that it is one of our main duties as legislators to ensure that victims of crime, no matter the crimes or the victims, trust the justice system enough to come forward and present their case.

*Government Orders*

That said, I would be remiss if I did not mention that the Bloc Québécois finds it very unfortunate that the government is using victims of sexual assault to introduce notions into this bill that were not in the previous versions and that have nothing to do with the purpose of the legislation. I am talking about the notions of systemic racism and discrimination.

Let me be clear: I am not saying that racism and discrimination do not exist in Quebec and Canada. They exist, and we agree on that. We do not agree, however, on whether racism and discrimination are systemic or institutional.

These issues are not clear-cut and they are currently a topic of debate in Quebec. They are not clear-cut and no one can agree on the meaning of these words. When we held hearings in committee on the previous version of Bill C-3, we heard from a number of witnesses. However, we did not ask any of those witnesses questions about systemic racism, systemic discrimination or all of the other notions the government has put into Bill C-3.

Parliament is voting today on a bill that started out as a pious hope on the part of Rona Ambrose. Members will recall that the Bloc Québécois enthusiastically supported that bill. At the time, I even moved a motion in the House to send the bill directly to the Senate and for the Senate to quickly pass it before the end of the Parliament. However, we know that the bill died on the Order Paper when an election was called. Since the bill was not passed, we are starting over again today.

Until now, this was not about systemic racism or discrimination. However, we are making a decision here as legislators and saying that our judges must take training on systemic racism and discrimination even though we have not heard from experts on that subject and we have not put any thought into it. We are doing that through the simple but detrimental process of making last-minute amendments during the clause-by-clause examination of the bill.

We are changing the situation by introducing abstract notions, notions on which there is no consensus and on which we have not heard from any experts, into a laudable bill that everyone agreed on and that sought to give judges training around sexual assault. I think that is unfortunate and I would ask my colleagues to refrain from taking this approach.

If we want to bake an apple pie, then we need apples, not grapes. What we are doing here is adding grapes to our apple pie. In the end, we will have an apple-grape pie, which is rather unfortunate. I do not know what the Senate will do with this iteration of Bill C-3. We will see.

• (1310)

Once again, the Bloc Québécois has always been there to support all victims of crime, no matter who they are, particularly victims of sexual assault. We have been there from the start and we will always be there. We will support this bill, but we are not happy that it now includes concepts that do not belong in it.

Lastly, I want to say that we must not stop here. Yes, making sure our judges get sexual assault training is good, but we need to keep working on this. Victims of sexual assault need support throughout the legal process. It is traumatizing for victims to testify about a

crime, and it is all the more traumatizing when that crime is as intimate as sexual assault. Often, that testimony is given years after the crime was committed, and victims who must testify are forced to relive the crime.

Yes, they need a judge who is open, who listens to them objectively, who understands their state of mind during their testimony and who is capable of evaluating the evidence objectively and effectively. However, the system also needs to support these victims in myriad other ways, and Bill C-3 does not enable that. Things will have to be done differently.

I remind members that the provinces are responsible for administering justice. We will always be committed to ensuring that Quebec can manage the entire judicial process. However, in order to truly support victims of sexual assault all through the process, the federal government should make significant investments. Bill C-3 does not include any such investments, but they are worth mentioning.

Let's not delude ourselves into thinking that training for judges will be a cure-all and that it will eliminate every problem. This is a very important issue that we still all agree on, but it goes beyond that. We will have to continue to work with victims and be cautious when dealing with a topic as important as victims of sexual assault. There is no consensus in Quebec or Canada on the notions of systemic racism and discrimination, and we have not heard from experts to advise us on how to legislate these major issues. The government must not introduce unclear notions into a bill, as it has done and as it will be tempted to do with other bills.

I reiterate our concern, but the Bloc Québécois will support this bill.

• (1315)

[*English*]

**Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I want to start by thanking the member opposite for his contributions at the justice committee. I will confess that my recollection of the witness testimony during the study was that witnesses did talk about systemic racism and systemic discrimination.

I will say to the member, point blank, that when we are talking about a bill that deals with the interaction of women who have experienced sexual assault and sexual violence, given the missing and murdered indigenous women and girls inquiry, I think systemic racism and systemic discrimination need to be front and centre in any training of judges being sensitized to these important issues.

Would the member agree with that simple concept, given the increased awareness of these issues vis-à-vis systemic concerns in Quebec in light of what happened to Joyce Echaquan in the health care setting? The health care setting is very similar in that regard to the justice setting.

*Government Orders*

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Rhéal Fortin:** Madam Speaker, I would first like to apologize for forgetting to wear my headset during my speech. That was my mistake.

I thank my colleague for his question. Yes, some witnesses said that they were the victims of racism in a judicial process. That is clear, particularly for indigenous people. We have seen that happen many times in many court cases where the court was not sufficiently aware of these issues. I agree. Again, I am not saying that racism does not occur. What I am saying is that we did not hear from experts on how systemic racism should be defined, for example, but yet we are still introducing that notion into the bill. We are using words like “systemic racism” in the bill when we do not all agree on what they mean. That is currently the topic of a major discussion in Quebec.

I am still not sure how I would define “systemic racism”, and since I am still unsure, I am even more hesitant and disappointed about it being introduced into this bill. That is what I was saying.

[*English*]

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I enjoyed working with my colleague on the justice committee. I will have to disagree with him on the point of systemic racism and systemic discrimination. It is borne out by numerical data, by policies and practices and by organizational culture.

What does my colleague say when even the Quebec human rights commission makes reference to these terms? What does he think his stance says to Blacks, indigenous people and persons of colour within Quebec who have a very different view than he has on the terms “systemic discrimination” and “systemic racism”, especially when they are going through the justice system?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Rhéal Fortin:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question.

Yes, there are people in Quebec who are victims of racism and discrimination of all kinds, such as discrimination against women or ageism. There are all sorts of discrimination and there is racism. We have seen it. We deplored recent tragic events. I am thinking about the indigenous woman in Joliette who was hospitalized. We deplore that incident and we are working to address it.

The Government of Quebec is working on these issues. We are aware of that. However, once again, there is no consensus on this topic. The Government of Quebec did not acknowledge the expression “systemic racism” as something that pervades Quebec institutions. While some talk about institutionalized racism and others of individual racism, no one talks about the racism of the institution.

Who is wrong, who is right, I cannot say. I am not saying that it does not exist. I am saying that there is no consensus. I understand that the Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse has an opinion on this. The party in power in Quebec has an opinion and the opposition parties have other opinions.

It is the same thing here in Ottawa. The parties do not agree on this. Some parties have a different opinion and some individuals

within the parties may not agree with the majority opinion of their party.

Before introducing such a complex notion into legislation, we must hear from expert witnesses and ensure that we are all saying the same thing and that we all understand the expression the same way.

**Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ):** Madam Speaker, this is my first opportunity to speak to Bill C-3, an act to amend the Judges Act and the Criminal Code.

Given that many of my colleagues have risen on this subject—I want to thank my colleague from Rivière-du-Nord for all his work on this issue—it will come as no surprise to anyone that the Bloc Québécois feels that passing this bill is in the best interest of the public and, more specifically, victims of sexual assault.

The Bloc Québécois supports this initiative because it is a step in the right direction. This will enable victims of sexual assault to trust the legal system and to feel understood and supported. We often get the sense that people are wary of these institutions, that victims lack trust and do not think it is worth turning to the justice system. That lack of trust is dangerous, but parliamentarians can find solutions because confidence in our institutions is essential, especially in such sensitive cases.

Requiring judges to be educated about the experience of victims of sexual assault, whom I prefer to call survivors, will not fix everything, obviously. However, it is an essential first step toward making sure our courts improve the way they handle this type of situation.

I want to take this opportunity to commend the thorough and rigorous work done by our counterparts in the National Assembly. Through serious work and in the spirit of sincere co-operation, elected officials, and women in particular, are committed to turning this growing distrust of institutions into trust. They are doing this through concrete and intelligent actions. These elected women in Quebec have mobilized many relevant experts and are sharing ideas to bring about profound change in the way survivors are supported in the justice system, and this is a great example.

These elected representatives from the four parties in the National Assembly have managed to rise above the fray and set partisan politics aside in order to study different paths. Does this call for a separate court specializing in sexual offences, for example? In other words, should there be a court specifically dealing with these issues, with lawyers who specialize in these matters, where sexual offence cases could be dealt with in a very specific way?

Do we need special shelters for victims, like the ones in South Africa, where psychosocial services and legal advice could be provided? For some survivors at least, such a place would have the advantage of being more suited to their needs than a police station.

They are also considering the issue of access to services that are already available but not well known and underutilized, such as shelters for women who are victims of domestic violence.

Although their report and detailed recommendations have not yet been tabled in the National Assembly, their work has resulted in the passage of Bill No. 55, which has now eliminated in Quebec the time constraints on civil proceedings against an alleged assailant. This is major progress and, once again, a step in the right direction that will ensure public confidence in the judicial system, no matter the case.

I am proud of this type of constructive action. This important progress reaffirms my belief that politics can lead to concrete, important and results that speak of compassion and that we can look after our fellow citizens. I invite all elected members in this House to undertake this type of constructive work.

At the end of the day, Bill C-3 will ensure that all judges hearing the evidence will have had training. In other words, these judges will have had to reflect on the stereotypes and myths surrounding sexual assault, as well as on the thought process of survivors. These are examples. We hope that every judge will be fully informed when dealing with sexual assault cases. Judges will therefore be in a position to do what they do best and get justice for victims.

The Bloc Québécois is in favour of this bill, because it has been debated many times in the House and has widespread support.

● (1320)

We are surprised to see that we are still debating this issue here today, since it is so important.

Let us not forget that the idea of providing judges with proper training on sexual assault law has been on the agenda here since 2017. The bill died on the Order Paper during the previous Parliament while being examined by the Senate.

Just one short month ago, I heard colleagues from all political parties clearly and unreservedly support the swift passage of Bill C-3. That rarely occurs in the House. That is why this bill should be passed quickly.

Bill C-3 is necessary because we have lost count of the number of reports of judges who have made inappropriate comments during sexual assault trials or who have rendered decisions that do not take into account the realities of victims.

I spoke earlier about myths and stereotypes. I will now give a few examples.

In one unfortunate case that has now become well-known in Quebec, a judge implied in court that the victim was flattered that an older man was interested in her. We are talking here about a 49-year-old man who licked his victim's face and groped her. She was a minor. That is one example.

Another example is the judge who questioned the credibility of a young survivor's testimony. The judge said that the girl had failed to describe the sexual acts in question accurately enough. He wanted a young girl to use grown-up words to describe the despicable acts she had been subjected to. A young woman cannot be expected to know all the words to describe what happened to her or to have

### *Government Orders*

noticed certain details about those sexual acts. That attitude is inappropriate and has no place in either a schoolyard or a courtroom.

As the mother of three girls, just talking about these two cases disgusts me.

In conclusion, I want to take a moment to honour the brave women who are making the effort to go to court, put together a case, be thorough, patient and courageous, and discuss and speak out publicly against these problems. The Bloc Québécois and I stand with them. Together, we will ensure, once and for all, that institutions actually listen to them and that justice is served.

● (1325)

[*English*]

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I want to ask about the parliamentary secretary's comments earlier. The parliamentary secretary said that although the bill recommended judges who were currently on the bench do this training and asked judges who were being appointed to make a commitment, there would not be a way of publishing who had or had not participated in this training.

We understand the importance of respecting judicial independence, but I am curious to hear my colleague's thoughts on whether this would constitute a limitation and how we might respond if it came out that many people did not do the training.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

I know some members of the Quebec bar are worried about that issue. I have confidence in the independence of the judiciary. Judges must commit to taking this training. Quite frankly, I hope new judges will take this training willingly and enthusiastically, because it is crucial. They need to get with the program, and I encourage them to do so. I think public opinion and society will encourage them to take this training and keep pace with our society's culture and values, which include protecting women against sexual assault.

**Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her comments. I have a question for her regarding what will happen with judges at the provincial level.

The topic has already come up in this debate. It has been noted that Prince Edward Island is the only province that has already moved in this direction in terms of training for judges.

*Government Orders*

Is the member in a position to ask our provincial counterparts and Premier Legault's government if the same kind of training could be brought in at the provincial level in Quebec to combat sexual assault and help victims in these difficult situations?

• (1330)

**Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question.

Obviously we are not going to ask Premier Legault to make a law. Every province is master of its own legislation. However, this issue is of great concern to Quebec's National Assembly. Members of the National Assembly have worked on this important subject.

Every province has to debate this subject and get its own legislature to agree on laws and rules that will promote better defences and protections for women who are victims of violence or sexual assault.

[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.):** Madam Speaker, could my friend provide her thoughts on the importance of seeing the federal legislation moving forward and how provinces across the country could look at ways in which they could incorporate it into provincial jurisdiction, which would go a long way in further advancing this cause?

[Translation]

**Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille:** Madam Speaker, the question from my colleague across the way is very similar to the question I just got.

All the provinces are watching the debates in the House of Commons. It is up to them to make these choices and decide to debate these issues in their own legislatures to provide women with protections and defences through better training for judges.

It is up to them to decide, and I believe they are capable of making the right decisions.

[English]

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Madam Speaker, it is a very real honour to be joining once again in the debate on Bill C-3. I am glad that this morning the House saw fit to pass the bill at report stage by unanimous consent, and get it to where it is now, at third reading. I hope that in short order the House can pass the bill because it still has half of its journey left: through the Senate. There is a real interest from many sectors of our society to see this legislation enacted in law so that we can take a small step toward restoring confidence and transparency in our justice system, because so many people who go through the justice system currently have a lack thereof.

It is important, given we are now at this stage of the debate, to acknowledge the hard work that has gone into getting the bill to where we are today. That starts with an acknowledgement of the work done by the Hon. Rona Ambrose in the previous Parliament, whose private member's bill formed the nucleus of what we see before us today. It is a testament to her leadership and her acknowledgement of a problem in our justice system that led to a version of

the bill being passed unanimously in the House of Commons in the 42nd Parliament, which unfortunately got bogged down in the Senate. We see it before us now in the version of Bill C-3, a government bill. The fact that we are at this stage and considering it for third reading is a great place to be.

I also want to acknowledge the witnesses who appeared before the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, whose testimony helped guide the committee to make the recommendations and amendments that it did. Those amendments make the bill stronger. They acknowledge some of the areas where witnesses had problems with various definitions. The witnesses included members of the Canadian Association of Black Lawyers, the Canadian Centre for Child Protection, the Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity, and the Women's Legal Education and Action Fund. We also had the National Judicial Institute and the Canadian Judicial Council appear before the committee. I believe that their combined testimony helped inform the committee.

I also want to acknowledge what a pleasure it was for me to join my colleagues again on the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. That is a committee I am very fond of, and one that I had the privilege of being a member of in the previous Parliament. It is a committee unlike any other within the House of Commons, given the gravity of the situations it regularly looks at. The legislation often involves weighty matters like the Criminal Code, which have very real consequences for people in everyday situations.

It is important to highlight some of the specific recommendations that the committee made: the amendments that were made to Bill C-3. I want to focus my remarks today specifically on how the reference to social context was made to include a reference to systemic discrimination and systemic racism.

Before I go on, it is important to read into the record a few of the quotes from witnesses at committee. I will start with the vice-president of the Canadian Association of Black Lawyers. He said:

The second concern we have revolves around the lack of definition of social context. If the amendments are to proceed as drafted, we urge the committee to think about the differential impacts of the law on the bodies of indigenous and black people. More specifically, when it comes to sexual assaults, whether in regard to victims or as accused, stereotypes about black and indigenous people lead to differential treatment under the law. These have different impacts on our bodies and our communities.

This was continued by Ms. Rosel Kim, who represented the Women's Legal Education and Action Fund. She said that the previous version of the bill that made its way to committee was problematic in not having specific definitions of what social context was.

• (1335)

While the Women's Legal Education and Action Fund wanted a bit more specific definition of what social context meant, I believe what the committee arrived at is a proper term. It serves to encompass many different forms of discrimination and racism.

A lot of what the witnesses reported to us at committee had to do with stereotypes. We know how different actors who go through the justice system experience things. It is different based on their backgrounds. This was repeatedly said at committee. For example, Ms. Rosel Kim said:

As relates to social context, I think that it would be helpful to have a definition of what social context means. I know that the mandate letter has signalled certain things like impact of trauma and unconscious bias. We would like to see the fact that social context is linked to factors that have led to systemic inequality that have exacerbated these harmful myths and stereotypes in Canadian society.

All of the testimony about systemic racism and systemic discrimination is backed up by the evidence. I want to put a few examples on the record because it is really important to form the basis of the conversation that we are having today.

We know that, for example, disabled women experience sexual violence at about three times the rate of non-disabled women. We know that women with disabilities, those who are institutionalized, aboriginal women, single women and women who are unemployed or have low incomes are at a heightened risk of sexual assault. We know that seniors also experience far higher rates of sexual assault than non-senior women. The way these are reported to police and dealt with by our justice system, and the harmful myths and stereotypes that are brought to bear, are precisely why Bill C-3 is needed: to have these important conversations, support and training so we can ensure at least our federally appointed judges have this background and understand the social context of the cases that come before them.

I want to take this opportunity to zero in on some of the comments made by my colleagues in the Bloc Québécois. The committee meeting that was held to discuss this bill was not in camera. It is all on the public record for everyone to see. It took place on October 27. A large part of the debate at committee centred on the word “systemic”. My colleague from the Bloc was fine having the references to “racism” and “discrimination”, but not the reference to the word “systemic”. That is problematic for a number of reasons.

First of all, if we want evidence that systemic racism exists, we need only look at the numerical data. We know racialized persons are not being treated equally by our justice system given their percentage of the population, how many of them end up incarcerated and the treatment they receive. We also need to look at the ways policies, practices and decision-making processes are brought about, and the organizational culture of our justice system.

We need only to listen to the voices of Black, indigenous and racialized persons, because they are the ones who have been leading this conversation through their organizations and as individuals. They are the ones who have been telling not only Parliament, but the government and broader Canadian society, that there is in fact a systemic bias in our justice system and that systemic discrimination and systemic racism do exist. It is particularly important that we name those terms and reference them specifically in this bill. If we do not, we are simply whitewashing it and ignoring the fact that this is a very real experience. It is important and we have to acknowledge it.

Systemic racism is, of course, inherent in institutions other than law, but it certainly involves law. It reinforces other spheres of soci-

ety, it raises questions about all aspects of law, and so on and so forth.

● (1340)

In this conversation about Bill C-3 there have been questions about the role of Parliament and the role of judges. Some of the concerns we have heard in write-ups about this bill have particularly focused on whether Parliament is overstepping its bounds with respect to judicial independence. Of course we have to respect the very important role judges play in our society. One of the pillars of our democracy is the idea of judicial independence. We do not want to arrive at a place where there is even a perception of political interference or control in how judges render their decisions. They have to necessarily be independent of Parliament. They have to be able to understand the facts of law and the facts of a case, and make a completely impartial decision based on those. Therefore, when Parliament is examining a bill that is going to be amending the Judges Act, I think it is only reasonable that questions of this nature arise. What I would say to those critics is this. If we look at the very careful language of the bill we now have before us in the House, the way the bill is currently written gives independence to the National Judicial Institute to tailor its programs in a way that is completely separate from any kind of political or parliamentary interference.

What we are stating as parliamentarians, as representatives of the people, which is an entirely legitimate role for us to play, is that we, on behalf of our constituents, are finally acknowledging the problems that exist in the justice system. These are borne out by the unfortunate comments we have heard from judges during trials and deliberations, and the harmful myths and stereotypes they have bought into when making their decisions. We, as the people's representatives, are communicating through a federal statute that we want to see these acknowledged. We believe it is important for them to be acknowledged. We have to name them and actually see them written down in the training that judges take. That is where I believe Parliament's role legitimately ends. Now it is up to the training the judges themselves organize to take that message from Parliament to the next step so we start to see the training that is necessary.

I do not want to spend too much time talking about this bill. From the debate we have seen in the House today there is fairly good support for it. If I'm reading the room correctly, I hope we can get to a vote soon and see this bill passed unanimously by the House to get it to the Senate. We would be kidding ourselves if we thought that this one amendment to a federal statute was going to fix the problems. Do not get me wrong: I think it is an important step. That is why we will be supporting the bill. The changes we need to make to the justice system as a whole are going to require far greater resources than just a legislative fix. I really hope a main topic of conversation with the federal Minister of Justice, when he is speaking with his provincial counterparts, is how we tackle these other systemic problems.

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I already talked about how myths and stereotypes have extremely negative impacts. We absolutely must make sure the voices of people who have been marginalized by our justice system are heard. They must be actively listened to and acted upon. We need to see those financial resources. We need to see that active commitment to making sure we are striving for equality before the law. There are many organizations out there, including women's organizations, LGBTQ organizations and organizations representing Black and indigenous persons of colour, that are only too willing to step up to the plate to show the government where these fixes need to be made.

• (1345)

I will end my speech with a quote from Michael Spratt, a well-known lawyer in the Ottawa region. He has frequently been a witness before the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. When speaking of this bill, he recently wrote in *Canadian Lawyer* magazine:

Step down from your ivory tower with me for a view from the trenches: where complainants in sexual assault cases are provided inadequate social supports; where complainants are almost always provided inadequate information about the court process; where the legal education of lawyers (both Crown and defense) is too often seen as an expensive obligation and not a learning opportunity; and where the wishes of complainants are often ignored.

Maybe we can start by tackling these problems.

This is a fitting place to end my speech. What we have before the House right now is a good bill. The work that was done at committee honoured the testimony that we heard from witnesses. I am pleased to offer my support to this important legislation. I hope we can send it to the other place quite soon so we can see the bill finally receive the royal assent it deserves so we can take this important step.

**Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford for his contributions at the justice committee in this Parliament, but also in the last Parliament. I also thank him for outlining actual evidence we heard at the committee study. This kind of speech elevates the tone of the debate, and we need exactly that from all parliamentarians.

What struck me was something we heard in the last Parliament from none other than Senator Murray Sinclair. When he was in front of the heritage committee, he said that systemic racism was what was left when all the racists were gotten rid of. What he meant by that was we had to look at the culture, the norms, the mores and the rules that were in place with respect to understanding a systemic problem as opposed individual acts of racism.

I hear the member opposite. I agree with his perspective on what we heard and also the direction of the bill. However, I will put to him something that he raised earlier in this debate, which was it needed to extend further, including to those other levels of government. The member is a representative from British Columbia. The British Columbia government has enacted a number of progressive pieces of legislation.

What are the member's thoughts about different areas, including his province of B.C., moving forward with this? Is this a cause that

the member would champion with respect to the training of provincial judges in B.C.?

• (1350)

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** Madam Speaker, I will be raising these issues with my provincial counterparts. I am lucky enough to have the premier as a constituent of mine. No other member of Parliament of B.C. can claim that.

In the recent provincial election, I was very glad to see our mutual friend, Murray Rankin. He is now an MLA-elect, representing the riding of Oak Bay-Gordon Head. I know from his decades of experience on justice issues, but also as a previous member of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human rights, that he understands these issues only too well. With David Eby, the attorney general of British Columbia, I would be more than happy to take up these conversations to see where B.C. can improve its own laws and processes.

Given what we have seen from the provincial government over the last three and a half years, I expect we will see some pretty impressive, progressive updates on this. I will be happy to have that conversation with my provincial counterparts.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I think we all feel grateful that all parliamentarians support this issue.

As we look at this, we know that discrimination, racism, all these issues continue to be a significant concern for us in our court system. I think of one of the communities I represent, Port Hardy. Just recently it started moving toward having a system that would allow indigenous folks to be part of the decision-making process in a court system.

How can parliamentarians also do the work with local indigenous leadership in bringing forward steps to move toward a less discriminatory system for indigenous members of our communities?

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** Madam Speaker, the member for North Island—Powell River has always been a fantastic advocate, particularly on indigenous issues.

What is important to acknowledge is that pre-contact indigenous people in what is today known as Canada had their own system of laws, their own justice system, and that was completely upended with colonization. A completely foreign way of doing the law was often imposed upon them, which was based on our own common law experiences that we inherited from England.

Therefore, if we are truly going to move forward as a nation, we have to acknowledge the pre-contact systems that were in existence for all indigenous communities right across the country. We have to find a way to work on that knowledge and their approaches to justice and incorporate them with our broader justice system. That is an absolutely important way of going forward. It will do wonders for our ultimate path toward reconciliation. As she and many indigenous Canadians would know, we still have a long way before us before we reach that.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Madam Speaker, although it is a little outside the scope of Bill C-3, one of the places where we see systemic racism is in the use of injunctions. I know he will have experienced, as a British Columbian, the use of injunctions to arrest indigenous protestors. However, when indigenous nations go to seek injunctions to protect territory, they are far less likely to be granted one than corporations that seek injunctions to violate indigenous rights and pursue projects like pipelines.

I wonder if my hon. colleague has some thoughts on how we might want to reform injunction law to deal with the systemic racism throughout our criminal justice system.

• (1355)

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** Madam Speaker, the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands raises an important point. I know that a couple of years ago she joined with the now mayor of Vancouver, Kennedy Stewart, to protest the expansion of the Trans Mountain pipeline. It is quite interesting to note, as she correctly pointed out, the treatments that corporations get versus indigenous protestors who, in many ways, are there trying to protect what is rightfully theirs since pre-contact. These are their traditional and unceded territories. For these projects to proceed, it is important we have that full consent going forward.

It is an interesting question. It is certainly one about which I, as a Vancouver Islander, have been rightly concerned. I still have constituents to this day writing to me about these specific issues. Therefore, I would agree with her that, when we are talking about Bill C-3 and the stereotypes and myths that exist and are acknowledged in this legislation, it does allow us to open up a broader conversation about the justice system as a whole. That is why I acknowledged in my comments that this was a small but important legislative step. However, it is important that we follow through with further actions and commitments to make the justice system much better for all Black, indigenous and persons of colour because of the discrimination they frequently experience.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Resuming debate, the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader. I will advise him that unfortunately I will have to interrupt him so we can go to question period.

**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 Speaker, it is with pleasure to speak to this important bill. I am very proud that all parliamentarians of all political stripes have come together in support of this substantial legislation. The very idea of it originates from a former Conservative member of Parliament and interim leader, Rona Ambrose. It is appropriate to give her recognition for bringing this forward in a private member's bill and the government and all members recognizing the true value of the legislation.

Ultimately, it was the will of the House of Commons in the last Parliament to see that legislation pass at third reading, with the unanimous support from all political parties. Unfortunately, for whatever reasons, the Senate of Canada was unable to pass it. Therefore, we now have, once again, the legislation but in a different format. It is government legislation, which speaks well to the

### *Statements by Members*

government picking up on what was an important piece of legislation, which passed through the House once before, and reintroducing it as Bill C-3.

I was really encouraged once again by the comments of members on all sides of the House during second reading of the bill, recognizing the importance of it. A number of personal stories were conveyed. Members used previous court rulings, for example, providing what members of our judicial system had said and why so many people were offended.

I recognize the importance of judicial independence and I think all members of the House recognize that importance. That something weighed heavily on the minds of individuals as we debated this very important topic. I want to pick up on the idea that this is federal legislation and that it only impacts federally appointed judges.

There is another important aspect of our judicial system, which is the provincially appointed judges. I was quite pleased when my daughter, an MLA from the province of Manitoba, raised the issue with me. She has an interest and would like to see this brought into provincial jurisdictions. I see no conflict by members of Parliament from whatever region, raising the issue, talking about the issue and encouraging our provincial jurisdictions.

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1400)

[English]

### LOUIS RIEL DAY

**Mr. Vance Badawey (Niagara Centre, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, November 16, today, is Louis Riel Day. We pay tribute to the Métis leader and founder of Manitoba. We recognize his tireless advocacy for Métis rights and celebrate Métis culture across this nation. Louis Riel was a father of Confederation, bringing Manitoba into Canada. His contributions have not only benefited the Métis nation but our entire country.

Today, Canada and the Métis nation are committed to working together on a renewed government-to-government relationship. We have made historic investments to support a Métis nation-led post-secondary education strategy, recognize the contributions of Métis veterans during the Second World War and address the housing needs of Métis communities.

We will continue to work with the Métis nation to make a real difference in the lives of Métis. Today, I invite all Canadians to celebrate this day by learning about Métis history and culture as we walk the path of reconciliation together.

*Statements by Members***SASKATCHEWAN PROVINCIAL ELECTION**

**Mr. Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am rising today to congratulate Premier Scott Moe on winning the recent Saskatchewan provincial election, the fourth consecutive win for his party.

My federal riding of Saskatoon West is home to six provincial ridings that have traditionally split themselves between the Saskatchewan Party and the NDP. Of particular interest to me is the southern part of my riding, the provincial riding of Saskatoon Riversdale, where the NDP incumbent MLA retired.

Saskatoon Riversdale has been an NDP monopoly since 1967, with the likes of former NDP premiers Roy Romanow and Lorne Calvert representing it. However, the demographics of this area are changing. Many young families, new immigrants and people concerned about their financial future have settled in this area.

Now the riding has switched and Saskatchewan Party candidate Marv Friesen has been elected. I want to congratulate Marv Friesen and his entire team, all the volunteers, donors and supporters. We in this House know too well of the hard work and dedication required of them.

I say congratulations to Marv and congratulations to Scott Moe.

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[*Translation*]

**MAX GROS-LOUIS**

**Ms. Annie Koutrakis (Vimy, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, today I want to pay tribute to former Huron-Wendat Grand Chief Max Gros-Louis. All members of this chamber and all Canadians are thinking of his friends, his family and the members of the Huron-Wendat First Nation.

He was a great leader and a passionate advocate for his nation's rights and culture. He served and represented his community as Grand Chief for more than 30 years. He was instrumental in creating dialogue and collaboration between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples. As a frequent ambassador for indigenous issues internationally, he introduced the Hurons-Wendat people to the world and ensured that the views of Canada's first nations were made known.

His death leaves a great void, but his legacy will leave an indelible mark on Canada's history.

\* \* \*

**MAX GROS-LOUIS**

**Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Madam Speaker, the Huron-Wendat First Nation is in mourning after losing Max Oné Onti Gros-Louis, a larger-than-life man whose life was interwoven with the history of the 20th century.

Max Gros-Louis was the Grand Chief of the Huron-Wendat First Nation on and off between 1964 and 2008. For 33 years in all, he was one of the greatest ambassadors for his people and one of the most recognizable advocates for first nations. He was a tireless activist who helped found a number of assemblies dedicated to promoting first nations' rights. His efforts earned him global renown.

I first met him as a child, and I remember him as a friendly man. One memory I will always treasure of this great man is from when I was a teenager and he would bring my family game that he had just hunted.

As the first member of the Huron-Wendat First Nation to sit in Parliament, I want to say *Tiawenhk* to Max Gros-Louis.

\* \* \*

• (1405)

**HOUSING IN HOCHELAGA**

**Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Hochelaga, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, last week, I had the opportunity to talk to representatives from Maison Oxygène, an organization in Hochelaga that provides support to fathers.

This year, Maison Oxygène celebrated its 30th anniversary. Every year, it provides shelter and support to more than 50 fathers and 90 children. It is the first shelter for struggling fathers on the Island of Montreal. It is part of the Carrefour familial Hochelaga, which also includes the Maison de la famille, the École hors murs and soon Les Glaneuses as well.

Today, we can count on 14 Maison Oxygène shelters across Quebec. It was to help organizations like this one that our government invested money in the first national housing strategy in Canada.

I am proud to be part of a government that advocates for access to housing, because everyone deserves to have a roof over their heads.

I am proud to represent all of Hochelaga's organizations, and I am proud that our government is there to help them.

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[*English*]

**DEFIBRILLATORS**

**Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the tragic death of Robert Dziekanski, tasered by RCMP officers in the Vancouver airport, was caught on video. The result was a media sensation and a commitment to install defibrillators wherever the police use tasers. However, when the very same RCMP officers arrive at someone's house as first responders, they are not equipped with defibrillators.

It is a statistical fact that upwards of 300 lives would be saved every year if each RCMP cruiser were issued a defibrillator, but those heart attack deaths, one a day on average, are not televised, so the media and, therefore, the government do not seem to care. When only visible deaths are taken seriously, Stalin's horrible maxim becomes a truism: one death is a tragedy; a million deaths are just a statistic.

The government could save 300 lives next year with a simple order to the RCMP to put a defibrillator in every cruiser. Surely now is the time to act.

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#### ALEX TREBEK

**Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Sudbury, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, Sudbury-born Alex Trebek never forgot his roots. Born to a French-Canadian mother with first nations ancestry and a Ukrainian immigrant father, and raised with a keen interest in geography, Trebek embodied both Sudbury and Canada.

We know him as the most successful game show host in history, having hosted world-famous *Jeopardy!* from Hollywood for more than 30 years. Trebek had a broad career before that in Canada. He was a news reader at CBC and a morning show host in Toronto. He was even short-listed to host *Hockey Night in Canada*. Throughout his storied career, Trebek remained a huge advocate for education, having served as the Royal Canadian Geographical Society's honorary president since May 2016 and hosting the Canadian Geographic Challenge numerous times.

Not long after Trebek announced he had pancreatic cancer, I had a chance to give him a gift from the people of Sudbury. Hundreds of residents had written well wishes on City of Greater Sudbury flags and Trebek shared with me how he was deeply moved by this gesture.

[Translation]

He was a first-rate ambassador for his hometown of Sudbury and for Canada as a whole.

[English]

His legacy and memory will long be part of Sudbury's and Canada's proud history.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### MONTREAL ISLAND NORTH HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES CENTRE

**Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg (Bourassa, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, today I rise in the House to acknowledge the work done by the Montreal Island North Centre intégré universitaire de santé et de services sociaux, the CIUSSS, since COVID-19 broke out in Montreal North, the epicentre of the pandemic. I am especially proud of the accomplishments of the school testing, early childhood intervention and communications teams, as well as those of community organizations, and of the work they continue to do.

This morning, with the honourable senator, Dr. Marie-Françoise Mégie in attendance, I had the honour of awarding the Bourassa MP's medal to Zina Beshila, Sylvie Guibert, Sandra Lalancette, Karine Morier and Danielle Thériault in recognition of their dedication and determination.

I would like to thank the CIUSSS administration and congratulate the recipients and their team.

#### Statements by Members

[English]

#### MÉTIS WEEK

**Mr. Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, *taanshi. Marc dishinikashon.*

I am speaking from Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, the traditional territory of the Katzie and Kwantlen first nations.

I am Cree Métis on my father's side, from Lesser Slave Lake, Alberta, with lineage to the Red River Métis settlements. This is national Métis Week. The Métis are the descendants of European fur traders and their indigenous wives in what was known then as the "North West". Our unique and rich culture took root in the early 1800s, and now has grown to 600,000 strong. Because we are an indigenous people living in so many centres, it takes purposeful effort to build community and strengthen culture.

I honour Métis National Council leader Clément Chartier and all Métis Nation leaders, including B.C. president Clara Morin Dal Col.

Locally, I am a member of the Golden Ears Métis Society. Thanks to all who are building up our Métis associations everywhere. Their efforts are valued, appreciated and vital.

\* \* \*

● (1410)

[Translation]

#### AMICITIA FRANCE-CANADA MONUMENT

**Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Orléans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on November 11, as chair of the Canada-France Inter-Parliamentary Association, I participated in the annual Remembrance Day ceremony for the French community at Beechwood.

In tribute to the ties of friendship that unite our two countries beyond interparliamentary relations, the ceremony took place at the future location of the Amicitia France-Canada commemorative monument. The fundraising campaign for the monument will be launched at the French embassy tomorrow.

[English]

Not only would this monument be a symbol of friendship and mutual aid, it would also confirm and immortalize the history that Canada and France have long shared on the battlefield. The long-standing friendship between our countries remains strong today, and this monument will be a reminder for generations to come.

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#### DIWALI

**Mr. Bob Saroya (Markham—Unionville, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to wish all Canadians who celebrated Diwali this weekend a happy Diwali.

*Statements by Members*

Every autumn, Hindus, Sikhs, Jains and others from across the globe celebrate Diwali, the festival of lights. The celebration heralds more than just the harvest and the beginning of winter. Diwali symbolizes the victory of truth over evil, light over darkness and knowledge over ignorance. It is a time to celebrate life and to look forward to the year ahead.

During the Diwali festival, people set off fireworks and distribute sweets, also known as mithai, to their families, friends and neighbours. This year, COVID-19 made celebrating a little different. People prayed and celebrated Diwali with their family and friends virtually, in parking lots and in open spaces.

On behalf of the Conservative Party and our leader, I wish everyone celebrating Diwali good health, wealth and happiness. Happy Diwali.

\* \* \*

**ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

**Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in the fog of war, nothing is more important than information to make sound decisions on the battlefield. Information is the difference between life and death, success and failure.

To fight this pandemic, we need information to navigate the uncertainty and position for recovery, but the government is waging a relentless campaign to restrict, delay and deny access to critical information. The Liberals will not answer questions, and they paralyze committees, shut down debate and refuse to provide a budget. The Parliamentary Budget Officer does not have the information to track government spending. Access to information laws are being ignored, with less than half of federal agencies processing information requests. The information exists, but the Liberals will not release it.

Information is power. The Liberals must give the power of government information to all Canadians. We cannot survive this crisis without it.

\* \* \*

**COVID-19 VACCINE**

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, as COVID cases rise across the country, access to a safe, effective vaccine is critically important to Canadians and their families. While there has been some encouraging news about vaccine candidates, the Liberal government has not been transparent about the deals it has signed with pharmaceutical companies, and it has refused to make them public as other countries have done.

It is alarming to hear reports that Canadians will get the vaccine months after other countries, such as the U.K. and the U.S., and while nations such as Australia, Japan and India have negotiated contracts that allow them to produce the vaccine in their own countries to ensure people get it quickly, apparently the Canadian government has not done this. People are rightfully wondering why.

Canadians have sacrificed profoundly to keep their families and neighbours safe. They deserve to know what the government has agreed to behind closed doors. The New Democrats are going to

keep fighting for answers, because when it comes to our health, it is unacceptable for the Liberals to keep Canadians in the dark.

\* \* \*

● (1415)

[*Translation*]

**DANIELLE GOULET**

**Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to commend Danielle Goulet for her 30 years of involvement with Macadam Sud, a community organization in my riding that helps young people aged 12 to 35 in Longueuil and Montérégie.

Ms. Goulet started working with people in need in 1990 as a street outreach worker with Macadam Sud. Since 2000, she has been the executive director, supervising 24 employees, and her organization averages 20,000 interventions with 5,000 people a year. That is an extraordinary level of involvement.

Ms. Goulet also oversees the TAPAJ program, an alternative work day program, and CAPAB, a school that provides customized learning programs for street youth. Ms. Goulet is the type of person who is never short of ideas. In May, anticipating the repercussions that COVID-19 would have on people who are struggling, Macadam Sud collaborated with Repas du Passant and Casa Bernard-Hubert on opening a homeless shelter that is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Longueuil is lucky to have someone like Ms. Goulet.

Ms. Goulet, on behalf of the people of Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, I thank you.

\* \* \*

**MAX GROS-LOUIS**

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, over the weekend, we were very sad to hear of the passing of Max Gros-Louis, the former Grand Chief of the Huron-Wendat First Nation who was a world-renowned indigenous leader, a larger-than-life man and a towering giant in our history.

Max Gros-Louis helped the members of the Wendat nation and indigenous peoples rediscover their pride in their identity. His Wendat name was Oné Onti, which means “paddler”. Grand Chief Gros-Louis was indeed skilled at paddling through the sometimes troubled waters of political negotiations. He was one of the first to unite the first nations. He was the Wendat Grand Chief for 33 years and was politically active for essentially half a century. He accomplished great things for his nation and for all first nations. He has left an indelible mark on our history. He believed in discussion, dialogue and negotiation. He ardently defended his rights, but he was always respectful. He taught us a lot.

He was known and recognized around the world, garnering the respect of everyone from the Pope to the Secretary-General of the UN, not to mention world leaders and royalty.

*Oral Questions*

We offer our sincere condolences to his family, his loved ones, his nation and the first nations.

\* \* \*

[English]

**2020 U.S. ELECTION**

**Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Scarborough—Rouge Park, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate President-elect Joe Biden and Vice-President-elect Kamala Harris on their historic victory.

Biden received over 78 million votes, the highest number of votes of any presidential candidate in history.

Harris is the first Black woman and the first woman of Tamil ancestry to be elected to the highest of offices in the United States. In a world that has systematically and repeatedly limited women, especially Black women, from achieving their fullest potential, Kamala Harris has shattered the glass ceiling for all. Her election stands as a testament that young women and girls of all backgrounds can achieve their dreams, no matter how big they are. Harris has deep roots in Canada. She lived here during her formative years and graduated from Westmount High School in Montreal.

Democracy works. The American people have spoken decisively, and we congratulate them. We look forward to welcoming President Biden and Vice-President Harris to Canada.

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**ORAL QUESTIONS**

[English]

**NATURAL RESOURCES**

**Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canada's economy was showing signs of trouble before COVID-19 hit, with record debt and out-of-control spending. In fact, in March of this year, prior to COVID, Canada lost over a million jobs, many of those in the energy sector.

Since 2015, energy workers have been abandoned by the government, so when Keystone XL was approved in the U.S. in March 2017, there was once again a glimmer of hope for Canadian workers. Those hopes are now at risk.

What will the Prime Minister do to ensure that the Keystone XL project moves ahead in the United States?

**Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let me be very clear to energy sector workers, especially those in Alberta who are worried about the future of this project. Our government has been and will be unwavering in its support for Keystone XL. We have been advocating for, and will continue to advocate for, this project to the U.S. government. In fact, the Prime Minister discussed this project on his very first call with the president-elect.

Keystone is a good project. We support it. There are 1,500 Canadians working on it as we speak. We support them.

**The Speaker:** I would like to remind hon. members to turn off their microphones.

• (1420)

[Translation]

I would ask the member for Thérèse-De Blainville to mute her microphone.

We seem to have a problem with the microphones. We will look into it.

[English]

The hon. member for Portage—Lisgar.

**Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, here is the problem with the Liberals' answer. The Prime Minister said that he wants to phase out the oil sands. He said this in 2017. He attacked pipelines with Bill C-69. He implemented a tanker ban and a job-killing carbon tax. That has meant thousands of jobs lost in the west. Losing Keystone would mean at least 2,800 more jobs lost.

What is the Prime Minister's plan to ensure that the Keystone XL project goes ahead so that more Canadian jobs are not lost?

**Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister raised this issue with the president-elect on the very, very first call. We have been clear. There is a very strong argument for the project, and that continues regardless of who the President of the United States is. We will continue to make that argument.

One of the strongest arguments for this project is that we have a government that is fighting climate change, that is putting a price on pollution and that is making investments to help our energy sector become more sustainable than ever.

**Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, recently, when asked if a Biden victory would mean the end of Keystone XL, the Prime Minister abdicated, saying, "That's a question for Mr. Biden." This defeatist tone is unacceptable and provides no reassurances that the Prime Minister will actually fight on behalf of energy workers for this project to move forward.

The success of Keystone XL would create 2,800 Canadian jobs and indirectly support 15,000 additional jobs. With the current COVID crisis, these jobs are more important than ever.

Again, what is the Prime Minister's plan to ensure that KXL is not cancelled?

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let me quote: “One of the real problems that I think lingers over [Keystone XL] is, before the pipeline question arose, the [Harper government] deliberately went out of its way to be seen as an adversary of environmentalists”. Who said that? It was the former Progressive Conservative prime minister, minister of Foreign Affairs and member for Calgary Centre, the Right Hon. Joe Clark. I look over to the other side. Its record of inaction and failure on the environment nearly doomed this project. We have been unwavering in our support for Keystone. We do not need any advice from the opposition.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Edmonton Manning on a point of order.

**Mr. Ziad Abouttaif:** Mr. Speaker, I cannot hear the Parliamentary Secretary.

**The Speaker:** Order. If I could have your attention for a moment, I just want to remind all the members, not only in the House but especially the ones joining us virtually, to make sure that they are in a place where they have good connections so that we can hear everything they have to say. Everyone is just waiting with bated breath to hear their answers.

[Translation]

The hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent.

\* \* \*

**OFFICIAL LANGUAGES**

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to be the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent, but I am not in the least proud of the member for Saint-Laurent. Last Thursday, at a parliamentary committee, she had the unmitigated gall to cast doubt on the fragility of French in Montreal.

She said, speaking in English, that she had to see it to believe it. She then used sarcastic air quotes when referring to the “decline” of the French language in Montreal.

It does not take a rocket scientist to understand that French is fragile in Montreal.

Could the Prime Minister, who is the member for Papineau and a neighbour of the member for Saint-Laurent, set the record straight and clearly tell the member that she was totally wrong?

• (1425)

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it goes without saying that both of our official languages are extremely important. We recognize that French is a minority language in Canada and North America, that it is losing ground and that, consequently, we must do more to protect French in Canada and across Quebec.

Given the situation, we stated in the throne speech, for the first time, that we would address this issue and find the means to resolve this problem, this phenomenon, I would call it. Under the circumstances, we will be modernizing the Official Languages Act.

[English]

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Chatham-Kent—Leamington is rising on a point of order. Normally we do not have points of order during the question period, unless it is a technical issue.

**Mr. Dave Epp:** Mr. Speaker, it is a technical issue in that the translation and the French were at the same volume and incomprehensible.

**The Speaker:** I would remind members to make sure they have switched the button to the language they are speaking in.

We were gone for a week and seem to have forgotten everything. Maybe by the time we are done today, we will have it all back in order.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the minister said earlier that we need to modernize the Official Languages Act, but the Liberals have been in office for five years, they have been saying that for five years and they have done nothing for five years. Why? Perhaps the member for Saint-Laurent was actually speaking on behalf of her colleagues when she made derogatory and disrespectful comments regarding the fragility of French in Montreal.

When will the government take action instead of lecturing everyone?

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, of course we recognize that French is declining in Montreal, Quebec and Canada. Studies show that such is the case. Those are the facts, and that is why we are going to take action.

At the same time, we said in the throne speech that we needed to do more and that we were going to modernize the Official Languages Act. No one in the House will take lessons from my colleague because he and his party voted against the throne speech and, consequently, they voted against the modernization of the Official Languages Act.

I hope that he will change his views on this issue, and I will be happy to work with him.

\* \* \*

**JUSTICE**

**Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, if you want a judicial appointment, become a Liberal. Everyone will work with you. Ministers, MPs and even their staff will help you become a judge.

Last week, the Canadian Bar Association condemned the judicial appointment process, saying, “It is time to make the system less open to manipulation.” That means something coming from the Canadian Bar Association.

Will the Liberals put an end to Liberal patronage?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are very proud of the judicial appointment process we put in place in 2016. The process is merit-based and involves advisory committees. As a result, 400 outstanding judges whose diversity reflects Canada's makeup have been appointed.

I am very proud of our appointments, and we will keep going.

**Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, that is the problem. The minister says his appointment process is great, but the lawyers to whom it applies are speaking out against it.

The Canadian Bar Association also said that “the government risks eroding the confidence of the public in the independence and fairness of the justice system”. Get rid of the process. Nobody believes in it.

When will the Liberals stop giving Liberals an edge when it comes to judicial appointments?

**Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I just said, our appointments are based on merit and diversity, and the advisory committees rely on a rigorous process that aims for quality and diversity.

Of the judges appointed since 2016 with this new process, 10% are visible minorities, 5% identify as members of the LGBTQ2 community, 3% are indigenous and 50% are women.

\* \* \*

**HEALTH**

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, during the first wave of COVID-19, conditions in long-term care centres were horrible.

Lives were lost. The Canadian Armed Forces had to be sent in. Now, cases are increasing and we have the same conditions. Public health experts are demanding that the government establish national standards for long-term care.

Why is the Prime Minister dragging his feet instead of protecting our seniors?

[*English*]

**Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I share the member opposite's concern about the growing number of cases across the country. We are working with all levels of government to make sure that we support people who are vulnerable to COVID-19.

I will just say this. In the safe restart, we contributed \$740 million to provinces and territories to strengthen their protections for long-term care homes, and we committed to the creation of national standards with provinces and territories.

We will do that work together with the provinces and territories, which will then have better ability to deliver on their health care responsibilities.

● (1430)

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, those national standards need to come quickly.

We are seeing long-term care outbreaks across this country. In particular, for-profit, long-term care centres are the site of the worst conditions. Revera-owned sites, owned by the federal government, are where some of the worst conditions are happening, in Edmonton, Winnipeg and Scarborough. In Winnipeg, paramedics arrived at a Revera-owned long-term care home and found seniors left dead in their beds for hours.

Will the Prime Minister commit today, once and for all, to remove profit from the care of our seniors?

**Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I share the member opposite's deep concern that care for seniors has to be paramount for all of us, no matter what level of government we are at. We have to care about the dignity and safety of the seniors who are amongst us in our communities.

That is why we have been supporting provinces and territories to deliver on their responsibility with \$740 million through the safe restart agreement and additional support through deployment of the Canadian Red Cross, including into Manitoba, Ontario and Quebec.

We will be there for the provinces and territories as they work to protect long-term care residents from COVID-19.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT**

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this government has awarded billions of dollars' worth of contracts in the fight against COVID-19, but many of those contracts have been untendered.

Not only did the Prime Minister award a \$237-million contract to his friend Frank Baylis, but we have also learned that a \$371-million untendered contract was awarded to another supplier for medical gowns. We would like to know the specifics of these contracts, but we are told we cannot have that information.

Can someone tell us why we are not allowed to have that information?

**Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for mentioning this Canadian success.

This Canadian small business ensured that these gowns could be distributed as quickly as possible by taking it upon itself to rent the biggest airplane in the world until all the gowns were delivered. The company went above and beyond to help protect Canada's front-line workers. I want to thank that business, as well as all Canadian businesses that have supplied equipment in the fight against COVID-19, for their support and hard work throughout this pandemic.

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary is starting to give an answer. He said that the company rented the biggest plane in the world, but he did not say anything else. We have no idea.

What we do know is that a \$371-million contract was awarded to a company made up of two people who work at home. That is it. Newspapers have reported that we may have paid three times the price for the gowns, but we do not know. We know nothing.

Why does the government refuse to provide information on the contracts for gowns or ventilators? This is straightforward, after all; we are not talking about military equipment.

**Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the entire Government of Canada naturally worked very hard to set up our domestic capacity to procure PPE for all Canadians.

We are working with Canadian companies, including small businesses in Ontario and Quebec and across Canada, from coast to coast, to meet our demands now, so that Canada is prepared to deal with any contingency. A large number of Quebec companies stepped up to supply the necessary PPE for Canada, and I could go on.

\* \* \*

[English]

**HEALTH**

**Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as Canadians continue to face a growing COVID pandemic, suicide rates are growing at an alarming rate. Last week, the Prime Minister encouraged Canadians who are feeling anxious or overwhelmed to call 211. For the record, 211 is not a suicide prevention hotline. It is a directory, and it may not even be available across the country. That is the equivalent of dialing 911 during an emergency and getting a recording or being put on hold. When minutes count, direct access can make the difference between a life saved and a life lost.

Will the Prime Minister take real action, join Conservatives and ensure that our 988 motion will pass?

**Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to share with the member opposite that I also am deeply concerned about the mental health of Canadians, in particular during COVID-19 but at all times. We know that suicide prevention is so critically important. The member opposite knows I want to work with him on making sure we have better and more rapid access to supports, wherever a person is in this country.

We know that when people reach out they are often in their worst moments, and they need immediate help.

**Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, to be clear, I am asking the minister for clarity. The motion has been tabled. If we sought unanimous consent, would the minister see that this motion would pass right now?

• (1435)

**Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, when a motion receives unanimous consent by the House of Com-

mons, of course that is a very important measure to move forward. As I said to the member, I will work with his office tirelessly to make sure that we see his reality of better access to immediate care for people who are worrying about their mental health and considering suicide as a way to end their suffering. It is not acceptable that people have to wait for that help.

**Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, over the last week many parts of Canada have seen record-breaking numbers of COVID cases. The Liberals did not even consider rapid tests until we were already well into the second wave. We needed to have the capacity to be testing, tracing and isolating when provinces had 70 cases a day, not 1,400.

After 10 months, hundreds of billions of dollars have been spent, thousands of lives and millions of jobs and businesses have been lost, and there has been no action. Why have the Liberals put Canadians in harm's way?

**Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I share the member opposite's concern about the rapid growth of cases across the country. In fact, I spent numerous hours this weekend speaking with health ministers across the country to make sure they have what they need to combat the growth. In fact, we have shipped over 4.2 million rapid tests to provinces and territories to date, over 1.7 million to Ontario, 1.2 million to Quebec and 345,000 to B.C. We stand ready to help those provinces and territories with whatever they need to combat COVID-19.

**Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that is a drop in the bucket and they should have been in place months ago. The Liberals wasted the summer trying to figure out how to get out of the WE scandal instead of getting these rapid tests.

Canadians should have access to rapid tests now, and a plan on vaccine distribution. Will the Prime Minister admit that these failures are why he is asking Canadians to cancel Christmas and saying some regions will get support for COVID, but not others?

**Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, every step of the way we have been there with provinces and territories as they worked to combat this terrible disease, and indeed, we see cases growing across the country. It is alarming, and Canadians have every right to be concerned.

We also know there is a light at the end of the tunnel. Canada has procured more doses of vaccine per capita than any other country in the world, and that light at the end of the tunnel should give us all hope. In the meantime we will work together in a team Canada approach to make sure that we get through the next several months together, with the health and safety of Canadians first and foremost.

[Translation]

### OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, Quebecers are worried about the future of their national language.

According to a recent Leger poll, two-thirds are worried about the state of French in Quebec and would support laws to better protect their common language. That being said, it is fairly clear that not every Quebecer is worried about this. The hon. member for Saint-Laurent, who prefers English to French, thinks everything is fine.

Does the Minister of Official Languages share the position of the hon. member for Saint-Laurent, who sees no problem for the future of French in Quebec?

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on several occasions I have said how concerned I am about the issue of French in Canada and in Quebec. We did of course reiterate that in the Speech from the Throne.

We must do something about this decline of French and that is why we are going to modernize the Official Languages Act. We said as much in the Speech from the Throne by stating that we recognize that French was in decline.

I hope that my colleague will support our position even though he voted against the Speech from the Throne. As such, he voted against modernizing the Official Languages Act, as did his Conservative colleagues.

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, it is easy.

My colleague is a member of the Standing Committee on Official Languages. She defends her party's positions. Quite frankly, no one can say the Liberal Party has been much of an ally to French in Quebec. That party voted against the application of Bill 101 to federally regulated businesses and against our proposal to make knowledge of French a requirement for obtaining citizenship in Quebec. It funds anglophone communities, but does not support French, which is under threat in Quebec.

Does the government realize that it is not helping French in Quebec? It continually undermines it.

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada has supported both official languages since 1969.

During the Laurendeau-Dunton commission hearings, the importance of French was made abundantly clear, and the commission made good recommendations. At the time, it was actually Pierre Elliott Trudeau who established institutional bilingualism in our entire public service, ensuring that all Quebecers and francophones across the country would have access to services in French.

A lot of water has gone under the bridge since then, and we are now at a point where we need to do more to protect French, a minority language in Canada and North America.

This is the first time the government has recognized the situation, which is why we are going to take action.

### Oral Questions

• (1440)

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the member for Saint-Laurent said out loud what the Liberals are secretly thinking, and she said it in English, to boot. That is the importance she places on French.

It is not surprising that when she won her seat, she gave her speech entirely in English, claiming that anglophones support her.

There is only one official language in Quebec, only one language that is under threat, and that is French.

Will the government finally wake up after 50 years? Will it apply Bill 101 to federally regulated businesses and make knowledge of French a requirement for citizenship in Quebec?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my Bloc Québécois colleague is certainly in no position to tell us what Liberal members are thinking.

However, I can tell him what they are thinking because I sit with them. We recognize that French is losing ground. We recognize the importance of supporting the French language, not just across Canada, but also in Quebec.

We mentioned it in the throne speech. We are saying it publicly everywhere. I know that the Bloc Québécois is still trying to pick fights. However, on this side of the House, we will always stand up for the French language.

\* \* \*

[English]

### PUBLIC SAFETY

**Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, CSIS says China's communist regime uses spies to intimidate and threaten Chinese Canadians to suppress dissent on Canadian soil. China's Operation Fox Hunt is an attack on Canadian sovereignty and national security. The Prime Minister says he has "long been concerned", and that he brings it up when he engages with China. The victims of these bullies sounded the alarm and they have the courage to stand up.

What is the government actually doing to protect them?

**Hon. Bill Blair (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let me be very clear that our government has been taking, and will continue to take, action to protect Canadians, their personal information and their interests from any threat or intimidation from foreign interference or espionage, including threats to our economy, intellectual property, critical supply chains and communities.

As the NSICOP report released earlier this year makes very clear, we recognize the hostile activities of state actors, such as China, as a key and growing risk in this regard. We remain constantly vigilant against these risks.

*Oral Questions*

**Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, beyond so-called recognition and all these words, what is the actual action?

Almost 80% of Canadians believe China constitutes a threat to Canada. Recently, the Chinese ambassador threatened Canadians in Hong Kong. Canadian citizens are in arbitrary imprisonment and Canadian lives are at risk in China. The Liberals' failure to stand up for human rights and to protect Canadians all over the world is emboldening these state-sponsored bullies.

How can Canadians feel safe anywhere when the Liberals clearly do not have their backs?

**Mr. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the very premise of that question is that Canada is making strong representations on an almost daily basis with respect to the issues around China. Reports of harassment and intimidation of individuals in Canada are deeply troubling. Allegations of such acts being carried out by foreign agents are taken very seriously. Chinese representatives, who are governed in Canada like all foreign government representatives in Canada, have a duty under international law to respect the laws and regulations of Canada. Canada will continue to use every measure available to stand up for Canadians and their rights.

**Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, so we will just tell Canadians these measures. Canadians are under threat and deserve action, not just words. Three weeks ago, eight people were charged for intimidating and harassing Chinese Americans in the U.S. American officials say there is an aggressive commitment to protect their citizens from China's campaign of illegally imposing its will. The Prime Minister does admit, as do these ministers, that this is happening to Canadians.

I will ask one more time. How many people have actually been charged in Canada for going after Canadians in Operation Fox Hunt?

• (1445)

**Hon. Bill Blair (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let me assure the House that we do not in any way tolerate hostile foreign state actors threatening Canada's national security or the safety of any of our citizens. I want to assure the House and all Canadians that our security and law enforcement agencies have the skills, resources and legal authority they need to detect, investigate and respond to every such threat.

\* \* \*

**COVID-19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE**

**Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have left thousands of small businesses, especially start-ups, to fend for themselves throughout the pandemic and they are desperate for help with a second wave hitting. Many entrepreneurs still cannot access CEBA, the wage subsidy or other small business supports. Now the government is refusing to backdate support for commercial rent relief to April. For months small businesses have been left behind by government programs. Many now have massive debts and are facing bankruptcy.

Will the minister do the right thing and backdate the broken CE-CRA program to April 1 to save thousands of small businesses across Canada?

**Hon. Mary Ng (Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the programs that we have put forward are the lifeline to our small businesses, whether it is the fixed cost support for rent or making sure they have support today and going forward. Over 780,000 businesses have taken advantage of the small business loan, with more to come as we increased it by another \$20,000. The Canadian emergency wage subsidy is providing the help necessary to keep employees on those companies' payrolls.

This work continues. I am thrilled to work with all members on all sides of the House to make sure we are supporting Canada's small businesses.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, businesses need retroactive payments. This country is in the grips of the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. In parts of the country, cases are higher than they were in the spring. It is critical that people can stay home to stop the spread of this virus.

Instead of supporting Canadians to help save lives, the Prime Minister is now threatening to take away those very supports. Previously, he said the government would do whatever was necessary to see our country through COVID-19.

Can the Prime Minister promise Canadians they will have the financial support that they desperately need to stay home and save lives?

**Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for her concern for Canadians' lives and safety. In fact, that is what we have been focused on since the beginning.

We have been there for provinces and territories no matter what measures they needed and no matter what tools they needed, whether it was providing financial support for Canadians to stay home or support for small businesses and, indeed, medium- and large-sized businesses to stay viable during this time.

We provided \$19 billion for provinces and territories, as well as additional supports to the Canadian Red Cross and others. I could go on. We will be there for Canadians.

### INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr. Majid Jowhari (Richmond Hill, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, many constituents in my riding of Richmond Hill rely on accessible public transit to commute to work and home safely. The proposed Yonge North subway extension is a major step in connecting Toronto and York Region.

Can the minister kindly update the House on the progress of this infrastructure project and other investments in public transit?

**Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Richmond Hill for his continued advocacy for the Yonge North subway.

While the Conservatives called for cuts to infrastructure, our government has invested over \$13 billion in public transit, more than 13 times what the previous government invested. We look forward to working with the province and seeing a business case from it for the Yonge North subway extension, so we can get it built. This will create good jobs, reduce emissions and help people get around their communities faster.

\* \* \*

### PUBLIC SAFETY

**Mr. James Cumming (Edmonton Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canada is the only Five Eyes member to neither ban nor restrict the use of Huawei 5G equipment. Why are we allowing the Chinese government to bully and intimidate our country in a brute force attempt to potentially surrender our citizens' data, privacy and security?

**Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we know the potential when it comes to 5G technology and the important impact it will have on Canadians and our economy going forward. That is why we continue to do our due diligence and work with national security experts. We continue to work with our allies.

I can assure the member opposite that we have never and will never compromise when it comes to the safety and well-being of Canadians. We will make a decision in the best interests of Canadians.

**Mr. James Cumming (Edmonton Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the EU's general data protection regulation mandates that all business activities by Huawei meet its requirements. This allowed it to rule that Huawei was in breach of a European privacy law when it failed to comply with the request to provide the data it kept on EU citizens.

I ask the minister to be clear. Will Canada's Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act take similar steps to identify companies that are deemed a security threat and take coercive action if needed?

● (1450)

**Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member opposite for his very thoughtful question on the privacy and protection of the individual data of Canadians. That is why we have been very clear about presenting the digital charter, which has 10 principles

### Oral Questions

that will guide future legislation, policies and programs, and will keep Canadians' privacy and data safe and secure. I look forward to having a meaningful conversation on the subject matter very soon.

\* \* \*

### INFRASTRUCTURE

**Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, effective public transit will be key to economic recovery after COVID, and York Region is no exception. The Yonge line is at capacity, and it does not go far enough north. The Yonge subway extension would create 60,000 jobs, reduce gridlock and deliver economic growth for the entire GTA.

The Ontario government has committed to investing, but the Liberal government is still refusing to act. What is the government waiting for? Why will it not invest in the Yonge subway extension?

**Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to stand and talk about our investments in public transit. Our government has invested over \$13 billion in public transit. That is more than 13 times what the previous government invested, and the Conservatives actually called for cuts to infrastructure.

We look forward to working with the province. We look forward to receiving a business case for the extension so that we can get it built, creating jobs, reducing emissions and helping people get around their communities faster.

**Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the federal government says it is committed to public transit in Ontario, but apparently not to the Yonge subway extension. The Yonge line is the lifeblood of the GTA, with 800,000 commuters a day and almost 100,000 of them passing through Finch. For jobs, economic recovery and growth, the GTA needs a union station of the north.

The business case is obvious. Why will the Liberals not get this Yonge subway extension on track? What is the real reason they will not invest?

**Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am happy to reiterate, again, our commitment to public transit.

*Oral Questions*

We have invested more than \$13 billion, but let us look at the previous Conservative government. We have invested 13 times more, but what did the Conservatives call for in the last election? They called for cuts to public transit. I am not sure that they would be committed to the investments in public transit we so desperately need to make.

We are committed to the Yonge North subway extension, but we need to be accountable to taxpayers. We need to see a business case, and then we will move forward, because we want to create good jobs. We want to tackle climate change, and we want to build more inclusive communities.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**TAXATION**

**Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, last night on the TV show *Tout le monde en parle*, the Minister of Canadian Heritage said that he was optimistic that web giants would be subject to GST in the next budget. It is not optimism he needs; it is a bit of initiative.

The minister does not need to wait for the budget. He can simply ask the GAFAM to immediately begin charging GST like other businesses do. Even the web giants are saying that they have nothing against that. The government just has to ask. This is a matter of tax fairness.

What is the minister waiting for to take action?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

Last week, we introduced a bill that seeks to reform Canada's Broadcasting Act for the first time in 30 years.

That law will significantly impact and benefit Canadian culture. My colleague is well aware of that, because we consulted him many times regarding the introduction of the bill, which will enable us to provide an additional \$1 billion in funding so that we can tell our stories in French in Quebec and Canada, as well as English and indigenous languages. That is a first for our country—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Drummond.

**Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, we are talking about two completely different things.

During our conversations, we were clear about the importance of tax fairness, which means requiring web giants to charge GST. The Liberals have been promising that for five years. Three heritage ministers, all of them from Quebec, ironically, have promised that. Being from Quebec, they should follow the Government of Quebec's lead and force the GAFAM to charge sales tax.

By failing to do so, the minister is robbing Quebec's culture sector, which has already been crippled by the pandemic, of hundreds of millions of dollars while the GAFAM rake in record profits. He could move today to ask web giants to collect GST.

Why is he refusing to do so?

• (1455)

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind my hon. colleague that our government has provided Canada's arts, culture and sports sector with over \$4 billion since the pandemic hit.

According to a recent survey, almost 78% of artists are very happy with what the federal government has done. Of course we can do more and will do more. The broadcasting bill is not about taxation, it is about broadcasting.

We will keep working to improve the system in this country.

\* \* \*

[English]

**TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

**Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the government's announcement on rural broadband last week was too little too late. Rural small businesses need broadband now, not between 2026 and 2030. The government was late on commercial rent assistance and late on the wage subsidy. Now it is busy auditing small businesses in the middle of a pandemic.

The Prime Minister wants more lockdowns, and rural small businesses do not have the infrastructure to move online. Why do small businesses always have to pay the price for the government's COVID-19 response?

**Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Rural Economic Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, last week we launched phase 2 of our government's plan to connect every Canadian to high-speed Internet. The universal broadband fund builds on the efforts that we began early on in our first mandate. It is the plan Canadians asked for. It is the plan our rural members of Parliament shaped. It is a plan shaped by experts, and it includes flexibility, backbone, last mile and a rapid response stream.

I want to thank the Prime Minister for his care and support for rural Canada and particularly for appointing the member for Long Range Mountains to co-lead this file with me. She truly moves mountains.

**Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer—Mountain View, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, millions of people in rural communities across Canada lack adequate Internet connections. The announcement made by the Liberal government last week will not change this. One reason is that a large portion of funding is through the Canada Infrastructure Bank. In three years, that Liberal boondoggle has completed zero projects.

Why does the Liberal government continue to fail hard-working rural Canadians through smoke-and-mirror initiatives that get great headlines but, thanks to Liberal incompetence, accomplish nothing?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Rural Economic Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, because of our government's efforts, tens of thousands of households at the end of this year will be connected to this essential service. Because of our government's commitment to rural Canadians, we have put more in investments than all previous governments combined. In fact, our government's support for rural broadband is 10 times higher than all governments that have come before us.

There is an unusual consensus emerging across the country that every Canadian deserves access to this essential service. Our plan is the plan Canadians asked for. It will work. I encourage colleagues to support their communities to put high-quality applications forward.

[Translation]

**Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, many students in my riding have to do online learning at home during this pandemic.

These students are at a disadvantage simply because they live in a rural area. Chantal Bédard, from Sainte-Hénédine, contacted me to tell me how hard it has been for her children to connect to their online classes. From Sainte-Hénédine to Saint-Gédéon in my riding, I keep hearing the same stories.

This government loves to keep announcing its funding commitments for high-speed Internet, but when will it unveil a real plan to successfully connect people like Ms. Bédard?

[English]

**Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Rural Economic Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, women like Chantal have been hit hardest by COVID, and one of the additional responsibilities they bear is supporting their kids with online learning. When that high-speed Internet access is not a reliable one, Chantal's life is that much more difficult.

We have heard her. We are working to address the challenge. Before the universal broadband fund was launched last week, our government had already invested five times more to connect the people of Quebec than the previous government. We know the work is not done, but there is a program there to support Canadians to get connected. I encourage my colleague to work with us to do that.

\* \* \*

**CHILD CARE**

**Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I was thrilled to hear about the commitment that our government has made toward the creation of a Canada-wide learning and child care system. We also know that help is needed, especially now, to help support parents as they re-enter the labour market.

Can the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development please update this House on the investments being made in New Brunswick to support families through this economic recovery?

• (1500)

**Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing), Lib.):**

Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for her continued and effective advocacy on this issue. We know that for Canadians child care is not a luxury, it is a necessity. COVID has shown this especially to be true.

That is why the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development was pleased to announce today a \$14-million investment to help make child care more accessible and affordable for New Brunswickers through the safe restart agreement. This is in addition to \$10 million announced just a couple of weeks ago to support thousands of families in that province.

This government has investment more in child care this year than any other government in Canadian history. We are proud of that record, but there is more to do. A national framework for national funding is needed. We hope the other parties in this House can be disciplined and continue to support our good work on this file.

\* \* \*

**AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD**

**Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, more than ever Canadians appreciate how essential farmers are. In the time of need, farmers stepped up to feed Canadians and made sure our grocery store shelves were fully stocked.

Earlier this month, the opposition secured relief for small businesses that are burdened by emergency wage subsidy audits. These audits are causing distress and anxiety among our farmers. Will the minister confirm that this relief for small businesses will include our Canadian farm families?

**Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I can assure the member we have been working closely with our farmers since the beginning of the COVID crisis. We made sure they were eligible for all the programs meant to support businesses like the CEBA and the subsidy support. I can assure the member we will continue to make sure our farmers are well supported.

\* \* \*

**COVID-19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE**

**Mr. Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, last month, I met with Chorus Aviation which, like many in the air industry, was waiting with bated breath for the transport minister's aid package. It is a Maritimes success story and operates many of Air Canada's regional routes. As Air Canada struggles, Chorus is struggling too. The Saskatoon Airport depends on its planes staying aloft.

*Oral Questions*

Liberal MPs in Nova Scotia will not challenge the government on behalf of Chorus, but I will. Why will the minister not expand rapid COVID testing to all airports, so airlines can attract customers back onto planes?

**Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I pointed out about 10 days ago, we are working on an aid package with respect to the air sector, and that includes airports as well as airlines.

We are also in parallel, led by the Minister of Health, working on rapid testing. As the member will know, there is rapid testing under way at Calgary airport and a separate test is being done at Toronto airport.

We realize this may be a way of speeding up and reducing quarantine.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Hon. Steven Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Quebec Bridge is a Canadian heritage gem.

Five years ago, the Liberals promised to have the bridge repainted. Ever since, the paint has been drying on the brushes. The Quebec Bridge continues to rust before our eyes while the Liberals keep making empty promises. To buy some time, they hired a negotiator to acquire the Quebec Bridge. There has been no news in six months.

Where is the report from the negotiator, Yvon Charest? When will they release the report, and when will they implement its recommendations?

**Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Canadian government recognizes the importance of repairing the Quebec Bridge.

Yvon Charest was appointed as a special negotiator in the Quebec Bridge file in August 2019. The negotiator's job is to recommend options for restoring the Quebec Bridge, in collaboration with stakeholders.

This file remains a priority for the Government of Canada, and Mr. Charest and I share the same goal, which is to ensure that the Quebec Bridge meets the long-term needs of the region. Mr. Charest's report is currently being analyzed. We will keep the members of the House informed of the results of that analysis and the next steps that should—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Markham—Stouffville.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

**HEALTH**

**Ms. Helena Jaczek (Markham—Stouffville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, cases of COVID-19 are growing in Ontario, and modelling suggests that the number of cases could increase dramatically in the coming months.

As former chief medical officer of health for York Region and former Ontario minister of health and long-term care, I can see how important federal support has been in Ontario's response to the pandemic.

Could the Minister of Health please update us on the investments and support that our government has provided to the Province of Ontario to date?

● (1505)

**Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for her leadership, expertise and experience. It certainly has been helpful to me over the past several months to have conversations with her.

We have been there to support Ontario all the way through in its responsibility of delivering on health care. In fact, over the summer, 97 cents on every \$1 spent on pandemic support in Ontario came from the federal government. We also, through the safe restart agreement, provided \$5.1 billion for effective testing, contact tracing, data systems, support for long-term care, 1.78 million rapid tests to date, and of course, the army and the Red Cross, supporting long-term care homes.

\* \* \*

**INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS**

**Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, first nations, Métis and Inuit communities have worked tirelessly to stay safe, but the second wave has hit hard, as we have warned.

OCN/The Pas, 147 cases; Arviat, up to 26 cases. For first nations, we are seeing higher rates of infection and increased severity. From mass testing to immediate contact tracing to self-isolation to ventilators, the government must pull out all the stops.

What is the government going to do for first nations, Métis and, now, Inuit communities to stop the spread of COVID-19?

**Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my thanks to the member for her tireless advocacy on behalf of indigenous peoples. I do think that she and the rest of the House will appreciate the update that I have with respect to Opaskwayak.

I have been in conversations with Chief Sinclair over the course of the weekend to ensure that the surge capacity of the Government of Canada is there to help the community, as well as in its role as a hub in the coming weeks. We are now at double the active rate of the total cases that occurred during the first wave. This is indeed exceedingly alarming.

First nations, Inuit and Métis should know that the Government of Canada will always be there for them and they will not be left behind.

## INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY

**Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP):** Mr. Speaker, the government has reserved 414 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines with six private sector contracts. What will this cost taxpayers? For 70 years, government-owned Connaught Labs developed low-cost vaccines and other medicines. This model would ensure the financial viability of a universal pharmacare program in Canada.

Will the government return to this model of publicly owned laboratories to develop low-cost medicines and vaccines to serve the greater good?

**Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, that is an important question that highlights and underscores our made-in-Canada initiative for investing in Canadian ingenuity and creativity, and supports our scientists and researchers. I am proud to say that we made significant investments in therapeutics and vaccine initiatives here in Canada. For example, from Vancouver, AbCellera received our support, as well as Medicago from Quebec City. We also invested in VBI in Ottawa and, of course, in Saskatoon through VIDO-InterVac and Dartmouth's IMV.

Those are some examples of made-in-Canada solutions that we have come forward with.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Sylvie Bérubé:** Mr. Speaker, there have been consultations among the parties and if you seek it, I believe you would find unanimous consent for the following motion: That the House of Commons join the Quebec National Assembly in commemorating the hanging of Louis Riel, which took place 135 years ago on November 16, 1885; and that this House ask the government to exonerate Louis Riel as soon as possible.

**The Speaker:** This being a hybrid sitting of the House, for the sake of clarity, I will only ask those who are opposed to the request to express their disagreement.

Accordingly, all those opposed to the hon. member moving the motion will please say nay.

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

## 2020 U.S. ELECTION

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties and if you seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent for the following motion:

That the House congratulate President-elect Joe Biden and Vice-President-elect Kamala Harris on their election and, in recognition of the extraordinary relationship between Canada and the United States, call upon the government to invite both to visit Parliament and to invite Mr. Biden to address Parliament at the earliest safe opportunity to do so.

• (1510)

**The Speaker:** This being a hybrid sitting of the House, for the sake of clarity, I will only ask those who are opposed to the motion

## *Business of Supply*

to express their disagreement. Accordingly, all those opposed to the hon. member moving the motion will please say nay. I hear none.

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

There being no dissenting voice, I declare the motion carried.

(Motion agreed to)

**Mr. Han Dong (Don Valley North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I noticed that some members have their banners as a backdrop. I would ask you to please clarify that rule for all members.

**The Speaker:** It is a good point of order. We have had this discussion with the whips and House leaders. We are asking members to be as neutral as possible, to reflect what we have in the chamber and not to have any statements or anything out of the ordinary. We will continue to discuss this.

I want to remind all members to keep their backgrounds as neutral as possible.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

### BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

#### OPPOSITION MOTION—TAX MEASURES TO SUPPORT CANADIANS

The House resumed from November 5 consideration of the motion.

**The Speaker:** It being 3:10 p.m., pursuant to order made on Wednesday, September 23, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion relating to the business of supply.

Call in the members.

[*And the bells having rung:*]

The question is as follows. May I dispense?

**Some hon. members:** No.

[*Chair read text of motion to House*]

[*Translation*]

• (1550)

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

(*Division No. 22*)

### YEAS

#### Members

Angus  
Atwin  
Blaikie  
Boulerice  
Collins  
Duvall  
Gazan  
Harris  
Johns

Ashton  
Bachrach  
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)  
Cannings  
Davies  
Garrison  
Green  
Hughes  
Julian

*Business of Supply*

Kwan  
Manly  
Mathysen  
McPherson  
Tabbara— 27

MacGregor  
Masse  
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)  
Singh

Jones  
Jowhari  
Kelly  
Khalid  
Kitchen  
Koutrakis  
Kurek  
Kusmierczyk  
Lalonde  
Lametti  
Larouche  
Lauzon  
LeBlanc  
Lefebvre  
Lemire  
Liepert  
Lobb  
Longfield  
Lukiwski  
MacKenzie  
Maguire  
Martel  
May (Cambridge)  
McCauley (Edmonton West)  
McCrimmon  
McGuinty  
McKenna  
McLean  
McLeod (Northwest Territories)  
Mendès  
Michaud  
Monsef  
Morantz  
Morrissey  
Murray  
Ng  
O'Connell  
O'Regan  
Paul-Hus  
Perron  
Plamondon  
Powlowski  
Rayes  
Regan  
Rempel Garner  
Robillard  
Rogers  
Rood  
Sahota (Calgary Skyview)  
Saini  
Samson  
Sarai  
Savard-Tremblay  
Scheer  
Schmale  
Seeback  
Sgro  
Sheehan  
Shin  
Sidhu (Brampton East)  
Simard  
Sloan  
Soroka  
Stanton  
Ste-Marie  
Stubbs  
Tassi  
Therrien  
Trudeau  
Turnbull  
van Koeverden  
Vandal  
Vidal

Jordan  
Kelloway  
Kent  
Khera  
Kmiec  
Kram  
Kusie  
Lake  
Lambropoulos  
Lamoureux  
Lattanzio  
Lawrence  
Lebouthillier  
Lehoux  
Lewis (Essex)  
Lloyd  
Long  
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)  
MacAulay (Cardigan)  
MacKinnon (Gatineau)  
Maloney  
Martinez Ferrada  
Mazier  
McColeman  
McDonald  
McKay  
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)  
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)  
Melillo  
Mendicino  
Miller  
Moore  
Morrison  
Motz  
Nater  
Normandin  
Oliphant  
Patzer  
Pauzé  
Petipas Taylor  
Poilievre  
Qualtrough  
Redekopp  
Reid  
Richards  
Rodriguez  
Romanado  
Ruff  
Sahota (Brampton North)  
Sajjan  
Sangha  
Saroya  
Scarpaleggia  
Schieffe  
Schulte  
Serré  
Shanahan  
Shields  
Shipley  
Sidhu (Brampton South)  
Simms  
Sorbara  
Spengemann  
Steinley  
Strahl  
Sweet  
Thériault  
Tochor  
Trudel  
Van Bynen  
Van Popta  
Vandenbeld  
Viersen

## NAYS

## Members

Aboultaif  
Albas  
Alleslev  
Amos  
Anandasangaree  
Arseneault  
Badawey  
Bains  
Baldinelli  
Barrett  
Battiste  
Beech  
Bennett  
Bergen  
Berthold  
Bessette  
Bibeau  
Blair  
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)  
Blois  
Bragdon  
Bratina  
Brunelle-Duceppe  
Carrie  
Chabot  
Champoux  
Chen  
Cooper  
Cumming  
Damoff  
Davidson  
Deltell  
Desbiens  
Dhaliwal  
Diotte  
Dong  
Dreeshen  
Dubourg  
Duguid  
Duncan (Etobicoke North)  
Easter  
El-Khoury  
Epp  
Falk (Provencher)  
Fergus  
Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock)  
Finnigan  
Fonseca  
Fortin  
Fraser  
Fry  
Garneau  
Généreux  
Gerretsen  
Gladu  
Gould  
Gray  
Hajdu  
Harder  
Hoback  
Housefather  
Hutchings  
Jaczek  
Jeneroux

Aitchison  
Alghabra  
Allison  
Anand  
Arnold  
Arya  
Bagnell  
Baker  
Barlow  
Barsalou-Duval  
Beaulieu  
Bendayan  
Benzen  
Bergeron  
Bérubé  
Bezan  
Bittle  
Blanchette-Joncas  
Block  
Boudrias  
Brassard  
Brière  
Calkins  
Casey  
Chagger  
Charbonneau  
Chiu  
Cormier  
Dalton  
Dancho  
DeBellefeuille  
d'Entremont  
Desilets  
Dhillon  
Doherty  
Dowdall  
Drouin  
Duclos  
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)  
Dzerowicz  
Ehsassi  
Ellis  
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)  
Fast  
Fillmore  
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)  
Fisher  
Fortier  
Fragiskatos  
Freeland  
Gallant  
Gaudreau  
Genuis  
Gill  
Godin  
Gourde  
Guilbeault  
Hallan  
Hardie  
Holland  
Hussen  
Iacono  
Jansen  
Joly

Vignola	Virani
Vis	Wagantall
Warkentin	Waugh
Webber	Weiler
Wilkinson	Williamson
Wong	Yip
Young	Yurdiga
Zahid	Zann
Zimmer	Zuberi — 292

PAIRED

Nil

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion lost.

[English]

**Mrs. Tamara Jansen (Cloverdale—Langley City, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, a few minutes ago you instructed all members to have a neutral background in view and not to have any props, yet one of the members who voted ignored you and held up a prop while abstaining.

I wonder if maybe it needs to be repeated.

**The Speaker:** Very good, I will repeat that.

For all members, whether you are voting or abstaining, we ask you to keep a very neutral background, one that reflects what is going on in the chamber.

I thank the member for Cloverdale—Langley City.

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

### GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

**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, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8)(a) I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 55 petitions. These returns will be tabled in an electronic format.

\* \* \*

• (1555)

### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

#### INDIGENOUS AND NORTHERN AFFAIRS

**Mr. Bob Bratina (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the first report of the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs, entitled “Main Estimates 2020-21”.

I also have the honour to present, in both official languages, the second report of the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs in relation to the motion adopted on Tuesday, October 27, 2020, regarding investment in broadband in northern Canada.

I also have the honour to present, in both official languages, the third report of the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs in relation to the motion adopted on Tuesday, October 27, 2020, regarding condolences to the family of Joyce Echaquan.

### Routine Proceedings

#### PETITIONS

##### DEMOCRATIC REFORM

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to present today a petition that the table clerks have received. It is petition number 10619174.

Petitioners are calling on the government to observe that the Canadian public is very interested in seeing an electoral reform process under the form of a citizens' assembly. They are also calling on this Parliament and the House of Commons assembled to establish a national citizens' assembly on electoral reform, and require that assembly to complete its work within 12 months such that the recommendations can be included in the conduct of our next general federal election.

\* \* \*

#### QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

**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, the following questions will be answered today: Questions No. 2, 5, 15-17, 19, 33, 35, 46, 48, 61, 63-65, 78, 85, 87 and 88.

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 2—**Mr. Tom Kmiec:**

With regard to the public consultation for the new five-dollar banknote launched by the Minister of Finance and the Governor of the Bank of Canada on January 29, 2020 (which ended on March 11, 2020): (a) how many nomination submissions were made nominating a Canadian to appear on the next five-dollar banknote; (b) of the nomination submissions made for a Canadian to appear on the next five-dollar banknote, what names were submitted for consideration; (c) of the names listed in (b), how many nominations did each name receive; (d) based on the analytics software installed or run on the Bank of Canada website and server, how many individuals visited the consultation form listed on the Bank of Canada website between January 29, 2020, and March 11, 2020?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), the Bank of Canada received 52,971 names during the January 29 to March 11, 2020, public call for nominations, resulting in 625 qualified submissions.

With regard to part (b), the 625 qualified nominees can be found at the following link: <https://www.bankofcanada.ca/banknotes/banknoteable-5/nominees/>.

With regard to part (c), the information is unavailable. The Bank of Canada does not collect information on the number of nominations received for each name.

With regard to part (d), the information is unavailable. The consultation form is not hosted on the Bank of Canada's website. However, the bank can report that 44,485 individuals submitted one or more names to the public call for nominations between January 29, 2020, to March 11, 2020.

*Routine Proceedings*

**Question No. 5—Mr. Marty Morantz:**

With regard to the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy: (a) what is the number of employers who have received the subsidy; (b) what is the breakdown of (a) by (i) sector, (ii) province; (c) what are the total government expenditures to date through the subsidy; and (d) what is the breakdown of (c) by (i) sector, (ii) province?

**Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, with respect to the above-noted question, parts (a) to (c), the latest information on the total amount of the Canada emergency wage subsidy expended is available on the Government of Canada website under “Claims to Date—CEWS” at <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/subsidy/emergency-wage-subsidy/cews-statistics.html>.

The CRA captures CEWS information regarding the total approved claims broken down by province or territory where the applicant resides, by industry sector and by size of applicant, by period beginning in May 2020, rather than in the manner requested above. The latest information, updated on a monthly basis, is available on the Government of Canada website under “CEWS Claims—Detailed Data” at <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/subsidy/emergency-wage-subsidy/cews-statistics/stats-detailed.html>.

**Question No. 15—Mr. Tim Uppal:**

With regard to government contracts entered into by the member of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada responsible for the Canadian International Development Agency, for the acquisition of architectural, engineering or other services required in respect of the planning, design, preparation or supervision of an international development assistance program or project valued between \$98,000.00 and \$99,999.99, signed since January 1, 2016, and broken down by department, agency, Crown corporation or other government entity: (a) what is the total value of all such contracts; and (b) what are the details of all such contracts, including (i) vendor, (ii) amount, (iii) date, (iv) description of services or construction contracts, (v) file number?

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

With regard to parts (a) and (b), with regard to government contracts valued between \$98,000 and \$99,999.99, signed since January 1, 2016, the department's delegation of financial and contracting signing authority delegates officers appointed to specific positions the authority to purchase services, in accordance with all applicable legislation, regulations, policies and directives.

Information on contracts for the time period requested is available under “Proactive Disclosure” at Open Government, <https://open.canada.ca/en>.

**Question No. 16—Mr. Kelly McCauley:**

With regard to the Atlantic Raven and the Atlantic Eagle: (a) how many Canadian Coast Guard (CCG) personnel are stationed on each ship by full-time equivalents; (b) how many hours per day while at sea are CCG personnel stationed on each ship; and (c) what are the costs for CCG personnel stationed on the tugs?

**Hon. Bernadette Jordan (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the following information is for the time period of October 1, 2018, to September 30, 2020.

With regard to part (a), the number of Canadian Coast Guard personnel on board both Atlantic Raven and Atlantic Eagle varies per patrol. There are between one and six CCG employees sta-

tioned on each ship for a total of 3976.5 person-days or 10.9 person-years, to date.

With regard to part (b), each CCG employee lives on board and holds a twelve-hour shift while on board.

With regard to part (c), to date the Canadian Coast Guard has paid \$206,778 on meals and quarters, and \$294,620 on salaries for a total cost of \$496,330 while CCG personnel are stationed on the tugs.

**Question No. 17—Mr. Kelly McCauley:**

With regard to personal protective equipment purchases since March 13, 2020: (a) what amount of supplies were ordered and prepaid for; (b) of the supplies in (a), how many units have yet to be received; (c) what amount of N95 or KN95 masks were ordered but deemed unacceptable by the Public Health Agency of Canada; (d) what was the dollar value associated with the masks mentioned in (c); (e) of the supplies in (c), were associated prepayment costs reimbursed to the buyer and if so, how much; (f) what is the dollar amount associated with each contract signed for N95, KN95, and surgical masks to date; and (g) what was the total prepaid to vendors for which no supplies were received or are not expected to be received?

**Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, since March, the Government of Canada has been engaged in an unprecedented effort to acquire supplies and equipment to ensure that our front-line health care workers, other essential services workers and Canadians stay safe and healthy. Throughout this pandemic, there has been a surge in global demand for the personal protective equipment, PPE, and medical supplies needed in response to COVID-19. As a result, the government has operated in a highly competitive market and faced risks posed by fragile international supply chains.

With regard to part (a), approximately 40% of PPE contracts have included a component of advanced payments. Such arrangements were necessary to ensure that Canada could secure access to supplies amidst intense international competition.

With regard to part (b), the most recent update on quantities ordered and received is available on PSPC's website at <https://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/comm/aic-scr/provisions-supplies-eng.html>.

The quantities ordered for personal protective equipment and medical supplies are intended to meet short-term needs and anticipate Canada's long-term needs as we continue to respond to COVID-19, while preparing for any eventuality over the coming months. “Quantities received” includes the approximate number of products that have been shipped and are in transit or have arrived at a Government of Canada warehouse. Some contracts are multi-year in nature with delivery scheduled beyond March 2021.

The information released will be adjusted over time as the procurement environment evolves.

*Routine Proceedings*

With regard to part (c), a total of 9.5 million KN95 respirators did not meet Government of Canada technical specifications for healthcare settings.

With regard to part (d), in order to support the negotiating position of the Government of Canada, this information cannot presently be disclosed.

With regard to part (e), negotiations are still taking place between the Government of Canada and the supplier.

With regard to part (f), as part of our commitment to transparency and accountability, we are publicly disclosing contracting information to the fullest extent possible. Supplier names and contract amounts for contracts entered into on behalf of other government departments for PPE and medical or laboratory equipment and supplies can be found on our COVID-19 contracting information page at <https://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/comm/aic-scr/contrats-contracts-eng.html>. The information released will be adjusted over time as the procurement environment evolves.

With regard to part (g), all suppliers are expected to deliver on their contracts.

**Question No. 19—Mr. Kelly McCauley:**

With regard to the COVID-19 Supply Council: what are the costs associated with the council, broken down by (i) salary top-ups and or additional pay for an individual sitting on the council, (ii) hospitality expenses, (iii) travel expenses broken down by type, (iv) in-person meeting facilities, (v) service reimbursements like Internet expenses, taxi or Uber costs, (vi) per diem expenses, (vii) incidentals?

**Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as of September 23, 2020, there have been no costs associated with the COVID-19 supply council. Members volunteer their time and meetings are held by video conference.

**Question No. 33—Mr. Damien C. Kurek:**

With regard to the government's decision not to exclude costs associated with grain drying from the carbon tax: (a) why did the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food say that the impact of these costs on farmers is "not that significant", and what specific evidence does the minister have to back up this claim; (b) what is the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food's definition of "not that significant"; (c) what are the government's estimates on how much revenue will be received yearly from the carbon tax on grain drying, for each of the next five years; and (d) has Farm Credit Canada conducted any analysis or studies on the impact of this tax on the income of farmers, and, if so, what were the findings of any such analysis or studies?

**Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, regarding part (a), according to data provided by provincial governments and industry groups, the estimated cost of carbon pollution pricing associated with grain drying increases the costs of farm operations by between 0.05% and 0.38% for an average farm.

Costs of drying grain will vary depending upon farm size, location, province, fuel used, grain type and other factors. Costs will also vary from year to year, with 2019 being wetter than usual in many provinces and, therefore, translating into higher than normal grain drying expenditures.

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, AAFC, obtained estimates of the cost of drying grains, which have either been publicly released or which have been provided to AAFC by external sources, including producer organizations and provincial governments.

Each of these groups arrived at estimates of the cost of grain drying and of carbon pollution pricing associated with this activity using different underlying assumptions, which makes direct comparisons difficult. AAFC standardized the various estimates to arrive at more comparable results. For grain and oilseed farms, the average per-farm cost of carbon pollution pricing associated with grain drying was \$210 in Alberta, \$774 in Saskatchewan, \$467 in Manitoba and \$750 in Ontario.

Note that the analysis received from Alberta was based on their estimates of what the carbon pollution price would cost in the province. On June 1, 2019, Alberta repealed their own provincial carbon price fuel levy, and the federal fuel charge came into force on January 1, 2020. Therefore, Alberta farmers did not pay a federal carbon pollution price on their fuels used for grain drying during harvest in 2019.

AAFC provided further context to these estimates by relating them to information on net operating expenses. To do this, AAFC calculated the share of the cost of carbon pollution pricing associated with grain drying to overall net operating expenses for an average farm in each of the four provinces mentioned above. Net operating costs refer to all expenses, other than financing expenses and income taxes, incurred in the normal course of business, including cost of goods sold, selling and administrative expenses, and all other operating expenses. Data on net operating expenses was obtained from Statistics Canada's agricultural taxation data program, or ATDP, which includes unincorporated and incorporated tax filer records used to estimate a range of financial agricultural variables. The financial variables disseminated by the ATDP include detailed farm revenues and expenses as well as farm and off-farm income of farm families.

Relating the estimates above to the value of net operating costs implies that the average per-farm cost of carbon pollution pricing associated with grain drying in 2019 was 0.05% of net operating costs in Alberta, 0.18% in Saskatchewan, 0.10% in Manitoba and 0.38% in Ontario.

Some variation still remains despite standardization. The estimates for Alberta and Saskatchewan are based on historical averages and, therefore, could be considered estimates for an average year in those provinces. The estimates for Manitoba and Ontario are based on 2019, a wet year, and therefore could be considered estimates for a year with higher-than-normal moisture levels.

*Routine Proceedings*

AAFC assessed the costs of the federal carbon pollution pricing fuel charge in 2018. That assessment is publicly available at: [https://multimedia.agr.gc.ca/pack/pdf/carbon\\_price\\_presentation-eng.pdf](https://multimedia.agr.gc.ca/pack/pdf/carbon_price_presentation-eng.pdf).

Regarding part (b), the above results show that the estimated costs of carbon pollution pricing to oilseed and grain farms amount to less than 0.5% of net operating expenses for 2019. This is for a hypothetical average farm. The financial impact on individual farms will depend on a myriad of factors, including the quantity of grain harvested, the type of grain produced, the share of grain drying done on farm versus at the elevator, the fuel used in grain drying, prices of fuel and the moisture level of crop at harvest, among other individual farm factors.

In addition, the agriculture sector receives significant relief under the federal carbon pollution pricing system compared to other sectors of the economy. The federal carbon pollution pricing system includes relief for farm activities that represents a significant part of the total cost of production that would otherwise impact their competitiveness. Thus, gasoline and diesel fuel used by farmers for agricultural activities is exempt from the fuel charge, and biological emissions, for example, from livestock, manure and fertilizer application, are not priced. Recognizing that greenhouse heating fuel consumption for year-round operations represents a significant cost of production, the system also provides significant relief of 80% for natural gas and propane used by commercial greenhouse operators. Natural gas and propane use for heating, for barns and grain drying, are not exempted under the federal fuel charge as it was not considered a significant cost of production for an average grain and oilseed farm.

Regarding part (c), the purpose of the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by ensuring that carbon pollution pricing applies broadly throughout Canada.

All direct proceeds from the federal carbon pollution pricing system are returned to the jurisdiction of origin. In Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, the majority of the direct proceeds from the federal fuel charge are returned directly to households through climate action incentive payments.

AAFC assessed the costs of the federal carbon pollution pricing fuel charge in 2018. That assessment is publicly available at [https://multimedia.agr.gc.ca/pack/pdf/carbon\\_price\\_presentation-eng.pdf](https://multimedia.agr.gc.ca/pack/pdf/carbon_price_presentation-eng.pdf).

Regarding part (d), Farm Credit Canada has not conducted analysis or studies on the impact of the carbon pollution pricing on the income of farmers.

**Question No. 35—Mr. Dan Albas:**

With regard to the government's 2019 election commitment to plant 2 billion trees: (a) how many trees have been planted to date; (b) what is the breakdown of the number of trees planted to date by (i) province, (ii) municipality or geographical location; (c) what are the total expenditures to date related to the tree planting project; and (d) what is the breakdown of (c) by item or type of expenditure?

**Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada is fully committed to delivering on its commitment to plant two billion trees over the next 10 years.

At this time, Natural Resources Canada is working closely with other government departments, including Environment and Climate Change Canada, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, and Parks Canada Agency to develop a comprehensive approach for implementing the government's plan to plant two billion trees. The government is also collaborating with provinces and territories, municipalities, indigenous partners and communities, non-governmental organizations, industry, the private sector, landowners, researchers and other stakeholders to move this initiative forward.

Existing federal programs are already supporting tree planting, with approximately 150 million seedlings expected to be planted by 2022 through the low carbon economy fund, working with provinces and territories, as well as trees planted through the disaster mitigation and adaptation fund, working with communities. The Government of Canada also continues to support the Highway of Heroes tree campaign, which has planted more than 750,000 of a planned two million trees between Trenton and Toronto.

As part of its commitment to supporting Canada's forests and forest sector, the Government of Canada took early action in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic by providing up to \$30 million to small and medium-sized forest sector firms, including tree planting operations, to defray the costs associated with COVID-19 health and safety measures. This funding helped ensure a successful 2020 tree planting season and the planting of an estimated 600 million trees, while protecting workers and communities.

The Government of Canada is also adapting the investing in Canada infrastructure program to respond to the impacts of COVID-19. The program, delivered through bilateral agreements with provinces and territories, is being adjusted to add some flexibilities, expand project eligibility and accelerate approvals. A new temporary COVID-19 resilience stream, with over \$3 billion available in existing funding, has been created to provide provinces and territories with added flexibility to fund quick-start, short-term projects that might not otherwise be eligible under the existing funding streams. The new stream will support projects such as: disaster mitigation and adaptation projects, including natural infrastructure; flood and fire mitigation; and tree planting and related infrastructure.

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 46—Mr. Kenny Chiu:**

With regard to Global Affairs Canada (GAC) and Canadians living in Hong Kong: (a) how many Canadian citizens or permanent residents are currently registered as living in Hong Kong; (b) how many Canadian citizens or permanent residents has GAC confirmed are currently in Hong Kong; (c) what is the government's best estimate of the total number of Canadian citizens and permanent residents currently residing in Hong Kong; and (d) on what date and what data did the government use to come up with the number in (c)?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the following reflects a consolidated response approved on behalf of Global Affairs Canada ministers.

Regarding parts (a) to (d), presently, there are 4,208 Canadians who have registered with the voluntary registration of Canadians abroad service in Hong Kong. As registration with the service is voluntary, this is not a complete picture of the total number of Canadians in Hong Kong.

Global Affairs Canada does not maintain statistics on the total number of Canadian citizens or permanent residents in a specific country or territory. According to a survey led in 2011 by the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, an estimated 295,930 Canadians were living in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region at that time.

**Question No. 48—Mr. Robert Kitchen:**

With regard to revenue collected from the federal carbon tax: (a) excluding any rebates, what is the total amount of revenue collected by the government from the carbon tax or price on carbon since January 1, 2017; (b) what is the breakdown of (a) by (i) year, (ii) province; (c) what is the total amount of GST collected on the carbon tax since January 1, 2017; and (d) what is the breakdown of (c) by (i) year, (ii) province?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to section 270 of the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act, GGPPA, the Minister of the Environment must table a report in Parliament annually with respect to the administration of the act. The inaugural edition of the "GGPPA Annual Report" is expected to be published in December 2020, including details of proceeds collected and how they were disbursed.

Under the GGPPA, the federal carbon pollution pricing system has two parts: a regulatory charge on fuel, or federal fuel charge; and a regulatory trading system for industry, the federal output-based pricing system, OBPS.

Consumers do not pay the fuel charge directly to the federal government. Fuel producers and distributors are generally required to pay the fuel charge and, as a result, the price paid by consumers on goods and services would usually have the costs of the fuel charge embedded. Registered OBPS industrial facilities will not generally pay the fuel charge on fuels that they purchase. Instead, OBPS facilities are subject to the carbon pollution price on the portion of emissions above a facility emissions limit. The GGPPA requires that the direct proceeds from carbon pricing be returned to the jurisdiction of origin.

With respect to reporting on the federal fuel charge, the "GGPPA Annual Report" will include a financial summary of fuel charge proceeds assessed, by province and territory, for the first full year that the fuel charge was in effect, April 1, 2019 to March 31, 2020. During this period, the federal fuel charge applied at a rate of \$20 per tonne, as of April 1, 2019, in Ontario, New Brunswick, Manito-

ba and Saskatchewan; as of July 1, 2019, in Yukon and Nunavut; and, as of January 1, 2020, in Alberta. The federal government has proposed to stand down the federal fuel charge in New Brunswick, as of April 1, 2020, as the province introduced a provincial tax on carbon-emitting products that meets the federal benchmark stringency requirements.

The OBPS came into effect January 1, 2019. Unlike the fuel charge, however, assessments are done on an annual basis. Due to the impact of COVID-19 on reporting, the government extended the due date for reporting under the OBPS system in respect of the 2019 compliance year from June 1, 2020 to October 1, 2020. The final assessed values of proceeds due to the OBPS for this first compliance year, therefore, are not expected to be available until after the publication of the first edition of the "GGPPA Annual Report".

The question requests information since January 1, 2017. No proceeds would arise from either the OBPS or federal fuel charge in calendar years 2017 or 2018, as these two systems did not come into effect until January 1, 2019 and April 1, 2019, respectively.

With respect to the goods and services tax, GST, the GST is levied on the final amount charged for a good or service. Under the GST, businesses are required to report and remit to the Canada Revenue Agency the total amount of GST collected on all goods and services they supply during a reporting period and do not report the GST collected in respect of specific goods and services or embedded costs.

**Question No. 61—Mr. Gord Johns:**

With regard to the approximately 20,000 Atlantic salmon that escaped from the Robertson Island pen fire on December 20, 2019: (a) how many of the fish were reported recaptured to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) by Mowi ASA as of February 20, 2020; (b) how many independent reports of caught Atlantic salmon were reported to the DFO, broken down by date and location of catch; (c) how many of the escaped fish were infected with Piscine orthoreovirus; (d) how much funding has the government provided to assist with recapture; and (e) how much compensation has the government provided to Mowi ASA?

**Hon. Bernadette Jordan (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), most of the salmon were removed from the pens prior to the escape event, and the rest of the farm was harvested following the fire. Mowi recovered and harvested 1,177 fish from within the predator netting at the Robertson Island site following the incident. Mowi did not recapture any escaped Atlantic salmon that left the site. It is widely believed that the escaped fish have been eaten by sea lions and other predators in the area. As per the company's condition of licence, the reporting of the fish escape to DFO occurred within 24 of the discovery event.

*Routine Proceedings*

With regard to (b), there have been no reports of recaptured fish. At the request of the 'Namgis First Nation, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, DFO, issued a scientific licence for up to three gillnets to recapture escaped Atlantic salmon from December 26 to December 29, 2019. Despite these efforts, no Atlantic salmon or other fish were caught during that time. Subsequently, the 'Namgis First Nation requested another scientific licence to continue recapture efforts. This licence was issued from December 30, 2019 to January 3, 2020. However, no fish were recaptured.

With regard to (c), it is unknown whether any of the escaped fish were infected with Piscine orthoreovirus, PRV.

With regard to (d), the federal government has not provided any funding to assist with the recapture. However, DFO regional staff have engaged Mowi and stakeholders in the area to develop a strategic coordinated plan for monitoring.

With regard to (e), the federal government has not provided any compensation to Mowi pertaining to this escape event.

**Question No. 63—Mr. Ben Lobb:**

With regard to the government's ethical apparel policy PN-132 and contract clause A3008C, since November 4, 2015: (a) how many times has the contract clause been breached by companies doing business with the government; (b) what are the details of each instance where a breach occurred, including (i) the date that the government advised the vendor that they were in breach, (ii) vendor, (iii) brand names involved, (iv) summary of breach; (c) for each instance in (b), did the government terminate the contract or issue a financial penalty to the vendor, and, if so, what are the details and amounts of the penalties; (d) how many investigations have been conducted to ensure compliance with PN-132, and, of those, how many vendors were found to be (i) in compliance, (ii) not in compliance; (e) does the policy consider ethical procurement certification for contracting below the first-tier subcontractor level; (f) what specific measures has the government taken, if any, to ensure that all vendors, including any contractors or subcontractors of such vendors, are in compliance with the policy; (g) what specific measures, if any, has the government taken to ensure that any products produced by forced labour camps, and specifically the forced Uyghur labour camps in China, are not purchased by the government; (h) what is the government's policy, if it has one, in relation to the termination of contracts in cases where a second-, third-, or any level below the first-tier subcontractor are found to be noncompliant with PN-132; (i) what is the total number of employees or full-time equivalents assigned to ensure compliance with the ethical apparel policy; and (j) for each employee in (i), what percentage of their job has been assigned to investigate or ensure compliance?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the following reflects a consolidated response approved on behalf of Global Affairs Canada ministers. With regard to parts (a) to (d), presently, there are 4,208 Canadians who have registered with the voluntary registration of Canadians abroad service in Hong Kong. As registration with the service is voluntary, this is not a complete picture of the total number of Canadians in Hong Kong.

Global Affairs Canada does not maintain statistics on the total number of Canadians citizens or permanent residents in a specific country or territory.

According to a survey led in 2011 by the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, an estimated 295,930 Canadians were living in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, SAR, at that time.

**Question No. 64—Mr. Ben Lobb:**

With regard to what the Prime Minister describes as the "due diligence" conducted by government officials in relation to the original decision to have the WE organization or WE Charity administer the Canada Student Service Grant (CSSG): (a) how many officials were involved in conducting the due diligence; (b) who con-

ducted the due diligence; (c) who was in charge of overseeing the due diligence process; (d) did the due diligence process examine WE's recent corporate governance or financial issues; (e) if the answer to (d) is affirmative, why did the officials still recommend that WE be chosen to administer the CSSG; (f) if the answer to (d) is negative, why were such issues not examined in the due diligence process; and (g) on what date did the due diligence process in relation to WE (i) begin, (ii) end?

**Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, officials from ESDC explained in several appearances before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance that contribution agreements are regularly used by the government to further policy objectives and engage a wide diversity of skills and resources outside the government.

ESDC began discussions in early May 2020 with WE Charity. Prior to entering into the contribution agreement, ESDC assessed the organization's eligibility and capacity to deliver a project against the terms and conditions of a program or initiative and the policy objectives and parameters of the Canada student service grant, CSSG; considered WE Charity's standing, including its completion of projects, results achieved and good financial standing on previous projects, by reviewing past projects where WE Charity received funding for project delivery from ESDC; and articulated clauses in the contribution agreement on accountability and results to mitigate any risks associated with the project development.

ESDC also outlined financial controls in the contribution agreement to govern the organization's appropriate use of funds, by including the following: payment clauses to advance funds based on project activities and to minimize the potential of overpayment; interest clauses requiring that any interest earned be either directed towards the project or returned to the Crown; repayment clauses governing the return of ineligible expenditures or funds that were not used for the project; project records, reporting and audit clauses holding the funding recipient accountable, allowing the department to track project progress, document results, provide financial accounting and track compliance; and a requirement for audited financial statements to reconcile expenditures at the end of the project.

Given the nature and amount of the agreement, due diligence was performed at all levels by employees and management within the skills and employment branch, program operations branch, chief financial officer branch and legal services branch within ESDC from the time negotiations on the contribution agreement commenced on May 5, 2020.

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 65—Mr. Alistair MacGregor:**

With regard to Transport Canada's (TC) announcement on November 1, 2017, to improve local maritime situational awareness and reduce marine traffic congestion through the Oceans Protection Plan, specifically with respect to the \$500,000 national Anchorages Initiative (NAI) to "bring together government, the marine industry, Indigenous peoples and stakeholder communities to develop a sustainable national anchorage framework": (a) in terms of subject matter, what areas of research has TC contracted, and who are the vendors; (b) who is currently directing the NAI and which of TC's federal and regional offices reports to the said director; (c) what concrete governmental actions, as a result of the NAI, can be expected by the initiative's estimated completion date of fall 2020; (d) which First Nations peoples and affected West Coast communities (i) have been consulted, (ii) have arrangements for NAI consultations in place; and (e) at the present date, how much of the \$500,000 budget allocated for the NAI remains unspent?

**Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), the World Maritime University completed three comparative research studies for Transport Canada. These studies examined the impacts of anchoring and related mitigation measures, technologies and practices; the demand for anchoring outside the jurisdiction of major public ports in Canada; and international approaches to the management and oversight of anchorages outside the jurisdictions of major public ports.

With regard to part (b), the anchorages initiative is led by Transport Canada's marine policy directorate in the national capital region.

With regard to part (c), Transport Canada will consult on a proposed approach to clarifying the governance and management of anchorages outside current port boundaries, with a view to mitigating socio-environmental impacts while promoting economic efficiency. As part of this work, best practices for the behaviour of large vessels at anchor will be advanced.

Given the impacts of COVID-19 on timelines and the need to ensure effective consultations with indigenous groups and other key stakeholders, the anchorages initiative will continue its work through to the end of the five-year mandate of the oceans protection plan.

With regard to part (d)(i), the following first nations peoples and affected west coast communities have been engaged: Snuneymuxw First Nation, Stz'uminus First Nation, Cowichan Tribes, Halalt First Nation, Lake Cowichan First Nation, Lyackson First Nation, Penelakut Tribe, Tsecum First Nation, Pauquachin First Nation, Tsartlip First Nation, Tsawout First Nation, Malahat First Nation, Tsawwassen First Nation, Cowichan Nation Alliance, Coast Salish Development Corporation, Islands Trust, Gabriolans Against Freighter Anchorages Society, Anchorages Concern Thetis, Cowichan Bay Ship Watch Society, Plumper Sound Protection Association, Protection Island Neighborhood Association, Stuart Channel Stewards, Saltair Ocean Protection Committee and Lady Smith Anchorage Watch.

In addition, the anchorages initiative participated in the following oceans protection plan engagement sessions attended by first nations, industry, government and community groups: Pacific Oceans Protection Plan Dialogue Forum Winter 2020, Vancouver, B.C., January 30, 2020; North Coast Oceans Protection Plan Dialogue Forum Fall 2018, Prince Rupert, B.C., November 22, 2018; Oceans Protection Plan Presentation to Comité de concertation sur la navigation, Bécancour, Quebec, October 30, 2018; South Coast Oceans Protection Plan Dialogue Forum Fall 2018, Vancouver,

B.C., October 22, 2018; South Coast Oceans Protection Plan Indigenous Workshop Spring 2018, Nanaimo, B.C., May 8-9, 2018; Atlantic Region Oceans Protection Plan Day with Indigenous Groups and Industry, St. John's, NFLD, March 28, 2018; South Coast Oceans Protection Plan Dialogue Forum Spring 2018, Vancouver, B.C., March 20-21, 2018; North Coast Oceans Protection Plan Dialogue Forum Spring 2018, Prince Rupert, B.C., March 8-9, 2018; Atlantic Oceans Protection Plan Day with Indigenous Groups, Moncton N.B., January 26, 2018; Oceans Protection Plan Presentation at the Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs Commercial Fisheries Conference, Moncton N.B., January 25, 2018; Atlantic Oceans Protection Plan Engagement Session, Dartmouth, N.S., June 19, 2018; Oceans Protection Plan Engagement Session, Quebec, Quebec, June 12, 2018; Oceans Protection Plan Engagement Session, Quebec, Quebec, November 7-8, 2017; Oceans Protection Plan Engagement Session, Vancouver, B.C., November 2, 2017.

With regard to part (d)(ii), additional engagement with indigenous groups and west coast communities will be undertaken once a proposed approach to the governance and management of anchorages is confirmed. No dates have been set at this point.

With regard to part (e), at the present date, the \$500,000 budget allocated for the NAI has been spent.

**Question No. 78—Mr. Greg McLean:**

With regard to the Clean Fuel Standard: (a) was a cost-benefit analysis of implementing such a regime conducted, and if not, why not; and (b) if such analysis was conducted, what are details including (i) who conducted the analysis, (ii) when was it conducted, (iii) what were the national results, (iv) what were the provincial or territorial results, (v) what is the website address of where analysis results were published, if applicable, (vi) if results were not published online, what is the rationale for not releasing the results?

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the proposed clean fuel standard regulations are on track to be published in Canada Gazette, part I in fall 2020, followed by a 75-day comment period. A regulatory impact analysis statement, which includes a cost-benefit analysis, will accompany the publication of the draft clean fuel standard regulations in Canada Gazette, part I. The cost-benefit analysis will provide an opportunity to engage with provinces, territories and stakeholders on, among other elements, the regional and sector economic impacts of the regulations.

Since the announcement of the clean fuel standard in 2016, there has been significant engagement on the design of the regulations. This has included engagement on the compliance pathways, including assumptions around technology update and costs.

*Routine Proceedings*

In February 2019, Environment and Climate Change Canada released the Cost-Benefit Analysis Framework for the Clean Fuel Standard for comment. The framework can be found at [www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/managing-pollution/energy-production/fuel-regulations/clean-fuel-standard/cost-benefit-analysis-framework-february-2019.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/managing-pollution/energy-production/fuel-regulations/clean-fuel-standard/cost-benefit-analysis-framework-february-2019.html).

Most recently, an update to the framework was provided in June 2020.

**Question No. 85—Mr. Dane Lloyd:**

With regard to government employees working from home during the pandemic, broken down by department, agency, Crown corporation or other government entity: (a) what is the total number of employees whose primary work location was, prior to the pandemic (or as of January 1, 2020), (i) in a government building or office space, (ii) at a home office or private residence, (iii) other, such as outdoor or travelling; (b) what is the total number of employees who worked from a government building or office space as of (i) April 1, 2020, (ii) July 1, 2020, (iii) September 28, 2020; (c) what is the total number of employees who worked from a home office or private residence as of (i) April 1, 2020, (ii) July 1, 2020, (iii) September 28, 2020; (d) what is the number of employees who initially were advised or instructed to work from home during the pandemic; (e) how many of the employees in (d) have since returned to work in a government building or office space, and when did they return, broken down by how many employees returned on each date; (f) of the employees in (d), how many were able to (i) complete all or most of their regular employment duties from home, (ii) some of their regular employment duties from home, (iii) few or none of their regular employment duties from home; (g) how many employees were provided with or had access to government laptop computers or similar type devices so that they could continue performing their regular employment duties from home during the pandemic; and (h) how many employees, who were advised or instructed to work from home during the pandemic, were not provided or had access to a government laptop or similar type of device while working from home?

**Mr. Greg Fergus (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board and to the Minister of Digital Government, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada is committed to supporting employees, whether physically in the workplace or at home. Together and apart, the government will continue to deliver information, advice, programs and services that Canadians need.

The Government of Canada continues to take exceptional measures to curb the COVID-19 pandemic and to protect the health and safety of its employees. The vast majority of public servants are working, either remotely or on site, to continue effectively delivering key programs and services to Canadians under these unprecedented circumstances.

Public health authorities have signalled that physical distancing requirements must remain in place. This means that many public service employees will continue to work remotely, and effectively, for the foreseeable future. Decisions regarding access to worksites are being made based on government-wide guidance and take into consideration the local public health situation and the nature of the work. Access to federal worksites for employees varies from organization to organization, based on operational requirements.

The physical and psychological health and safety of employees remain an absolute priority for the Government of Canada. As many parts of the country are seeing a resurgence in cases, the Government of Canada continues to be guided by the decisions of public health authorities, including Canada's chief public health officer, and the direction of provinces/territories and cities. While the COVID-19 pandemic presents ongoing challenges for Canadians and for the public service, the government has been moving collectively and successfully towards managing COVID-19 as part of its

ongoing operations and the continued delivery of key programs and services to Canadians.

**Question No. 87—Mr. Dane Lloyd:**

With regard to the government's firearms prohibitions and buyback program: (a) did the government conduct, either internally or externally, any analysis on the impacts of alternative mechanisms to address firearms related crimes; and (b) if the answer to (a) is affirmative, what are the details of each such analysis, including (i) the alternate mechanism analyzed, (ii) who conducted the analysis, (iii) the date the analysis was provided to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, (iv) findings, including any associated cost projections?

**Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on May 1, 2020, the Government of Canada announced the immediate prohibition of over 1,500 models of assault-style firearms that are specifically designed for soldiers to shoot other soldiers. The prohibition limits access to the most dangerous firearms and removes them from the Canadian market.

For decades, police chiefs had been advocating for such a measure. In 1986, the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, CACP, declared there was a "worldwide surplus" of accessible firearms that were designed for warfare and for the federal government to "take the steps necessary to end this increase in available weapons." In 1994, the CACP declared that "military assault rifles" were produced for the "sole purpose of killing people in large numbers" and urged the Minister of Justice to enact legislation to "ban all military assault rifles except for law enforcement and military purposes." Last September, the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police declared their support for a prohibition on all military-designed assault rifles. In their view, "these weapons have no place in our communities and should be reserved for use by Canada's military and law enforcement." Additionally, the current chief of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police has declared that this prohibition "finds balance" as it "ensures the safety of our members" while not limiting "those that recreationally participate in hunting or those that actually live off the land."

Between October 2018 and February 2019, the government held extensive public engagement on the issue of banning handguns and assault-style firearms with the provinces and territories, municipalities, indigenous groups, law enforcement, community organizations and industry to help inform policy, regulations and legislation to reduce violent crime involving firearms. While the engagement was framed by the examination of a potential ban, the discussion explored several potential measures to reduce violent crime including enhanced enforcement capacity for law enforcement and border services, investments to support initiatives that reduce violence, and strengthening safe firearms storage requirements to help prevent theft. Many participants expressed that a ban on assault-style firearms was needed in order to protect public safety.

*Routine Proceedings*

We put in place an amnesty to give existing owners time to come into compliance with the law. The amnesty order also provides a temporary exception for indigenous persons exercising section 35 constitutional rights to hunt and for sustenance hunters to allow for continued use of newly prohibited firearms, if previously non-restricted, until a suitable replacement can be found. The government remains committed to introducing a buyback program during the amnesty period. However, the costs associated with implementing a buyback program have not yet been finalized.

While the prohibition was a crucial initiative, it was only the first step in the government's gun control agenda. The government also intends to bring forward targeted measures to further address the criminal use of firearms. We will strengthen firearms storage requirements to deter theft. Following hundreds of millions of dollars cut by the previous Conservative government, we will continue to make the necessary investments to enhance our tracing capacity and reduce the number of guns being smuggled across the border. We will continue to also work with our partners from other levels of government to develop an approach to address handguns.

The government also intends to build on previous investments in youth and community measures, because we know that better social conditions lead to a reduction in crime and violence.

These initiatives were identified as a priority by our government, both in the throne speech and in the Prime Minister's mandate letter to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness and we are committed to addressing these important issues as soon as possible.

**Question No. 88—Mr. Dane Lloyd:**

With regard to the firearms regulations and prohibitions published in the Canada Gazette on May 1, 2020, and the proposed gun buyback program: (a) what is the total projected cost of the buyback program, broken down by type of expense; (b) is the projected cost a guess, or did the government use a formula or formal analysis to arrive at the projected cost; and (c) what are the details of any formula or analysis used by the government in coming up with the projected cost?

**Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the government remains committed to introducing a buyback program that offers fair compensation to affected owners and businesses, while making sure implementation and management costs of such a program are well priced and sustainable. To assist in meeting this dual objective, Public Safety is seeking to obtain professional services through a competitive process for the provision of advice on options and approaches to further inform ongoing efforts to develop a buyback program. Specifically, this advice would focus on firearms pricing models, as well as on the design, implementation and management of a buyback program for recently prohibited firearms.

As such, the costs associated with implementing and managing a buyback program have not been finalized yet and will be further refined in the coming months as program design development work progresses. Public Safety, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, RCMP, and its partners are looking at a range of options, and will work with the provinces and territories to get this right for law-abiding gun owners and businesses.

[English]

**QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS**

**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, if the government's responses to Questions No. 1, 3, 4, 6-14, 18, 20-32, 34, 36-45, 47, 49-60, 62, 66-77, 79-84, 86 and 89-97 could be made orders for returns, these returns would be tabled immediately.

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[Text]

**Question No. 1—Mr. Tom Kmiec:**

With regard to the fleet of Airbus A310-300s operated by the Royal Canadian Air Force and designated CC-150 Polaris: (a) how many flights has the fleet flown since January 1, 2020; (b) for each flight since January 1, 2020, what was the departure location and destination location of each flight, including city name and airport code or identifier; (c) for each flight listed in (b), what was the aircraft identifier of the aircraft used in each flight; (d) for each flight listed in (b), what were the names of all passengers who travelled on each flight; (e) of all the flights listed in (b), which flights carried the Prime Minister as a passenger; (f) of all the flights listed in (e), what was the total distance flown in kilometres; (g) for the flights listed in (b), what was the total cost to the government for operating these flights; and (h) for the flights listed in (e), what was the total cost to the government for operating these flights?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 3—Mr. Tom Kmiec:**

With regard to undertakings to prepare government offices for safe reopening following the COVID-19 pandemic since March 1, 2020: (a) what is the total amount of money the government has spent on plexiglass for use in government offices or centres, broken down by purchase order and by department; (b) what is the total amount of money the government has spent on cough and sneeze guards for use in government offices or centres, broken down by purchase order and by department; (c) what is the total amount of money the government has spent on protection partitions for use in government offices or centres, broken down by purchase order and by department; and (d) what is the total amount of money the government has spent on custom glass (for health protection) for use in government offices or centres, broken down by purchase order and by department?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings*

**Question No. 4—Mr. Tom Kmiec:**

With regard to requests filed for access to information with each government institution under the Access to Information Act since October 1, 2019: (a) how many access to information requests were made with each government institution, broken down alphabetically by institution and by month; (b) of the requests listed in (a), how many requests were completed and responded to by each government institution, broken down alphabetically by institution, within the statutory deadline of 30 calendar days; (c) of the requests listed in (a), how many of the requests required the department to apply an extension of fewer than 91 days to respond, broken down by each government institution; (d) of the requests listed in (a), how many of the requests required the department to apply an extension greater than 91 days but fewer than 151 days to respond, broken down by each government institution; (e) of the requests listed in (a), how many of the requests required the department to apply an extension greater than 151 days but fewer than 251 days to respond, broken down by each government institution; (f) of the requests listed in (a), how many of the requests required the department to apply an extension greater than 251 days but fewer than 365 days to respond, broken down by each government institution; (g) of the requests listed in (a), how many of the requests required the department to apply an extension greater than 366 days to respond, broken down by each government institution; (h) for each government institution, broken down alphabetically by institution, how many full-time equivalent employees were staffing the access to information and privacy directorate or sector; and (i) for each government institution, broken down alphabetically by institution, how many individuals are listed on the delegation orders under the Access to Information Act and the Privacy Act?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 6—Mr. Marty Morantz:**

With regard to loans made under the Canada Emergency Business Account: (a) what is the total number of loans made through the program; (b) what is the breakdown of (a) by (i) sector, (ii) province, (iii) size of business; (c) what is the total amount of loans provided through the program; and (d) what is the breakdown of (c) by (i) sector, (ii) province, (iii) size of business?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 7—Mr. Marty Morantz:**

With regard to the Interim Order Respecting Drugs, Medical Devices and Foods for a Special Dietary Purpose in Relation to COVID-19: (a) how many applications for the importation or sale of products were received by the government in relation to the order; (b) what is the breakdown of the number of applications by product or type of product; (c) what is the government's standard or goal for time between when an application is received and when a permit is issued; (d) what is the average time between when an application is received and a permit is issued; and (e) what is the breakdown of (d) by type of product?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 8—Mrs. Rosemarie Falk:**

With regard to converting government workplaces to accommodate those employees returning to work: (a) what are the final dollar amounts incurred by each department to prepare physical workplaces in government buildings; (b) what resources are being converted by each department to accommodate employees returning to work; (c) what are the additional funds being provided to each department for custodial services; (d) are employees working in physical distancing zones; (e) broken down by department, what percentage of employees will be allowed to work from their desks or physical government office spaces; and (f) will the government be providing hazard pay to those employees who must work from their physical government office?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 9—Mrs. Cathay Wagantall:**

With regard to the use of security notifications, also known as security (staff safety) threat flags, applied to users of Veterans Affairs Canada's (VAC) Client Service Delivery Network (CSDN) from November 4, 2015, to present: (a) how many security threat flags existed at the beginning of the time frame; (b) how many new security threat flags have been added during this time frame; (c) how many security threat flags have been removed during the time frame; (d) what is the total number of VAC clients who are currently subject to a security threat flag; (e) of the new security threat flags added since November 4, 2015, how many users of VAC's CSDN were informed of a security threat flag placed on their file, and of these, how many users of VAC's CSDN were provided with an explanation as to why a security threat flag was placed on their file; (f) what directives exist within VAC on per-

missible reasons for a security threat flag to be placed on the file of a CSDN user; (g) what directives exist within VAC pertaining to specific services that can be denied to a CSDN user with a security threat flag placed on their file; and (h) how many veterans have been subject to (i) denied, (ii) delayed, VAC services or financial aid as a result of a security threat flag being placed on their file during this time frame?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 10—Mr. Bob Saroya:**

With regard to government programs and services temporarily suspended, delayed or shut down during the COVID-19 pandemic: (a) what is the complete list of programs and services impacted, broken down by department of agency; (b) how was each program or service in (a) impacted; and (c) what is the start and end dates for each of these changes?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 11—Mr. Bob Saroya:**

With regard to recruitment and hiring at Global Affairs Canada (GAC), for the last 10 years: (a) what is the total number of individuals who have (i) applied for GAC seconded positions through CANADEM, (ii) been accepted as candidates, (iii) been successfully recruited; (b) how many individuals who identify themselves as a member of a visible minority have (i) applied for GAC seconded positions through CANADEM, (ii) been accepted as candidates, (iii) been successfully recruited; (c) how many candidates were successfully recruited within GAC itself; and (d) how many candidates, who identify themselves as members of a visible minority were successfully recruited within GAC itself?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 12—Mr. Bob Saroya:**

With regard to the government projections of the impacts of the COVID-19 on the viability of small and medium-sized businesses: (a) how many small and medium-sized businesses does the government project will either go bankrupt or otherwise permanently cease operations by the end of (i) 2020, (ii) 2021; (b) what percentage of small and medium-sized businesses does the numbers in (a) represent; and (c) what is the breakdown of (a) and (b) by industry, sector and province?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 13—Mr. Tim Uppal:**

With regard to government contracts for services and construction valued between \$39,000.00 and \$39,999.99, signed since January 1, 2016, and broken down by department, agency, Crown corporation or other government entity: (a) what is the total value of all such contracts; and (b) what are the details of all such contracts, including (i) vendor, (ii) amount, (iii) date, (iv) description of services or construction contracts, (v) file number?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 14—Mr. Tim Uppal:**

With regard to government contracts for architectural, engineering and other services required in respect of the planning, design, preparation or supervision of the construction, repair, renovation or restoration of a work valued between \$98,000.00 and \$99,999.99, signed since January 1, 2016, and broken down by department, agency, Crown corporation or other government entity: (a) what is the total value of all such contracts; and (b) what are the details of all such contracts, including (i) vendor, (ii) amount, (iii) date, (iv) description of services or construction contracts, (v) file number?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 18—Mr. Kelly McCauley:**

With regard to public service employees between March 15, 2020, and September 21, 2020, broken down by department and by week: (a) how many public servants worked from home; (b) how much has been paid out in overtime to employees; (c) how many vacation days have been used; and (d) how many vacation days were used during this same period in 2019?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 20—Mr. Alex Ruff:**

With regard to Order in Council SOR/2020-96 published on May 1, 2020, which prohibited a number of previously non-restricted and restricted firearms, and the Canadian Firearms Safety Course: (a) what is the government's formal technical definition of "assault-style firearms"; (b) when did the government come up with the definition, and in what government publication was the definition first used; and (c) which current members of cabinet have successfully completed the Canadian Firearms Safety Course?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 21—Mr. Alex Ruff:**

With regard to defaulted student loans owing for the 2018 and 2019 fiscal years, broken down by year: (a) how many student loans were in default; (b) what is the average age of the loans; (c) how many loans are in default because the loan holder has left the country; (d) what is the average reported T4 income for each of 2018 and 2019 defaulted loan holder; (e) how much was spent on collections agencies either in fees or their commissioned portion of collected loans; and (f) how much has been recouped by collection agencies?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 22—Mr. Alex Ruff:**

With regard to recipients of the Canada Emergency Response Benefit: what is the number of recipients based on 2019 income, broken down by federal income tax bracket?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 23—Mr. Pat Kelly:**

With regard to accommodating the work from home environment for government employees since March 13, 2020: (a) what is the total amount spent on furniture, equipment, including IT equipment, and services, including home Internet reimbursement; (b) of the purchases in (a) what is the breakdown per department by (i) date of purchase, (ii) object code it was purchased under, (iii) type of furniture, equipment or services, (iv) final cost of furniture, equipment or services; (d) what were the costs incurred for delivery of items in (a); and (d) were subscriptions purchased during this period, and if so (i) what were the subscriptions for, (ii) what were the costs associated for these subscriptions?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 24—Mr. John Nater:**

With regard to the responses to questions on the Order Paper earlier this year during the first session of the 43rd Parliament by the Minister of National Defence, which stated that "At this time, National Defence is unable to prepare and validate a comprehensive response" due to the COVID-19 situation: what is the Minister of National Defence's comprehensive response to each question on the Order Paper where such a response was provided, broken down by question?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 25—Mrs. Tamara Jansen:**

With regard to the transfer of Ebola and Henipah viruses from the National Microbiology Laboratory (NML) to persons, laboratories, and institutions in China: (a) who in China requested the transfer; (b) other than the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV), which laboratories in China requested the transfer; (c) for the answers in (a) and (b) which are affiliated with the military of China; (d) on what date was the WIV's request for the transfer received by the NML; (e) what scientific research was proposed, or what other scientific rationale was put forth, by the WIV or the NML scientists to justify the transfer of Ebola and Henipah viruses; (f) what materials were authorized for transfer pursuant to Transfer Authorization NML-TA-18-0480, dated October 29, 2018; (g) did the NML receive payment of \$75, per its commercial invoice of March 27, 2019, for the transfer, and on what date was payment received; (h) what consideration or compensation was received from China in exchange for providing this material, broken down by amount or details of the consideration or compensation received by each recipient organization; (i) has the government requested China to destroy or return the viruses and, if not, why; (j) did Canada include, as a term of the transfer, a prohibition on the WIV further transferring the viruses with others inside or outside China, except with Canada's consent; (k) what due diligence did the NML perform to ensure that the WIV and other institutions referred to in (b) would not make use of the transferred viruses for military research or uses; (l) what inspections or audits did the NML perform of the WIV and other institutions referred to in (b) to ensure that they were able to handle the transferred viruses safely and without diversion to military research or uses; (m)

what were the findings of the inspections or audits referred to in (l), in summary; (n) after the transfer, what follow-up has Canada conducted with the institutions referred to in (b) to ensure that the only research being performed with the transferred viruses is that which was disclosed at the time of the request for the transfer; (o) what intellectual property protections did Canada set in place before sending the transferred viruses to the persons and institutions referred to in (a) and (b); (p) of the Ebola virus strains sent to the WIV, what percentages of the NML's total Ebola collection and Ebola collection authorized for sharing is represented by the material transferred; (q) other than the study entitled "Equine-Origin Immunoglobulin Fragments Protect Nonhuman Primates from Ebola Virus Disease", which other published or unpublished studies did the NML scientists perform with scientists affiliated with the military of China; (r) which other studies are the NML scientists currently performing with scientists affiliated with the WIV, China's Academy of Military Medical Sciences, or other parts of China's military establishment; (s) what is the reason that Anders Leung of the NML attempted to send the transferred viruses in incorrect packaging (type PI650), and only changed its packaging to the correct standard (type PI620) after being questioned by the Chinese on February 20, 2019; (t) has the NML conducted an audit of the error of using unsafe packaging to transfer the viruses, and what in summary were its conclusions; (u) what is the reason that Allan Lau and Heidi Wood of the NML wrote on March 28, 2019, that they were "really hoping that this [the transferred viruses] goes through Vancouver" instead of Toronto on Air Canada, and "Fingers crossed!" for this specific routing;

(v) what is the complete flight itinerary, including airlines and connecting airports, for the transfer; (w) were all airlines and airports on the flight itinerary informed by the NML that Ebola and Henipah viruses would be in their custody; (x) with reference to the email of Marie Gharib of the NML on March 27, 2019, other than Ebola and Henipah viruses, which other pathogens were requested by the WIV; (y) since the date of the request for transfer, other than Ebola and Henipah viruses, which other pathogens has the NML transferred or sought to transfer to the WIV; (z) did the NML inform Canada's security establishment, including the RCMP, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, the Communications Security Establishment, or other such entity, of the transfer before it occurred, and, if not, why not; (aa) what is the reason that the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) redacted the name of the transfer recipient from documents disclosed to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) under the Access to Information Act, when the PHAC later willingly disclosed that information to the CBC; (bb) does Canada have any policy prohibiting the export of risk group 3 and 4 pathogens to countries, such as China, that conduct gain-of-function experiments, and in summary what is that policy; (cc) if Canada does not have any policy referred to in (bb), why not; (dd) what is the reason that did the NML or individual employees sought and obtained no permits or authorizations under the Human Pathogens and Toxins Act, the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act, the Export Control Act, or related legislation prior to the transfer; (ee) what legal controls prevent the NML or other government laboratories sending group 3 or 4 pathogens to laboratories associated with foreign militaries or laboratories that conduct gain-of-function experiments; (ff) with respect to the September 14, 2018, email of Matthew Gilmour, in which he writes that "no certifications [were] provided [by the WIV], they simply cite they have them", why did the NML proceed to transfer Ebola and Henipah viruses without proof of certification to handle them safely; and (gg) with respect to the September 14, 2018, email of Matthew Gilmour, in which he asked "Are there materials that [WIV] have that we would benefit from receiving? Other VHF? High path flu?", did the NML request these or any other materials in exchange for the transfer, and did the NML receive them?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings*

**Question No. 26—Mrs. Tamara Jansen:**

With regard to both the administrative and RCMP investigations of the National Microbiology Lab (NML), Xiangguo Qiu, and Keding Cheng: (a) with respect to the decision of the NML and the RCMP to remove Dr. Qiu and Dr. Cheng from the NML facilities on July 5, 2019, what is the cause of delay that has prevented that the NML and the RCMP investigations concluding; (b) in light of a statement by the Public Health Agency of Canada to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation which was reported on June 14, 2020, and which stated, “the administrative investigation of [Dr. Qiu or Dr. Cheng] is not related to the shipment of virus samples to China”, what are these two scientists being investigated for; (c) did Canada receive information from foreign law enforcement or intelligence agencies which led to the investigations against Dr. Qiu or Dr. Cheng, and, in summary, what was alleged; (d) which other individuals apart from Dr. Qiu or Dr. Cheng are implicated in the investigations; (e) are Dr. Qiu or Dr. Cheng still in Canada; (f) are Dr. Qiu or Dr. Cheng cooperating with law enforcement in the investigations; (g) are Dr. Qiu or Dr. Cheng on paid leave, unpaid leave, or terminated from the NML; (h) what connection is there between the investigations of Dr. Qiu or Dr. Cheng and the investigation by the United States National Institutes of Health which has resulted in 54 scientists losing their jobs mainly due to receiving foreign funding from China, as reported by the Journal Science on June 12, 2020; (i) does the government possess information that Dr. Qiu or Dr. Cheng solicited or received funding from a Chinese institution, and, in summary what is that information; and (j) when are the investigations expected to conclude, and will their findings be made public?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 27—Ms. Heather McPherson:**

With regard to Canada’s commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: (a) what is the role or mandate of each department, agency, Crown corporation and any programs thereof in advancing Canada’s implementation of the 2030 Agenda; (b) what has the government, as a whole, committed to achieving and in what timeline; (c) what projects are currently in place to achieve these goals; (d) has the government liaised with sub-national governments, groups and organizations to achieve these goals; (e) if the answer to (d) is affirmative, what governments, groups and organizations; (f) if the answer to (d) is negative, why not; (g) how much money has the government allocated to funding initiatives in each fiscal year since 2010-11, broken down by program and sub-program; (h) in each year, how much allocated funding was lapsed for each program and subprogram; (i) in each case where funding was lapsed, what was the reason; (j) have any additional funds been allocated to this initiative; (k) for each fiscal year since 2010-2011, what organizations, governments, groups and companies, have received funding connected to Canada’s implementation of the 2030 Agenda; and (l) how much did organizations, governments, groups and companies in (k) (i) request, (ii) receive, including if the received funding was in the form of grants, contributions, loans or other spending?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 28—Ms. Heather McPherson:**

With regard to the government’s campaign for a United Nations Security Council seat: (a) how much funding has been allocated, spent and lapsed in each fiscal year since 2014-15 on the campaign; and (b) broken down by month since November 2015, what meetings and phone calls did government officials at the executive level hold to advance the goal of winning a seat on the United Nations Security Council?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 29—Ms. Heather McPherson:**

With respect to the government’s response to the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, broken down by month since June 2019: (a) what meetings and phone calls did government officials at the executive level hold to craft the national action plan in response to the final report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls; and (b) what external stakeholders were consulted?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 30—Ms. Heather McPherson:**

With regard to Canada Revenue Agency activities, agreements guaranteeing non-referral to the criminal investigation sector and cases referred to the Public Prosecution Service of Canada, between 2011-12 and 2019-20, broken down by fiscal year: (a) how many audits resulting in reassessments were concluded; (b) of the agreements concluded in (a), what was the total amount recovered; (c) of the agreements concluded in (a), how many resulted in penalties for gross negligence; (d) of

the agreements concluded in (c), what was the total amount of penalties; (e) of the agreements concluded in (a), how many related to bank accounts held outside Canada; and (f) how many audits resulting in assessments were referred to the Public Prosecution Service of Canada?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 31—Mr. Michael Kram:**

With regard to the Wataynikaneyap Transmission Project: (a) is it the government’s policy to choose foreign companies over Canadian companies for this or similar projects; (b) which company or companies supplied transformers to the project; (c) were transformers rated above 60MVA supplied to the project subject to the applicable 35% or more import tariff, and, if so, was this tariff actually collected; and (d) broken down by transformer, what was the price charged to the project of any transformers rated (i) above 60MVA, (ii) below 60MVA?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 32—Mr. Philip Lawrence:**

With regard to the Canada Revenue Agency’s approach to workspace-in-the-home expense deductions in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic’s stay-at-home guidelines: are individuals who had to use areas of their homes not normally used for work, such as dining or living rooms, as a temporary office during the pandemic entitled to the deductions, and, if so, how should individuals calculate which portions of their mortgage, rent, or other expenses are deductible?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 34—Mr. Kerry Diotte:**

With regard to the status of government employees since March 1, 2020: (a) how many employees have been placed on “Other Leave With Pay” (Treasury Board Code 699) at some point since March 1, 2020; (b) how many employees have been placed on other types of leave, excluding vacation, maternity or paternity leave, at some point since March 1, 2020, broken down by type of leave and Treasury Board code; (c) of the employees in (a), how many are still currently on leave; and (d) of the employees in (b), how many are still currently on leave, broken down by type of leave?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 36—Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:**

With regard to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, since 2005: how many meat and poultry processing plants have had their licences cancelled, broken down by year and province?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 37—Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:**

With regard to instances where retiring Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) Members were negatively financially impacted as a result of having their official release date scheduled for a weekend or holiday, as opposed to a regular business day, since January 1, 2016, and broken down by year: (a) how many times has a release administrator recommended a CAF Member’s release date occur on a weekend or holiday; (b) how many times did a CAF Member’s release date occur on a holiday; (c) how many Members have had payments or coverage from (i) SISIP Financial, (ii) other entities, cancelled or reduced as a result of the official release date occurring on a weekend or holiday; (d) were any instructions, directives, or advice issued to any release administrator asking them not to schedule release dates on a weekend or holiday in order to preserve CAF Member’s benefits, and, if so, what are the details; (e) were any instructions, directives, or advice issued to any release administrator asking them to schedule certain release dates on a weekend or holiday, and, if so, what are the details; and (f) what action, if any, has the Minister of National Defense taken to restore any payments or benefits lost as a result of the scheduling of a CAF Member’s release date?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 38—Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:**

With regard to federal grants, contributions, non-repayable loans, or similar type of funding provided to telecommunications companies since 2009: what are the details of all such funding, including the (i) date, (ii) recipient, (iii) type of funding, (iv) department providing the funding, (v) name of program through which funding was provided, (vi) project description, (vii) start and completion, (viii) project location, (ix) amount of federal funding?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 39—Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:**

With regard to Canadian Armed Forces personnel deployed to long-term care facilities during the COVID-19 pandemic: (a) what personal protective equipment (PPE) was issued to Canadian Armed Forces members deployed to long-term care homes in Ontario and Quebec; and (b) for each type of PPE in (a), what was the (i) model, (ii) purchase date, (iii) purchase order number, (iv) number ordered, (v) number delivered, (vi) supplier company, (vii) expiration date of the product, (viii) location where the stockpile was stored?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 40—Ms. Jenny Kwan:**

With regard to the National Housing Strategy, broken down by name of applicant, type of applicant (e.g. non-profit, for-profit, coop), stream (e.g. new construction, revitalization), date of submission, province, number of units, and dollar amount for each finalized application: (a) how many applications have been received for the National Housing Co-Investment Fund (NHCF) since 2018; (b) how many NHCF applications have a letter of intent, excluding those with loan agreements or finalized agreements; (c) how many NHCF applications are at the loan agreement stage; (d) how many NHCF applications have had funding agreements finalized; (e) how many NHCF applications have had NHCF funding received by applicants; (f) for NHCF applications that resulted in finalized funding agreements, what is the (i) length of time in days between their initial submission and the finalization of their funding agreement, (ii) average and median rent of the project, (iii) percentage of units meeting NHCF affordability criteria, (iv) average and median rent of units meeting affordability criteria; (g) how many applications have been received for the Rental Construction Financing initiative (RCFi) since 2017; (h) how many RCFi applications are at (i) the approval and letter of intent stage of the application process, (ii) the loan agreement and funding stage, (iii) the servicing stage; (i) how many RCFi applications have had RCFi loans received by applicants; (j) for RCFi applications that resulted in loan agreements, what is the (i) length of time in days between their initial submission and the finalization of their loan agreement, (ii) average and median rent of the project, (iii) percentage of units meeting RCFi affordability criteria, (iv) average and median rent of units meeting affordability criteria?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 41—Ms. Jenny Kwan:**

With regard to the National Housing Strategy: (a) what provinces and territories have reached an agreement with the federal government regarding the Canada Housing Benefit; (b) broken down by number of years on a waitlist for housing, gender, province, year of submission, amount requested and amount paid out, (i) how many applications have been received, (ii) how many applications are currently being assessed, (iii) how many applications have been approved, (iv) how many applications have been declined; and (c) if the Canada housing benefit is transferred as lump sums to the provinces, what are the dollar amount of transfers to the provinces, broken down by amount, year and province?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 42—Ms. Jenny Kwan:**

With regard to immigration, refugee and citizenship processing levels: (a) how many applications have been received since 2016, broken down by year and stream (e.g. outland spousal sponsorship, home childcare provider, open work permit, privately sponsored refugee, etc.); (b) how many applications have been fully approved since 2015, broken down by year and stream; (c) how many applications have been received since (i) March 15, 2020, (ii) September 21, 2020; (d) how many applications have been approved since (i) March 15, 2020, (ii) September 21, 2020; (e) how many applications are in backlog since January 2020, broken down by month and stream; (f) what is the number of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) visa officers and other IRCC employees, in whole or in part (i.e. FTEs), who have been processing applications since January 1, 2020, broken down by month, immigration office and application stream being processed; (g)

since March 15, 2020, how many employees referred to in (f) have been placed on paid leave broken down by month, immigration office and application stream being processed; and (h) what are the details of any briefing notes or correspondence since January 2020 related to (i) staffing levels, (ii) IRCC office closures, (iii) the operation levels of IRCC mail rooms, (iv) plans to return to increased operation?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 43—Ms. Jenny Kwan:**

With regard to asylum seekers: (a) broken down by year, how many people have been turned away due to the Safe Third Country Agreement since (i) 2016, (ii) January 1, 2020, broken by month, (iii) since July 22, 2020; (b) how many asylum claims have been found ineligible under paragraph 101(1)(c.1) of the Immigration, Refugee and Protection Act since (i) January 1st 2020, broken by month, (ii) July 22, 2020; and (c) what are the details of any briefing notes or correspondence since January 1, 2020, on the Safe Third Country Agreement?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 44—Mr. Kenny Chiu:**

With regard to government involvement in the negotiations with Vertex Pharmaceuticals for a Price Listing Agreement with the Pan Canadian Pharmaceutical Alliance, in relation to cystic fibrosis treatments: (a) what is the current status of the negotiations; (b) what specific measures, if any, has the government taken to ensure that Kalydeco and Orkambi are available to all Canadians that require the medication; (c) has the government taken any specific measures to make Trikafta available to Canadians; and (d) how many months, or years, will it be before the government finishes the regulatory and review process related to the approval of Trikafta?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 45—Mr. Kenny Chiu:**

With regard to the government's position regarding visitors coming to Canada for the sole purpose of giving birth on Canadian soil and subsequently obtaining Canadian citizenship for their child: (a) what is the government's position in relation to this practice; (b) has the government condemned or taken any action to prevent this practice, and if so, what are the details of any such action; and (c) has the government taken any action to ban or discourage Canadian companies from soliciting or advertising services promoting this type of activity, and if so, what are details?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 47—Mr. Alex Ruff:**

With regard to the government's response to Q-268 concerning the government failing to raise Canada's bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) risk status from "Controlled Risk to BSE" to "Negligible Risk to BSE" with the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) in the summer of 2019: (a) what is the government's justification for missing the deadline with the OIE in the summer of 2019; (b) has the government conducted consultations with beef farmers to discuss the damage to the industry caused by missing this deadline, and, if so, what are the details of these consultations; (c) when did the government begin collating data from provincial governments, industry partners and stakeholders in order to ensure that a high-quality submission was produced and submitted in July 2020; (d) what measures were put in place to ensure that the July 2020 deadline, as well as other future deadlines, will not be missed; and (e) on what exact date was the application submitted to the OIE in July 2020?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings*

**Question No. 49—Mr. Brad Vis:**

With regard to the First-Time Home Buyer Incentive (FTHBI) announced by the government in 2019, between February 1, 2020, and September 1, 2020: (a) how many applicants have applied for mortgages through the FTHBI, broken down by province and municipality; (b) of those applicants, how many have been approved and have accepted mortgages through the FTHBI, broken down by province and municipality; (c) of those applicants listed in (b), how many approved applicants have been issued the incentive in the form of a shared equity mortgage; (d) what is the total value of incentives (shared equity mortgages) under the FTHBI that have been issued, in dollars; (e) for those applicants who have been issued mortgages through the FTHBI, what is that value of each of the mortgage loans; (f) for those applicants who have been issued mortgages through the FTHBI, what is the mean value of the mortgage loan; (g) what is the total aggregate amount of money lent to homebuyers through the FTHBI to date; (h) for mortgages approved through the FTHBI, what is the breakdown of the percentage of loans originated with each lender comprising more than 5% of total loans issued; and (i) for mortgages approved through the FTHBI, what is the breakdown of the value of outstanding loans insured by each Canadian mortgage insurance company as a percentage of total loans in force?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 50—Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:**

With regard to the air quality and air flow in buildings owned or operated by the government: (a) what specific measures were taken to improve the air flow or circulation in government buildings since March 1, 2020, broken down by individual building; (b) on what date did each measure in (a) come into force; (c) which government buildings have new air filters, HVAC filters, or other equipment designed to clean or improve the air quality or air flow installed since March 1, 2020; (d) for each building in (c), what new equipment was installed and on what date was it installed; and (e) what are the details of all expenditures or contracts related to any of the new measures or equipment, including (i) vendor, (ii) amount, (iii) description of goods or services provided, (iv) date contract was signed, (v) date goods or services were delivered?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 51—Ms. Marilyn Gladu:**

What was the amount of FedDev funding, in dollars, given by year since 2016 to every riding in Ontario, broken down by riding?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 52—Ms. Rachel Blaney:**

With regards to Veterans Affairs Canada, broken down by year for the most recent 10 fiscal years for which data is available: (a) what was the number of disability benefit applications received; (b) of the applications in (a), how many were (i) rejected, (ii) approved, (iii) appealed, (iv) rejected upon appeal, (v) approved upon appeal; (c) what was the average wait time for a decision; (d) what was the median wait time for a decision; (e) what was the ratio of veteran to case manager at the end of each fiscal year; (f) what was the number of applications awaiting a decision at the end of each fiscal year; and (g) what was the number of veterans awaiting a decision at the end of each fiscal year?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 53—Ms. Rachel Blaney:**

With regard to Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC): (a) during the most recent fiscal year for which data is available, broken down by month and by VAC office, including nationally, what was the total number of overtime hours worked, further broken down by job title, including National First Level Appeals Officer, National Second Level Appeals Officer, case manager, veterans service agent and disability adjudicator; (b) during the most recent fiscal year for which data is available, broken down by month and by VAC office, including nationally, what was the average number of overtime hours worked, further broken down by (i) job title, including National First Level Appeals Officer, National Second Level Appeals Officer, case manager, veterans service agent and disability adjudicator, (ii) directorate; (c) during the most recent fiscal year for which data is available, broken down by month and by VAC office, including nationally, what was the total cost of overtime, further broken down by (i) job title, including National First Level Appeals Officer, National Second Level Appeals Officer, case manager, veterans service agent and disability adjudicator, (ii) directorate; (d) during the most recent fiscal year for which data is available, broken down by month and by VAC office, including nationally, what was the total number of disability benefit claims, further broken down by (i)

new claims, (ii) claims awaiting a decision, (iii) approved claims, (iv) denied claims, (v) appealed claims; (e) during the most recent fiscal year for which data is available, broken down by month and by VAC office, including nationally, how many new disability benefit claims were transferred to a different VAC office than that which conducted the intake; (f) during the most recent fiscal year for which data is available, broken down by month and by VAC office, including nationally, what was the number of (i) case managers, (ii) veterans service agents; (g) during the most recent fiscal year for which data is available, broken down by month and by VAC office, including nationally, excluding standard vacation and paid sick leave, how many case managers took a leave of absence, and what was the average length of a leave of absence; (h) during the most recent fiscal year for which data is available, broken down by month and by VAC office, including nationally, accounting for all leaves of absence, excluding standard vacation and paid sick leave, how many full-time equivalent case managers were present and working, and what was the case manager to veteran ratio; (i) during the most recent fiscal year for which data is available, broken down by month and by VAC office, including nationally, how many veterans were disengaged from their case manager; (j) during the most recent fiscal year for which data is available, broken down by month and by VAC office, including nationally, what was the highest number of cases assigned to an individual case manager;

(k) during the most recent fiscal year for which data is available, broken down by month and by VAC office, including nationally, how many veterans were on a waitlist for a case manager; (l) during the most recent fiscal year for which data is available, broken down by month and by VAC office, including nationally, for work usually done by regularly employed case managers and veterans service agents, (i) how many contracts were awarded, (ii) what was the duration of each contract, (iii) what was the value of each contract; (m) during the most recent fiscal year for which data is available, broken down by VAC office, what were the service standard results; (n) what is the mechanism for tracking the transfer of cases between case managers when a case manager takes a leave of absence, excluding standard vacation and paid sick leave; (o) what is the department's current method for calculating the case manager to veteran ratio; (p) what are the department's quality assurance measures for case managers and how do they change based on the number of cases a case manager has at that time; (q) during the last five fiscal year for which data is available, broken down by month, how many individuals were hired by the department; (r) how many of the individuals in (q) remained employed after their 12-month probation period came to an end;

(s) of the individuals in (q), who did not remain employed beyond the probation period, how many did not have their contracts extended by the department; (t) does the department track the reasons for which employees are not kept beyond the probation period, and, if so, respecting the privacy of individual employees, what are the reasons for which employees were not kept beyond the probation period; (u) for the individuals in (q) who chose not to remain at any time throughout the 12 months, were exit interviews conducted, and, if so, respecting the privacy of individual employees, what were the reasons, broken down by VAC office; (v) during the last five fiscal years for which data is available, broken down by month, how many Canadian Armed Forces service veterans were hired by the department; (w) of the veterans in (v), how many remained employed after their 12-month probation period came to an end; (x) of the veterans in (v), who are no longer employed by the department, (i) how many did not have their employment contracts extended by the department, (ii) how many were rejected on probation; (y) if the department track the reasons for which employees are not kept beyond the probation period, respecting the privacy of individual veteran employees, what are the reasons for which veteran employees are not kept beyond the probation period;

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(z) for the veterans in (v), who chose not to remain at any time throughout the 12 months, were exit interviews conducted, and, if so, respecting the privacy of individual veteran employees, what were the reasons for their leaving, broken down by VAC office; (aa) during the last five fiscal year for which data is available, broken down by month, how many employees have quit their jobs at VAC; and (bb) for the employees in (aa) who quit their job, were exit interviews conducted, and, if so, respecting the privacy of individual employees, what were the reasons, broken down by VAC office?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 54—**Mr. Todd Doherty:**

With regard to the 2020 United Nations Security Council election and costs associated with Canada's bid for a Security Council Seat: (a) what is the final total of all costs associated with the bid; (b) if the final total is not yet known, what is the projected final cost and what is the total of all expenditures made to date in relation to the bid; (c) what is the breakdown of all costs by type of expense (gifts, travel, hospitality, etc.); and (d) what are the details of all contracts over \$5,000 in relation to the bid, including (i) date, (ii) amount, (iii) vendor, (iv) summary of goods or services provided, (v) location goods or services were provided?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 55—**Mr. Chris d'Entremont:**

With regard to any exemptions or essential worker designations granted to ministers, ministerial exempt staff, including any staff in the Office of the Prime Minister, or senior level civil servants so that the individual can be exempt from a mandatory 14-day quarantine after travelling to the Atlantic bubble, since the quarantine orders were put into place: (a) how many such individuals received an exemption; (b) what are the names and titles of the individuals who received exemptions; (c) for each case, what was the reason or rationale why the individual was granted an exemption; and (d) what are the details of all instances where a minister or ministerial exempt staff member travelled from outside of the Atlantic provinces to one or more of the Atlantic provinces since the 14-day quarantine for travellers was instituted, including the (i) name and title of the traveller, (ii) date of departure, (iii) date of arrival, (iv) location of departure, (v) location of arrival, (vi) mode of transportation, (vii) locations visited on the trip, (viii) whether or not the minister or staff member received an exemption from the 14-day quarantine, (ix) whether or not the minister of staff member adhered to the 14-day quarantine, (x) purpose of the trip?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 56—**Mr. Chris d'Entremont:**

With regard to expenditures on moving and relocation expenses for ministerial exempt staff since January 1, 2018, broken down by ministerial office: (a) what is the total amount spent on moving and relocation expenses for (i) incoming ministerial staff, (ii) departing or transferring ministerial staff; (b) how many exempt staff members or former exempt staff members' expenses does the total in (a) cover; and (c) how many exempt staff members or former exempt staff members had more than \$10,000 in moving and relocation expenses covered by the government, and what was the total for each individual?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 57—**Mr. Chris d'Entremont:**

With regard to national interest exemptions issued by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration or the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness in relation to the mandatory quarantine required for individuals entering Canada during the pandemic: (a) how many individuals received national interest exemptions; and (b) what are the details of each exemption, including (i) the name of the individual granted exemption, (ii) which minister granted the exemption, (iii) the date the exemption was granted, (iv) the explanation regarding how the exemption was in Canada's national interest, (v) the country the individual travelled to Canada from?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 58—**Mr. James Cumming:**

With regard to electric vehicle charging stations funded or subsidized by the government: (a) how many chargers have been funded or subsidized since January 1, 2016; (b) what is the breakdown of (a) by province and municipality; (c) what was the total government expenditure on each charging station, broken down by location; (d) on what date was each station installed; (e) which charging stations are currently open to the public; and (f) what is the current cost of electricity for users of the public charging stations?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 59—**Mr. Gord Johns:**

With regard to the Civilian Review and Complaints Commission for the RCMP (CRCC), since its establishment: (a) how many complaints and requests for review were filed by individuals identifying as First Nations, Metis, or Inuit, broken down by percentage and number; (b) how many of the complaints and requests for review in (a) were dismissed without being investigated; (c) how many complaints and requests for review were filed for incidents occurring on-reserve or in predominantly First Nations, Metis, and Inuit communities, broken down by percentage and number; (d) how many of those complaints and requests for review in (c) were dismissed without being investigated; and (e) for requests for review in which the CRCC is not satisfied with the RCMP's report, how many interim reports have been provided to complainants for response and input on recommended actions?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 60—**Mr. Gord Johns:**

With regard to active transportation in Canada: what federal actions and funding has been taken with or provided to provinces and municipalities, broken down by year since 2010, that (i) validates the use of roads by cyclists and articulates the safety-related responsibilities of cyclists and other vehicles in on-road situation, (ii) grants authority to various agencies to test and implement unique solutions to operational problems involving active transportation users, (iii) improves road safety for pedestrians, cyclists and other vulnerable road users, (iv) makes the purchase of bicycles and cycling equipment more affordable by reducing sales tax on their purchase?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 62—**Mr. Michael Cooper:**

With regard to management consulting contracts signed by any department, agency, Crown corporation or other government entity during the pandemic, since March 1, 2020: (a) what is the total value of all such contracts; and (b) what are the details of each contract, including the (i) vendor, (ii) amount, (iii) date the contract was signed, (iv) start and end date of consulting services, (v) description of the issue, advice, or goal that the consulting contract was intended to address or achieve, (vi) file number, (vii) Treasury Board object code used to classify the contract (e.g. 0491)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 66—**Mr. Taylor Bachrach:**

With regard to the information collected by the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) regarding electronic funds transfers of \$10,000 and over and the statement by the Minister of National Revenue before the Standing Committee on Finance on May 19, 2016, indicating that using this information, the CRA will target up to four jurisdictions per year, without warning, broken down by fiscal year since 2016-17: (a) how many foreign jurisdictions were targeted; (b) what is the name of each foreign jurisdiction targeted; (c) how many audits were conducted by the CRA for each foreign jurisdiction targeted; (d) of the audits in (c), how many resulted in a notice of assessment; (e) of the audits in (c), how many were referred to the CRA's Criminal Investigations Program; (f) of the investigations in (e), how many were referred to the Public Prosecution Service of Canada; (g) how many prosecutions in (f) resulted in convictions; (h) what were the penalties imposed for each conviction in (g); and (i) what is the total amount recovered?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings*

**Question No. 67—Mr. Taylor Bachrach:**

With regard to the Canada Revenue Agency's (CRA) activities under the General Anti-Avoidance Rule under section 245 of the Income Tax Act, and under section 274 of the Income Tax Act, broken down by section of the act: (a) how many audits have been completed, since the fiscal year 2011-12, broken down by fiscal year and by (i) individual, (ii) trust, (iii) corporation; (b) how many notices of assessment have been issued by the CRA since the fiscal year 2011-12, broken down by fiscal year and by (i) individual, (ii) trust, (iii) corporation; (c) what is the total amount recovered by the CRA to date; (d) how many legal proceedings are currently underway, broken down by (i) Tax Court of Canada, (ii) Federal Court of Appeal, (iii) Supreme Court of Canada; (e) how many times has the CRA lost in court, broken down by (i) name of taxpayer, (ii) Tax Court of Canada, (iii) Federal Court of Appeal, (iv) Supreme Court of Canada; (f) what was the total amount spent by the CRA, broken down by lawsuit; and (g) how many times has the CRA not exercised its right of appeal, broken down by lawsuit, and what is the justification for each case?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 68—Mr. Taylor Bachrach:**

With regard to the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) interdepartmental committee that reviews files and makes recommendations on the application of the General Anti-Avoidance Rule (GAAR), broken down by fiscal year since 2010-11: (a) how many of the proposed GAAR assessments sent to the CRA's headquarters for review were referred to the interdepartmental committee; and (b) of the assessments reviewed in (a) by the interdepartmental committee, for how many assessments did the interdepartmental committee (i) recommend the application of the GAAR, (ii) not recommend the application of the GAAR?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 69—Mr. Taylor Bachrach:**

With regard to the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program, since March 22, 2016: (a) what is the complete list of infrastructure projects that have undergone a Climate Lens assessment, broken down by stream; and (b) for each project in (a), what are the details, including (i) amount of federal financing, (ii) location of the project, (iii) a brief description of the project, (iv) whether the project included a Climate Change Resilience Assessment, (v) whether the project included a Climate Change Green House Gas Mitigation Assessment, (vi) if a project included a Climate Change Resilience Assessment, a summary of the risk management findings of the assessment, (vii) if a project included a Climate Change Green House Gas Mitigation Assessment, the increase or reduction in emissions calculated in the assessment?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 70—Mr. Gord Johns:**

With regard to the motion respecting the business of supply on service standards for Canada's veterans adopted by the House on November 6, 2018: (a) what was the amount and percentage of all lapsed spending in the Department of Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC), broken down by year from 2013-14 to the current fiscal year; (b) what steps has the government taken since then to automatically carry forward all unused annual expenditures of the VAC to the next fiscal year; and (c) is the carry forward in (b) for the sole purpose of improving services to Canada's veterans until the department meets or exceeds the 24 service standards it has set?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 71—Mr. Matthew Green:**

With respect to the tax fairness motion that the House adopted on March 8, 2017: what steps has the government taken since then to (i) cap the stock option loophole, (ii) tighten the rules for shell corporations, (iii) renegotiate tax treaties that allow corporations to repatriate profits from tax havens back to Canada without paying tax, (iv) end forgiveness agreements without penalty for individuals suspected of tax evasion?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 72—Ms. Raquel Dancho:**

With regard to government assistance programs for individuals during the COVID-19 pandemic: (a) what has been the total amount of money expended through the (i) Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB), (ii) Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS), (iii) Canada Emergency Student Benefit (CESB), (iv) Canada Student Service Grant (CSSG); (b) what is the cumulative weekly breakdown of (a), starting on March 13, 2020, and further broken down by (i)

province or territory, (ii) gender, (iii) age group; (c) what has been the cumulative number of applications, broken down by week, since March 13, 2020, for the (i) CERB, (ii) CEWS, (iii) CESB, (iv) CSSG; and (d) what has been the cumulative number of accepted applications, broken down by week, since March 13, 2020, for the (i) CERB, (ii) CEWS, (iii) CESB, (iv) CSSG?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 73—Ms. Raquel Dancho:**

With regard to government assistance programs for organizations and businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic: (a) what has been the total amount of money expended through the (i) Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance (CECRA), (ii) Large Employer Emergency Financing Facility (LEEFF), (iii) Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA), (iv) Regional Relief and Recovery Fund (RRRF), (v) Industrial Research Assistance (IRAP) programs; (b) what is the cumulative weekly breakdown of (a), starting on March 13, 2020; (c) what has been the cumulative number of applications, broken down by week, since March 13, 2020, for the (i) CECRA, (ii) LEEFF, (iii) CEBA, (iv) RRRF, (v) IRAP; and (d) what has been the cumulative number of accepted applications, broken down by week, since March 13, 2020, for the (i) CECRA, (ii) LEEFF, (iii) CEBA, (iv) RRRF, (v) IRAP?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 74—Mr. Peter Julian:**

With regard to federal transfers to provinces and territories since March 1, 2020, excluding the Canada Health Transfer, Canada Social Transfer, Equalization and Territorial Formula Financing: (a) how much funding has been allocated to provincial and territorial transfers, broken down by province or territory; (b) how much has actually been transferred to each province and territory since March 1, 2020, broken down by transfer payment and by stated purpose; and (c) for each transfer payment identified in (b), what mechanisms exist for the federal government to ensure that the recipient allocates funding towards its stated purpose?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 75—Mr. Scot Davidson:**

With regard to construction, infrastructure, or renovation projects on properties or land owned, operated or used by Public Services and Procurement Canada: (a) how many projects have a projected completion date which has been delayed or pushed back since March 1, 2020; and (b) what are the details of each delayed project, including the (i) location, including street address, if applicable, (ii) project description, (iii) start date, (iv) original projected completion date, (v) revised projected completion date, (vi) reason for the delay, (vii) original budget, (viii) revised budget, if the delay resulted in a change?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 76—Mr. Scot Davidson:**

With regard to the ongoing construction work on what used to be the lawn in front of Centre Block: (a) what specific work was completed between July 1, 2020, and September 28, 2020; and (b) what is the projected schedule of work to be completed in each month between October 2020 and October 2021, broken down by month?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 77—Mr. Gary Vidal:**

With regard to infrastructure projects approved for funding by Infrastructure Canada since November 4, 2015, in Desnethé-Missinippi-Churchill River: what are the details of all such projects, including the (i) location, (ii) project title and description, (iii) amount of federal funding commitment, (iv) amount of federal funding delivered to date, (v) amount of provincial funding commitment, (vi) amount of local funding commitment, including the name of the municipality or of the local government, (vii) status of the project, (viii) start date, (ix) completion date or expected completion date, broken down by fiscal year?

(Return tabled)

## Routine Proceedings

**Question No. 79—Mr. Doug Shipley:**

With regard to ministers and exempt staff members flying on government aircraft, including helicopters, since January 1, 2019: what are the details of all such flights, including (i) date, (ii) origin, (iii) destination, (iv) type of aircraft, (v) which ministers and exempt staff members were on board?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 80—Ms. Marilyn Gladu:**

With regard to the Connect to Innovate program of Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada as well as all CRTC programs that fund broadband Internet: how much was spent in Ontario and Quebec since 2016, broken down by riding?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 81—Mr. Joël Godin:**

With regard to the procurement of personal protective equipment (PPE) by the government from firms based in the province of Quebec: (a) what are the details of all contracts awarded to Quebec-based firms to provide PPE, including the (i) vendor, (ii) location, (iii) description of goods, including the volume, (iv) amount, (v) date the contract was signed, (vi) delivery date for goods, (vii) whether the contract was sole-sourced; and (b) what are the details of all applications or proposals received by the government from companies based in Quebec to provide PPE, but that were not accepted or entered into by the government, including the (i) vendor, (ii) summary of the proposal, (iii) reason why the proposal was not accepted?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 82—Mr. John Water:**

With regard to the government's Canada's Connectivity Strategy published in 2019: (a) how many Canadians gained access to broadband speeds of at least 50 megabits per second (Mbps) for downloads and 10 Mbps for uploads under the strategy; (b) what is the detailed breakdown of (a), including the number of Canadians who have gained access, broken down by geographic region, municipality and date; and (c) for each instance in (b), did any federal program provide the funding, and if so, which program, and how much federal funding was provided?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 83—Mr. Mario Beaulieu:**

With regard to permanent residents who went through the Canadian citizenship process and citizenship ceremonies held between 2009 and 2019, broken down by province: (a) how many permanent residents demonstrated their language proficiency in (i) French, (ii) English; (b) how many permanent residents demonstrated an adequate knowledge of Canada and of the responsibilities and privileges of citizenship in (i) French, (ii) English; and (c) how many citizenship ceremonies took place in (i) French, (ii) English?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 84—Mr. Damien C. Kurek:**

With regard to Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) pension recipients who receive Regular Force Pension Plan: (a) how many current pension recipients married after the age of 60; (b) of the recipients in (a), how many had the option to apply for an Optional Survivor Benefit (OSB) for their spouse in exchange for a lower pension level; (c) how many recipients actually applied for an OSB for their spouse; (d) what is the current number of CAF pension recipients who are currently receiving a lower pension as a result of marrying after the age of 60 and applying for an OSB; and (e) what is the rationale for not providing full spousal benefits, without a reduced pension level, to CAF members who marry after the age of 60 as opposed to prior to the age of 60?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 86—Mr. Dane Lloyd:**

With regard to access to remote government networks for government employees working from home during the pandemic, broken down by department, agency, Crown corporation or other government entity: (a) how many employees have been advised that they have (i) full unlimited network access throughout the workday, (ii) limited network access, such as off-peak hours only or instructions to download files in the evening, (iii) no network access; (b) what was the remote network capacity in terms of the number of users that may be connected at any one time as of (i) March 1, 2020, (ii) July 1, 2020; and (c) what is the current remote network capacity in terms of the number of users that may be connected at any one time?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 89—Mr. Bob Saroya:**

With regard to the operation of Canadian visa offices located outside of Canada during the pandemic, since March 13, 2020: (a) which offices (i) have remained fully operational and open, (ii) have temporarily closed but have since reopened, (iii) remain closed; (b) of the offices which have since reopened, on what date (i) did they close, (ii) did they reopen; (c) for each of the offices that remain closed, what is the scheduled or projected reopening date; and (d) which offices have reduced the services available since March 13, 2020, and what specific services have been reduced or are no longer offered?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 90—Mr. Don Davies:**

With regard to testing for SARS-CoV-2: (a) for each month since March, 2020, (i) what SARS-CoV-2 testing devices were approved, including the name, manufacturer, device type, whether the testing device is intended for laboratory or point-of-care use, and the date authorized, (ii) what was the length in days between the submission for authorization and the final authorization for each device; (b) for each month since March, how many Cepheid Xpert Xpress SARS-CoV-2 have been (i) procured, (ii) deployed across Canada; (c) for what testing devices has the Minister of Health issued an authorization for importation and sale under the authority of the interim order respecting the importation and sale of medical devices for use in relation to COVID-19; (d) for each testing device so authorized, which ones, as outlined in section 4(3) of the interim order, provided the minister with information demonstrating that the sale of the COVID-19 medical device was authorized by a foreign regulatory authority; and (e) of the antigen point-of-care testing devices currently being reviewed by Health Canada, which are intended for direct purchase or use by a consumer at home?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 91—Mr. Eric Melillo:**

With regard to the government's commitment to end all long-term drinking water advisories by March 2021: (a) does the government still commit to ending all long-term drinking water advisories by March 2021, and if not, what is the new target date; (b) which communities are currently subject to a long-term drinking water advisory; (c) of the communities in (b), which ones are expected to still have a drinking water advisory as of March 1, 2021; (d) for each community in (b), when are they expected to have safe drinking water; and (e) for each community in (b), what are the specific reasons why the construction or other measures to restore safe drinking water to the community have been delayed or not completed to date?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 92—Mr. Eric Melillo:**

With regard to Nutrition North Canada: (a) what specific criteria or formula is used to determine the level of subsidy rates provided to each community; (b) what is the specific criteria for determining when the (i) high, (ii) medium, (iii) low subsidy levels apply; (c) what were the subsidy rates, broken down by each eligible community, as of (i) January 1, 2016, (ii) September 29, 2020; and (d) for each instance where a community's subsidy rate was changed between January 1, 2016, and September 29, 2020, what was the rationale and formula used to determine the revised rate?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 93—Ms. Raquel Dancho:**

With regard to the impact of the pandemic on processing times for temporary residence applications: (a) what was the average processing time for temporary residence applications on September 1, 2019, broken down by type of application and by country the applicant is applying from; and (b) what is the current average processing time for temporary residence applications, broken down by type of application and by country the application is made from?

(Return tabled)

*Government Orders*

**Question No. 94—Ms. Raquel Dancho:**

With regard to the backlog of family sponsorship applications and processing times: (a) what is the current backlog of family sponsorship applications, broken down by type of relative (spouse, dependent child, parent, etc.) and country; (b) what was the backlog of family sponsorship applications, broken down by type of relative, as of September 1, 2019; (c) what is the current estimated processing time for family sponsorship applications, broken down by type of relative, and by country, if available; (d) how many family sponsorship applications have been received for relatives living in the United States since April 1, 2020; and (e) to date, what is the status of the applications in (d), including how many were (i) granted, (ii) denied, (iii) still awaiting a decision?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 95—Mr. John Brassard:**

With regard to government expenditures on hotels and other accommodations used to provide or enforce any orders under the Quarantine Act, since January 1, 2020: (a) what is the total amount of expenditures; and (b) what are the details of each contract or expenditure, including the (i) vendor, (ii) name of hotel or facility, (iii) amount, (iv) location, (v) number of rooms rented, (vi) start and end date of rental, (vii) description of the type of individuals using the facility (returning air travelers, high risk government employees, etc.), (viii) start and end date of the contract?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 96—Mr. Arnold Viersen:**

With regard to the firearms regulations and prohibitions published in the Canada Gazette on May 1, 2020: (a) did the government conduct any formal analysis on the impact of the prohibitions; and (b) what are the details of any analysis conducted, including (i) who conducted the analysis, (ii) findings, (iii) date findings were provided to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 97—Mr. Arnold Viersen:**

With regard to flights on government aircraft for personal and non-governmental business by the Prime Minister and his family, and by ministers and their families, since January 1, 2016: (a) what are the details of all such flights, including the (i) date, (ii) origin, (iii) destination, (iv) names of passengers, excluding security detail; and (b) for each flight, what was the total amount reimbursed to the government by each passenger?

(Return tabled)

[English]

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

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### JUDGES ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-3, An Act to amend the Judges Act and the Criminal Code, be read the third time and passed.

**The Speaker:** I wish to inform the House that because of the deferred recorded divisions, Government Orders will be extended by 40 minutes this evening.

Resuming debate, the hon. 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.

**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, it is a pleasure for me to continue the comments I started this morning with respect to a very important piece of legislation. One only needs to look at the bill number to get a sense of why this has been a priority for the government. Survivors of sexual assault need to be treated with respect and dignity. To me, this encapsulates why it is so important we see this legislation ultimately passed.

It is not the first time we have had this debate in the House of Commons. In the last Parliament we had a member from the Conservative Party introduce Bill C-337. There has been a bit of modification from what it is right now, but in essence it is the same bill. It was the former interim leader of the Conservative Party, Rona Ambrose, who brought it forward to the House. At the time, one could talk and reflect with respect to what was happening, but the bottom line is that we saw support from all sides of the House. It was quite encouraging. Members might remember that in the last Parliament it did not take long for that particular private member's bill to hit the floor of the House of Commons and receive the unanimous support of all members of the House.

Ultimately, it passed through the different stages in the House. Unfortunately, once it got into the Senate it kind of got stuck. As opposed to getting into the politics of why it got stuck, the bottom line is it never passed through the Senate. Members on all sides of the House were somewhat disappointed it never got the support required to get out of the Senate, to the degree that members from within my own political party, prior to the last federal election, incorporated the idea into our actual platform. Therefore, it did not matter what area of the country one was in: Liberal candidates were aware of the platform and campaigned on the issue, recognizing, as I stated when I started my comments, that survivors of sexual assault need to be treated with respect and dignity. That is something I believe is universally accepted among all members of the House, both today and in the last Parliament.

Not that long ago, the bill went through second reading in the House of Commons once again. What was encouraging is I believe there was an intent to have a recorded vote because we wanted to be able to demonstrate very clearly that all members of the House of Commons, no matter what political party they belonged to or if they were sitting as independents, supported this very important piece of legislation. It was very encouraging to see that.

If we look at the minister responsible for bringing Bill C-3 to the House, we find that it was part of his mandate letter. The Prime Minister started a process a number of years ago, when issuing mandate letters to ministers, that they would become public in time. If we look at the mandate letter of this particular minister, we will see that it is there and is one of the reasons why we are again seeing it as a priority issue going forward.

During second reading, or even in the last Parliament, one of the things I noted in many of the comments from members, from the official opposition and others, was that they were focusing on comments that were made by judges.

*Government Orders*

• (1600)

I think the public as a whole would be surprised at the degree to which some of those comments were made. It demonstrated a clear lack of respect. The impact it had on women who have gone through these brutal incidents was quite significant. One did not even have to be subjected to a physical sexual assault in order to appreciate that those comments, in certain situations, were highly inappropriate.

It is an interesting system we have in Canada. We understand the importance of the rule of law. We understand the importance of an independent judiciary system. That is why the manner in which this legislation was brought through was very important, and ultimately what is within the legislation clearly respects judicial independence. For those who might have concerns in regard to that, I would refer them to look at the Debates on the floor of the House or at the discussions that have taken place in our standing committees. There are hours and hours of discussion and debate, and they will find that there is recognition of the importance of judicial independence. It is something I too respect, as I know all members of the House respect.

I listened in terms of the core of this legislation and what it would do. It would ensure that there is better understanding of and insight into the myths and stereotypes around the issue of sexual assault. The bill incorporates that into something that would allow for educational training of judges prior to their appointment. It would ensure that there is a higher sense of accountability on the issue of sensitivity training for new judges.

When I look across the way or have had the opportunity to talk with many people in regard to this, the support has been virtually unanimous. I cannot recall having had one person say to me that the legislation should not be supported. We should all be encouraged by that. I have had some people provide additional comments on things that we could be doing. I have had some people raise the issue of things such as judicial independence, and I attempted to deal with that particular issue in my comments. I do believe that this training would be of great benefit to our community as a whole.

This is not the first time that the federal government has demonstrated an interest in doing something with respect to this issue. In the 2017 budget, there was a budget allocation to encourage judges to have more access to professional development. It was a multi-million dollar commitment that would see judges have more professional development. That is something that is encouraged in many different professions.

• (1605)

It is important to recognize that the Canadian Judicial Council plays a critical role in ensuring that the professional development does at least occur in part. Through that council, my understanding is that we will receive an annual report to reflect on the legislation that we are passing, again providing a higher sense of accountability.

Through this debate we heard other members talk about other potential areas of concern. Systemic racism is a very real issue. Many of my constituents have raised the issue. I have had numerous emails not only from Winnipeg North but outside of the constituent-

cy that I represent, trying to emphasize the issue of systemic racism. We possibly may see something more tangible come from that. This is where the Canadian Judicial Council plays a very important role.

Often we find a very high bar that the public has for our judicial system, where our judges are held in high esteem and respected for the fine work that they do. However, all of us at different points in time can look at ways in which we can enhance our skills and knowledge, and professional development opportunities are an excellent way of doing that. That is why I was glad that not only do we have a government that recognized a good idea when it saw it a couple of years ago in regard to Bill C-337 from Ms. Ambrose, but we moved forward on that idea and brought it back in the form of legislation. We are also investing financial resources to encourage that professional development.

The Conservative member for Calgary Midnapore spoke earlier today at great length in regard to Rona Ambrose and how she was inspired by her. She went on to talk about other Conservative members and some of their accomplishments. It is important to recognize that in our history here in the House of Commons and beyond, there have been some incredible, strong women who have provided inspiration to many, both young men and women alike.

One can talk about some of our current ministers as the member across the way talked about some of her caucus colleagues that were before her. I think of the Minister of Finance and the important role she has in taking us through the pandemic, not to mention the overall finances of our nation. I could talk about leadership from other ministers in dealing with issues such as disability programs.

In my question for the member for Calgary Midnapore I talked about my daughter Cindy. Cindy learned about what we are doing here in Ottawa on this issue, and she right away jumped on it and said that this is something they should be doing in the province, without me even having to say anything. She raises it in such a way that hopefully we will see this type of legislation brought to the Manitoba legislature.

• (1610)

Other provincial jurisdictions, as some of my colleagues here have mentioned, such as the Province of Ontario and, I believe, Nova Scotia or New Brunswick, one of the Atlantic provinces, have also brought in legislation of a similar nature. It is important that we look at ways in which we can see an expansion, because not all judges are federal appointments. In order to have the policy be even more effective, it would be nice to see more provinces across Canada support it in the same fashion that we have seen here in Ottawa, where we have all parties getting behind the legislation and supporting it. In my books, this piece of legislation is a no-brainer. Everyone should be supporting it.

As I would encourage my daughter to move forward on this idea and I would encourage the Province of Manitoba, I would go beyond that. I would encourage all provincial jurisdictions to look at what it is we are hoping to pass in Ottawa, and I think that it would be that much stronger if we saw provinces and territories move in the same direction.

*Government Orders*

• (1615)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague.

We know that the Liberals consider the list of party donors when choosing judges, but I will not get into that. I simply wanted to point it out.

I believe that it is critical that judges take the social context into account. In that regard, something has been added to the bill about systemic racism.

I readily recognize that there is racism in Quebec and Canada, and I am open to talking about that. However, I would like to know how my colleague defines systemic racism.

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I believe there are barriers in place or stereotypes or myths that have fed systemic racism. Racism is very hurtful. Sometimes it is unintentional, yet it occurs. Sometimes it is intentional, and we need to recognize that it does not matter. All racism hurts. As leaders of our communities and as parliamentarians of whatever political stripe, we all have a role in, first, recognizing its existence and, second, doing what we can to fight racism on a number of fronts. I personally believe the best way to fight racism is through education and cross-cultural awareness. I hope that at some point we will see more of a discussion about racism on the floor of the House of Commons.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I guess my question closely resembles the one that we just heard from the Bloc Québécois, and it does focus on the terms “systemic racism” and “systemic discrimination”. We did have a bit of a debate about these terms at committee. Ultimately the committee decided that adding reference to those two terms was important when we were talking about social context. I, for one, am glad we did.

I would like to hear the member's thoughts on why it is important that we have this very important federal statute making explicit reference to systemic racism and systemic discrimination. Furthermore, because we know that amending legislation is not going to be the end-all of solving this problem, what further steps is the federal government prepared to take to truly meet and fix systemic racism and discrimination in our justice system, while acknowledging that we must also work with the provinces?

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, we need to look at the social context of our communities. We can see racism in certain areas more than in other areas. Dealing with the issue of racism is indeed fairly complex, but it is achievable if there is a political will to have an impact on the issue.

The member referenced the provinces. I would argue that school boards, municipalities, the provinces, Ottawa, indigenous leaders and the many other stakeholders all have a role to play in dealing with systemic racism. To me, the common threads for resolving it in the long term are education and tolerance. Those are the types of things we need to focus attention on when looking at the broader picture or the social context in which it occurs.

• (1620)

**Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP):** Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. parliamentary secretary, as he is always very passionate about this issue.

The idea of putting social context, systemic racism and systemic discrimination into this bill is important. It is about cultural competence and cultural safety. This is a process that the health care system in British Columbia has been implementing for training doctors and medical professionals. This system is moving to other places in the country because it is important that people understand social context and how discrimination works in an institutionalized way.

In what other areas under federal jurisdiction should we see this kind of cultural competence and cultural safety implemented to train and educate people? We could do this, for instance, regarding indigenous people in this country, given the systemic racism they face and the colonial history they have had to deal with.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, I do not think the spectrum for providing supports and cross-cultural awareness could be wide enough.

During the early 1990s when I was an MLA, the Manitoba Intercultural Council provided a report on combatting racism. One of its recommendations said that cross-cultural awareness is best achieved through education in the broader sense. I still believe that today.

The member asks what the federal government's role is. I believe it is to demonstrate national leadership on the issue. We do that through the actions we take. For example, we proposed this particular piece of legislation and appointed a minister of diversity.

There are different things we can do that will have an impact, whether it is on the military, civil servants or the judicial system. In fact, there are all sorts of things the government can do, and it is important to take these into consideration for legislation. In addition to legislation, we should also be looking at monetary ways of doing things and working with other jurisdictions and appealing to them.

Health care is an excellent example. We had an incident in the Province of Manitoba when I was an MLA a number of years ago. An indigenous person who was sitting in an emergency room was deceased for hours. I cannot recall the exact number of hours, but I believe it was 20 hours or so. He sat in an emergency room for hours and no one noticed he had passed away.

It is there, it is real and it would be nice to see it dealt with.

**Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Fredericton.

*Government Orders*

I appreciate the opportunity to speak to Bill C-3, an act to amend the Judges Act, at report stage, which would mandate, among other things, education for judges on matters related to sexual assault and would require judges to provide a written reason for their ruling in such cases.

It is now the third time the bill has returned to the House in one form or another. It was first introduced in 2017 by the then-interim Conservative leader Rona Ambrose, but it died in the other place when the writs were dropped for the 2019 election. The current Minister of Justice reintroduced the bill with changes that were recommended by the other place in the first session of this Parliament. However, it too died on the Order Paper, when Parliament was prorogued.

In both previous instances and at second reading, the bill received unanimous support from all parties in the House. I believe that for proposed changes like these, no matter how small, to receive unanimous support not once but three separate times in two different Parliaments speaks to their importance and necessity.

We have heard from victims of sexual assault and have come to understand that it is among the most destructive acts that anyone could ever experience, leaving a deep wound in their lives and damaging their confidence, their self-worth and their ability to trust and to experience emotional intimacy. Sexual violence is so destructive to the human person that it is considered a war crime if used as an act of subjugation.

Sexual assault is also a betrayal. In over half of cases, the victims know the perpetrator. It could be a family member, a friend or an authority figure. It is a betrayal of the inherent trust we place in each other to respect and care for one another as human beings. It is a betrayal of the human condition in place of being treated like an object.

We have also heard that individuals do not react to this betrayal in the same way. Some react in anger or pain, fear or denial, perhaps trying to forget the betrayal because the reality is too painful for them to bear, or believe that admitting they are victims would somehow change who they are. For some, admitting that someone they love and trust is capable of such violence is unthinkable, and others continue to live in fear of their abuser, fearing that telling anyone or changing anything might make things worse. Compound this with the knowledge of what they will be up against should they choose to report an assault.

Our justice system has fallen behind our understanding of the impact of these crimes on the lives of the victims and how they react. Instead, it relies on outdated stereotypes that deeply harm women and men who have experienced sexual violence.

As the minister noted in his remarks at the beginning of this debate, there is no room in our courts for harmful myths or stereotypes. We have all heard of the insensitive and grotesque comments by judges during sexual assault cases, including the appalling comment that was the impetus for Ms. Ambrose to introduce this bill. While we have heard these comments, I am convinced that we do not fully understand the devastating impact they have on those who have experienced sexual assault.

As noted by my colleague from South Surrey—White Rock in her intervention, our justice system rightly relies on the legal principle that one is considered innocent until proven guilty, which is an international human right under the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in article 11. This has proven itself to be the most resilient form of justice in history and has protected citizens from government tyranny through the burden of proof. However, it is that same burden of proof that revictimizes those who have experienced sexual assault. It cannot help but do so.

When victims appear in court, they are forced to relive the worst day of their lives over and over, whether it is in statements to police, in conversations with prosecutors, in courtrooms or in cross-examinations. They watch as someone undertakes to find contradictions or mistakes in their testimony, using any small error, discrepancy or perceived character flaw to convince a jury that the entire story is not credible or, worse, is a slanderous lie.

● (1630)

Through this entire process, they may feel like they are poked and prodded and treated like a piece of evidence. I can only imagine what is weighed and measured as one contemplates filing a report. Is it any wonder that the justice department estimates that only 5% of sexual assaults are reported?

In acknowledging that our justice system is not perfect, we must continue to hold fast to the legal principle of innocent until proven guilty, while at the same time doing everything we can to improve how victims are treated within that system. This is not to say there are no supports for victims already in place. It is quite the opposite.

Police do receive training to help victims as much as possible. Support groups provide assistance in whatever way is necessary, including 24-hour personal availability. Prosecutors learn how to care about the person, not just the case. Does it not then make sense to ensure that those aspiring to be judges have similar training?

If the purpose of the bill to improve the interaction between sexual assault survivors and the judiciary is realized, then it will go a long way in helping to restore their confidence in our justice system.

As I referenced earlier, Bill C-3 would amend the Judges Act to require that anyone eligible to be appointed to be a judge undertake to participate in continuing education on matters related to sexual assault law and social context. It includes a subsection to clarify the establishment and topics of seminars that must be attended.

*Government Orders*

Finally, Bill C-3 would require judges to provide in writing the reasons for their decisions in sexual assault cases. Victims would no longer be left guessing about the reasons for a particular ruling. This would also go a long way in increasing the trust in our judicial system by shedding light on the decision-making process itself.

Rona Ambrose spoke about the importance of this bill when it was first re-tabled and how it went beyond partisan lines, stating:

Supporting victims of sexual assault and improving our justice system and building confidence in our justice system is one of those issues. From the very beginning, this has been about all the MPs in the House, no matter the stripe, putting partisanship aside.

It is important for Parliament to remain focused and committed to doing just that.

I would like to thank Rona Ambrose for first introducing the bill, the Minister of Justice for reintroducing it and the justice committee for its thoughtful study on its contents.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek for her excellent speech. In my opinion, she has the best last name of anyone in the House, but let's move on.

Something was added to this bill in committee. Systemic racism and discrimination were added to the subjects that should be addressed during the mandatory seminars. Members can be for or against that. I personally believe that systemic racism exists. Residential schools are the most obvious example of systemic racism in our history. However, that was not the objective of the bill when Ms. Ambrose introduced it.

I would simply like to know whether my colleague agrees with me that this addition only detracts from the objective of the bill.

[*English*]

**Mrs. Kelly Block:** Madam Speaker, not having been in committee, not having been part of the deliberations around the bill and contemplating amendments that would be made to it, I rely on my colleagues who were at the table to put thought and due diligence toward any amendments that would be presented to legislation at committee.

I did look at the term “social context”, knowing that was part of the bill. I looked at the definition of it. I have heard today, through others who have made interventions, that “systemic racism” and “systemic discrimination” are terms that were included and that the committee decided to reference both in providing clarity to the term “social context”. I would imagine that if there were issues with it at committee, those issues would have been raised and duly noted.

● (1635)

**Mr. Tony Baldinelli (Niagara Falls, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for her heartfelt remarks and her support for the bill. I hope maybe the member could speak to her thoughts on the impact of the bill being passed, not only on the justice system itself but on those who are victims of sexual assault.

**Mrs. Kelly Block:** Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for the opportunity to reiterate that I believe when Ms. Ambrose introduced the bill in the last Parliament, she was responding to is-

...sues she saw within our judicial system that needed to be addressed. This bill will go a long way to building confidence and trust in our judiciary and judicial system by victims of sexual assault, knowing that judges have agreed to and have undertaken the kind of education that will help them understand the social context in all the issues when making their rulings in these cases.

**Ms. Lenore Zann (Cumberland—Colchester, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, we cannot lose track of the reason the bill was introduced in the first place. Sexual assault is such a horrendous crime and for too long judges and the justice system have not really given it its due. It has made it very difficult for women to come forward when they have been assaulted. If we add systemic racism to that, it makes it even more difficult for many women who are racialized as well. It is about time the bill was passed.

What does the member see as the benefits of the bill for women across Canada once it is passed?

**Mrs. Kelly Block:** Madam Speaker, I went back and reviewed the speech that was given by the minister when the bill was introduced in the House. I also went back to a couple of speeches made by colleagues on this side of the House. It is my understanding that the bill was designed to enhance public confidence in our criminal justice system, in particular, the confidence of survivors of sexual assault.

I know the minister made the observation that it was hard to imagine anyone more vulnerable in the criminal justice system than the women who found the courage to report sexual assault. It is my hope that not only will they have the courage, but they will be rewarded with a system that is actually responsive to them.

**Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Fredericton, GP):** Madam Speaker, I am thankful to once again speak to Bill C-3, an act to amend the Judges Act and the Criminal Code regarding training for judges on sexual assault.

At first reading, we heard amazing speeches from engaged and passionate parliamentarians across party lines. I agree with the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader in his remarks this afternoon that these rounds of debate demonstrate a level of cooperation within our minority Parliament that I too appreciate and would love to see more of.

I would like to use my time today to speak to the opportunity I had to participate in the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights in tabling my first amendments as a member of Parliament.

As a member of an unofficial party, the opportunities to get involved in these important matters are both broad and limiting. In a three-person caucus, I hold 10 critic files and monitor 10 committees. As I am a member of an unofficial party, my opportunities to be involved are at the discretion of different members. I am not a regular face on the justice and human rights committee, however, I was welcomed and treated with respect, and I wish to formally thank all members for their hospitality.

• (1640)

[*Translation*]

I also want to thank my incredible team, especially my parliamentary assistant, for working hard and being committed to promoting rights.

[*English*]

I will also take this moment to celebrate that one of the four amendments I tabled was accepted. I sincerely appreciate the support and feedback I received in this venture. More importantly, I am thrilled at what this amendment means for Canadians, for women and for victims of sexual assault. It is a meaningful step toward reconciliation with indigenous peoples in Canada.

I tabled three other amendments that echoed those put forward by my Liberal and NDP colleagues. I joined in their concern for adequately clarifying social context, as it can and does include a variety of subjects. My team and I listened to organizations and advocates. We considered it essential to understand the intersection of systemic oppression and gender identity, and the dynamic it plays in the perpetuation of sexual violence.

I was alone, however, in addressing the need to include indigenous voices in the development of training seminars and in recognizing the impact of the failures within the justice system on indigenous peoples. My amendment to section 60(3) of the act as detailed in Bill C-3 ensures that indigenous leaders and representatives of indigenous communities will be included in consultations to develop seminars for judges related to sexual assault law.

With this in place, seminars on matters related to sexual assault law will be developed after consultation with indigenous leaders and representatives of indigenous communities. It enshrines indigenous leadership up front, not consultation after the fact, which we have seen time and time again. It embeds meaningful recognition that indigenous women and girls face rates of sexual assault three times higher than non-indigenous Canadians.

We cannot continue to ignore the prevalence of sexual violence and its impacts on indigenous, Métis and Inuit women. I believe that this is essential. This section explicitly mentions the need for involvement of indigenous leaders and representatives in the development of these seminars.

This amendment is consistent with the spirit of the calls to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and it represents a significant act with respect to the Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. I will celebrate this win, but with a commitment to continue to push from all angles for ways to ensure that the dignity and rights of indigenous peoples are upheld in this country.

I received interesting comments about this amendment. They suggested that it was perceived as being too complicated to explicitly highlight indigenous peoples in the bill and that it is a slippery slope to begin to name different groups. I was taken aback by this, especially considering that same week we had debated in the House a bill that would have indigenous peoples recognized in our citizenship oath, distinctly recognized as the first peoples of this land, as a critical step on our path toward reconciliation.

### *Government Orders*

Therefore, I reject the notion of it being a slippery slope to include indigenous leaders and representatives in this amendment. It is never my intention to exclude when highlighting indigenous peoples. It is, rather, the opposite, and it is within the world view that I was taught, which is an inclusion of all life and all peoples, including 2-spirited, Black Canadians and other people of colour.

Additionally, this amendment was never outside the realm of possibility, as its intent was included in the way forward in the RCMP sexual assault review and victim support action plan. This is where the RCMP outlined its commitment to the development of a sexual assault training curriculum, including mandatory education about the history of colonialism and racism in Canada, the role of racism and sexual assault myths and misconceptions.

The plan includes training being developed in consultation with front-line workers, survivors and organizations that reflect a diversity of backgrounds, including Black and indigenous women and girls, trans people and non-binary people. I would go even further to suggest that, if we include indigenous leadership and representatives at all levels of government and in all sectors in Canada, we will all be the better for it.

I wish to end tonight by sending my condolences, love and prayers to the family of Chantel Moore. They are dealing with yet another immeasurable loss while awaiting the report from the inquest into her death. We cannot take these issues lightly. We cannot ignore that, as conversations about consent and violence against women have evolved generationally, so too have conversations around systemic racism.

As we empower today's bench with the education they need to assess questions of consent and rape, so too must we empower them with an understanding of systemic racism and the way those issues intersect. By passing Bill C-3, we tell the women of Canada, including indigenous women, that they matter, that we believe them and that we will do everything within our power to ensure justice for crimes against them. No longer will a biased judgment from an uneducated judge prevent this from happening.

• (1645)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague's speech.

I think all parties in the House agree that this bill should move forward. I know that in Quebec, there have been some all-party discussions on a special court for sexual offences, an idea proposed by Véronique Hivon. What does my colleague think of this idea?

**Mrs. Jenica Atwin:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his important question.

*Government Orders**[English]*

I think that is an excellent idea, and I think it works very well for Quebecers. I would be very interested to see that in other jurisdictions as well. Perhaps we could draw a little from Quebec's lead and use this model in other places.

However, for now, Bill C-3 and what we are working on today in Parliament is something to be very proud of as Canadians. Certainly, there is more work to be done. I do not think there is anything bad in further investigations into these kinds of issues.

**Ms. Lenore Zann (Cumberland—Colchester, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I agree wholeheartedly with my hon. colleague and her incredible speech. I want to thank her for bringing this issue forward and including it in this important bill.

Are we not getting tired of trying to explain to people what systemic racism is? People should just accept the fact that it is there, that sometimes it is unconscious and that is why it is systemic. We now need to move forward and accept that racism does in fact exist and it is systemic.

When it comes to women, that systemic racism adds another layer of trouble to get through and make our voices heard, to have the justice and dignity we deserve. What are my hon. colleague's thoughts?

**Mrs. Jenica Atwin:** Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her kind words. I know that we both care deeply about these issues.

Absolutely, I am frustrated with having to define what systemic racism is for individuals who refuse to accept it. I see this on social media any time we put something out about this kind of issue. People will say that this is an American issue, that it is not happening in Canada, and that we should stop bringing it up because it is making it an issue.

**Ms. Lenore Zann:** That is racist.

**Mrs. Jenica Atwin:** Exactly. We have a responsibility not only to acknowledge it, but also to do something about it. To get bogged down in a debate about whether it exists or not is just ridiculous. It is a waste of our time.

I am thankful that we are seeing more and more people coming out to acknowledge and understand what it is, but the work is still there for the actions to eradicate it. Once again, I thank the member for drawing attention to that.

**Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP):** Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate the hon. member for Fredericton for her speech. I would also like to thank her for her tireless advocacy on these issues of systemic discrimination, for seeing it for what it is and for understanding it. Cultural safety and cultural competency are things that all professionals need to learn in every profession, and I think that the amendments that the hon. member has put forward to this bill are valuable. I am pleased to see that the committee has supported them and they have been included in the bill.

I do not have a question in particular. I just wanted to thank the hon. member for her work. If she would like to comment further on any ideas she may have on how we can better train all professionals

in this country to understand systemic racism, I would appreciate that.

**Mrs. Jenica Atwin:** Madam Speaker, before I came to the House of Commons my work was in education. I worked in anti-racism education and in indigenising curriculums in our public spaces and in our schools. That work will continue. I am so honoured to have the opportunity to do it from this vantage point, but this is a commitment that I made a long time ago. I do believe that education is the key to eradicating systemic racism in our communities, and we all need to call out the overt racism that we are seeing, so there are many layers to this, but it takes all of us.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, Canada Revenue Agency; the hon. member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands, Public Services and Procurement; the hon. member for Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, Infrastructure.

● (1650)

**Ms. Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I can see it is no exception to the previous times this bill was before the House. All the parties are very much in support of us doing more.

Today I rise in support of Bill C-3, an act to amend the Judges Act and the Criminal Code. This bill is a key step to ensuring that each individual who interacts with our justice system is treated with the dignity, respect and compassion they deserve. I am eager to see this important bill continue to move through the legislative process.

Bill C-3 would amend the Judges Act to ensure all newly appointed provincial superior court judges take part in training on social context and sexual assault law. This bill also proposes that, when the Canadian Judicial Council develops seminars on sexual assault law, it does so following consultation with groups that counsel sexual assault survivors and organizations that support them.

Bill C-3 also seeks to have the council report to the Minister of Justice on the seminars offered related to sexual assault law and social context. Finally, the bill would require judges to provide reasons for their decisions under certain sexual assault provisions of the Criminal Code.

This would be a great step forward at this time. The House is not necessarily aware of all the judges going through the currently available programs, so having this transparency would be a great step forward.

Today I would like to focus my remarks on the importance of social context training for judges. In particular, I would like to address how the social context education provisions in Bill C-3 would help ensure an inclusive justice system that is free of systemic racism and systemic discrimination.

*Government Orders*

Individuals who appear in court are more than claimants, respondents or witnesses. They are not just names on a legal document or faces in a courtroom. An individual's engagement with the justice system is deeply intertwined with their life outside the court. They bring with them to court their experiences, their stories and their context. To ensure that all people who engage with the justice system are treated respectfully, fairly and equally, judges need to understand the realities of individuals who appear before them. Bill C-3 recognizes this need.

I would like to take this opportunity to talk about certain cases that have come to light recently. When we speak about the realities individuals face in the social context of their upbringing, the religious or ethnic group they belong to, or how they were raised and the socioeconomic impacts they have had to live with, we do not know a person until we have walked a mile in their shoes. That is a commonly used phrase, and I do not think we expect judges to know all the social contexts people come from without training. It is not a knock on anyone's intelligence per se, but we can benefit in many roles, even as parliamentarians. I know my team and I have benefited from the knowledge we have learned from having to take the GBA+ analysis course annually.

In many of the stories I went through in preparation for today's speech, I saw a common thread linking victims together. They felt like going through our criminal justice system made them feel like they were the criminals. They felt they were on trial. This happens because of either how their work, family or society treats them after they come out, but also particularly because of how our justice system treats them, with the comments made by judges and the faulty decisions that have happened in so many trials. It is very important for us to take a moment to highlight those and understand them a bit better.

● (1655)

In a particular trial I read about a woman was raped over a 15-hour period by her brother-in-law. She screamed at times, she fought her attacker and, at times, she said she stayed quiet out of fear. As a result, in the trial, the judge questioned her credibility because he said her inconsistent behaviour was not credible. Why did she fight it off at times and why, at times, did she remain quiet out of fear? It goes to show that when victims come forward, they are the ones who are put on trial and their actions are put on trial.

We do not see this in regular physical assault cases. For example, if somebody is punched or beaten in a bar fight, we never question the victim. Why were they not able to duck a punch? Why were they not able to run away? Why did they not do better to protect themselves in that moment? I have never heard those types of remarks made by a judge or authority when it comes to those who suffer physical violence unless, at times, it comes in the form of domestic violence. I think we have come a long way on domestic violence, but we hear those types of statements made at that time too. I fear that when it comes to the issue of sexual assault and rape cases, we just have not gone far enough. We have not progressed in our society to where we should be.

In another case I was looking at, a woman was screaming "no" when she was being attacked. She tried to crawl away. She was fighting the person off. However, the Superior Court justice said

that it was very curious that nobody heard her cries and that there were no witnesses to testify that she was crying out. Once again, whether someone is quiet or crying out during an attack, it seems that in case after case some insensitivity, stereotype or rape myth was commonly used in these trials.

Another really important case I came across during this pandemic was from my own community. I come from a South Asian background, particularly Punjabi, and my parents immigrated to this country in the 1970s. In the case I came across, this family also immigrated to British Columbia in the early 1970s. I do not think it is unique to South Asian culture, but many cultures find shame in the act of sexual assault. The shame is not necessarily put on the perpetrator the majority of the time, who is often a male perpetrator, but the shame is put on the victim. I have seen it in popular Bollywood movies I watched growing up.

In the case I am going to talk about, the girls involved just released a documentary that I would highly suggest people watch. It is called *Because We Are Girls*. In this documentary, three sisters were victims of sexual assault from the age of 11 onward for a lengthy period of time. They suffered daily abuse at the hands of a family member. They often go back to think about why they did not speak out at that time, why they were not able to bring the issue up to their parents, or why they felt shame. Often, there are cultural influences people go through. I know our justice system, and many people, would ask why they did not come forward sooner or why they waited until their adult years to finally speak out about the terror they had been through. They go through that in this documentary. They are three girls from the Pooni family, and they really explain the terror they went through.

● (1700)

The three sisters were Jeeti Pooni, Salakshana Pooni and Kira Pooni. They had a cousin named Raj Rana who also brought forward claims of sexual assault.

They grew up in a very traditional family, one that worked really hard to give themselves, their family and their daughters a very good life, which every immigrant family tries to do. Immigrant families work hard to succeed here in Canada and along with success, they want to be able to raise happy and healthy children. With that comes the need and desire to hide these incidents when they happen, because they know that if these incidents come out, they would not just bring shame on their whole family, but perhaps their whole community. Therefore, the need to hide this is even greater among immigrant families.

### *Government Orders*

In this case, I want to talk about the influence of many films they talked about, where the heroine would be raped in a certain scene and then commit suicide because she had become impure. She was going to bring disgrace and shame on her family, so she would jump in a river or use another means of committing suicide. These films are really tragic.

One does even not realize, when watching a lot of these old movies, how often these references are made, how women are made to feel subservient and that good women would remain quiet and listen to the authority figures in their lives, who are generally men. When men in women's lives have some authority over them, as men in some cultures tend to have, it is very difficult for survivors in those cases to come forward. It is extremely difficult.

I want to give credit to the Pooni sisters who brought their story to light through this documentary and went through the horrors of the judicial system for approximately 12 years. In 2006 they first reported the abuse to the authorities, and it was not until 2011 that the perpetrator was charged. The trial did not begin until 2015, and then a verdict in that trial was not reached until 2018. Many years went by.

During 11 years of going through the system, many comments were made to these individuals. The judge found one of the sisters to be too aggressive and too evasive when she was asked questions at trial. At times, the women testified that they really felt it was so difficult to have to relive their horrors and nightmares. Each time there was a delay in the case and the case would be brought back, or when there was an appeal, they were made to testify again.

When there is a long period of time in between proceedings, there are bound to be inconsistencies and details people forget or may recall that they did not recall last time. For a lot of victims of sexual assault, one of the coping mechanisms is to block the assault out and not think about it. When something happens to women at a very young age, it becomes even more difficult.

There is definitely insensitivity within our process to not be able to understand what a victim goes through. In some cases I have seen, if the witness's timing is off by an hour in how they recall events, the victim is not successful at trial. Also, as in the Pooni sisters' case, because there was too much raw emotion in their testimony, the judge found that to be a very negative thing. At times there is just no winning, depending on the inherent biases the judge may have at any given point.

• (1705)

Thankfully, at one point in April 2018, the perpetrator in this case, Mr. Virk, was found guilty of four of the six charges that were laid against him. However, in June 2019, before he could be sentenced, the defence asked for a stay of proceedings due to all the court delays and the fact that the defendant was not able to get a speedy trial. Of course, not being able to get a speedy trial was something the victims suffered from. According to our Charter of Rights and Freedoms, people are guaranteed a speedy trial.

There are a lot of flaws in our system and educating judges will be one step forward, but efficiency is definitely needed within our courts system. Efficiencies will be very important for us to be able to provide witnesses with relief so they do not have to live their

horrors over and over again. It will also provide a speedy trial for defendants.

After the stay of proceedings was granted, it meant there would be no sentencing even though this man had been found guilty of four of the six charges. It also means the perpetrator is still out there. The perpetrator is still able to offend. Other people could become victims. The perpetrator does not have to sign up and be on the national registry. A petition on change.org was signed by many Canadians around the country to have an inquiry into this trial, which is a good idea. We need to inquire further as to what missteps have happened in this trial and in many other similar trials.

The good news is that the Crown appealed the stay of proceedings. There was a hearing on that appeal on November 5. We do not know what the outcome of that hearing is and I do not think we will know until spring of 2021. Therefore, going from 2006, when these three young brave women came forward about the rape and the horrors they experienced in their childhood, to 2021, they are still living it day in and day out.

They have become role models for many other women who have suffered in silence, many other women who do not have the strength to come forward. I have met many women like that as well. I have to commend the Pooni sisters. They have become great role models for their children and for other women in their position.

I would like to thank Rona Ambrose for bringing this bill forward originally. It is unfortunate that the bill sat in the Senate for two years when there was unanimous support for it in the House of Commons. Elected members of Parliament truly want to see change in this area, and there was a lot of delay in the Senate.

I am really hopeful that the bill will see the same type of cross-party support this time around and that we will see a speedier decision in the Senate. Together, we must work to ensure Canadians have access to a justice system that is responsive, inclusive and free from systemic racism and systemic discrimination. This bill is an important step forward toward those goals and I am eager to continue to work with my colleagues to move Bill C-3 forward.

I would suggest that those who are interested should watch the documentary *Because We Are Girls*. It gives great understanding as to what sexual abuse victims go through. We can do a lot better.

• (1710)

**Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I will certainly review the documentary. I appreciate the member's intervention today in talking about many of the cases, both close to her riding as well as across the country, where there is a tendency in these things to cause shame. There are better ways, and this bill is part of it.

*Government Orders*

I have one thing I would like to ask the member. The bill would correct where there is a set of standards right across the country. Every jurisdiction, every province have their own administration of justice. There is an issue that we found at the industry committee in the last Parliament, where Crown copyright allows courthouses a fair amount of control over which documents are made public and to whom they are given, whether they are online or whether people have to go in themselves and request those documents.

We could also be discussing how we could make the system more open and available to our citizens. Does the member believe that we should also be looking at other ways to improve our justice system to ensure that every Canadian receives the same level of justice, whether it be from a more informed judiciary or from a more informed citizenry?

**Ms. Ruby Sahota:** Madam Speaker, absolutely. There are many other things we could do to improve our judiciary.

A couple of things I would like to highlight are the investments our government has made. In budget 2018, we provided funding for targeted investments to help eliminate gender-based violence and harassment, while promoting security of the person and access to justice. This included \$25.4 million over five years to boost legal aid funding across the country, with a focus to help support victims of sexual harassment in the workplace.

Budget 2017 also saw investments in this area so judges could have training and professional development, which focused on gender and cultural sensitivity.

I agree that this is only one step and there is so much more to do. However, the federal government is a great place to start. We should lead in this area. We should talk to our provincial counterparts so they will also make the necessary changes and we will not have victims reliving their experiences. If a trial judge gets it wrong, the victims have to relive it, at every single level, until they get to the Supreme Court of Canada. That is not efficient and it is not how our system was intended to work.

We should get it right the majority of the time and as quickly as possible.

**Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Madam Speaker, the member mentioned that the former version of this bill was delayed in the Senate for over two years. I cannot help but think about all the people this bill would have helped if it had been passed expeditiously by that place.

I wonder if the hon. member could speak to what that says about the change we still need to see in wider society, in our country and among ourselves as parliamentarians and those who sit in the Senate.

• (1715)

**Ms. Ruby Sahota:** Madam Speaker, in my position as chair of the procedure and House affairs committee, I have become aware recently that there is work going on in the other place to address this issue to ensure that the delays we saw when it came to this bill do not happen again and that bills that pass unanimously in the House of Commons, like private members' bills, should be given a time limit within the other place to ensure we have efficiency so the elected representatives and the will of the people is satisfied.

I look forward to working with the senators who are looking at making these changes and improvements so private members' bills are treated like government legislation and given the priority they deserve as well, especially when there is unanimous consent across party lines. It is not often we have that and there should be no reason for lengthy delays such as what we saw with this bill.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to engage with my colleague again on both her speech and on her earlier answer to my question.

My question pertains to Crown copyright. The Speaker of our House has the ability to say where Hansard and our committee testimony can be protected by the copyright powers given to him under the Crown copyright. The same goes in every province, where the courthouses can set up how they will let their rulings be accessible to the public. For example, in some courthouses, people must present their requests in person, which COVID-19 makes very difficult. Other provinces allow all the documentation to be available online. Right now we do not have that.

Instead of the member talking about the investments the government has made, does she believe that the federal government can make a useful measure and help this issue to step forward so every citizen in Canada will have the same access to the same level of documentation? Actually, there is a bill on the Order Paper by an NDP member to abolish Crown copyright. Does she believe this would be a good thing for our citizenry?

**Ms. Ruby Sahota:** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the question, but it is not really on the topic of the debate tonight. I would be interested in looking into the matter and developing a proper stance on it. However, without having been able to study the issue, understand it completely and weigh the matter, I do not think giving an opinion would necessarily be fair.

The issue we are talking about today is one that we have been trying to work on for a very long time, but there has been very little improvement in this area. We have seen improvement in a lot of other areas of law. I really hope we do better for the victims of sexual assault crimes. At this point, only 5% of sexual assaults are brought to the attention of authorities and of that 5%, only 12% ever result in convictions. These are extremely sad numbers and we must do something—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The hon. member for Etobicoke Centre.

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**Mr. Yvan Baker (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I wonder if my colleague could share with the House how she would describe the benefits of this bill if she were speaking to one of her constituents. I think her speech was thoughtful and covered a lot of examples. She offered a lot of insight, but I think a lot of times my constituents want to understand how this will touch their lives or how this will touch those who have been victims of sexual assault or sexual abuse. I am wondering if the member could share that with us today.

**Ms. Ruby Sahota:** Madam Speaker, honestly, a lot of my speech today is inspired by the people I have met in this role and of course by my past experiences and reading about the experiences of others. The experiences I have shared today are no different from the experiences of my constituents and I am sure of the member's constituents.

I am speaking from my constituency office right now, and often there are women right in the seat in front of me who want to talk to me about the violence or the sexual abuse that has occurred in their lives, whether at a workplace or at home. I do not know why some people feel more comfortable coming to a woman. I have also had people from other ridings come to me to talk about the matter.

Many times they make the decision not to report. They make the decision not to go forward to trial. However, there are many who do report, which takes a lot of courage. I always advise them to report the matter. I think it is the most important first step they can take, but many do not go to trial because they have heard stories over and over again about the insensitivity they would face at trial. I think that is going to make a big difference—

• (1720)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Resuming debate, the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to join the debate on Bill C-3. I have really appreciated the opportunity to hear many of the excellent speeches given by colleagues on all sides about this important piece of legislation. For me, it certainly underlined the importance and value of Parliament.

When we have these discussions about listening to victims and understanding what survivors have experienced, it gives us an opportunity to recognize those situations. I think the debate itself, not just the passage of the legislation but the conversations that come out of it, provides a great deal of benefit as well.

Some of the points about process have been particularly important. Picking up on something that my colleague from Brampton North said earlier, many good ideas come forward from private members' bills, but opportunities to bring private members' bills all the way through the process are relatively limited. I was involved in a private member's bill that received unanimous consent in the House and in the Senate, but in slightly different forms, and the reconciliation never took place before the next election.

I appreciate the fact that this has now become a government bill, but it does underline a bit of a structural challenge: It is much harder for us to move good ideas forward that come from members of

Parliament who are not in the government, even if the ideas have very wide support across this place.

I had the opportunity to speak in support of this bill at second reading, so I want to briefly summarize some of the points I made at that time. I will then take my arguments in a bit of a different direction. I want to talk a bit about building up confidence and recognizing some of the limitations of this bill. I have the honour of serving as the shadow minister for international development and human rights, so I also want to share some thoughts about the international context we are operating in when it comes to combatting sexual violence and what lessons we might take from this conversation for our engagement internationally. I think there is a lot there. I think there is a lot we can learn from and apply to our international development and to our work on promoting human rights around the world that specifically comes out of this conversation.

The bill in front of us, Bill C-3, requires those seeking to become judges at the federal level to agree to undertake education with regard to sexual assault law and social context, essentially committing themselves to becoming aware of and educated about issues around sexual assault. This is aimed at responding in particular to cases where judges have made some very insensitive comments and—

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The interpretation has been working only intermittently or not at all for a while now. It is impossible to understand.

[*English*]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** I do not think the member is wearing the proper microphone for the interpreters. The interpreters cannot follow him.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Madam Speaker, I do have a lapel mike on, which is right by my mouth, so I can try to adjust it.

• (1725)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The interpretation does not work at all.

The hon. member would not have his headset, would he?

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Madam Speaker, I do, but it will probably take me about five minutes to transfer the set-up. If another member would like to speak in the meantime, they could.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Does the hon. member have unanimous consent to do an exchange, giving the hon. member for Mississauga East—Cooksville the opportunity to do his speech now?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The hon. member for Mississauga East—Cooksville.

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**Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East—Cooksville, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I know that technology can always be a challenge, and we want to make sure that our interpreters are able to hear what we have to say so that it can be provided in both official languages.

Today I will be sharing my time with the member for Vaughan—Woodbridge.

I am very pleased to speak in support of Bill C-3, an act to amend the Judges Act and the Criminal Code. This is a critical piece of legislation that is necessary to ensure that judges understand the context in which offending occurs.

Bill C-3 would amend the Judges Act to require candidates seeking appointment to a provincial superior court to commit to participating in training related to sexual assault law and social context. Thanks to amendments made by the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, candidates must also commit to participate in training on systemic racism and systemic discrimination. The bill would also require the Canadian Judicial Council to ensure that those knowledgeable in the field, potentially including sexual assault survivor organizations, are consulted in the development of this new training.

The bill would also assist in ensuring transparency in judicial decision-making by amending the Criminal Code's sexual assault provisions to include a requirement that judges provide reasons for their decisions, either in writing or in the record of the proceedings. This requirement complements existing legal requirements for reasons including specific obligations for judges to provide reasons in sexual history evidence and third-party records application hearings.

Allow me to explain why these amendments are so critical to a fair and effective response to sexual assault, which we know disproportionately impacts women and girls. Canada has come a long way in this regard. We have one of the most robust sexual assault legal frameworks in the world, but we must not forget the myths and stereotypes to which Canada's existing legal regime responds, nor the fact that those very same myths and stereotypes persist to this day. For example, pre-1983 sexual offending laws were repealed and replaced with “affirmative consent”, the model we have in place today.

The previous laws accepted as a fact, first, that a complainant who fails to resist is consenting and, second, that a complainant who consented to sexual activity with the accused before an alleged sexual assault likely also consented to any subsequent sexual activity. It is hard to believe that this was in place before 1983 until changes started to be made, like the changes that we are looking to make through this bill.

We now know that myths and stereotypes like these are false and distort the court's ability to seek the truth. We also know that these myths and stereotypes have a detrimental impact on victims, who are overwhelmingly women and girls, and that their impact is compounded when they intersect with other discriminatory stereotypes. In particular, they deter women and girls from coming forward to denounce their assailants, which means that those assailants cannot be held accountable.

Statutory rules of law and Supreme Court of Canada jurisprudence now clarify that myths and stereotypes about sexual assault victims have no place in the courtroom, yet we continue to hear that such myths and stereotypes persist. Allow me to expand on examples I have just noted.

We have known for quite some time that a failure to resist is not the equivalent of consent. More than 20 years ago now, in its 1999 *Ewanchuk* decision, the Supreme Court of Canada clarified that the accused's belief that “silence, passivity or ambiguous conduct constitutes consent is a mistake of law, and provides no defence”. That can be found at paragraph 51.

That rule is reflected in all of the Criminal Code's provisions that relate to consent, sections 273.1 and 273.2. Thanks to former Bill C-51's sexual assault amendments, which were enacted in 2018, this important principle has been further clarified. The provision that limits when an accused can raise the defence of honest but mistaken belief in consent is now clearly limited to situations where there is some evidence that the complainant communicated consent affirmatively through words or conduct. That is found at paragraph 273.2(c).

● (1730)

More recently, in its 2019 *Barton* decision, the Supreme Court of Canada aptly renamed this defence as the “defence of honest but mistaken belief in communicated consent”. I understand that many now refer to Canada's sexual assault framework as an “affirmative consent” model. This means that failing to resist is not relevant to the issue of whether the complainant consented or whether the accused believed the complainant consented. However, in 2014, the Alberta case of *Wager*, a trial court judge asked a sexual assault complainant why she did not squeeze her legs together if she did not want to engage in sexual activity she alleged was a sexual assault. This is unbelievable. It is unheard of that someone would make a comment like that and that we would hear it from a judge.

We have also known for quite some time that a complainant's prior sexual conduct is not relevant to the question of whether she consented to sexual activity that she alleges is a sexual assault. Originally enacted in 1983, the sexual history evidence provisions, sometimes called the “rape shield provisions”, were amended in 1992, almost 30 years ago, to ensure charter compliance. These provisions were upheld as constitutional in the Supreme Court of Canada's 2000 *Darrach* decision. They directly target two myths. The first of these is that a complainant who is sexually active is more likely to have consented to an alleged sexual assault. The second is that she is less worthy to be believed in respect of her claim that the sexual activity was non-consensual. These are sometimes called the “twin myths”.

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The sexual history evidence provisions require an accused who wants to adduce evidence of the complainant's prior sexual conduct to bring an admissibility application to the court. The court then plays a gatekeeper function at the admissibility hearing to prevent the evidence from being admitted to infer one of the twin myths. Former Bill C-51 strengthened these provisions. Specifically, it clarified that communications for a sexual purpose or whose content is of a sexual nature constitutes sexual history evidence, which is found in subsection 276(4).

In the Barton case, the trial court had to determine whether the sexual activity that caused the death of the victim, Ms. Gladue, was consensual. In this case, evidence of prior sexual activity with the accused was admitted without the judge holding a hearing on whether it was appropriate to admit this evidence as would usually happen. In addition, numerous statements about the complainant's status as a person who provides commercial sexual services were admitted, as were statements about her ethnicity. I want to be clear that both the Wager and the Barton trial court decisions were overturned on appeal because errors of law were made. It provides a measure of comfort to know that such errors are corrected on appeal. However, that fact may not offer much comfort to the victims in such cases, or in the case of Ms. Gladue, her loved ones. When the law is misapplied, appeals follow and perhaps even a new trial will be ordered. This can significantly lengthen the criminal justice process.

What can we do about this problem? How can we help our criminal justice system function fairly when addressing one of the most complex human interactions? We can support Bill C-3, which would assist in ensuring that judges have the education they need to understand sexual assault law, those most impacted by sexual offending and the social contexts in which sexual offending occurs.

• (1735)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I enjoyed my colleague's speech. Everyone here is in agreement. I do not think anyone is opposed to this bill. I would like to pick up on my colleague's remarks by talking about myths and stereotypes.

Some judges may have certain stereotypes. That is not too hard to imagine, given examples like the one my colleague shared about the Alberta judge who told the poor victim to squeeze her legs together. This bill may put an end to outdated cultural constructs and stereotypes. However, it seems to me that the Liberal government is introducing a new myth and new stereotypes by selecting judges from a list of Liberal Party donors. That could undermine public confidence in the justice system.

Does my colleague think we need a more rigorous process to preserve public confidence in judicial neutrality?

[*English*]

**Mr. Peter Fonseca:** Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for the opportunity to speak about the stereotypes that still exist and persist in our society. When it comes to the courts, they should be completely neutral. They should be listening to the evidence and not be subject to those stereotypes that we have heard about, which have been in the courts for decades.

This legislation cannot come too soon. This will be an opportunity for our judges to truly understand and, as I just heard one of our eloquent members from Brampton say, to walk in someone else's shoes, to walk in her shoes. To understand and put those stereotypes aside is important for our courts, and it would make a more robust system for us here in Canada in addressing these horrific crimes of sexual assault.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I was sitting on the justice committee when we made the amendments to the bill. I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on why it is important that the bill now includes specific reference to the terms “systemic racism” and “systemic discrimination” when talking about social context.

Also, could the member talk about how much more needs to be done than just this legislation and how he will pressure his Minister of Justice to do more? What more could the federal government be doing to ensure that we are addressing these profound issues in our justice system?

• (1740)

**Mr. Peter Fonseca:** Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for the work he has done over many years and for his advocacy when it comes to victims of sexual assault. He has been very vocal, very impactful, very passionate and has brought so much to the table.

When Bill C-3 has been studied and debated here in the House, we would see almost wraparound services for the victim, which is part of this bill and would have an impact by providing those extra social services and those opportunities that come with community-based supports. I know the member has spoken about that and how important it is to him. I fully support him on that, and we want to see Bill C-3 pass.

**Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased that the government has reintroduced this bill that we all agreed to in its original form in the last Parliament. Credit is due to the Liberals for doing so.

In the member's speech, he addressed the issue and talked about trust in the justice system. I would like the member to answer the question that was put to him by the Bloc member a moment ago, about the impact of seemingly having political influence bear on the judicial decision-making process at appointment.

**Mr. Peter Fonseca:** Madam Speaker, we have to be very proud of the justice system that we have here in Canada. What we try to do in this chamber every day is continue to make it better. By desensitizing the courts, by being able to address where we have found, as we have just heard, systemic discrimination, where we know that there are stereotypes and myths that—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Resuming debate, I am going to go back to the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank you, the House and especially the member for Mississauga East—Cooksville for his flexibility and assistance with this. I appreciate the opportunity to continue the remarks that I was making.

Bill C-3 prescribes a mechanism by which judges would be expected to go through a process of education when it comes to sexual assault law and social context. Additionally, it requires judges to provide written reasons in these cases. That will provide greater clarity about the way in which decisions have been made.

At second reading I spoke about that. I spoke about my support for the bill and I spoke about the importance of understanding the value, but also the limitations, of education, recognizing that education is not the whole solution. As C.S. Lewis pointed out once, education without character might simply serve to create more clever devils. When we think about how to create a society without sexual violence, or at least with substantially less sexual violence, we need to pay attention to those strategies that encourage the development of empathy, understanding, goodwill and self-control. These things, in addition to education and the provision of information, are sort of combined effects that work together to achieve the desired result. When individuals fully absorb the importance of justice and self-control, the way that they treat others will reflect that empathy. We will find that education of judges is not the only thing we need to do, and it is not the full and complete picture. That came through well in all of the remarks that different members were making.

This is an important step forward nonetheless for us to collectively underline the importance of awareness about sexual assault law and the social context for all of those who are going on to the bench. That is the general thrust of the remarks I have made in the past about this bill.

As I was thinking about the particular things I wanted to say here at third reading, the idea that jumped out at me, in terms of the importance of what we are doing with this piece of legislation, is the issue of confidence. It is the issue that when people have something terrible happen in their lives, they make a decision about whether or not to come forward to others and seek support in that situation. Whether they do so stems from the expectation they have about how they will be treated when they come forward. People need to have confidence in our justice system. They need to have confidence in our health system. They need to have confidence in our police. They need to have confidence in our legal professionals. If people do not have confidence in vital social institutions, they will be much less likely to come forward to share and seek assistance in the context of the challenges they are facing.

What we are trying to do with the bill is to make sure that judges are aware, and that we do not have the kinds of things happening to women and others in the court system that have happened in the past. Critically, the fact that we are doing this through legislation recognizes the importance of speaking and acting collectively to try to restore and strengthen confidence among people who are victims in the justice system.

Many of the things that we are doing through the bill could have been done without legislation. There could have been directives given, and I think the government has said that it is putting forward

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the importance of training in every case with an appointment being made. That is valuable. Given the time that has elapsed, it is valuable that the government is taking the steps that it can in the meantime. The value of acting in legislation in particular is that it is an opportunity for us to collectively communicate an awareness of these problems and a desire to resolve them.

● (1745)

It is to try to restore what has been, I think for a long time, a lack of confidence, and to try to create the conditions in which, if someone experiences horrific acts of sexual violence, they feel intuitively that if they bring those issues forward to the police and judges, they will be heard and responded to in a way that is empathetic, that treats them with justice and that seeks to treat the perpetrator with justice as well. We need to not only fix the problems that have existed, but we need to be seen to have fixed the problems that existed and thus restore a sense of confidence in the system.

Other members have cited these statistics before, but it is important to underline them again. The vast majority of sexual assaults in Canada, over 80%, do not get reported to police. We know that one in three women has been a victim. Many men have been victims as well, and the vast majority of victims do not come forward. I suspect that in many cases it is because of a lack of confidence in the kind of response that they will receive. This is something that we need to change not only by passing this bill, but also by speaking about these issues, by participating in this education and seeking to communicate the messages about the challenges and the need for change, as we are doing in the House today.

What I have seen as well in the last few years is the #MeToo movement. The willingness of people to speak out about their experiences has helped to contribute to a willingness on the part of others to speak about it. It has helped to build this sense of confidence. When people speak out and tell their stories and see that others are listening to them, it builds confidence and makes it easier for others to come forward.

Conversely, if people speak out and are not heard, if there are instances where complaints are made and there is not a proper process or is not meaningful accountability, that detracts from people's confidence. We have seen a lot of these issues play out in real time and it speaks to the importance of people being held accountable in every case, including, and perhaps especially, in very public cases. Not that there is not due process, but the processes are engaged in seriously, victims are treated with respect and justice is sought and achieved in an equal way that applies in every case.

About nine years ago, I was on the board of a local organization in my community called Saffron, which did and continues to do incredible work on education dealing with sexual assault and other forms of violence and bullying. It offers education to young people and parents about these issues. It also provides counselling to victims. The social context has changed a bit in the time since I was on the board for about four years prior to getting elected and now.

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At the time, we would discuss as a board how we could raise awareness in the community about these issues, and maybe sensed that there was a real need for greater awareness. Today, there is much more awareness, and that has concrete impacts for organizations such as Saffron in my community that are doing this work. What it means is that more people are coming forward and seeking help.

Right after the #MeToo movement started, what I heard from people who were still involved with this organization in my community was that so many more people were coming forward and seeking counselling and support for events that had happened long in the past. In some cases these were decades and decades ago. People speaking out, being heard and listened to, gave others the confidence to seek counselling, seek support and try to work through and understand things that had happened to them that they maybe had not spoken with anyone about before.

When we do things like debate and pass this legislation, and when people speak out about their experiences, that can have a positive ripple effect of giving others confidence to come forward, to seek counselling, to make complaints and so forth. We can work toward ensuring that a greater proportion of victims of sexual violence is coming forward and that there is meaningful accountability. Ultimately, the result of more people coming forward will be a reduced sense of impunity and less victimization going forward.

● (1750)

It is important for us to acknowledge, in the context of this debate, that our justice system will never be perfect, that we work toward improvements and that we have the end goal in mind, which is ending all violence against women and against all people in general. However, we do not give people the false sense that we are ever going to pass one, or two or three bills and then have a perfect justice system that will respond perfectly in every case.

We should be impatient in our pursuit of reform and improvement, but we should also recognize that this work will never be completely finished, that those of us as members of Parliament, the people who work on these issues throughout the system, will continue to be engaged and work on these things for a long time going forward.

I always think it is important to underline, as we talk about combatting sexual violence, the fact that more and more young people, especially young boys, are accessing very violent sexual images on the Internet. Our country needs to have measures in place, things like meaningful age verification online, to address this issue. When we have very young boys learning about sexuality in a context which is very violent and absorbing images that shape their sense of what is normal, this has major implications with respect to subsequent acts they may commit and acts they may perceive as being normal.

I hope to see government action on that issue as well, that we will see greater exploration of the negative health effects that come from early exposure to violent sexual images online and appropriate legislative responses to that.

I know there was a motion from my colleague, the member for Peace River—Westlock, in the last Parliament for a study on this is-

sue at the health committee. I understand he may be speaking later on this evening. That motion received unanimous consent, but the health committee could have gone further. It ultimately comes down to the government needing to act on these issues.

We need to think about the kind of socialization that contributes to what many people have called “rape culture”. Some of that response has to include addressing this issue online.

In the remaining time I have, I want to speak a little about the international dimension. I have the honour of serving in our opposition shadow cabinet as the shadow minister for international development and human rights. For a long time, a big part of Canada's engagement internationally has been seeking to advance the rights of women and girls.

Members have spoken about Rona Ambrose's involvement in putting forward this bill in the last Parliament. She was also a big part of working with former Prime Minister Harper and others on advancing the rights of women and girls internationally as part of our development assistance. That approach got a bit of a name change under the Liberal government.

Frankly speaking, although not in every area, there has been a great deal of continuity in terms of initiatives that were started under Stephen Harper and have continued, with some modifications but not that many in the scheme of things, under the current government.

Part of our engagement internationally on the rights of women and girls should be promoting reforms to justice systems, helping to facilitate the development and strengthening of justice systems around the world. The quality of justice systems, the protection of young women from violence is a key part of achieving larger development objectives in countries that are struggling around the world.

There may be cases where parents are reluctant for their daughters to go to school if they feel they are not safe on the way to and from school or if they are not safe at school. These are the kinds of issues that are linked to questions of education and access to health care, if justice systems and safety are in place for women around the world.

● (1755)

I also am regularly contacted by people in Canada who are concerned about cases of sexual violence involving abduction of women from minority communities also associated with forced conversion. There have been a number of prominent cases of this in Pakistan recently where women from the Christian community have been abducted and there have been instances of forced conversions as well as forced marriages.

We see these cases in a number of different contexts and require a strong response, recognizing the linkages that exist between violations of religious freedom and the rights of minorities as well as sexual violence. Often, we see cases where women specifically from minority communities are targeted in countries that have relatively weak justice systems.

Canada's engagement in understanding the linkage between different human rights issues around the world is important. That is part of why I was a champion for leaving in place the Office of Religious Freedom. It was working in this space, recognizing the linkages that exist, for instance, between violence against women and violence targeting minority communities.

Also, we need to do more in Canada to recognize how online sexual exploitation is a growing problem in certain countries around the world, how the sexual exploitation of people, often of children, happens in a way that is linked to the demand for that kind of material in other countries, perhaps in Canada. It is so important for us in Canada to be willing to work with justice systems in other countries, building capacity to work together to combat online sexual exploitation where the perpetrators may be here—

• (1800)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** We now go to questions and comments, the hon. member for Yukon.

**Hon. Larry Bagnell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages (Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the member always has very erudite speeches. Like the member, I am very passionate in my support of this bill. I will probably not ask a question, but let him carry on because I know he always has a lot of very important input. However, I want to make a couple of comments.

One was mentioned earlier this afternoon. Over and above the bill, which is very important, Bill C-51 added some very important steps. I want to ensure that all the elements of Bill C-51 are implemented so we can get the full benefit of the bill to deal with this.

The second point I want to make is that I am very strongly in support of indigenous involvement in designing the training. Indigenous women and girls, who are often the targets and victims, come from a different culture and a different history of their own unique legal systems. They are different social structures of which we just cannot understand—

**The Deputy Speaker:** I will have to leave it there to permit some other interventions.

The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Yukon for his kind words.

He mentioned Bill C-51, which was an omnibus justice bill from the last Parliament. If I recall rightly, it contained many different elements about many different issues. To the member's point, sometimes when we have these kinds of omnibus bills, there are particular elements of it that get relatively less discussion.

What the member is pointing out with respect to indigenous communities is something I was talking about in a slightly different context. I was talking a bit about our engagement internationally and the link we sometimes see between violence against women and violence against minority communities and that women from minority communities are sometimes particularly targeted. The member is speaking about something in a similar context in Canada. That is an important complement to some of the points I

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was making more broadly, that we need to understand human rights and the dignity of the person in an integrated way.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking my hon. colleague for his speech.

It is always a pleasure to listen to him. He tends to build solid arguments and is glad to share ideas. I would even say I found the first part of his speech rather dazzling, but perhaps more because of its delivery than its substance.

We are here to exchange ideas. Most members of the House agree with this bill, and we will be supporting it. However, it is important to remember that there has been some criticism, particularly from the Quebec bar, which believes that this bill jeopardizes the independence of the judicial system. I would like to hear my hon. colleague's point of view on that, and I will put on my sunglasses to listen to him.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his remarks.

[*English*]

The member is asking about the issue of judicial independence and how that interacts with this bill. The mechanisms that would be put in place with this bill would respect judicial independence. They involve a person committing to undertake training, but they preserve a level of autonomy in pursuing that training. The decision they make is ultimately still up to them, the things they say, how they make those determinations and so forth. They have to commit to the training, but in practice there does not seem to be a way of compelling them to do it.

In some respects that is a limitation, but it may well be a necessary limitation in that it preserves the independence of judges to act independent of the legislature even though we are going as far as we can within the balance of judicial independence to very strongly recommend the value of this particular training.

• (1805)

**Ms. Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague made some references to the per cent of reporting in Canada and also some of the incidents that happened overseas in different countries and victims who were in minority groups.

I often hear of the need for protecting women or to provide them a safe place. I can completely relate and understand that, and it is necessary. However, would the member also think it is necessary to perhaps do a better job at educating our men, ensuring they are not committing these types of offences against women? We know nine out of 10 incidences involving sexual assault are female victims. We are also not doing so well in the country when we look at the statistics. We have a very low conviction rate.

Does the member think our system is also one that is broken? Perhaps we do not have as strong of a judicial system as we may think compared to other countries.

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**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Mr. Speaker, this bill is about providing training to judges in Canada. It is one that I strongly support because I think it is absolutely necessary. I completely agree as well with the member's comment that education as well as character formation for men is critically important. Most of the victims of sexual violence are women. Most of the perpetrators, statistically, are men. Absolutely, that is important and complementary to the point I made.

With respect to the international context, as we seek to make reforms in our system, we can see the need to strengthen the effectiveness of justice systems as being an important part of our international development assistance as well. Just as I do not think we should wait until poverty is fully solved at home before addressing poverty overseas, I do not think we should wait until this problem is fully solved at home before we engage overseas.

We also need to recognize the issue of online sexual exploitation means, unfortunately, in these crimes there may be links. There may be victims overseas who are being victimized by perpetrators in Canada. It speaks to the need for an international perspective and for that collaboration.

**Mr. Chris Lewis (Essex, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am thankful for the recognition in the House this evening. Bill C-3 is a vital bill to speak to. I want to thank my hon. colleague for his remarks and his speech. I echo his remarks about celebrating Rona Ambrose and her being such a vital aspect to this proposed legislation.

I know that each and every member of this House is responsible for certain training. As a matter of fact, just this upcoming Monday I will be taking the House of Commons harassment training, so training is vital. It does not matter if one is a member of Parliament, or what profession one comes through, it is absolutely vital.

The previous speaker, the hon. member from the Liberal party, said that this legislation cannot come too soon. My hon. member, with as much passion, said it is time to speak out. How detrimental was shutting down the government to allowing people to speak out?

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Mr. Speaker, I agree with the point that my colleague is making. The prorogation of Parliament was a mistake. We can identify many vital areas of work that were either halted or put on hold as a result of that, including the important study being done at the Canada-China committee on Hong Kong, the work on this bill and other legislative items. There were certain aspects of the fiscal response to COVID-19 that were also delayed as a result of prorogation.

Across the board, on all of these issues, we have had a situation where the government prorogued Parliament, which caused a big delay, and then we came back and it said that we needed to rush.

I think it was very clearly a mistake. It was a mistake that was aimed at addressing political controversy around the WE scandal, as opposed to the public interest.

• (1810)

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is great to be here today, back in our nation's capital again for another sitting week.

I rise today in support of Bill C-3, An Act to amend the Judges Act and the Criminal Code. This bill is a key step to ensuring that each individual who interacts with our justice system is treated with the dignity, respect and compassion they deserve. I am eager to see this important bill continue to move through the legislative process.

Bill C-3 would amend the Judges Act to ensure that all newly appointed provincial superior court judges take part in training on social context and sexual assault law. This bill would also propose that when the Canadian Judicial Council develops seminars on sexual assault law, it does so following consultations with groups that the council considers appropriate, such as sexual assault survivors and organizations supporting them.

Bill C-3 also seeks to have the council report to the Minister of Justice on the seminars offered related to sexual assault law and social context. Finally, this bill would require judges to provide reasons for decisions under certain sexual assault provisions of the Criminal Code.

[*Translation*]

I am proud to note that Bill C-3 continues to be an example of parliamentary collaboration on key issues that have an impact on Canadians. The bill before us today is identical to Bill C-5, which was referred to committee before Parliament was prorogued.

Like Bill C-5, Bill C-3 reflects the private member's bill introduced by the former interim leader of the Conservative Party, the Hon. Rona Ambrose. I want to thank her for her work and her commitment to these important issues. I look forward to continuing our collaboration to ensure that this bill is brought before the other place and that Canadians can benefit from the important changes it seeks to make.

[*English*]

This evening I would like to focus my remarks on the importance of social context training for judges. In particular, I would like to address how the social context education provisions in Bill C-3 would help ensure an inclusive justice system that is free from systemic racism and system discrimination.

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Each individual who appears in court is more than a claimant, respondent or witness. They are not just a name on a legal document or a face in a courtroom. An individual's engagement with the justice system is deeply intertwined with their life outside of court. They bring with them to court their experiences, their stories and their context. To ensure that all people who engage with the justice system are treated respectfully, fairly and equally, judges need to understand the realities of these individuals who appear before them. Bill C-3 recognizes this need.

[*Translation*]

By requiring candidates to superior court benches to participate in continuing education on social context, Bill C-3 would help ensure that new judges are aware of the many factors that can affect a person's involvement in the justice system.

Bill C-3 would amend the Judges Act to restrict eligibility for judicial appointment to a provincial superior court to persons who undertake to participate in continuing education on matters related to social context after their appointment. This means that every new provincial superior court judge would begin their tenure on the bench with this important training.

• (1815)

[*English*]

Social context refers to a range of factors that impact an individual's reality and experiences, including experiences leading up with their interaction with the justice system, their first contact with the justice system and their experiences before a judge. The factors that make up social context intersect an individual's life. Social context includes systemic racism and systemic discrimination.

Bill C-3 reflects this reality. During the clause-by-clause study of this bill, the member for Hull—Aylmer proposed an amendment to specify that systemic racism and systemic discrimination are part of social context. I was pleased to support this critical amendment and see it pass at committee.

For too many Canadians, notably indigenous peoples, and Black and racialized Canadians, systemic racism and systemic discrimination are lived realities. We see this in health care, access to economic opportunity and our justice system. We know that indigenous, Black and racialized Canadians are overrepresented in the criminal justice system. We also know that Canadians who experience systemic racism and systemic discrimination face structural barriers to access to justice, barriers that have sadly been worsened by the pandemic.

Amending Bill C-3 to specify that social context includes systemic racism and systemic discrimination reflects where we are as a nation, where we are as a country. We have work to do.

Our government is committed to doing that work. We released Canada's anti-racism strategy for 2019 through 2022. We are investing in economic empowerment for racialized communities. We are combatting online hate, and we are creating a unified approach to better collect disaggregated data. Through these and other actions, we are taking concrete steps to combat systemic racism and systemic discrimination in their many incarnations, including in the justice system. Bill C-3 will help us achieve this critical goal.

[*Translation*]

Bill C-3 focuses on the importance of providing training for judges that addresses racism and systemic discrimination. When appointed, judges should be aware of the reality lived and experienced by the people who will come before them. The requirement for social context education set out in Bill C-3 would ensure that new judges have this awareness.

[*English*]

Learning about social context will ensure that newly appointed judges are aware of systemic racism, systemic discrimination and the ways these pervasive problems impact individuals' experiences with the justice system. When judges have this fundamental awareness, courtrooms are more sensitized, hospitable and inclusive. A judge who is aware of social context is, for example, better prepared to ensure that a racialized young woman with a disability appearing in court experiences a justice system that is respectful and responsive to her reality. Social context training supports understanding, empathy and appropriate judgments for all Canadians.

By bolstering judges' awareness of the context in which they fulfill their functions, social context training ensures myths and stereotypes or personal societal biases do not play a role in their decisions. Social context shapes the experiences of all individuals who interact with the justice system, whether they are before a judge, in superior court, or in provincial or territorial court. That is why our government is also working with our partners to improve the availability of training on social context for provincially and territorially appointed judges.

[*Translation*]

We must ensure that our justice system treats everyone with respect and dignity. The team work involved requires the collaboration of all parties and potential stakeholders in the justice system.

[*English*]

Together, we must work to ensure that Canadians have access to a justice system that is responsive, inclusive and free from systemic racism and systemic discrimination. This bill is an important step toward these goals, and I am eager to continue to work with my colleagues to move Bill C-3 forward.

• (1820)

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Louise Charbonneau (Trois-Rivières, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his excellent speech.

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The Bloc Québécois believes that passing this bill serves the interest of Canadians. As the member stated, this is about trust, awareness, emotions and social context. Bill C-3 touches on our beliefs, our values and our emotions. Victims, just like judges, have their own value systems, which vary greatly from one person to the next.

Does my colleague believe that the training given to judges will truly have an impact on the decisions they will have to make in sexual assault cases?

[*English*]

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara:** Mr. Speaker, my answer, quite simply, is that, yes, this will have a positive impact on our justice system. It will have a positive impact, once the law is put in place and implemented, for judges to be more sensitized to the needs of Canadians who face systemic discrimination and racism. Bill C-3 would also reaffirm the principle of judicial independence for our legal community and judges, and rightly so.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

Of course it is necessary to train judges to ensure they have increased knowledge and awareness when dealing with cases of sexual assault. That is something that the Bloc Québécois supports.

However, there is another skill that is important when becoming a judge in the highest court in this country, and that is language skills. Right now, there is no legal obligation for judges to be bilingual.

I want to give some background. In 2006, Stephen Harper's Conservative government appointed a unilingual anglophone judge to the Supreme Court of Canada, which caused quite an uproar. Many francophones in Canada, particularly in Quebec, were appalled by this insulting decision. Then, in 2010, Commissioner of Official Languages Graham Fraser stated that bilingualism should be an essential criteria for becoming a judge, particularly in the Supreme Court. Nevertheless, in 2011, Stephen Harper's Conservative government appointed another unilingual anglophone judge.

Today, the Minister of Official Languages, the member for Ahuntsic-Cartierville, very strongly suggested that French was declining in Quebec and Canada.

Does my colleague believe that Supreme Court judges should be officially required to be bilingual?

[*English*]

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara:** Mr. Speaker, bilingualism is a very important factor for me and my family, but I would generally state that Bill C-3 would improve the confidence in our justice system for all Canadians, especially sexual assault survivors, and that is the intent of the bill.

I also wish to thank the hon. member who brought forward the original incarnation of the bill, the Hon. Rona Ambrose.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Lead-**

**er of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am wondering if the member could provide his thoughts on how encouraging it is to see all political entities in the House of Commons get behind the legislation, which will ultimately see it passed.

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara:** Mr. Speaker, the collaboration that we are seeing on Bill C-3 is great to see and it reflects the reality of where we are as a nation. We want to move forward on breaking down barriers, especially for systemic racism and systemic discrimination, and we want to make sure that survivors of sexual assault have the confidence to come forward, and that their stories will be listened to in a manner that is appropriate. I wish to thank the justice committee for its great work on this and the Minister of Justice for his great work on Bill C-3.

• (1825)

**Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for the opportunity to be here today to address Bill C-3. It has gone through committee and is now back in the House of Commons, and we once again get an opportunity to speak to it.

I want to point out that this is a pleasant departure for the Liberal Party in supporting the bill. In the past the Liberals have typically been odious, pointing out errors that the justice system gets. For them to give clear instructions to the justice system is refreshing. I am excited to see that they are supporting the bill, that they have moved it forward and that we have the Government of Canada pursuing education of judges.

We have seen in the past some horrendous crimes that have been committed in this country, and we have seen sentencing that does not seem to fit the crime. The sentencing does not provide an incentive to not do the crime again. I am talking particularly in the area that I know best, around human trafficking. I have a series of examples in which folks were convicted of trafficking people and the justice system was incapable, or folks in the justice system were rude about what was going on. It led to people being concerned and not willing to come forward when they had a crime perpetrated against them.

I remember one situation in which a gal was talking to me. She had come forward and pressed charges against an individual, but the guy was out on bail very quickly and was standing at the end of her driveway making threatening gestures such as slicing across his throat. This is a justice system that was supposed to be there to protect her. I am happy to see the government supporting the bill to provide judge training, and it is important that we get it right. The justice system should get it right.

I also want to note that I will share my time with the member for Mégantic—L'Érable, a great colleague of mine. I also had the opportunity to tour him across the promised land. He is from Quebec and I am from Alberta. I know there is a bit of rivalry there, although it is more imagined than real because when I had him, a Quebecker, in Alberta, I stuck him in a trench of a pipeline and showed him what pipelines were all about. He was impressed with the size of the farms that we have where I come from. He is the member of Parliament for the maple syrup capital of Canada, and I am the member of Parliament for the honey capital of Canada, which I think is pretty sweet, either way. I do take a little honey in my coffee because I think that makes me a little sweeter all the time.

We have seen human traffickers get off with sentences that were in many cases less time than they had spent trafficking their victims. We have seen traffickers who trafficked multiple girls for several years get months in prison. We also see traffickers, who have made hundreds of thousands of dollars trafficking people, get fines of \$5,000. It is important to me that the justice system provides justice and deterrence. It says in the Bible that the law cannot save us, and that is true. The words on a piece of paper will not in the instant save someone, but we do try to rectify these situations after the fact. Our justice system is to bring justice to the situation. We see in the bill the acknowledgement that our justice system does not get it right all the time.

• (1830)

From time to time, things change, things come to light, society changes and society sees the need to shine a spotlight on particular issues. That is what this bill does. I am pleased to support the bill.

However, this is a departure from what we have seen in the past. We have seen the Liberals hesitate on bringing justice through the justice system for human trafficking victims. When it comes to consecutive sentencing, we saw a bill that was first introduced by a Bloc member, then was introduced by an NDP member and it was finally passed under a Conservative government. It was brought into force by the Liberal government.

However, before the bill was brought into force, the government waited for two years to pass Bill C-75. It could have been brought into force immediately when it took power back in 2015, but the government waited in order to pull out consecutive sentencing, because, lo and behold, if a trafficker had to go to jail for an extended period of time, that would not have been right.

The Liberals delayed the passing of that bill. While it had originally been introduced in 2013, it took all the way until 2017 to be reintroduced. We see that when the bill was finally brought, the Liberals had pulled the consecutive sentencing out and went back to concurrent sentencing, saying if someone had trafficked one girl, they were going to jail for a maximum of 10 years, and if they had trafficked 10 girls, they could serve those sentences concurrently. Regardless of how many people they had trafficked, they would serve the sentences concurrently.

That is not justice. That is not bringing people to justice. That is not providing any deterrent. Perhaps the Liberals will stand up and ask me questions about this, and maybe they will clarify whether they actually believe that deterrence should be something that is

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part of our justice system. Do Liberals believe that deterrence is part of our justice system?

At the end of the day, serious penalties for this type of sexual violence is important. However, it is more important to provide real protection for victims who endure years of trauma and take years to recover, knowing that their trafficker could be out and back on the streets before they have been fully integrated back into society.

Today we see that judges are still handing down human trafficking sentences that do not reflect the seriousness of the crime. The government refuses to send a message to traffickers by mandating serious penalties.

I propose that the government, at the very least, consider adopting a similar approach to human trafficking as it did on this bill. Judicial training on human trafficking law would be unprecedented. Maybe we could go beyond this. Maybe we could look at special courts. I know there are a number of special courts in Canada. We see drug courts where there are two doors. If someone is convicted of a drug crime, there are two doors. One is rehabilitation; the other is jail. People can choose which door they want to go through. If they do not abide by the conditions set when they cross the first door, then they are switched to the second door.

Those kinds of things have been successful in Canada. I think Ontario is the province that has been pushing that the most. I think that is great. In Alberta, we have the child advocacy centre. It is not a special court, but it is a centre where children of sexual abuse come. There are complete wraparound services. It is not a sterile institutionalized facility. There are puppy dogs wandering around. There are nice trees. The whole place is a place to put people at ease.

All of the government services that come into play in a case of child abuse come to the child, rather than sending the child through multiple different institutions. That, again, has been a great model and is something that we could see across Canada, in terms of dealing with human trafficking victims.

While I support the government's initiative around the bill, I hope that we can see some of these other things that Conservatives are pushing for that get our justice system to provide justice but also, on the front end, prevent these crimes from happening by providing a deterrent.

• (1835)

It is always an honour and privilege to rise in the House of Commons.

**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, one of the things that has been talked about in the third reading and a bit in second reading is how wonderful it is to see the unanimous support for a good idea. What would make the idea even better is if we were to see more and more provinces look at their appointments.

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Could the member share his thoughts on what role we could have in encouraging this? I believe Ontario has moved forward and possibly another province has. What are his thoughts on that?

**Mr. Arnold Viersen:** Mr. Speaker, I know appointments are a very important part of the judicial system. What I always say about the judicial system is that we have to get it right. If the average Canadian thinks the case is being judged fairly, then we are getting it right. If we are not getting it judged right, then we have a problem and we need to have a chat with the judges, which is what the bill would do.

As to provincial jurisdiction, I am always concerned about treading on provincial jurisdiction. I have close colleagues who work in provincial legislatures and I talk to them about the bills I am working on, the ideas I have and they do the same. On appointments and training for judges, we should be working hand in glove with the provinces.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague for his excellent speech.

The Quebec bar has expressed some concerns about Bill C-3, particularly because the vast majority of criminal offences are handled in provincial courts.

Training for judges is a good idea, but the Quebec bar has pointed out that many of these cases will be handled by provincial judges and not federal ones.

Does my colleague think that this could create some irregularities or lead to an uneven administration of justice across Canada?

[*English*]

**Mr. Arnold Viersen:** Mr. Speaker, no, I do not think that will be a problem at all. The bar association can step up for sure. I believe it represents both federal and provincial lawyers. The bar associations could provide this training, which would be more useful than us having to pass bills on that.

**Mr. Rob Morrison (Kootenay—Columbia, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for his work on human trafficking, which is so important.

My question is on accountability. We seem to have an issue with accountability. He mentioned some of it with the sentencing. With respect to Bill C-3, which I support, how does the member propose there will be accountability for the justices so they actually follow through with what we want them to do in the bill?

**Mr. Arnold Viersen:** Mr. Speaker, that is exactly the issue all the time. If we go back to the appointments, which the member from Winnipeg talked about, this kind of training sends a message to the judicial system as to our expectations in this place.

As for accountability, there is an independence between this place and the judiciary which we must always appreciate. There can be a conversation about it, but that is always going to be a challenge. I do not see a great accountability structure at this point, so we really just send a message and hope that is the case. It goes back to appointing the right people. Appointments are very important.

I know the member for Kootenay—Columbia is right next door to Alberta. I like to call him an honorary Albertan. Any time that part of the province wants to join Alberta, come on down. However, I want to point out that the Alberta government has aggressively pursued anti-human trafficking measures. It has come out with a great strategy on ending human trafficking in Alberta. I hope the federal government can get behind this and bring in a national strategy that works for all Canadians.

• (1840)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour for me to be here this evening. First, I would like to commend and thank my colleague from Peace River—Westlock for his excellent speech. I was impressed by the pipeline construction I saw when I had the opportunity and the pleasure to visit his riding. Perhaps we could find a new use for pipelines. We could send maple syrup from the beautiful riding of Mégantic—L'Érable to his riding via pipeline in the spring and then Mégantic—L'Érable could get delicious honey from his riding the same way in the fall. That would be an excellent opportunity for trade between our two ridings.

It is with honour and enthusiasm that I rise today at third reading of Bill C-3, which is also known as the just act. I hope it will help women who are victims of sexual assault to regain some trust in the justice system and encourage them to come forward when they are assaulted.

I would like to remind members that this is the third time that the House has tried to pass the just act. We must give its original author, the Hon. Rona Ambrose, all the credit for bringing before the House the serious issue of the lack of training of some judges who hear sexual assault cases.

When introducing the just bill, which was private member's Bill C-337 at the time, my hon. colleague Ms. Ambrose said:

Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to stand in the House to introduce a bill to address the need to build more confidence in our judicial system when it comes to the handling of cases involving sexual assault and sexual violence. Too often, those involved in these cases come away with the feeling they have experienced not just a judgment on their case but a judgment on their character.

On another occasion, she gave more detail to explain why women are afraid to file a complaint. She talked about what survivors go through in the justice system and the repercussions it has on them:

We have people who have backgrounds in corporate law, and oil and gas law who are overseeing some of these trials. That's not good enough. They need to have the training in criminal law and particularly in these kinds of cases, I believe. We know from research that's conclusive now that these kinds of crimes and this kind of trauma, especially at a young age, have a massive impact on girls and women. We know that women who experience violence are at least twice as likely to suffer from mental health issues, and they deal with these issues for the rest of their lives.

Clearly, the justice system is frightening for women who are victims of sexual assault. The statistics are clear: too few women report the assault, even fewer go to trial, and an infinitely small number of those trials end in convictions.

As I mentioned in my speech at second reading of Bill C-3, the numbers do not lie: 83% of sexual assaults go unreported. Of the remaining 17% of cases, one in five gets dropped, while the other four are subjected to intense scrutiny, leaving the victims caught in the middle of a difficult and stressful process that unfortunately has only a small chance of success. In three out of four cases, the proceedings are stayed, and just one in five will go to court. One in 10 cases ends in a conviction resulting in a fine or jail time.

Can we seriously ask women who are victims of sexual assault, especially women from disadvantaged, racialized or indigenous communities, to trust a system that finds it so difficult to recognize the crimes committed against them and punish those responsible?

Let me talk about a study I read. The topic of this action research study was “Female victims of violence and the criminal justice system: experiences, obstacles and potential solutions”. This study was conducted by several groups in Quebec and uncovered several reasons for this harsh reality.

The women interviewed for this study revealed the reasons they were fearful of the justice system. These include a lack of trust and the fear of not being believed; the perception that the safety of victims cannot be guaranteed throughout the process; and the influence of comments made by justice system stakeholders and the women's friends and families, who, according to studies, express doubts about the women's ability to navigate the justice system.

From the outset, the women are clearly told that they may not be able to see the process through and that it will be very difficult. In short, many obstacles are placed in their way from the beginning.

- (1845)

Some of the other reasons that came up include the need to take care of themselves first and to manage everyday life in the wake of sexual violence; the anticipation of the consequences of the legal process on the women and those around them; a lack of information on the legal process; and the fact that women know that assailants or perpetrators of sexual violence will get fairly lenient sentences.

The study went even further. Women who had gone through the justice system spoke about the obstacles and issues they had faced, such as the dearth of knowledge about female victims of violence; the continued existence of bias; being made to feel guilty by people within the justice system; the feeling that violence against women is minimized because of the very common legal procedure of sentence bargaining, during which the Crown and the defence negotiate sentencing; a perception that the accused has more rights than the victim; and lengthy delays.

I encourage my colleagues to read this study. They can contact my office or just google it. This study helped me better understand what women face after experiencing sexual violence.

Bill C-3 is not a magic wand that will change everything all at once, nor will it single-handedly change the statistics, but I think judges are the cornerstone of our justice system. Canadian judges

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must have all the tools they need to deal with every possible situation. If we give judges access to sexual violence training and require new judges to take the training, the entire justice system will clearly be better off. I sincerely believe it is high time Canada took action on this issue.

To ensure a better understanding of sexual assault cases, a new law concerning judges' education just came into force in August 2020. Judges will be required to attend specific training provided by a judicial training institute. Amnesty International and SOS Viol, a victim support organization, have called this a major victory, saying: “This new law is a positive and important step in the right direction. It addresses one of our main concerns in the fight against rape and sexual violence in Belgium: the many gaps in the training of those on the front lines, particularly in the judiciary.”

In France, the training course on sexual violence created in 2016 is five days long and addresses relevant issues pertaining to this specific type of violence.

In England and Wales, a tracking system was implemented that requires Crown Court judges to take a specialized training course before being able to hear sexual violence cases.

After all these years of waiting and all of the opportunities that we have had to pass Ms. Ambrose's bill, it is time to finally take action and pass this bill so that it becomes a reality.

However, I heard the questions that were raised throughout today's debate and I know that this bill will apply only to judges appointed by the federal government.

Although it is an area of provincial jurisdiction, I want to say a few words about training for Quebec court judges because they are responsible for the majority of the province's sexual violence cases. The Quebec Court has a six-page training program, which provides a very good summary. The Quebec Court and the Quebec Judicial Council are responsible for this continuing education, which is an ethical obligation for these two institutions.

The Judicial Code of Ethics states that judges have an ethical obligation to acquire and foster the knowledge and skills they need to carry out their judicial functions. However, I had to read through until the fourth page of the document to learn that the Court of Quebec is working on a special project to give judges specialized training on preparing rulings. However, there is no mention of training on sexual violence there.

- (1850)

The very last page mentions training on the rule of law and also on the society in which these rules are applied. I quote:

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With respect to sexual offences, the training deals primarily with the evolution of jurisprudence and legislation regarding the notion of “consent”, the admissibility of means of defence and the tests for ensuring that myths or stereotypes do not influence the assessment of the credibility of complainants.

Once again, the training is not mandatory—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. The hon. member's time has expired. We will now move on to questions and comments.

The hon. member for Jonquière.

**Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague referred to a study he consulted that demonstrates how certain myths and stereotypes are sometimes perpetuated in the justice system. That is what I took away from it. As I said earlier, it would be good for judges to get away from these outdated cultural constructs.

I do not want to dwell on this too much, but to continue my reflection, I have to wonder whether certain members would not benefit from this kind of training. I am thinking about Bill C-6. As a reminder, that is the bill on conversion therapy. Certain members had some reservations.

I would like to hear from my colleague on that. Does he think certain members should take that training in order to better understand the realities facing sexual minorities?

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my two daughters, my wife and all the women of Mégantic—L'Érable, Quebec and Canada, I would say that it is of the utmost importance to support Bill C-3. I hope it will receive royal assent as quickly as possible. I am also in favour of Bill C-6, which I will support without any hesitation.

However, what I am thinking about the most right now is the fact that this is the third time that Parliament has tried to adopt the Hon. Rona Ambrose's bill. This is not the time to be playing politics. It is time that we moved forward.

[*English*]

**Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, some of the debate today has focused on the inclusion of language related to systemic racism and the importance of education and training for judges, including training specifically on systemic racism.

I am wondering if the member supports that inclusion and, if so, why he thinks it is important to have it in the bill.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** That is already in the bill. My colleague is well aware of that because the committee proposed amendments to the bill and thus the changes are already included.

As I mentioned, there are problems of sexual violence, especially in racialized, underprivileged and indigenous communities. It is important that any form of sexual violence be well understood by judges. That is the initial objective of Bill C-3, and I support it 100%.

• (1855)

[*English*]

**Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, judges shape society, so it is important that judges understand the society within which they work and, indeed, the society in which those people who appear before them in court live, work and breathe. I am thinking of accused people and witnesses, of course, but I am thinking particularly of victims.

Sadly, that has not always been the case in the Canadian court system, and this is especially true in sexual assault proceedings. There have been instances where victims have felt mistreated, disrespected and not treated with the dignity they deserve as human beings, and that is not acceptable.

The result is that many people do not bother to report cases of sexual assault. According to Statistics Canada, 95% of sexual assault cases are never reported. Fully two-thirds of sexual assault victims surveyed by the justice department say they have no confidence in Canada's court system.

One of my constituents, Lia, wrote a very thoughtful email to me, and I will highlight a couple of sentences from it. She said, “For far too long, survivors of sexual assault have had to deal with a justice system that does not treat them with the dignity they deserve. Many victims of sexual assault decide not to file a complaint because they are afraid of being mistreated and humiliated. That is why most sexual assaults committed in Canada are not reported to the police.... This must change. Survivors of sexual assault have the right to be treated with respect and dignity.” Sadly, that has not always been the case in the Canadian court system. I agree with Lia that this must change.

What has gone wrong?

The Canadian criminal justice system is based on many centuries of common law tradition coming out of England. It is a legal structure built around an adversarial system where the Crown advances a rigorous prosecution and the defence an equally rigorous defence. The accused always has the presumption of innocence in their favour, so the hurdle for the Crown prosecutor to overcome is a very high one. That is the system we have adopted, and that is what we say is best for society.

However, the result is that victims are often treated very badly, in their opinion. The accused has the right to meet their accuser in court and to subject the evidence to rigorous cross-examination, which will often involve drawing the victim's reputation into question. Sometimes, despite the prosecution's best efforts, the accused person is not convicted and, unfortunately, the victim's reputation is left in tatters.

The risk associated with our criminal law system is far from perfect as it is, but we say it is the best way to conduct criminal trials because it is more important that innocent people are not convicted than it is that guilty people are left to go free. However, the sad result is that in many sexual assault cases it is the victims who are re-victimized in the process, and that is not acceptable.

*Government Orders*

The bill before us is about the education and training of judges, and it is very timely. It is about rebalancing the right of the accused to have a fair trial with the right of the victim to be treated with dignity and respect. It is about ensuring that trust is maintained in our justice system, which is important not only for the victim but for all of society, and that survivors of sexual assault are treated respectfully. It is about judges being equipped with the knowledge and skills they need to run fair trials. Ultimately, the bill is all about maintaining that the administration of justice is not brought into disrepute by poorly run trials. We need educated judges.

All parties in the House agree on this, so why are we debating it? Well, there is a little thing called “judicial independence”. It is a little thing, but it is fundamental to the way our society operates. Politicians do not tell judges what to do. Judges need to be independent. We set laws, but we do not tell judges how to run their courts and how to make decisions. That is up to them. This is so fundamental to our judicial system and our western democracy. Sadly, it seems that some elected officials have not learned that lesson.

● (1900)

From the sounds of it, everybody in this House is in agreement that this bill should become law. That is not true of all people. There are some academics and jurists who say the bill is going in the wrong direction and is undermining judicial independence. What about that? With Bill C-3, are we stepping over the line of judicial independence? When we consider that question there are a couple of things to keep in mind.

First, not every lawyer who is appointed to a superior court will have had experience in their careers up to that point with actually working in the criminal justice system, and certainly not with any sexual assault proceedings. Some will have practised in other fields, such as commercial law, tax law, intellectual property law or, like I did, corporate law.

Therefore, I would submit it is important and completely appropriate that judges should undergo special education in the field, as is stated in Bill C-3, including, “instruction in evidentiary prohibitions, principles of consent”, which is so fundamental to sexual assault law, “and the conduct of sexual assault proceedings”. I could not agree with that more.

Another thing to keep in mind when we are talking about whether or not this bill steps over the line of judicial independence is that other countries, and some of the previous speakers have alluded to this, require their judges to have special training before they become judges. They have to go to judge school. We have not done that here in Canada. We say that if one has practised law for 10 years, regardless of whatever field it is in, he or she is now qualified to become a judge. That is why it is so important that we have the special education for judges.

One more thing we should keep in mind when we ask whether Bill C-3 is stepping over the judicial independence line, is that the bill states it is the Canadian Judicial Council, which is run by judges for judges, that is the organization that will decide what the content of the courses is and how they are to be connected. Therefore, this bill does not tell judges what to do or how to decide cases. It does not tell them to have a higher rate of conviction. It simply

tells judges to get themselves educated because that is what society expects of them. It is certainly what victims expect.

If we hope that more victims will report cases of sexual assault, which I think is fundamental to our court system working properly, then I think we need to do whatever we can to build that confidence back into the minds of the Canadian public that our court system is fair to victims of sexual assault.

The bill also talks about the requirement that judges in sexual assault proceedings must give written reasons. Does that go too far? I would submit that it does not because the victim, the accused and their lawyers should have the right to review the reasoning of the judge, how he or she came to that decision.

Also, I would say the requirement that judges should give written reasons will inevitably result in more guarded and well-considered language when judges write up their decisions. That is good for everyone involved, including the victim, the accused, all of Canadian society and, importantly, the credibility of our criminal justice system.

When we weigh the risk to judicial independence introduced by Bill C-3, which I think is a very small risk for the reasons stated, against the risk of our courts being disrespected, which is a real and present danger, most Canadians will support the purpose of intent of Bill C-3. That is why I thank the people who have written to me, including Lia, encouraging me to vote in favour of this bill.

This bill is a step in the right direction to rebalance the interests of the accused to a fair trial and the complainant to respect and dignity. As a Conservative, I am proud that this bill was initiated on this side of the House by our former colleague Rona Ambrose. I thank the Hon. Rona Ambrose for introducing this.

● (1905)

I have a quote here from Ms. Ambrose, which I think is really interesting. She said:

...like me, many Canadians would be surprised to learn that a lawyer does not need any experience in the sensitivities of sexual assault cases to become a judge overseeing these types of challenging trials.

As I said earlier, this might be the first sexual assault case that a judge has ever heard or been involved in, in a criminal law setting, much less in a sexual assault proceeding. The judge, prior to becoming a judge, might have been a tax lawyer or dealt with intellectual property law.

### *Adjournment Proceedings*

I am a little less surprised than most Canadians about this gap in judges' education. In this debate, we have talked about new judges who have little or no experience in sexual assault proceedings. That creates challenges, obviously. However, at the other end of the spectrum are judges who, as lawyers, practised solely in the field of criminal law, maybe even specializing in sexual assault cases and, when they become judges, have a first case of complex commercial law.

I think there is something missing in judges' education. That is where I am going with this. Bill C-3 is a step in the right direction. The field of law is so broad that not even the smartest, most educated and well-intentioned judge could know it all.

As a lawyer, I must undergo continuing professional development every year in order to maintain my practice licence. I would submit that the same should apply to judges, and maybe even more so to judges because they are societal influencers. They need to understand the society within which they work.

I am confident that our judiciary, in consultation with appropriate stakeholder groups, will develop an effective, responsible, continuing education program for judges, and that judges will respond favourably to Bill C-3. I will be voting in favour of this bill.

**The Deputy Speaker:** We have about three minutes or so remaining for questions and comments. Of course, the full 10 minutes could be taken if the House chooses to get back to that, when it gets back to the bill in front of the House. For now, we will go to questions and comments, the hon. member for Fleetwood—Port Kells.

**Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that this bill is focusing in on a very necessary aspect of our justice system, and that great injustices have been done.

However, I want to ask the hon. member if he feels that, incrementally, we should be thinking of the same process for judges when it comes to dealing with indigenous people, who tend to be overrepresented in terms of the severity of the sentences handed out and in terms of imprisonment, etc., or Black people. There are a number of different categories of people who appear in court and who appear to be treated badly. I am wondering how the member would want to see those issues approached.

**Mr. Tako Van Popta:** Mr. Speaker, that is a very important question. Judges influence society; therefore, they must understand the society within which they work and within which the people who appear before them in court live.

Sadly, indigenous people are overrepresented in our court system and in our prisons. I think it would be very important for judges to get training in understanding some of these societal influences to a much greater degree than they do right now.

**Mr. James Cumming (Edmonton Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his speech and his support of this very important bill. I want to give my personal thanks to the Hon. Rona Ambrose for the work that she did in the last Parliament. Now we are dealing with this again in this Parliament.

I have an organization in my riding, SACE, the Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton, that has been desperately waiting for this legislation to be passed. How frustrating does the member think it was

for this bill to have been delayed again by the proroguing of Parliament?

• (1910)

**Mr. Tako Van Popta:** Mr. Speaker, this legislation should have happened a long time ago. This must be done quickly.

Ninety-five per cent of people who experience sexual assault do not even report it, because they do not have confidence in the judicial system. It needs to be fixed. It is a high priority. It should have been done a long time ago.

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## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[English]

CANADA REVENUE AGENCY

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as the member of Parliament for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, I welcome the opportunity to demonstrate to Canadians why, aside from all the scandals, they should not be trusting the Prime Minister or his party.

Let me be very clear. I support helping Canadians who are struggling with the unprecedented events of our time, such as the COVID pandemic. The federal government's promised one-time payment for Canadians living with disabilities who are struggling through this pandemic is one such support, even though it is only being delivered now after months of meaningless clichés from the Prime Minister. I do not support a government that uses an extraordinary event like a health pandemic to erode the democratic rights of Canadians.

Unfortunately for Canadians, this abuse of democracy was happening before the pandemic by ignoring the will of Parliament and not bringing forth the necessary regulations to implement Bill C-462, An Act restricting the fees charged by promoters of the disability tax credit. Canadians living with disabilities have been taken advantage of. Rather than receiving their full benefit of this special one-time payment, some Canadians living with disabilities are poised to lose a portion of it. The abuse of middlemen charging fees to access government programs is becoming so rampant under the Liberal government that an RCMP anti-fraud analyst was recently quoted by the CBC, saying that he wonders whether or not the time has come to start “regulating the promotion of access to government services where people are making money off people trying to access these services that are otherwise free to access”.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

The same disability tax consultants saw big paydays when the Canada emergency response benefit was introduced. One such tax consultant started offering to apply on behalf of taxpayers for the benefit. He advertised to assist with CERB applications. This is what can be read on his website: “We have no upfront fee, you only pay us once you get your CERB payment. Due to these rough times, Canada Tax Reviews has reduced our fee from 33% to an 8% fee for this program.”

Seven years ago I introduced private member's legislation, Bill C-462, restricting the fees charged by promoters of the disability tax credit. One of the ways to receive this special one-time disability tax benefit just announced was to qualify for this. My intention in bringing that legislation before Parliament was straightforward. I wanted to see increased protection for disabled Canadians from the predatory practices of certain individuals who refer to themselves as tax credit promoters. When I found out that some individuals were being charged 20%, 30% or 40% of the tax credit, I was misled to believe that Liberal members of Parliament agreed that those kinds of charges were unfair. This is especially true when considering the purpose of the disability tax credit is to support Canadians living with serious disabilities.

Parliament voted in this tax credit in recognition of the fact that Canadians with disabilities face extra challenges. As the member of Parliament whose riding includes Garrison Petawawa, the soldiers and veterans in my community are at greater risk for a number of disabilities because of the sacrifices they have made for our country. The tax credit is of special importance to them.

In bringing forward Bill C-462, I also wanted my constituents and all other Canadians to know they could access their local member of Parliament regarding any federal tax credit without being charged a percentage of the tax credit. Seven years ago, my private member's legislation helped disabled Canadians receive unanimous support in that Parliament. Even the current Prime Minister, who at that time was an opposition MP on the WE Charity speaker circuit, voted in support of my legislation. What happened?

• (1915)

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada has taken strong, immediate and effective action to protect Canadians and the economy from the impacts of the global COVID-19 pandemic. On March 25, 2020, the Government of Canada announced the Canada emergency response benefit, CERB, a taxable benefit of \$2,000 per month for eligible workers whose income and employment were affected by COVID-19.

When it first launched the CERB, the CRA focused on providing emergency payments quickly to the millions of Canadians who were affected by the pandemic. To achieve this, the CRA has witnessed an unprecedented mobilization of its resources to build on past successes.

The CRA has collaborated with financial industry stakeholders to implement direct deposit for businesses to facilitate issuing of CEWS payments.

On April 27, the first bank successfully transmitted direct deposit information for businesses to CRA. The Canada emergency re-

sponse benefit, which was administered by the Canada Revenue Agency and Service Canada, has since provided critical financial support to over eight million Canadians. Canadians from all walks of life and employment backgrounds have been negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

For this reason, the CERB was designed to apply to a wide variety of individuals, their only commonality being their inability to work because of COVID-19. Some categories of individuals who were eligible for the CERB are those who lost their jobs or had their hours reduced because of COVID-19, as well as those unable to work because they were caring for a dependant whose care was disrupted by the pandemic. Additionally, the CERB covered not only traditionally employed, but also contract workers and self-employed persons not otherwise eligible for employment insurance.

As the pandemic situation progressed, some adjustments were made to the CERB eligibility criteria to allow Canadians to take on part-time work. This allowed Canadian businesses to rehire workers on a part-time basis to ensure that Canadians could continue to put food on the table, pay their rent or mortgage, and support their families.

During the implementation of the CERB, as well as other emergency benefits like the Canada emergency wage subsidy, the government sought to get money into the hands of Canadians who were in need as quickly as possible, via direct deposit or cheque. Payments were made within 10 days in most cases.

Canadians were able to apply for the CERB through an easy web portal, an automated telephone line or a toll-free number. The CERB officially ended on September 26, 2020, but Canadians can still retroactively apply for the CERB until December 2, 2020.

The CERB, I am proud to announce, has now been replaced with three new benefits: the Canada recovery benefit, CRB; the Canada recovery sickness benefit, CRSB; and the Canada recovery caregiving benefit, CRCB. These new benefits are being administered by the Canada Revenue Agency and Canadians can apply online through the agency's “my account” or via a toll-free number.

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**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** Mr. Speaker, I will tell members what happened. There was an unfortunate change that led to a government that breaks its promises to reward its friends. Canadians are still waiting for the regulations for that legislation that was enacted seven years later. In the latest example of meaningless tropes from a government that excels in meaningless slogans, this time from the last Speech from the Throne, is something called the disability inclusion plan. If the Liberal government was actually serious about helping Canadians living with disabilities, the regulations to implement Bill C-462, an act restricting the fees charged by promoters of the disability tax credit, would be law by now and in the plan. The process to determine eligibility for government disability programs and benefits should not have been left in the hands of these tax credit vultures all these years.

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara:** Mr. Speaker, I am proud to speak to the government's swift actions to help Canadians, including those in my riding of Vaughan—Woodbridge.

The Canada Revenue Agency has developed a fast and simple application process that it uses to deliver benefits payments to Canadians within days of applying. Millions of Canadians have accessed the CERB over the past seven months and this easy-to-use system has helped support Canadians and their families at a time of significant upset and uncertainty.

In fact, as of September 28, the CRA and Service Canada have processed over 27 million applications for the CERB. Canadians can have confidence in the CRA's proven track record in providing emergency support to those who need it most. We can look at the successful roll out of the CERB as an indicator of the agency's strong capacity in this regard.

• (1920)

## PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

**Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, at the end of October, I asked the government about its priorities for procurement when it came to Canada's COVID response over the past year. The Minister of Public Services and Procurement responded with no direct answers. She gave up a tremendous world salad, so I am hoping we can get a bit better *salade du jour* today from the minister.

The issues have been going on since the spring. When I was a member of the industry committee, we talked a lot about PPE and the government's response to the pandemic and how it was handling it. Repeatedly, there was talk and a lot of instances of business owners and manufacturers looking to retool what was going on in their companies so they could help out with the pandemic and the recovery.

Honey Bee Manufacturing is a company within my riding. I had the owners get in touch with the minister's office so they could re-purpose and retool what they did to help with the pandemic. The response they got from the minister and her office staff was to thank them very much, that they really appreciated they were willing to help out, but at the time they did not need them. However, if they waited, the minister's staff might tell them later on if they needed them.

Then we have companies like Novo Textiles in B.C. The owner got a nice mention from the member for Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam. He gave a nice reference. The company had the capacity to manufacture masks and was not given any opportunity to expand production or to contribute even more than what they were able to already do.

We started to see incidents with companies like Medicom. It is involved in the medical world, but it had no production capacity in Canada to speak of. It got a government handout. Medicom was able to set up shop and develop masks. I am not begrudging Medicom for wanting to help out or the fact that it got the contract. However, the fact is that it had to build facilities to be able to start manufacturing its product. Companies that already had the capacity to do manufacturing were told that they were good where they were, that the government would give it to another company and wait for it to build up what it had.

Then we started to see somebody like Frank Baylis. It was the same thing. He did not have any capacity at that point in time to manufacture the very ventilator that he proposed and he got a massive contract. All he had to do was prove that he had connections through another company and prove that he was a Liberal, and he got a massive contract.

Canadians are looking for this process to once again bring manufacturing back to Canada. When Brad, a constituent in my riding, had to prove that he had the capacity to manufacture face shields, he did so but he did not get the contract, which is fine. However, now Brad is sitting with over \$300,000 worth of product that is not being utilized.

Then we have all these companies which won the bid that are covered by a national security exemption for masks. I could understand it for vaccines, where there are sensitive scientific processes that go into it, but for plastic face shields? Why are we hiding behind national security exemptions for things like face shields or a simple face mask?

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise in the House to respond to the question from the hon. member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands.

The government has focused on the health and safety of Canadians since the very beginning of this pandemic. This has been our most pressing issue, and I am sure all members would agree that this is a national priority.

[*Translation*]

Public Services and Procurement Canada is responsible for purchasing the PPE and supplies that will enable us to meet our needs now and in the future as the pandemic runs its course. To do that, we have set up new supply chains with domestic and foreign manufacturers in a highly competitive global market.

• (1925)

[English]

Along with acquiring billions of units of PPE, including masks, N95 respirators, face shields, hand sanitizer, protective gowns and gloves, we are also negotiating with international manufacturers and pharmaceutical companies to have tests, treatments and vaccines made widely available across Canada. I note that about 80% of the total value of contracts for personal protective equipment, medical equipment and supplies have been with Canadian companies that supply and distribute PPE.

In addition, we have engaged a large number of manufacturers from across the country. This has allowed us to increase our capacity to produce many of these essential products right here in Canada. In fact, approximately 40% of the total value of contracts is going to Canadian manufacturing companies, many of which were identified through call-outs issued by PSPC and Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada.

[Translation]

Companies such as Fluid Energy Group in Calgary, the GM plant in Oshawa and Medicom in Pointe-Claire, Quebec, are to be congratulated on their creativity and their desire to help the whole country fight COVID-19. These businesses have helped stimulate the economy by creating good jobs in their regions when good jobs were sorely needed.

[English]

To get this essential equipment into the hands of those who need it the most, PSPC has also launched a supply hub to bring together buyers and sellers of PPE and other supplies in the Canadian market. The supply hub website has been viewed more than 133,000 times by individuals from across Canada. All of this work has put Canada in a much stronger and more stable position in terms of supplies.

[Translation]

Even so, our work is far from done. This pandemic will not go away until we have a safe and effective vaccine. Our government has therefore adopted a dynamic approach to obtaining the most promising vaccine candidates and distributing them to Canadians as quickly as possible once they are approved.

[English]

PSPC has been taking recommendations from the government's COVID-19 vaccine task force, and we have already established agreements with seven manufacturers, including Moderna and Pfizer, to secure up to 414 million doses of their vaccine candidates. Moreover, we have made agreements with companies such as Becton, Dickinson and Company and Abbott for rapid antigen tests to supplement the existing testing regime. To date, more than four million of Abbott's Panbio and ID NOW rapid tests have already been delivered to provinces and territories, and deliveries are continuing on a weekly basis.

[Translation]

Our government believes that, given the surge in COVID-19 cases in many regions in the country, it is more important than ever to pursue its efforts to acquire essential supplies. I can assure the

### *Adjournment Proceedings*

House that we will continue to make a concerted effort to advance this complex work.

[English]

The government's top priority remains the health and safety of all Canadians, and we will continue to pursue the equipment and supplies that we need for fighting COVID-19 to help us build a stronger and more resilient Canada for everyone.

**Mr. Jeremy Patzer:** Mr. Speaker, I was happy to hear the member opposite bring up the N95 mask, because some of the farmers in my riding are talking to me about the fact that they cannot get their preferred N95 mask with a filter built into it for when they clean out their grain bins. We are now starting to see issues with the regular supply of PPE that people outside of the medical industry use for their day-to-day lives and their livelihoods. They are having issues getting it. I talked to some of the suppliers to find out if it is just a localized issue. This issue has been stretched out for months now and has not been addressed yet.

I am wondering if the parliamentary secretary can talk about regular PPE, which people rely on for their day-to-day lives, for their livelihoods and in their places of work. What is the government doing to ensure that this PPE is still being manufactured as well so that we are not creating issues in other areas of people's lives?

• (1930)

[Translation]

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara:** Mr. Speaker, I assure the House that our government is continuing to work during this exceptional period to ensure that Canadians remain healthy and safe.

[English]

We are procuring supplies for our front-line health care workers and essential businesses, including from numerous Canadian manufacturers. We are also putting in place new agreements to secure access to the most effective and efficient testing solutions.

[Translation]

We are thinking of the future. We made agreements to have access to the most promising vaccine candidates currently being developed in the world in order to be able to turn the page on COVID-19.

[English]

The government will continue to make it a priority to meet the challenges of this pandemic and to ensure Canadians are supported and safe.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

[Translation]

## INFRASTRUCTURE

**Hon. Steven Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, through you, I would like to recommend something to the parliamentary secretary.

It is the holiday season and time to shop for presents. This year, I would like to recommend a Christmas gift for him. It is a fascinating book written by a historian and available in any good book shop, especially in the Quebec City area. It is called *Curieuses histoires du pont de Québec*.

It begins with the opening of the Quebec Bridge in 1917. The roadway is added in 1929. In 1952, the Quebec Bridge is widened to three lanes. The book also mentions the construction of the Pierre Laporte bridge in 1970.

Perhaps my colleague will add a last chapter to this book about the painting of the Quebec Bridge. The Liberals promised and swore up and down in 2015 that it would be painted. Since then, we have described the situation in many ways: the paintbrushes are getting stiff, the paint is still in the can, taking action is a must to deal with the rust. We are running out of ways to spur the government to action.

The government is good at talking and making promises. It hired a very competent negotiator, Yvon Charest, on the Quebec Bridge purchase file. This negotiator's report was not made public, but we have learned from information leaked to the media that Mr. Charest is of the opinion that it is high time the federal government took ownership of the Quebec Bridge and implemented a maintenance plan.

Unfortunately, at this time, I do not have access to that report or any information on the implementation of the recommendations it contains. We are still waiting for the government to take real action, as it promised to do five years ago. We know that this was not the first time that the Liberals made promises they did not keep, but we would certainly like to be able to believe in Santa Claus during this holiday season.

To come back to the government's infrastructure program, the government invested huge sums of money in that program—specifically \$187 billion, according to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, Yves Giroux. However, Mr. Giroux also indicated that the government does not have a plan and that there have been delays.

We know we are in the middle of a pandemic, but in October, the government announced \$10 billion in infrastructure projects. We were excited about that because we have needs. For the first time in five years, the government finally announced some funding, but we did not know where the money would be spent. Unfortunately, once again the money will be transferred to the Canada Infrastructure Bank even though the bank has not financed a single project to date and has produced no concrete results.

Time flies when one has only four minutes to cover everything, so I will wrap up by saying that there are digital, drinking water and roadway infrastructure needs. It is high time the Liberals took action because the bridge is rusting.

We are asking the government to do something about the Quebec Bridge because the need is great. The bridge is an important piece of infrastructure for the Quebec City region. It is a heritage gem that has earned recognition internationally and from Canadian authorities.

My question is simple: When will the government stop making exciting announcements and actually start investing in the Quebec Bridge in particular and infrastructure in general?

**Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis for his speech. His riding is in the greater Quebec City area.

He talked about broken promises when it comes to infrastructure. With all due respect to him, when I hear him speak, I cannot help but remember that famous photograph of him and his colleagues, all proudly wearing Nordiques jerseys and giving a thumbs up. At the time, the Conservatives promised that the Harper government would make investments in building the Vidéotron Centre. Hon. members will recall, as the people of Quebec City certainly do, that the Conservatives did not invest a single dollar, a single penny, in building the Vidéotron Centre. They had made the promise with all the theatrics that they are known for. In fact, that is what they are doing again this evening, saying things like “taking action is a must to deal with this rust”.

I have no doubt about their ability to put on a dog and pony show and their capacity for theatrics. That said, I want to reassure my colleague from Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis that in the Quebec Bridge story, the chapter on finding a lasting solution to repairing and restoring the bridge remains to be written. For a decade, the Conservatives failed to take any action and failed to find this lasting solution. That very member was around the cabinet table at the time.

We will deliver on this. We have given ourselves the means to succeed, beginning with the appointment of Yvon Charest as negotiator, for example. He has submitted his report. It is important to remember that the bridge is over 100 years old. It is an engineering marvel that allows 33,000 vehicles a day to move from one shore to the other, from the north shore to the south shore and from the south shore to the north shore of Quebec City. It is much more than a simple road link. It is a jewel of our heritage, part of the pride of Quebec City and Canada, pride that should shine all around the world.

That is why, where the Conservatives failed for 10 years, where they failed to take action for 10 years, and while they left the bridge to rust for 10 years, we have given ourselves the means to succeed by taking the politics out of this matter and bringing in an extremely competent individual, Yvon Charest. His mandate was to negotiate with CN and to determine, with CN and with Quebec City, the best lasting solution for the Quebec Bridge. This included everything from transferring ownership with adequate compensation to legislation, and that is what Mr. Charest did. Infrastructure Canada is currently examining his report.

I can assure the member for Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis that we will find a solution for the restoration and enhancement of the Quebec Bridge. We will succeed where the Conservatives failed for 10 years. One end of the bridge is in my riding. I can almost see it from my house. Of course, I would have preferred to see this matter resolved a long time ago.

We want to get this right. This matter has been mishandled too often in the past, and there is no way we are going to let it be mishandled again. We want a long-term solution that will highlight the priceless value of this heritage jewel. It is an engineering marvel, not to mention a crucial economic and transportation link for the Quebec City region.

I can also assure the member that our government will take action for the long term. Until then, the owner, Canadian National, and Quebec's ministry of transportation, the MTQ, will ensure the safety and stability of the bridge. As for enhancement, that is what we promised in 2015, and we will keep that promise.

• (1935)

**Hon. Steven Blaney:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Quebec City's other shore for his comments.

I can tell him that the Vidéotron Centre was built and is operational, whereas the Quebec Bridge has been rusting this whole time. I invite him to attend a show. I would be pleased to invite him and to share one of the two Vidéotron Centre seats I have purchased.

The day after the 2015 election, that very member said that it would be better to allocate our resources to a third link rather than to the Quebec Bridge. I have the impression that it will happen one day or another. At that time, the third link and not the Quebec Bridge was important.

In the last election, the Prime Minister himself said that he would not comment on a project that did not exist. Essentially, if I under-

### *Adjournment Proceedings*

stand correctly, the member says a lot of things. He said some things this evening, he said some things in 2016, and his leader said some things before the election. We simply want the Liberals to get moving on some serious issues by maintaining this infrastructure that is essential for the community of the greater Quebec City area. They must take action.

Mr. Charest's report has been tabled. Will there be any news before Christmas?

**Mr. Joël Lightbound:** Mr. Speaker, I will humbly tell my colleague that this statement from 2015 or 2016 was a mistake that I regret. *Mea culpa.*

My colleague should know that for the government and for me in particular, addressing the Quebec Bridge issue is very important. In 2015, when Stephen Harper went to Quebec City and jokingly feigned surprise that the Quebec Bridge was still standing, his colleague, the member for Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, smiled and clapped at Mr. Harper's mockery of this infrastructure.

We would never do that. We have done everything necessary to succeed in addressing this matter. We want to make sure that during future election campaigns, no one will be wondering about the future of the Quebec Bridge, because we will have addressed it once and for all.

• (1940)

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

(The House adjourned at 7:40 p.m.)



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