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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, February 17, 2021

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayer

• (1405)

[*English*]

The Speaker: It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of the national anthem led by the hon. member for Calgary Midnapore.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

BLACK CULTURAL CENTRE FOR NOVA SCOTIA

Mr. Darrell Samson (Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as Black History Month continues, I would like to recognize the hard work and resilience of the Black Cultural Centre for Nova Scotia during COVID-19.

Led by Russell Grosse, executive director, the centre has been finding innovative ways to continue to work to protect, to preserve and to promote the history of African Nova Scotian communities. The centre has been there to lend a hand to other African Nova Scotian organizations and has helped them adjust to COVID-19 and thrive in the digital environment. The centre is working toward being designated as a national museum, and I am proud to help it achieve this goal in any way I can.

Throughout my time as a member of Parliament for Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, it has been inspiring to see the incredible impact the centre has had on the African Nova Scotian communities, and I cannot wait to see what it can do on the national scene and see our Prime Minister there to cut the ribbon on opening day.

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• (1410)

GRAEME CRAIG

Mr. Ben Lobb (Huron—Bruce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Huron County lost one of its great residents February 8.

Graeme Craig was a lifelong resident on a century farm in Walton. His first passion in life was music. Graeme entertained many

people, singing and playing guitar at numerous events. He was a graduate of Ridgetown College and had a very successful career with United Breeders and McKillop Insurance.

Graeme was a federal returning officer for Huron—Bruce for five elections. He ran as a Liberal candidate in 1979-80 and was trustee and chair on the Huron County Board of Education for 12 years. Graeme did a term as president of the Ontario Plowmen's Association. He was the chair of the 1999 International Plowing Match in Dashwood and was the current treasurer in the Canadian Plowing Match. He made a positive impact on everyone he knew.

My condolences to Graeme's family, wife Helen, Michael, Shannon and Dave. May Graeme rest in peace on a life well lived.

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I READ CANADIAN DAY

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today is I Read Canadian Day. This year more than ever, we have turned to reading as a way to escape, to learn and to experience new ideas. I love reading to our four grandkids remotely, to Michael and Anna in Guelph, and to Jack and our new granddaughter Frankie in Toronto.

Started by Guelph author Eric Walters as a collaboration between the Canadian Children's Book Centre, the Canadian Society of Children's Authors, Illustrators and Performers and the Ontario Library Association, and this year joined by Communication-Jeunesse and Canadian School Libraries, we will reach many more readers in both our official languages.

Today, we challenge all Canadians to read for 15 minutes, whether it is English, French or indigenous languages, to their young ones around them to show their ongoing support to our wonderfully talented Canadian authors and illustrators. Use #IRead-Canadian and share in the love of reading Canadian stories.

Statements by Members

[Translation]

MEDIA

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, for years, people have been using the term “media crisis” to describe the challenges our newspapers are facing because of the web giants. In times of crisis, we need urgent action, but the federal government is doing nothing.

Today, all Quebec publishers are demanding that Ottawa correct the serious inequity between web giants and our media when it comes to advertising revenues generated from sharing the work of our content creators on digital platforms. Without the work of journalists, there would be no stories to share on social media. The content is coming from our media, not from Facebook or Google.

If we do not protect content creators, we will lose a pillar of public and democratic life. Ottawa has to take action to ensure that the work of our media benefits our media. Ottawa needs to make web giants pay taxes on the profits they are making here and put that money into a fund to support our media and culture.

Now is the time to act, and quickly.

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GEORGES EL KHOURY

Mr. Fayçal El-Khoury (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in 1976, I was welcomed to Canada by a pioneering member of the Lebanese community, Georges El Khoury.

We lost Mr. El Khoury three weeks ago. He was a noble and generous person who gave so much to Canadians of Lebanese origin and contributed to the growth of jobs and investment with the Middle East as well as to the education of many young people. He helped everyone who needed help regardless of their faith or background. In fact, I owe the first two years of my university studies to him.

I would like to extend my sincere condolences to his wife Thérèse; his daughters, Sylvana, Denise and Barbara; and his sons, Maroun and Michel. May his soul rest in peace, may his life be an inspiration to others of Lebanese origin, and may his legacy live on.

[Member spoke in Arabic]

[English]

May his memory be eternal. Rest in peace.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Ramesh Sangha (Brampton Centre, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, I am a proud Sikh by birth. Like Sikhs in Canada, I am not a Khalistani extremist or a sympathizer. However, there are a few Sikhs in Canada as well as in the House.

On December 13, 2018, the minister of public safety removed religion Sikh words from the “Terrorist Threat to Canada” report, 2018, and the Sikh community was grateful. However, a few unsatisfied Sikh members of Parliament stood against their own government, used all the tools and ulterior motives, pressurized the government and got Khalistani extremism removed from the report.

Their hidden agenda was to camouflage all the names long-linked to the movement, even their own near and dear ones.

The security of Canada is paramount, but they compromised it. Shame on them for pandering to extremism in Canada. History will not forgive them.

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● (1415)

POINTS OF ORDER

STATEMENT BY A MEMBER

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The last S. O. 31 was out of line with respect to the decorum that is expected in this House. A number of comments were made by the previous speaker that clearly impugned the reputation of many of our members, and I take particular offence to them.

I would ask, for the record, that the S. O. 31 be struck from the record of this House.

The Speaker: I would like to point out that normally the Chair does not take points of order during statements by members, or S. O. 31s, but we will review it and see where it goes from there.

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[Translation]

SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I recently moved Motion No. 63 in the House of Commons. The motion calls on the government to recognize the urgent need to pass legislation to combat the sexual exploitation of minors in order to better protect our children.

In my previous role as shadow minister for public safety and emergency preparedness, I worked closely with the elected members of the Quebec National Assembly to support them in regard to the Criminal Code changes that were being requested. I also continue to support the Deputy Premier of Quebec, Geneviève Guilbault, in order to achieve that goal.

Now I would like the federal government to make this a priority so that our young people who are being sexually exploited are not just numbers in a report. It is high time we protected our children.

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[English]

NATIONAL FLAG OF CANADA DAY

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Gatineau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on February 15, 1965, Canada's red and white maple leaf flag was raised for the very first time on Parliament Hill. On the same day in 1996, National Flag of Canada Day was declared.

Statements by Members

[Translation]

Some 56 years ago, an audience of 10,000 enthusiastically applauded Gaétan Secours. He was a 26-year-old RCMP officer when he raised Canada's new flag for the first time over the Peace Tower on Parliament Hill.

In order to celebrate National Flag of Canada Day, in honour and recognition of Mr. Secours's years of service and to commemorate the inauguration of the national flag of Canada, Mr. Secours will receive the maple leaf flag that flew over the Peace Tower on Parliament Hill.

[English]

February 15 is a part of Mr. Secours' unique history as well as that of all Canadians. Our national flag is a symbol that unites us all and reflects the shared values we hold so dear: equality, diversity and inclusion.

I send my thanks to Mr. Secours.

[Translation]

I wish him a happy National Flag of Canada Day.

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[English]

OPIOIDS

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Orléans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week I was proud to present a petition calling on the federal government to collaborate with the provinces and territories to establish a pan-Canadian action plan to end overdose deaths and overdose injuries.

With a death taking place roughly every two hours, and a death toll of 15,400 people in the last four years alone, the opioid crisis is one of the deadliest public health emergencies of our lifetime. Canadians in every corner of our country are affected by this crisis, and it is being made even worse by the ongoing pandemic.

The petition was organized by Katherine Steinhoff, an activist with Moms Stop the Harm, and a mother who lost her son, Simon, to the crisis. It was signed by citizens across the city of Ottawa, and I want to thank her for her tireless advocacy for action on this issue.

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● (1420)

COVID-19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, fewer than 1% of Canadians have received their second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. Forty-second is where Canada ranks on the world stage in terms of vaccines administered per capita. This is not the team Canada I know. This means more loved ones getting sick and more restrictions keeping us apart. It means more difficulty for the many sectors that continue to struggle.

From the White Rock Promenade to The Shops at Morgan Crossing, businesses in my riding are hurting. In January, the unemployment rate in B.C. hit 8%, up 3.4% from a year ago.

Access to vaccines would help us all get back to our friends, families, and work. It would help new businesses, such as the Eggeetra Breakfast Cafe in Surrey, thrive. We need to get the vaccine rollout right in order to secure jobs and secure our economic future.

I will leave the House with one final number: 701 is the number of days since the last federal budget.

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LUNAR NEW YEAR

Mr. Ali Ehsassi (Willowdale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to mark the commencement of the lunar new year by recognizing the spring festival in China, Seollal in Korea and the Tet festival in Vietnam.

Many across our country have been marking the arrival of the Year of the Ox, a symbol of honesty, hard work and perseverance, which are indeed fitting qualities to guide us all in the year ahead. Lunar new year is an opportunity for many Canadians to reflect on the immense and extraordinary challenges of the past year and to focus our gaze on ushering in new beginnings. It is also a time to connect with the elderly, relatives and friends.

On behalf of my riding of Willowdale, I wish all those marking this festive occasion a year filled with good health and also much happiness and success. While most have graciously avoided gatherings this year, I have no doubt that we will more than make up for it by celebrating bigger and brighter next year.

Gung hai fat choy; gong xi, gong xi; shi nian kuai le; seh heh mahn hee bah deux sayo.

* * *

KENORA FRONT-LINE WORKERS

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to thank all of the front-line workers across the riding of Kenora and all of northwestern Ontario who have stepped up to keep us safe during this pandemic.

As we approach the one-year mark of COVID-19 lockdowns, we are all greatly appreciative of their work and their sacrifice. They have truly done an amazing job. Unfortunately, the federal government has not done its job to ensure that these workers have the tools they need to combat the virus. The failure to procure vaccines, distribute rapid tests and provide clear information has hindered Canada's response to this crisis.

As we move into the spring, it is my hope that all Canadians who want a vaccine will have access in a timely manner. It is something that our Conservative team will continue to fight for, because we know a robust vaccine plan is key to overcoming COVID-19 once and for all and getting our economy back on track.

Statements by Members

Our mission is to secure vaccines, to secure jobs and to secure our future. [Translation]

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HOUSING

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this government's newest housing program gave half a billion dollars to big cities but left Canada's small and medium-sized municipalities, non-profits and indigenous governing bodies to compete for the rest. Many of these communities simply lack the capacity to submit an application during normal operations, never mind the current circumstances.

A disproportionate number of these communities are rural, remote, indigenous, or all three. There are communities like Lillooet, B.C., which put forward an application but had it disqualified. Urban centres should not automatically be first in line for government services. Once-vibrant small communities are emptied out as vulnerable people leave their hometowns in search of housing and other supports.

We know that housing is an essential component of our economic recovery and necessary to secure our future. Canada's Conservatives have heard and are heeding the calls to improve the national housing strategy. We are focused on increasing affordable rental stock, improving fairness in the mortgage market and ensuring the current generation is not left behind.

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● (1425)

MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND GIRLS

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the community continues to march yearly on February 14 to honour the lives of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls and to demand action and justice. This year is the 30th anniversary of the Memorial March. It truly shows that the issues faced by indigenous women and girls are not new but are part of Canada's colonial history.

Issues of housing, food and income security have all become exponentially more precarious. Systemic racism in the health care system is real, and violence against women is on a steep rise. The pandemic is precisely why we need bold, urgent action to implement the calls to justice from the national inquiry. There is no time to waste.

To start, implementing safe and affordable housing for all, universal pharmacare and child care, and culturally aware and trauma-informed support services is just a short list of actions that would make an immediate difference. No more delays, no more inaction, no more stolen sisters: We need justice for missing and murdered indigenous women and girls now.

YVON MAJOR

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Montarville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we were sad and shocked to learn that a great citizen of Sainte-Julie, Yvon Major, passed away during the night of January 18. He was mayor of Sainte-Julie for more than 10 years.

Mr. Major began his career in municipal politics as a councillor in 1984 and became mayor in October 1993, an office he held until 2005. He also became reeve of the Lajemmerais RCM in 2000. I had the pleasure and the honour, during my first term in this House, of working with him during his time in office as the chief executive of the town of Sainte-Julie.

He was well known as a likeable, available, energetic, conscientious and visionary man. He brought major environmental advancements to the RCM, such as wheeled bins for recycling, household waste and, eventually, organics.

Thank you for everything, Mr. Major. We already miss you.

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HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today is the 800th day the two Michaels have been detained by Chinese authorities. For 800 days, the two Michaels have languished behind bars while our Prime Minister keeps saying it is a priority to get them released. As we see once again, those are only words with no real substance. In fact, in many respects the Prime Minister seems weak and ineffective in his dealings with China.

Today, the Conservative Party is calling for action to free our Canadians and to prevent the 2022 Olympics from being held in China. Our party demands that Canada ask the International Olympic Committee to relocate the Olympics, as Brian Mulroney did in 1985. For once, the Prime Minister must show leadership and stand up and defend human rights on behalf of Canada, on behalf of Canadians, on behalf of the two Michaels.

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[English]

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Black History Month is commemorated in many ways across Canada. This year, in light of the Black Lives Matter movement and the fight against systemic racism, we are seeing a call to action as well.

In my riding, Black community leaders joined me in meeting with the Minister of Justice to discuss the issue of police profiling and discrimination, while members of our youth council produced an educational video entitled “Youth Translate Racism”.

[*Translation*]

This video features young people from various communities in my riding speaking about racism. I was very moved by all of their stories. This initiative gives us hope for a more inclusive world.

I also want to once again thank my colleague from LaSalle—Émard—Verdun, who took the time to participate in a round table with representatives from Châteauguay's Black community.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[*English*]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is out of step with the Biden administration on China. The Prime Minister is out of step with our Five Eyes allies on China. The Prime Minister is even out of step with his own caucus on China. The experienced Liberal finance chair says that he needs to wake up and smell the roses.

Will the Prime Minister wake up and remove Canada from the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank?

• (1430)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the past number of years we have always been very clear with China when we disagreed on human rights. We have real concerns about the treatment of the Uighurs in Xinjiang and the situation in Hong Kong. We have continued to express our concern and demonstrate our solidarity with the two Michaels and expect them to be returned home from arbitrary detention, while at the same time we continue to work with partners around the world in holding China to account and improving opportunities for our workers and businesses across the country and around the world. These are things we will continue to work on, including tomorrow in our virtual G7 meeting.

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EMPLOYMENT

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we lost 213,000 jobs in January, most of them in Ontario and Quebec. That is 213,000 families looking for a paycheque amidst a pandemic. The Prime Minister is funding the Asian infrastructure bank while his Liberal insider-friendly Canadian infrastructure bank has completed zero projects in Canada.

When will the Prime Minister start prioritizing Canadian workers?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a part of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, Canada joins countries such as Australia, France, Germany, India, Italy, South Korea and the U.K. in promoting growth around the world.

Oral Questions

Indeed, when the Leader of the Opposition brings up support for workers, let me point out that the Conservative Party has consistently said we have done too much when we gave 380,000 unique applicants sickness benefit support, supported the wage subsidy with over five million jobs and provided over \$64 billion in support for workers. We have had Canadians' backs and we will continue to.

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HEALTH

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday experts spent hours telling committee about the conflicts of interest, the late planning and the end run around Canadian manufacturers that defined the government's vaccine plan. By the end of last week, two million Americans a day were being vaccinated. We need two million Canadians a week to get vaccinated to meet the Prime Minister's vaunted September deadline.

Why are Canadians paying the price for the Prime Minister's planning failures?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, from the very beginning we valued the work of scientific and industry experts who were volunteering their time to ensure sound, evidence-based decisions during the pandemic on the vaccine task force, which has a robust conflict of interest process in place and goes above and beyond the practices of other volunteer external advisory bodies.

We have moved forward on procuring vaccines for Canadians. In the coming weeks, we will be receiving millions of vaccines. We are going to hit our March deadlines, and all Canadians will be vaccinated by September.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada has the expertise to manufacture vaccines. That is a fact. Unfortunately, the Liberal government ignored Quebec businesses like Solstar Pharma, choosing instead to partner with a Chinese state-owned company.

Why did the government abandon Canadian businesses and embrace Chinese state-owned firms?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, from the outset, we have relied on experts who have given us recommendations on investments we could make here in Canada to advance the biopharmaceutical industry.

Oral Questions

We invested up to \$173 million in Medicago in Quebec City and \$4 million in Glycovax Pharma in Montreal. We invested in VIDO-InterVac in Saskatchewan, AbCellera Biologics in Vancouver, Variation Biotechnologies here in Ottawa, Precision Nanosystems, and ImmunoVaccine Technologies in Dartmouth, to name only a few.

We are here to invest in domestic production.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister keeps promising us that there will be many vaccine deliveries in March and many more before September.

That is all well and good, but can the Prime Minister tell us how many Canadians will be vaccinated next week?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to report that this week, we will receive more than 400,000 doses of the Pfizer vaccine, and they are arriving in the provinces and territories as we speak.

We know there are still minor delays in vaccine delivery, but we have seen that of the 1.2 million vaccines we have delivered, the provinces and territories have managed to get almost 90% into Canadians' arms. We will continue to work to get those millions of vaccines into Canadians' arms.

* * *

• (1435)

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, since the feds refused, Quebec is going to step in with funding for Université Laval's Infectious Disease Research Centre, which has laid the foundation for a vaccine that could save lives. The federal government would rather hand hundreds of millions of dollars over to multinational pharmaceutical companies. The Prime Minister is hiding behind a panel of experts and scientists who have advised him on his decisions.

I would like the Prime Minister to share with the House what his panel told him that led him to shut out the vaccine developed by an international expert at Université Laval.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to correct my hon. colleague and point out that, in February, Dr. Kobinger did in fact receive a \$1-million federal grant for his research from the COVID-19 rapid research funding opportunity.

We will always invest in promising Canadian solutions that will help combat COVID-19. We have been there to invest in scientists across the country for the past five years, and we have been there for them since the beginning of this pandemic.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister needs to stop taking people for fools.

Dr. Kobinger asked for \$2 million to develop the vaccine and was told no. The Prime Minister is refusing to tell Quebecers what he heard from a panel that made him decide to shut out Université Laval, a decision with consequences for people's health, safety and even their lives. He is refusing to release his contracts with multina-

tional pharmaceutical corporations for vaccine delivery. We all know that has been a colossal failure.

Why is the Prime Minister behaving like a monarch who is accountable to nobody and who makes decisions all by himself and in secret?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can hear the Bloc Québécois leader's frustration at seeing a federal government investing in Quebecers and Canadians, being there for people as we have been from the start, being there to support Quebec families, Quebec workers and Quebec scientists and researchers.

We will be there for all Canadians, as we have been since the start, investing in promising science and supporting families.

I really think the Bloc Québécois leader should refrain from calling people fools just because he is so frustrated that we have kept our promises to Quebecers.

* * *

HEALTH

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the new COVID-19 variants spread more quickly and pose a greater threat. People are worried. This is not the time to hold an election.

Will the Prime Minister commit today that he will not call an election during the pandemic, yes or no?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since the start of the pandemic, our priority in the House, and in the government's work, has been to help Canadians and pass legislation to support families, seniors and youth. That is what we have been doing in partnership with many members on all sides of the House.

The reality is that we are now seeing delays caused by the Conservative Party with respect to measures that I know that Conservatives want Canadians to accept. We will keep doing our best to work with opposition members to deliver for Canadians for as long as we can.

[English]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister told his party to get ready for a spring election. All the while, the new variants of COVID-19 are spreading like wildfire. We have seen the effects of the new variant in Newfoundland and Labrador, where people are getting sick and are afraid to vote, and it has meant they have had to delay the election.

I have committed that I will not trigger an election while we are fighting this pandemic. Will the Prime Minister commit today in this chamber that he will not call an election while we are fighting this pandemic, yes or no?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know well that in a minority Parliament the government does not have the sole power to decide when we go into an election. The opposition members have a role to play not only in providing confidence for the House, but also by being able to function appropriately to deliver the help to Canadians that Canadians so seriously need.

We will continue to stay focused on delivering for Canadians and delivering vaccines, with over six million vaccines by the end of March, tens of millions of vaccines into the spring and every Canadian vaccinated by September. That is our focus. That is what we will stay concentrated on.

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● (1440)

EMPLOYMENT

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, 834,100 is the number of paycheques that are missing in Canada. It is the number of families sitting teary-eyed around the kitchen table trying to figure out how they are going to fund their future.

While the Deputy Prime Minister is congratulating the Conservatives for supporting income programs for those same families, those families need jobs back in order to secure their future.

With our unemployment a third higher than the G7 average, when will those families have their paycheques back?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, from the beginning of this pandemic we made a simple and straightforward promise to Canadians that we would have their backs regardless of how long it took, regardless of what it took. That is why we delivered the CERB to eight million Canadians, even while Conservative politicians, like the member for Carleton, were saying we were doing too much too fast, we should not be helping workers and we have to help businesses faster than workers.

Sorry, but we were there for Canadians and we continue to be there for Canadians. We know the best way to get the economy to come roaring back is to create opportunities for Canadians.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what the Prime Minister has just said is false. In fact, his Deputy Prime Minister thanked the Conservatives for supporting that assistance.

It just shows how out of touch he is that he thinks families can go on living forever off a measly \$2,000 cheque from the government. They do not have multi-million dollar trust funds like he does. They want jobs like workers in other countries, where unemployment is significantly lower than it is here.

Why is it that workers abroad get paycheques while ours here at home just get credit card debts?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, among others, the IMF has recognized that Canada's approach to supporting workers, supporting businesses and supporting communities through this pandemic has left us better positioned to come roaring back once this pandemic is over. We had to do the things

that were necessary to protect Canadians during this pandemic, and as a government we were there to support those families.

We are all looking forward to getting back to work right across the country, but the fact is that we need to continue to be there to support them while we get through this pandemic. This government will continue to do so regardless of what the Conservatives say.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what the IMF actually did is cut Canada's growth projection for this year by a third, not to mention that we are falling behind the rest of the world on jobs. In fact, the G7 average is 6%; the U.S., 6.3%; the EU, 7.5%; and Canada, 9.4%. They also have COVID, but they are getting their jobs back.

Is it not clear that for Canadians to regain their jobs, the Prime Minister will have to lose his?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this crisis demanded targeted, time-limited support to keep people and businesses afloat and that is exactly what this government chose to do.

The IMF report indeed found that Canada's strong and decisive actions at the onset of the pandemic "provided crucial support to the economy and the functioning of financial markets, and helped protect lives and livelihoods" and that "Canada's strong history of prudent policymaking afforded it the policy space to respond forcefully to the crisis and avert much steeper declines in economic activity and employment."

We were there for Canadians. We will continue to support them through this pandemic.

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[Translation]

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while the Liberals are searching the globe for a vaccine supply, we could have produced one in our own backyard at Université Laval's Infectious Disease Research Centre. It is the only Canadian team that got an Ebola vaccine all the way to the approval stage. In a matter of weeks and with little to go on, they developed a prototype COVID-19 vaccine that was effective on animals.

Why did the federal government not prioritize vaccine research and development in Canada?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been investing in Canadian industry and Canadian scientists, not just during this pandemic, but for the past five years, because the previous Conservative government seriously under-invested in science. Since we are talking about Université Laval, we gave Dr. Kobinger a \$1-million federal grant for his research at the beginning of the pandemic through the novel coronavirus rapid research funding opportunity.

Oral Questions

We will continue to invest in Canadians. We will continue to keep our promises to Canadians.

• (1445)

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the fact is that the Prime Minister chose China to develop a vaccine instead of supporting Canadian companies. We ultimately lost the deal with China, we lost our intellectual property and the government wound up behind in its other negotiations. The Prime Minister had no issue helping his former federal MP Frank Baylis when the opportunity arose.

Was the Prime Minister surprised to be once again duped by China?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we did make investments around the country while we were signing contracts with international companies to secure vaccines for Canadians, and our plan is working. We will have more than six million vaccines by the end of March. We will get everyone vaccinated by this coming September.

We have also invested in Canada's manufacturing capacity, with companies like Medicago, in Quebec City; Glycovax, in Montreal; Variation Biotechnologies, in Ottawa; AbCellera Biologics, in Vancouver; Symvivo, in Burnaby; and VIDO-InterVac, in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government can keep insisting that Canada will receive six million doses by March 31, but it is already behind schedule. What is more, those six million doses are only a fraction of what we need. People are dying because of bad management and a vaccine supply shortage.

How many lives will be lost because of this government's incompetence?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in early December, members of the Conservative Party were saying that billions of people around the world were going to be vaccinated before a single Canadian received the vaccine. That is simply not true. On the contrary, we have seen that Canada was among the first two or three countries in the world to vaccinate its citizens with safe, approved and effective vaccines. We are there to deliver vaccines for Canadians. We are preparing to receive six million doses at the end of March, as we have been promising since November. We will have vaccinated everyone by the end of September.

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, at the beginning of the pandemic, the government had to act urgently.

That is why, in March, all parties allowed the government to take \$2.5 billion and invest it in vaccine research and development. The government gave \$1 million to the team at Université Laval, who used it to discover a potential vaccine. The team asked the government for an additional \$2 million to test the vaccine, one-thousandth of all the money invested in vaccine research.

Still, the government said no. Why is that?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we quickly realized early on in the pandemic that we needed to

invest in flexible domestic production and upgrade our facilities. That is exactly what we did.

In fact, we had already taken significant steps in that direction before the pandemic. In our first term, we gave Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada the means to invest in life sciences. Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have only accelerated our investments significantly by making large investments in production capacity, like Medicago and the National Research Council of Canada in Montreal.

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am guessing the Prime Minister read from the wrong notes because his answer had nothing to do with the question.

He refused to invest \$2 million in a potential made-in-Quebec vaccine. Had he invested in time, maybe Canada would not now be in 52nd place for vaccination rates. Had he invested in time, he would not have been forced to dip into vaccines for developing countries. Had he invested in time, maybe he would not have had to go begging India for vaccines. Had he invested in time, maybe some Quebecers would have been vaccinated in the past month.

Yesterday, the Government of Quebec once again did the federal government's job and invested \$2 million. Is the Prime Minister embarrassed about that?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the government, it is our responsibility to listen to the experts, to scientists and to the authorities who issue recommendations about the best investments to make. This is about taxpayers' money, and taxpayers expect us to make the best possible investments. We have plenty of excellent scientists in this country, but it is up to our experts to decide who is likely to deliver vaccines fastest and who will succeed. We listen to those experts, and we trust their advice when we decide how to invest taxpayers' money.

* * *

• (1450)

[English]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister does not even pretend to support Canadian energy, and his lacklustre approach is proof.

Fourteen states in the U.S. have taken their federal government to court over the Keystone XL cancellation. Democrats and Republicans alike have called for the decision to be reversed, but as for our own Prime Minister, he is silent. He has not even bothered to reach out to any of these possible allies.

Why is the Prime Minister always mailing it in, with zero engagement, zero energy and zero passion when it comes to protecting Canada's energy security?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, we have been consistent in our support for Canadian energy workers and Keystone XL. We continuously advocated for this project to our counterparts in the United States. In my recent phone call with the President, I raised Keystone XL again. We are disappointed, but we acknowledge the President's decision to fulfill his election campaign promise.

We continue to be the single largest supplier of energy to the United States, contributing to U.S. energy security and economic competitiveness. We will continue to work hand in hand with the new administration to ensure that we are creating good jobs for Canadians and opportunities for energy for all.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister failed miserably on Keystone XL. We expected a little more effort from him on Line 5. After all, there are 30,000 jobs in Ontario and Quebec at stake.

It would be nice if the Prime Minister passionately advocated for them, but it does not seem he is going to do that. The Prime Minister has made no calls to the governors of Michigan or Wisconsin, or to the cabinet secretaries responsible for these projects.

What is it? Is the Prime Minister going to actually pick up the phone, or is he going to continue this half-hearted do-nothing approach to securing Canadian energy jobs?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I understand well that the Conservative Party of Canada has a job to do of throwing random accusations at the government to see what will stick. It has been doing that for the past number of years while we have been busy at work standing up for Canadians against what was, at certain times, a very difficult American administration. We stood up for jobs on NAFTA; we stood up for aluminum and steel workers; we continue to stand up to protect our supply management; we continue to protect our cultural industries; and now we work hand in hand with a new administration that is serious about tackling climate change and creating good jobs across the continent.

We will continue to work with the Americans, and we will take no lessons from the Conservative Party on how to do that.

* * *

COVID-19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, just before the holiday season, the Liberals sent over 440,000 letters to CERB recipients warning them that they might have to repay up to \$14,000. This bad news came following the worst economic downturn in nearly a century. Talk about kicking someone when they are down.

For months, Conservatives have been raising the alarm about poor communications on eligibility for CERB, but the Liberals ignored the concerns of our constituents and instead told Canadians that the upcoming tax season would be “tough”. Well, no kidding.

How many self-employed Canadians are going bankrupt by the government's failure to face up to the problems with CERB repayments?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, here is the situation the Conservatives find themselves in: They say that the Liberals have invested too much in Canadians and been there too much to support workers, been there too much to support seniors and youth and that we have done far too much in terms of spending on Canadians to get them through the pandemic, but at the same time they say that we should have done more. They are completely incoherent.

On this side of the House we were guided by a very straightforward principle: to support Canadians as long as possible and as much as necessary, and that is exactly what we have been doing.

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the fact remains that the Prime Minister is leaving thousands and thousands of Canadians behind. For example, those who are not eligible for EI are being directed to apply for the new CERB, the CRB. However, technical issues at the Canada Revenue Agency are resulting in automatic rejection of their applications. A Winnipeg couple with a newborn baby is dealing with this disaster and we have heard the same from a single mother in Vaughan, Ontario. A year into this pandemic, Canadians are being made more and more aware of the Prime Minister's incompetence.

Can the Prime Minister provide a date as to when the EI and CRB issue will be resolved?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, from the very beginning of this pandemic, we faced unprecedented situations of hardship across the country, and this government stepped up with CERB supports for over eight million Canadians; with wage subsidies that made a huge difference to businesses across the country; with direct support for small businesses; with investments in shelters and homeless support programs; and with investments to fight gender-based violence, which is on the rise in this pandemic. We have been there to support students and to support seniors. We will continue to be there to support people, and yes, as the member points out, there is more to do, and we will do that, too.

Oral Questions

● (1455)

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, an APTN report showed us that the government knew that violence against the Sipekne'katik Nation was likely to happen before they launched their moderate livelihood fishery, and yet the Liberals did nothing. They allowed lives to be threatened, and only showed concern after these acts of terror took place. This is textbook systemic racism, and indigenous fishers do not need more symbolic gestures by the Liberals. They need leaders who will keep them safe.

Could the Prime Minister tell us why the government stood by when Mi'kmaq fishers needed him to step up?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, we have been working with indigenous leaders in Nova Scotia and indeed across the country on advancing their rights and recognizing them and moving forward on reconciliation and supporting them. We deeply, deeply condemn and regret the actions of a few in Nova Scotia, and that is why we are there to continue to support and move forward to build a better future for the Mi'kmaq and for everyone across the country.

* * *

HOUSING

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today our community is mourning another life lost to a fire that broke out in an encampment. The government's failure to uphold the right to affordable, accessible social housing is costing lives. In fact, a PBO report released last week noted that 9,000 indigenous households are in core housing need and that investments are critical. The federal government needs to step up and act now before more lives are lost.

Will the Prime Minister commit to making immediate and substantial new investments to address the housing crisis in Winnipeg before more people die?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the past years we have stepped up significantly with a \$40 billion national housing strategy, a housing first program to combat homelessness, supports for people living with addictions and investments in indigenous communities, including investments for urban indigenous people facing challenges. We continue to be there. We look forward to continuing to work on rapid housing initiatives, on local municipal initiatives to build more housing. We are there as a partner to support vulnerable Canadians through this difficult time and into the coming years.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a family physician, I know that gun violence is a public health issue that affects cities and small towns across Canada. Last month alone, there were three fatal gang shootings over three nights in Vancouver. We must end the gun violence and criminal activity. In 2019, we passed a bill expanding background checks for prospective gun buyers. Last year, we banned arms that were made for soldiers in

war. Will the Prime Minister tell the House what next steps the government is taking to end this violence and death?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Vancouver Centre for this important question and her many, many years of public health advocacy. While the Conservatives made promises to the gun lobby to weaken gun control, we are taking action to keep Canadians safe. Just yesterday, we introduced legislation that targets gun violence and criminal activity and addresses intimate partner violence, self-harm and online hate. As Canadian Doctors for Protection from Guns has declared, "This is a comprehensive bill that, if enacted, will save lives."

* * *

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Chris d'Entremont (West Nova, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it has been a year since I first raised concerns about the fisheries crisis in West Nova with the Minister of Fisheries, and we all know how bad events played out due to her inaction. Spring fishing is just around the corner, and although the minister says that she has been holding discussions with stakeholders, no official agreements have yet been made.

Will the Prime Minister ask the Minister of Fisheries to take on her responsibility and assure indigenous and non-indigenous fishers in Nova Scotia that they will not have to relive another season of insecurity, fear and violence?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for giving me the opportunity to highlight the extraordinary work that the Minister of Fisheries is doing in resolving this issue, moving forward on the moderate livelihood for Mi'kmaq fishers and ensuring the commercial fishers in Nova Scotia and Atlantic Canada continue to benefit from a strong future for their communities as well.

We know that this is a situation that has been in place for many, many decades, but it is time to recognize those rights that have been identified for many years but not been fulfilled. This is what we are working on now and hope to resolve soon.

Oral Questions

• (1500)

Mr. Richard Bragdon (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yet again we are given more dither, delay and denial from the Prime Minister. Canadians are realizing more each day that they have, yet again, walked to the far side of a disappointing decision by entrusting the Liberal government to deal with the challenges of these times.

The fact of the matter is that the government has demonstrated a pattern of neglect and lack of communication. The Atlantic fishing crisis is just one example of how the government has failed on numerous occasions to keep stakeholders informed and a part of the process.

When will the Prime Minister do his job and look out for the livelihoods of all Canadians, including those in the fishing sector?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the past five years, we have demonstrated what a government that is focused on Canadians can actually deliver for Canadians. Whether it was lifting a million people out of poverty or whether it was creating a million new jobs, these are the kinds of things we worked on.

Then the pandemic hit, and we had an opportunity and demonstrated the ability to be there for Canadians. We made a simple promise that we would support Canadians as much as it took, as long as it took, to get through this pandemic, and that is exactly what we are doing. We are doing it for fishers in the Atlantic. We are doing it for farmers on the Prairies. We are doing it for community members in the north. We are doing it for all Canadians.

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Mr. Speaker, things are not good on the west coast either. Canadians who depend on fisheries have been let down by the minister. Investments across all sectors are being shelved because of uncertainty and instability. The minister's rejection of viable, science-based proposals is keeping Canadians off the water. Even indigenous food, social and ceremonial harvest rates have been undermined by the minister's decisions and failures.

When will the Prime Minister direct his minister to start working with the fisheries sector to rebuild fisheries and restore access for all Canadians?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the grandson of a proud minister of fisheries and oceans who was in the House many years ago, I can tell the member that we continue, as a government, to be deeply committed to supporting fishers right across the country. Whether it is on the west coast or the east coast, the work that the Minister of Fisheries is doing with them is not just to solve the challenges of today but to ensure a vibrant fishery industry for decades to come.

Given the scientific advancements and various climate challenges we are facing, we know that there needs to be a strong future for our oceans. That is something we are working on hand in hand with communities right across the country.

Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the B.C. fishing community has expressed that if the Minister of Fisheries continues to ignore sound science, the impact on our angling families will be devastating. Her

own department's data shows that many rivers are showing strong returns, and 100% closure of the fishery is not required. From the recent Public Fishery Alliance open letter to the minister, "Failure to do so reinforces the common view that science-based fisheries management and your mandate letter from the Prime Minister are not guiding your actions."

Will the Prime Minister step in now and demand that the minister listen to the concerns of our B.C. fishing community: yes or no?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, science and evidence must always underpin the decisions taken by any government. That is something we knew and heard very clearly from Canadians when we took over from a Conservative government that used to put policy ahead of science every single time.

We base our decisions on science, and that is why we defer to the experts across the country in making recommendations on how to best preserve our fishers' livelihoods for the present and for decades to come. That is the work we will continue to do with indigenous fishers, commercial fishers and, indeed, with people from coast to coast.

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[Translation]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has no courage whatsoever when it comes to assault weapons.

As usual, he has completely abdicated his responsibilities by creating a voluntary buyback program, since that is what it really is: a voluntary program based on a voluntary ban on assault weapons. The government is totally relying on the good faith of gun owners.

How can the Prime Minister claim that assault weapons are banned if he leaves up to 200,000 of them in our communities?

• (1505)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me make this perfectly clear. Since last spring, it has been illegal to use, sell, purchase, transfer or bequeath military-style assault weapons anywhere in Canada. That is something that we promised to do, and we delivered.

We are now bringing in measures to provide fair compensation to anyone who purchased these weapons legally but can no longer use them because they are now prohibited from doing so.

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Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is not a ban. It is a suggestion.

People are still allowed to have assault rifles. The only thing that has changed is that now they are also allowed to sell those rifles to the government.

Again, we are not talking about hunting rifles or harassing hunters; we are talking about military-style rifles like the ones that were used in mass shootings such as the one at Polytechnique.

The Prime Minister promised the families and the survivors of Polytechnique that he would ban assault rifles. Does he realize that he is betraying them?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would not want the hon. member to mislead the House or Canadians.

If I may, I will be very clear.

It is now illegal to use these military-style assault rifles anywhere in Canada, including in a person's basement or backyard. It is a legal and formal ban. It is done. These weapons are banned.

We are now giving those who bought these weapons when they were legal the opportunity to sell them back to the government because now they are absolutely useless.

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OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals tried to throw more dust in our eyes this morning by announcing the imminent release not of the modernization of the two official languages, nor of the white paper that they proposed before the holidays, but of a document to protect the French language.

Meanwhile, our leader has been clear on the issue of the two official languages and protecting French across the country. He has even promised that when he becomes prime minister, he will introduce a bill in the first 100 days.

I have a simple question for the Prime Minister. I hope he will make an effort to answer it.

Can he tell us when we will see the bill to modernize the two official languages, as all organizations have been calling for for the past several months and years?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for several years we have been strengthening measures to protect both official languages across the country. We will continue to do so with the modernization of official languages.

I understand the Conservatives are suddenly trying to position themselves as defenders of the French language, so perhaps they could answer my question right now.

Will they undertake today to appoint only judges who can speak French to the Supreme Court, yes or no?

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, all this Prime Minister is giving us is rhetoric.

In the past few months, the report on the Governor General was published in English only; WE Charity, a unilingual anglophone organization, was given a contract that cost taxpayers \$1 billion; COVID Alert texts have been sent in English only in Quebec; and government workers are getting fed up because they do not feel respected when they want to speak French.

We do not want to hear any more of the Prime Minister's rhetoric. We have had enough. Practical suggestions have been made. We are waiting for the bill.

Can he give us a date rather than talking non-stop like he is doing?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think the question I asked the member opposite touched a nerve. Although the member may be trying to show that the Conservative Party is serious about wanting to protect French, he cannot demonstrate that he approves of something as basic as appointing bilingual judges to the Supreme Court of Canada, a promise we made as a government. The Conservatives cannot do that. Why do they not support bilingualism in Canada?

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Brian Mulroney was the last prime minister to modernize the Official Languages Act.

After five years of talk and no action, the Liberal government has yet to make a move. When will the Prime Minister step up and modernize the Official Languages Act?

● (1510)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are moving forward with our proposed modernization of official languages as promised.

Over the past five years, we have shown linguistic minority communities across the country that we are there to stand up for them and to protect French and English across the country. We will continue to do so.

This is another opportunity for the Leader of the Opposition to demonstrate his commitment by pledging to appoint only bilingual judges to the Supreme Court. He is mum on this issue, unfortunately. He cannot really protect the French language. He just wants to play petty politics.

* * *

WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY

Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Longueuil—Charles-LeMoine, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, earlier this week, I met with representatives of the Table de concertation des groupes de femmes de la Montérégie to discuss the enormous challenges faced by women and the organizations that have been providing services to them since the beginning of the pandemic.

Last week, the Minister for Women and Gender Equality announced a new way to support these vital organizations. Can the Prime Minister tell the House a bit about the feminist response and recovery fund?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Longueuil—Charles-LeMoine for her question and her work.

In order for Canada to recover from this pandemic, Canadian women need to be working and safe. That is why we announced our \$100-million feminist response and recovery fund to support regional and national efforts to end violence against women and girls and improve their economic status.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Chinese government is committing genocide against the Uighurs, violating an international treaty by threatening 300,000 Canadians living in Hong Kong, and committing other warlike acts in the Indo-Pacific region.

With that in mind, will the government take action? Will it at least refuse to send a representative to the opening of the Olympic Games in Beijing?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will continue to stand firm and resolved as we defend our principles and interests abroad.

Our Olympic athletes build bridges between peoples and nations, and they deserve our support when they participate in international competitions. We will continue to work with the Canadian Olympic and Paralympic committees and all sports organizations to support Canadian athletes between now and the next games. We will continue to stand up for our values and principles when it comes to defending human rights.

[*English*]

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, specifically on the issue of genocide, the Prime Minister's excuse is that he says there needs to be another on-the-ground investigation. However, if the Prime Minister could see a violent crime through his neighbour's window, I do not think he would just knock at the door and ask to be invited in to investigate. We already have satellite imagery, survivor testimony, numerous expert reports, recognition by the Biden administration, the unanimous statement of the all-party Subcommittee on International Human Rights, and the public support of numerous Liberal MPs.

The victims have spoken. The Prime Minister should believe them. Why is there continuing denial?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will always advocate and stand up for human rights around the world. Canada is deeply concerned by reports of human rights violations in China against the Uighurs and other ethnic minorities.

In October, Canada, along with 39 other countries of the UN, expressed its grave concerns regarding the situation in Xinjiang. This is why we have repeatedly called for an international investigation in response to allegations of genocide.

• (1515)

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Prime Minister said that the word "geno-

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cide" was a loaded term. Two secretaries of state knew that and they said it anyway. Irwin Cotler knew that and he said it anyway. Many Liberal MPs know that and say it anyway.

A 105-page report filed with the U.K. court describes in detail a campaign of enslavement, torture, rape, enforced sterilization and persecution. If that is not a genocide, what more evidence does the Prime Minister need?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said, Canada is deeply concerned by reports of human rights violations in China against the Uighurs and other ethnic minorities. We have continued to work with the international community on pushing for better answers, on following up on these reports and on making determinations around the seriousness of these acts.

We recognize that we have many partners who have already identified this as a genocide. We will continue to work with them and others as we move forward in the right way for Canadians and, indeed, for people around the world.

* * *

HEALTH

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government has stepped up and has taken concrete action to help support and protect Canadians since the very beginning of this pandemic. Canadians are worried about the second wave and the new variants and want to see their loved ones vaccinated as soon as possible.

Could the Prime Minister provide an update to the House on our vaccination procurement efforts?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week, I was happy to announce that we were now on track to receive 84 million doses of Pfizer and Moderna by the end of September, enough doses to ensure that every Canadian who wants to get vaccinated has the opportunity to do so.

This week, we are on schedule to receive our single largest Pfizer shipment to date. We promised a total of six million vaccines by the end of March. That is exactly what we will be delivering.

*Points of Order***GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS**

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the workers at CESSCO, a company in Edmonton Strathcona, have been locked out by their employer since June. Instead of negotiating, that same employer was able to access federal dollars through the wage subsidy program to hire scab labour. Last week, those workers were locked out in -40 weather while scabs collected their paycheques, paid for by the government. I wrote to the Minister of Finance over a month ago and I have heard nothing back.

When will the Liberals fix the wage subsidy program to ensure workers are not the ones left out in the cold?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, from the very beginning we knew that we needed to step up to be there for Canadians and that is exactly what we did. Within weeks we delivered the CERB and a few weeks later the wage subsidy program to support Canadians right across the country. We did that because all parties worked together to get this legislation through in exceptional circumstances and to be there for Canadians who needed it.

Since that moment, we have continued to refine and improve the system to make sure that no Canadians are falling through the cracks. We continue to know that there are many Canadians across the country who continue to need support. We will be there for them. As I said from the beginning, we will be there for Canadians as long as it takes, whatever it takes.

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[Translation]

POINTS OF ORDER

INTERPRETATION SERVICES IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, following consultation with the parties, I believe you will find unanimous consent of the House for the following motion:

That, given that working conditions of interpreters have deteriorated since the beginning of the pandemic affecting their ability to provide quality service in both official languages, a service that is essential to the work of parliamentarians, the House express its concern for the health and safety of all its interpreters and urges Public Services and Procurement Canada and the House Administration to take a precautionary approach to setting levels of exposure to the potentially harmful audio delivered by video conferencing platforms like ZOOM.

The Speaker: 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)

MARS 2020 MISSION

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, there have been consultations among the parties, and I believe if you seek it, you would find unanimous consent to adopt the following motion:

That the House congratulate Montreal engineer Farah Alibay, who will be coordinating the operations of the helicopter Ingenuity landing on Mars tomorrow as

part of the “Perseverance” Mars 2020 mission to find traces of microbial life, and wish her the best of luck in this historic adventure.

• (1520)

The Speaker: 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. Martin Champoux: Mr. Speaker, there have been consultations among the parties, and I believe if you seek it, you would find unanimous consent to adopt the following motion: That the House recognize that our news media and our hard-working journalists help strengthen democratic debate; that it recognize that web giants receive an unequal share of advertising revenue from sharing the work of our content creators on the various digital platforms; and that it call on the government to take urgent action and implement a regulatory framework that would fairly and equitably allocate the advertising revenue generated from content and intellectual property created by Quebec and Canadian media.

The Speaker: 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.

Some hon. members: Nay.

[English]

STATEMENT BY A MEMBER

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I brought up this point of order right after the S. O. 31 made by the member for Brampton Centre. At that point you indicated it was not the appropriate time. Therefore, I would like to raise that point of order again and ask that the S. O. 31 statement be stricken from the records, because it impinged on the reputation of many of our members and it was rather inflammatory.

I know this is a place of debate, but the statement surpassed any acceptable decorum in a House like this. It directly affected the morale of many members and, frankly, it is language that should never be accepted in the House.

You may not need to rule on it now, Mr. Speaker, but I would like to ask that you take it under consideration and come back to the House. I ask that you do strike from the record the S. O. 31 that was delivered by the member for Brampton Centre.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is not the part of the member to decide what is right or what is wrong. You have the right to say that what someone is saying is not correct. This is your power, not the power of each and every member individually.

[*Translation*]

Today, we heard a member give an S. O. 31 statement, which is an opportunity for a member to rise for one minute to express an opinion on a specific subject. There is absolutely nothing in the Standing Orders that says that a member cannot make accusations or say things that are not in keeping with government policy. We are free to speak our minds, and we need to preserve that right.

In my opinion, the parliamentary secretary's comments are unjustified. We recognize that the member who gave the S. O. 31 statement made some harsh comments, but that is his right. If, unfortunately, he went too far, it was your duty to call him to order, Mr. Speaker. It is not up to any other member to do that, or else no one would ever be able to speak in the House.

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would encourage you to take the opportunity to reflect on this, in particular some of the comments raised by the opposition House leader. There are indeed rules that are set out with regard to S. O. 31s. I know that at times some of those rules have been stretched. Perhaps this is an opportunity for you to go back, reflect on this and come back with a ruling to the House.

In regard to the member's comment about other members not having the ability to raise these points of order, that is absolutely false. It is actually the responsibility of members, when they believe that a procedural error has been made, to call that to the attention of the Chair. That is exactly what we saw happen today.

● (1525)

The Speaker: I want to thank the hon. members for their interventions. I will look into it and take this under advisement and return to the chamber if necessary.

[*Translation*]

It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill, Health; the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, Foreign Affairs; the hon. member for Bow River, Veterans Affairs.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

CANADA LABOUR CODE

The House resumed from February 4 consideration of the motion that Bill C-220, An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code (compassionate care leave), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: It being 3:25 p.m., pursuant to an order made on Monday, January 25, the House will now proceed to the taking of

Private Members' Business

the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-220, under Private Members' Business.

[*Translation*]

Call in the members.

● (1605)

[*English*]

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

(*Division No. 51*)

YEAS

Members

Abouttaif	Aitchison
Albas	Alghabra
Alleslev	Allison
Amos	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arnold	Arseneault
Arya	Ashton
Atwin	Bachrach
Badawey	Bagnell
Bains	Baker
Baldinelli	Barlow
Barrett	Barsalou-Duval
Battiste	Beaulieu
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	Benzen
Bergen	Bergeron
Berthold	Bérubé
Bessette	Bezan
Bibeau	Bittle
Blaikie	Blair
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)	Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Block	Blois
Boudrias	Boulerice
Bragdon	Brassard
Bratina	Brière
Brunelle-Duceppe	Cannings
Carr	Carrie
Casey	Chabot
Chagger	Champagne
Champoux	Charbonneau
Chen	Chiu
Chong	Collins
Cooper	Cormier
Cumming	Dabrusin
Dalton	Damoff
Dancho	Davidson
Davies	DeBellefeuille
Deltell	d'Entremont
Desbiens	Desilets
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Diotte	Doherty
Dong	Dowdall
Dreeschen	Drouin
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Duvall	Dzerowicz
Easter	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Ellis
Epp	Erskine-Smith
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencer)
Fast	Fergus
Fillmore	Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock)
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Finnigan
Fisher	Fonseca

Private Members' Business

Fortier	Fortin	Saini	Sajjan
Fragiskatos	Fraser	Saks	Samson
Freeland	Fry	Sangha	Sarai
Gallant	Garneau	Saroya	Savard-Tremblay
Garrison	Gaudreau	Scarpaleggia	Schieffe
Gazan	Genuis	Schmale	Schulte
Gerretsen	Gill	Seeback	Serré
Gladu	Godin	Sgro	Shanahan
Gould	Gourde	Sheehan	Shields
Gray	Green	Shin	Shiple
Guilbeault	Hajdu	Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Hallan	Harder	Simard	Simms
Hardie	Harris	Singh	Sloan
Hoback	Holland	Sorbara	Soroka
Housefather	Hughes	Spengemann	Stanton
Hussen	Hutchings	Steinley	Ste-Marie
Iacono	Ien	Strahl	Stubbs
Jaczek	Jansen	Sweet	Tabbara
Jeneroux	Johns	Tassi	Thériault
Joly	Jordan	Therrien	Tochor
Jowhari	Julian	Trudeau	Trudel
Kelloway	Kelly	Turnbull	Uppal
Kent	Khalid	Van Bynen	van Koeverden
Khera	Kitchen	Van Popta	Vandal
Kmiec	Koutrakis	Vandenbeld	Vaughan
Kram	Kurek	Vecchio	Vidal
Kusie	Kusmierczyk	Viersen	Vignola
Kwan	Lake	Virani	Vis
Lalonde	Lambropoulos	Wagantall	Warkentin
Lametti	Lamoureux	Waugh	Webber
Larouche	Lattanzio	Weiler	Wilkinson
Lauzon	Lawrence	Williamson	Wilson-Raybould
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier	Wong	Yip
Lehoux	Lemire	Young	Yurdiga
Lewis (Essex)	Liepert	Zahid	Zann
Lightbound	Lloyd	Zimmer	Zuberi — 328
Lobb	Long		
Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)		
Lukiwski	MacAulay (Cardigan)		
MacGregor	MacKenzie		
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maguire		
Maloney	Manly	Nil	
Martel	Martinez Ferrada		
Masse	Mathysen		
May (Cambridge)	May (Saachich—Gulf Islands)		
Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)	Nil	
McColeman	McCrimmon		
McDonald	McGuinty		
McKay	McKenna		
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLean		
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	McLeod (Northwest Territories)		
McPherson	Melillo		
Mendès	Mendicino		
Michaud	Miller		
Monsef	Moore		
Morantz	Morrison		
Morrissey	Motz		
Murray	Nater		
Ng	O'Connell		
Oliphant	O'Regan		
O'Toole	Patzer		
Paul-Hus	Pauzé		
Perron	Petitpas Taylor		
Plamondon	Poilievre		
Powlowski	Qaqqaq		
Qualtrough	Ratansi		
Rayes	Redekopp		
Regan	Reid		
Rempel Garner	Richards		
Robillard	Rodriguez		
Rogers	Romanado		
Rood	Ruff		
Sahota (Calgary Skyview)	Sahota (Brampton North)		

NAYS

PAIRED

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities.

(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

* * *

● (1610)

SAFE AND REGULATED SPORTS BETTING ACT

The House resumed from February 5 consideration of the motion that Bill C-218, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (sports betting), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Pursuant to order made on Monday, January 25, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-218.

● (1655)

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

*Private Members' Business**(Division No. 52)*

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif	Aitchison
Albas	Alghabra
Alleslev	Allison
Amos	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arnold	Arseneault
Arya	Ashton
Atwin	Bachrach
Badawey	Bagnell
Bains	Baker
Baldinelli	Barlow
Barrett	Barsalou-Duval
Battiste	Beaulieu
Bendayan	Bennett
Benzen	Bergen
Bergeron	Berthold
Bérubé	Bessette
Bezan	Bibeau
Bittle	Blaikie
Blair	Blanchet
Blanchette-Joncas	Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)	Blois
Boudrias	Boulerice
Bragdon	Brassard
Bratina	Brière
Brunelle-Duceppe	Cannings
Carr	Carrie
Casey	Chabot
Chagger	Champagne
Champoux	Chen
Collins	Cooper
Cormier	Cumming
Dabrusin	Dalton
Damoff	Dancho
Davidson	Davies
DeBellefeuille	Deltell
d'Entremont	Desbiens
Desilets	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Diotte
Doherty	Dong
Dowdall	Dreeshen
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Duval
Dzerowicz	Easter
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Ellis	Epp
Erskine-Smith	Fast
Fergus	Fillmore
Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock)	Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Finnigan	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fortin	Fragiskatos
Fraser	Freeland
Fry	Garneau
Garrison	Gaudreau
Gazan	Gerretsen
Gill	Gladu
Godin	Gould
Gourde	Gray
Green	Guilbeault
Hajdu	Hallan
Harder	Hardie
Harris	Hoback
Holland	Housefather
Hughes	Hussen
Hutchings	Iacono
Ien	Jaczek

Jeneroux	Johns
Joly	Jordan
Jowhari	Julian
Kelloway	Kelly
Kent	Khalid
Khera	Kitchen
Kmiec	Koutrakis
Kram	Kurek
Kusie	Kusmierczyk
Kwan	Lake
Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Larouche	Lattanzio
Lauzon	LeBlanc
Lebouthillier	Lehoux
Lemire	Lewis (Essex)
Liepert	Lightbound
Lloyd	Lobb
Long	Longfield
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	Lukiwski
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacGregor
MacKenzie	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maguire	Maloney
Manly	Martinez Ferrada
Masse	Mathysen
May (Cambridge)	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McCrimmon	McDonald
McGuinty	McKay
McKenna	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLean	McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
McLeod (Northwest Territories)	McPherson
Melillo	Medicino
Michaud	Miller
Monsef	Moore
Morantz	Morrison
Morrissey	Motz
Murray	Nater
Ng	O'Connell
Oliphant	O'Regan
Patzer	Paul-Hus
Pauzé	Perron
Petitpas Taylor	Plamondon
Poilievre	Powlowski
Qaqqaq	Qualtrough
Ratansi	Rayes
Redekopp	Regan
Reid	Rempel Garner
Robillard	Rodriguez
Rogers	Romanado
Rood	Ruff
Sahota (Calgary Skyview)	Sahota (Brampton North)
Saini	Sajjan
Saks	Samson
Sangha	Sarai
Saroya	Savard-Tremblay
Scarpaleggia	Scheer
Schiefke	Schmale
Serré	Sgro
Shanahan	Sheehan
Shields	Shin
Shiple	Sidhu (Brampton East)
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Simard
Simms	Singh
Sorbara	Soroka
Spengemann	Stanton
Steinley	Ste-Marie
Stubbs	Sweet
Tabbara	Tassi
Thériault	Therrien
Tochor	Trudeau
Trudel	Turnbull
Uppal	van Koeverden

Private Members' Business

Van Popta
Vandenbeld
Vidal
Virani
Warkentin
Webber
Wilkinson
Wilson-Raybould
Young
Zahid
Zuberi— 303

Vandal
Vecchio
Vignola
Vis
Waugh
Weiler
Williamson
Yip
Yurdiga
Zann

Diotte
Dowdall
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Fast
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Genius
Godin
Gray
Harder
Jansen
Kelly
Kitchen
Kram
Lake
Lehoux
Liepert
Lobb
MacKenzie
Mazier
McColeman
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Moore
Morrison
Nater
Paul-Hus
Raves
Reid
Richards
Ruff
Saroya
Schmale
Shields
Shipley
Soroka
Steinley
Stubbs
Tochor
Van Popta
Vidal
Vis
Warkentin
Webber
Wong
Zimmer— 115

Doherty
Dreeshen
Epp
Falk (Provencher)
Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock)
Gallant
Gladu
Gourde
Hallan
Hoback
Jeneroux
Kent
Kmiec
Kurek
Lawrence
Lewis (Essex)
Lloyd
Lukiwski
Maguire
McCauley (Edmonton West)
McLean
Melillo
Morantz
Motz
Patzner
Poilievre
Redekopp
Rempel Garner
Rood
Sahota (Calgary Skyview)
Scheer
Seeback
Shin
Sloan
Stanton
Strahl
Sweet
Uppal
Vecchio
Viensen
Wagantall
Waugh
Williamson
Yurdiga

NAYS

Members

Block
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Genius
Lawrence
Seeback
Strahl
Wagantall
Zimmer— 15

Chong
Falk (Provencher)
Jansen
McColeman
Sloan
Vaughan
Wong

PAIRED

Nil

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee.)

* * *

EXPROPRIATION ACT

The House resumed from February 16 consideration of the motion that Bill C-222, An Act to amend the Expropriation Act (protection of private property), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Pursuant to an order made Monday, January 25, the House will now proceed to the taking of deferred recorded division on the motion on second reading stage of Bill C-222, under Private Members' Business.

• (1735)

[Translation]

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

(Division No. 53)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif
Albas
Allison
Baldinelli
Barrett
Bergen
Bezan
Block
Brassard
Chiu
Cumming
Dancho
Deltell

Aitchison
Alleslev
Arnold
Barlow
Benzen
Berthold
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Bragdon
Carrie
Cooper
Dalton
Davidson
d'Entremont

Alghabra
Anand
Arseneault
Ashton
Bachrach
Bagnell
Baker
Battiste
Beech
Bennett
Bérubé
Bibeau
Blair
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Boudrias
Bratina
Brunelle-Duceppe
Carr
Chabot
Champagne
Charbonneau
Collins
Dabrusin
Davies

NAYS

Members

Amos
Anandasangaree
Arya
Atwin
Badawey
Bains
Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu
Bendayan
Bergeron
Bessette
Bittle
Blanchette-Joncas
Blois
Boulerice
Brière
Cannings
Casey
Chagger
Champoux
Chen
Cormier
Damoff
Desbiens

Desilets
 Dhillon
 Drouin
 Duclos
 Duvall
 Easter
 El-Khoury
 Erskine-Smith
 Fillmore
 Fisher
 Fortier
 Fragiskatos
 Freeland
 Garneau
 Gaudreau
 Gerretsen
 Gould
 Guilbeault
 Hardie
 Holland
 Hughes
 Hutchings
 Ien
 Johns
 Jordan
 Julian
 Khalid
 Koutrakis
 Kwan
 Lambropoulos
 Lamoureux
 Lattanzio
 LeBlanc
 Lemire
 Long
 Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
 MacGregor
 Maloney
 Martinez Ferrada
 Mathysen
 May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
 McDonald
 McKay
 McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
 Mendicino
 Miller
 Morrissey
 Ng
 O'Regan
 Perron
 Plamondon
 Qaqqaq
 Ratansi
 Robillard
 Rogers
 Sahota (Brampton North)
 Sajjan
 Samson
 Sarai
 Scarpaleggia
 Schulte
 Sgro
 Sheehan
 Sidhu (Brampton South)
 Simms
 Spengemann
 Tabbara
 Thériault
 Trudeau
 Turnbull
 van Koeverden
 Vandenbeld
 Vignola

Dhaliwal
 Dong
 Dubourg
 Duguid
 Dzerowicz
 Ehsassi
 Ellis
 Fergus
 Finnigan
 Fonseca
 Fortin
 Fraser
 Fry
 Garrison
 Gazan
 Gill
 Green
 Hajdu
 Harris
 Housefather
 Hussien
 Iacono
 Jaczek
 Joly
 Jowhari
 Kelloway
 Khera
 Kusmierczyk
 Lalonde
 Lametti
 Larouche
 Lauzon
 Lebouthillier
 Lightbound
 Longfield
 MacAulay (Cardigan)
 MacKinnon (Gatineau)
 Manly
 Masse
 May (Cambridge)
 McCrimmon
 McGuinty
 McKenna
 McLeod (Northwest Territories)
 Michaud
 Monsef
 Murray
 O'Connell
 Pauzé
 Petitpas Taylor
 Powlowski
 Qualtrough
 Regan
 Rodriguez
 Romanado
 Saini
 Saks
 Sangha
 Savard-Tremblay
 Schiefke
 Serré
 Shanahan
 Sidhu (Brampton East)
 Simard
 Sorbara
 Ste-Marie
 Tassi
 Therrien
 Trudel
 Van Bynen
 Vandal
 Vaughan
 Virani

Private Members' Business

Weiler
 Wilson-Raybould
 Young
 Zann
 Wilkinson
 Yip
 Zahid
 Zuberi— 202

PAIRED

Nil

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I declare the motion lost.

[*English*]

I wish to inform the House that because of the deferred recorded divisions, Government Orders will be extended by 90 minutes.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order, as a result of the vote we just had in the House on the second reading of Bill C-218, an act to amend the Criminal Code with regard to sports betting. The government is firmly in favour of single sports betting. This is why on November 26 of last year we introduced Bill C-13, an act to amend the Criminal Code with regard to single event sport betting. We also supported unanimous consent motions to pass Bill C-13 at all stages in December. We were disappointed it did not pass.

We took action to decriminalize single event sport betting in Canada so these activities take place in a safe and regulated environment, while supporting good well-paying jobs for Canadians. We also proposed—

An hon. member: Debate. Debate.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member has the right to get to his point.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, the point of order has been discussed with the opposition House leader, who I see nodding his head, so if I could continue, I will be no more than 30 to 45 seconds.

We also proposed to engage the provinces, territories, indigenous communities and organizations that have expressed an interest in discussing how gambling is regulated. We believe Bill C-13 is substantively different from Bill C-218, as it includes a horse racing provision and achieves its objectives through different means.

Having said that, the government acknowledges that Bill C-218 came to a vote first and that the horse racing amendments can be moved at committee. Given our strong support for single sport betting, we have therefore decided that, in the interest of moving forward with the legislation in the most efficient manner possible, the government will now focus its energy on supporting Bill C-218 and seek to make the important amendments regarding the horse racing provision at committee.

Therefore, if you seek it, I hope you will find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move that notwithstanding any Standing Order, special order or usual practice of the House, the order for second reading in reference to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights of Bill C-13, an act to amend the Criminal Code (single event sport betting), standing in the name of the Minister of Justice, be discharged and that the bill be withdrawn from the Order Paper.

Routine Proceedings

• (1740)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): All those opposed to the hon. member moving the motion will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present, in both official languages, two reports from the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group.

The first is in relation to the National Governors Association's winter meeting, held in Washington, D.C., U.S.A., from February 7 to 10, 2020.

The second concerns the Great Lakes Day and Great Lakes Congressional Breakfast, held in Washington, D.C., U.S.A., from March 3 to 5, 2020.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I believe there may have been some confusion with the last unanimous consent motion I put forward. I ask your permission to rehear it from me, although perhaps you need unanimous consent for this. You might find unanimous consent for the motion this time.

The Speaker: Perhaps a more concise version might help.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, if you seek it, I believe that you will find unanimous consent for the following motion: That notwithstanding any Standing Order, special order or usual practice of the House, the order for second reading and reference to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights of Bill C-13, an act to amend the Criminal Code (single event sport betting), standing in the name of the Minister of Justice, be discharged and the bill be withdrawn from the Order Paper.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Maybe you could provide some clarification. I am not too sure, but for someone to say no, do they not have to appear on the monitor? On both occasions the member was not on the monitor.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: One moment, if I may. In the chamber, when someone says no, we do not have to know who that person is. We will apply the same rule to this. It is fine as long as we can hear someone say they are not in favour. I am afraid we do not have unanimous consent.

An hon. member: That is a good rule.

The Speaker: Thank you. I appreciate the comment.

Mr. John Williamson: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am not equipped with a headset, so I will be brief. If I need to, I will come back to this tomorrow.

It seems out of line for the government to come back a second time on the same issue. In fact, earlier this week an opposition member tried that, and the Chair ruled it out of order because it was the same issue. I am not sure what allows the government to come back a second time when the House has already spoken. It is just for clarification.

• (1745)

The Speaker: There was some confusion because of the length of it. There seemed to be some confusion in the chamber as well, but it was clarified. That was the logic behind allowing the hon. member to present again.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, on that point of order, I want to make it clear that I did suggest you might need to get unanimous consent to allow me to bring it forward a second time.

The Speaker: I accept full blame for that.

* * *

RESPECTING FAMILIES OF MURDERED AND BRUTALIZED PERSONS ACT

Mr. Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-267, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (increasing the period of parole ineligibility).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table my first private member's bill in the House. This is the same private member's bill introduced by my colleague, the member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, during previous Parliaments. I am proud to take up this legislation and have him second it.

The legislation would allow courts the discretion to increase parole ineligibility from 25 years up to a maximum of 40 years for the most heinous and horrific crimes in our country. This bill is not about sentencing, but rather about protecting victims' families. This bill aims to limit the exposure of victims' families to the people who abducted, sexually assaulted and murdered their loved ones during automatic parole hearings after 25 years of incarceration and every two years after, despite the fact that they are likely never to be granted parole. Many of these criminals have used their parole hearings as a platform to revictimize the families by recounting their crimes in grotesque detail, seeking to terrorize the families.

This bill has enjoyed support from MPs in other parties in past Parliaments, and I look forward to working with all parties to get this compassionate bill for victims' families across the finish line this time.

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

PETITIONS

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to present a petition on behalf of over 700 Canadians who recognize that Falun Gong practitioners have been unfairly targeted and persecuted by the Communist Party of China. The petitioners recognize that for over 21 years Falun Gong practitioners have been political prisoners, have been tortured and, horrifically, have had their organs harvested for sale on the open market. They also recognize the fact that Parliament passed, back in 2018, the Justice for Victims of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act, called the Magnitsky law.

They are calling on the government to sanction 14 individuals in China, the primary people carrying out the illegal operations of organ harvesting and profiting from doing just that. It is about time that we use the Magnitsky act to target, name and shame these Chinese officials and make sure they are not using Canada as a safe haven for travel and their investments and are not bringing their families to Canada, given that they are carrying out these horrific acts against peaceful practitioners of Falun Gong.

• (1750)

FIREARMS

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I have the honour to present two petitions.

The first petition I am presenting today seeks to support Canadian firearms owners and their health and safety. The petitioners are calling for the recognition that Canada is the only G7 nation that does not allow the use of sound moderators for hunting, sport shooting or noise pollution reduction. They are calling on the government to allow legal firearms owners to purchase and use sound moderators for all legal hunting and sport shooting activities.

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition I present today is on behalf of Canadians from across the country. These Canadians are looking for the government to crack down on the practice of forced organ harvesting that is happening around the world and to prevent Canadians from travelling abroad to purchase organs on the black market.

I look forward to the passage of Bill S-204 in the Senate and its rapid passage in this place as well.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to be presenting three petitions in the House today.

The first petition calls on the House to recognize that Uighurs and other Turkic Muslims in China have been and are being subject to an ongoing genocide. This petition has the support of most members of the House and support from some members in all parties.

In addition to that call, the petition asks the government to impose Magnitsky sanctions on those responsible for gross violations of fundamental human rights in East Turkestan to end a sense of impunity for perpetrators of these terrible crimes.

Routine Proceedings

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is in support of Bill S-204, which is currently before the Senate. This bill deals with a human rights issue in China and elsewhere as well: forced organ harvesting and trafficking.

This bill would make it a criminal offence for a Canadian to go abroad to receive an organ for which there has not been consent. It would also create a mechanism by which a person could be deemed inadmissible to Canada if they had been involved in forced organ harvesting and trafficking.

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the third and final petition raises concerns about some of the provisions in Bill C-7. In particular, it echoes the concerns of people in the disability community that Bill C-7 increases vulnerability and focuses on pushing people who are disabled toward death instead of providing them with the means and support to live their lives. The petition also raises concerns about same-day death: the possibility that someone could request and receive euthanasia on the same day as a result of the elimination of the 10-day reflection period. The petitioners want to see that reflection period left in place.

I commend all three of these petitions to the consideration of members.

CANADIAN MEDICAL PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATION

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table e-petition 2890 today, signed by citizens across Canada.

The petitioners point out that the Canadian Medical Protective Association, the CMPA, was incorporated by an act of Parliament in 1913 and that Canada remains the only country in the world with a medical protective association. This association is subsidized by taxpayer dollars and has \$5.4 billion in assets that increase annually. They add that the CMPA uses what has been described by judges as scorched-earth tactics to defend doctors accused of medical errors and that only 2% cases are settled in favour of patients.

The petitioners therefore ask that the government conduct a forensic examination of the CMPA and that the government defund the CMPA and repeal the act that incorporated it.

• (1755)

OPIOIDS

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise virtually today to present two petitions submitted by mothers in my riding of South Surrey—White Rock whose families have been affected by opioid addiction.

S. O. 52

Linda tragically lost her beautiful son Justin to a fentanyl overdose. Brenda worries for her son who has struggled with addiction in the past. As a mother of four, I can understand the pain these families have endured. My heart goes out to Linda, Brenda and their families, and to all Canadians affected by drug addiction.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would also like to present a petition calling on the Liberal government to apply Magnitsky sanctions against 14 officials from the Chinese Communist Party for various and serious human rights violations, including the persecution of the Falun Gong.

As a lawyer and former administrative law judge on the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal, I have been a lifelong advocate for human rights at home and abroad. This is a matter that has to be taken seriously.

NATURAL HEALTH PRODUCTS

Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to table this petition, initiated and signed by my constituents in Nanaimo—Ladysmith.

The petitioners note that natural time-tested immune system essentials and holistic health practices do not receive enough attention for their role in preventive health care.

The petitioners request that the Government of Canada educate and empower Canadians on holistic approaches to optimize and maintain their natural immunity and well-being; cover practices for health sustainability and wellness care under the Canada Health Act, including chiropractic care, massage therapy, acupuncture and naturopathic medicines; and support, promote and enhance Canadians' access to holistic health services and natural products.

FARMERS' PROTESTS IN INDIA

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I table my third petition from constituents in Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon who are concerned for the safety of Indian farmers who are protesting changes affecting their agriculturally dependent livelihoods.

The petitioners call on the federal government to condemn the use of violence and reaffirm Canada's international support for the fundamental freedoms of expression and assembly. Without farmers, we do not have food; we do not have a future.

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition respecting forced organ harvesting.

The petitioners wish to draw to the attention of this place the lack of a legal prohibition for Canadians travelling abroad. They call on Parliament to pass Bill C-350 and Bill S-240.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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 ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all notices of motions for the production of papers be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY DEBATE

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to request an emergency debate on the growing crisis of housing affordability across Canada.

An estimated 1.8 million Canadian households spend more than the affordability threshold of 30% of their income on rent, and 80% of those households spend more than 50%. An estimated 2.4 million Canadian households experienced core housing needs in 2020. Hundreds of thousands are on the verge of becoming homeless and joining the hundreds of thousands of Canadians who are already homeless.

The affordable housing crisis in Canada is a result of structural problems that cannot be fixed by spending taxpayers' dollars alone. It requires regulation and an all-of-government approach.

Canadian real estate was identified as a major vehicle for money laundering and as a tax haven for the world's ultra-wealthy. This has driven up the price of real estate in major cities, and the ripple effect is part of the cause of an affordability crisis across the country. At the same time, real estate investment trusts, which receive a massive tax exemption, and other big investors are using predatory practices, raising rents by huge amounts with little notice or using "renovictions" to empty buildings and jack up rents. Some investors even leave units empty, because empty units increase demand and rental prices, and real estate values continue to rise regardless.

Low-wage workers, people who lost work due to COVID-19 restrictions and people living on fixed incomes are finding themselves in a precarious situation in communities across Canada. Those evicted are facing substantial rent increases, have serious problems finding reasonable rents and face potential homelessness.

Last week, Vancouver City Council passed a motion to communicate to the federal government its concerns about the impact that real estate investment trusts and big investors are having on the human right to housing, the commodification of housing, housing security and affordability for Vancouver residents. It intends to ask the government to protect and invest in existing rental stock for acquisition by non-profits and co-operatives. Like many communities, Vancouver is in the midst of an affordable housing emergency.

Existing government programs are oversubscribed and insufficient to meet demands. Investment companies are flipping rental units and removing them from affordable housing stock faster than new subsidized units can be built.

This Parliament needs to address housing affordability and homelessness as twin emergency national crises. Holding an emergency debate will allow members of the House to discuss the crisis in their communities and assist in identifying options for lasting solutions to the housing affordability crisis. Those solutions might include such things as ensuring that the loopholes that allow residential real estate to be used for money laundering and tax evasion are properly closed, creating national standards for rental and vacancy controls, instituting empty-home taxes on buildings and units left vacant by foreign and corporate residential property owners, regulation of foreign investment in residential real estate and removing tax exemptions for real estate investment trusts.

It is unreasonable to ask Canadians to pour billions of tax dollars into affordable housing while foreign investors and corporate interests are able to continue using predatory practices to destroy the Canadian housing market. The housing policy of the Government of Canada recognizes that housing is a fundamental human right as defined by international human rights law. This Parliament must do more to protect these rights.

• (1800)

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I want to thank the hon. member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith for his intervention. However, I am not satisfied that his request meets the requirements of the Standing Orders at this time.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES ACT

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice, Lib.) moved that Bill C-15, An Act respecting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to the second reading debate on Bill C-15, an act respecting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Before I get into the substance of the bill, I would like to remind the House that it has taken decades of work to get to where we are today.

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Negotiations and discussions have been taking place at the United Nations for over 20 years. Many Canadian indigenous leaders, speaking on behalf of the indigenous people of the world, have been strong advocates for a human rights instrument that would take into account the unique experiences and historical situations of the world's indigenous peoples.

I must acknowledge the tremendous efforts of parliamentarians and indigenous leaders in Canada who have proposed legislative frameworks for the implementation of the declaration since it was adopted by the United Nations in 2007.

I especially want to recognize the efforts of our former colleague Romeo Saganash, who introduced private member's Bill C-262 in the last Parliament. This bill was read and studied in quite some detail. His efforts brought us to this point and remind us of the constructive discussions that contributed to the drafting and presentation of Bill C-15. I thank Mr. Saganash.

Bill C-15 and our endorsement of the UN declaration are intended to renew and strengthen the relationship between the Crown and indigenous peoples, a relationship based on recognition, rights, respect, co-operation, partnership and reconciliation.

• (1805)

[*English*]

It is also part of a broader work to make progress together on our shared priorities for upholding human rights, affirming self-determination, closing socio-economic gaps, combatting discrimination and eliminating systemic barriers facing first nations, Inuit and Métis peoples.

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is an international human rights instrument that affirms the rights that constitute the minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of indigenous peoples. It includes 46 articles that affirm a broad range of collective and individual rights, including rights related to self-determination and self-government; equality and non-discrimination; culture, language and identity; lands, territories and resources; and treaty rights, among others.

The declaration also recognizes that the situation of indigenous peoples varies from region to region and country to country. As such, it provides flexibility to ensure rights are recognized, protected and implemented in a manner that reflects the unique circumstances of indigenous peoples across Canada. This means that implementation of the rights it describes must respond to the specific and unique circumstances in Canada.

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In Canada, both the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2015 and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in 2018 called upon governments in Canada to fully adopt and implement the UN declaration in partnership with indigenous peoples. We heard these calls, and in 2016 the Government of Canada endorsed the declaration without qualification and committed to its full and effective implementation.

We have been making significant progress on the implementation of the declaration on a policy base. While we have done this, Bill C-15 would create a legislated, durable framework requiring government to work collaboratively with indigenous peoples to make steady progress in implementing the declaration across all areas of federal responsibility. This reflects the sustained transformative work that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and so many others have repeatedly told us is required to truly advance reconciliation in Canada.

[*Translation*]

Some of the declaration's principles are already included in several Canadian laws, policies and programs, such as section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982, the provisions of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms on the right to equality, and the protections against discrimination in the Canadian Human Rights Act.

Working within Canada's legal framework, the Government of Canada has also taken measures to better reflect the declaration in federal policy and legislation, such as the recent initiative, An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families, and the Indigenous Languages Act. Bill C-15 represents another important step forward. By working in co-operation and partnership with indigenous peoples, we are creating new opportunities to dismantle colonial structures, establish strong, lasting relationships, close socio-economic gaps, and promote greater prosperity for indigenous peoples and all Canadians.

● (1810)

[*English*]

I would like to turn now to the key elements of Bill C-15.

The bill makes a number of important statements in the preamble by acknowledging the importance of the declaration as a framework for reconciliation, healing and peace; recognizing inherent rights; acknowledging the importance of respecting treaties and agreements; and emphasizing the need to take diversity across and among indigenous peoples into account in implementing the legislation.

The preamble also specifically recognizes that international human rights instruments, such as the declaration, can be used as tools to interpret Canadian law. This means that the human rights standards they outline can provide relevant and persuasive guidance to officials and courts. While this does not mean that international instruments can be used to override Canadian laws, it does mean that we can look to the declaration to inform the process of developing or amending laws and as part of interpreting and applying them. This principle is further reflected in section 4, which affirms the Government of Canada's commitment to uphold the rights of indigenous peoples and the declaration as a universal human rights instrument with application in Canadian law. Together, the objec-

tive of these acknowledgements is to recognize existing legal principles and not give the declaration itself direct legal effect in Canada.

The bill also includes specific obligations intended to provide a framework for implementing the declaration over time. By requiring the Government of Canada to, first, take measures to align federal law with the declaration in clause 5; second, to develop an action plan in consultation and co-operation with indigenous peoples in clause 6; and third, to report to Parliament annually on progress in clause 7, Bill C-15 proposes a clear pathway to stronger, more resilient relationships between the government and indigenous peoples.

Bill C-15 would also contribute to our efforts to address discrimination, socio-economic disparities and other challenges on which we continue to make progress. By mandating a collaborative process for developing a concrete action plan on these and other human rights priorities, we should see an improvement in trust and a decrease in recourse to the courts to resolve disputes over the rights of indigenous peoples.

[*Translation*]

I would now like to talk about how Bill C-15 was developed. This bill was the result of our collaboration and consultation over the last several months with indigenous rights holders, leaders and organizations. Using the former private member's bill, Bill C-262, as a starting point in these discussions, we worked closely with the Assembly of First Nations, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and the Métis National Council.

We also received valuable input from modern treaty and self-governing nations, rights holders, indigenous youth, and regional and national indigenous organizations, including organizations representing indigenous women, two-spirit and gender-diverse people.

All of this feedback helped shape this proposed legislation, and we thank everyone who participated. We also held talks with the provincial and territorial governments, as well as with stakeholders from the natural resources sector.

These discussions were enriched by the contributions of indigenous representatives and provided an opportunity to learn about many of the efforts and initiatives already under way in the provinces and territories, and in various natural resource sectors, to further engage indigenous communities, create partnerships and lasting relationships, and work collaboratively to support responsible economic development that includes indigenous peoples.

People always say that young people are our best hope for the future. There is a lot of truth in that, and we held a virtual round table with indigenous youth to ensure that their perspectives and their vision of the future were included in the process.

First nations, Inuit and Métis youth from across the country shared their views on the bill and their priorities for the implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. I am grateful that they took the opportunity to ask me many difficult questions.

Looking back on that event, it is clear to me that young indigenous people have a vision for a better Canada. This stems from the vision of the future that they have for their nation and their people. They see a future in which strong, self-determined indigenous peoples thrive and are connected to the land and culture.

Young indigenous people see a future in which indigenous-Crown relations are truly nation-to-nation, reflecting equality and respect, and not colonial attitudes.

Clearly, we still have a long way to go together to build that better future. However, it is also clear that Bill C-15 will enable us to harness the full potential of the declaration in building that better Canada.

• (1815)

[English]

To this end, and consistent with this government's mandate commitment, Bill C-15 builds on the core elements of former Private Member's Bill C-262 including the requirement to align federal laws with the declaration over time, develop and implement an action plan in consultation and co-operation with indigenous peoples, and report to Parliament on progress annually. However, our recent engagement process led to a number of key enhancements. In addition to new language in the preamble highlighting the contributions the declaration can make to reconciliation, to sustainable development, and to responding to prejudice and discrimination, the addition of a purpose clause and more detail with respect to the development of an action plan and annual reporting requirements build on and enhance what was set out in Bill C-262.

Over the course of our engagement, we heard some questions about the scope of Bill C-15 and the concerns that it might create economic uncertainty. Let me be clear: Bill C-15 would impose obligations on the federal government to align our laws with the declaration over time and to take actions within our areas of responsibility to implement the declaration, in consultation and co-operation with indigenous peoples. It would not impose obligations on other levels of government. However, we know that the declaration touches on many areas that go beyond federal jurisdiction. The preamble, therefore, recognizes that provincial, territorial, municipal and indigenous governments have and would continue to take actions within their own areas of authority that can contribute to the implementation of the declaration. Our goal is not to get in the way of good ideas and effective local action, but to look for opportunities to work collaboratively on shared priorities and in ways that are complementary.

The declaration and, by extension, the legislation provides a human rights-based framework for the development of the relation-

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ships required to support the effective exercise of the indigenous peoples' right to self-government and self-determination. The exercise of these rights contributes in turn to creating more prosperous, resilient and self-reliant communities.

[Translation]

Arising from the right to self-determination, “free, prior and informed consent”, as it appears in various articles of the declaration, refers specifically to the importance of meaningful participation of indigenous peoples, through their own mechanisms, in decisions and processes affecting them, their rights and their community.

Free, prior and informed consent is a way of working together to establish a consensus through dialogue and other means and of enabling indigenous peoples to meaningfully influence decision-making.

Free, prior and informed consent does not constitute veto power over the government's decision-making process. After all, human rights and the resulting obligations and duties, particularly those provided for in the declaration, are not absolute.

The declaration states that indigenous peoples have individual and collective rights equal to those of other peoples. That means that the provisions of the declaration, including those that refer to free, prior and informed consent, must be taken in context. Different initiatives will have different impacts on the rights of indigenous peoples and will require different types of approaches.

Thus, free, prior and informed consent could require different processes or new creative ways of working together to ensure meaningful and effective participation in decision-making.

If passed, this bill will not change Canada's existing duty to consult with indigenous peoples or the other consultation and participation requirements under other legislation such as the new Impact Assessment Act. As also explained in section 2, it would not diminish constitutional protection of the indigenous and treaty rights recognized and affirmed in section 35.

The bill would inform the government on how it plans to phase in its legal obligations in the future. In addition, the bill would do so in a way that would provide greater clarity and foster greater certainty over time for indigenous groups and all Canadians.

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● (1820)

[*English*]

When indigenous peoples have a seat at the table for decisions that may affect their communities, we are respecting their rights and encouraging stronger economic development and outcomes. As we work to implement the declaration federally and to support indigenous peoples' inherent right to self-determination, we will help develop a stronger, more sustainable and predictable path for indigenous peoples, the Government of Canada and industry. We are ready to work with all levels of government, with indigenous peoples and other sectors of society to achieve the declaration's goals.

I would now like to turn to the road map this bill would lay out for the future. If passed, the bill would require the Government of Canada to develop an action plan in consultation and co-operation with first nations, Inuit and Métis to ensure that we achieve the objectives of the declaration. I believe the additional details included in Bill C-15 with respect to the action plan are very important. Indeed, the action plan is a central pillar of this legislation.

As outlined in clause 6 of the bill, developing and implementing the action plan would mean working together to address injustices, combat prejudice and eliminate all forms of violence and discrimination, including systemic discrimination, against indigenous peoples, including all forms of racism against indigenous peoples; promote respect and mutual understanding as well as good relations, including through human rights education; and measures related to monitoring oversight, recourse or remedy and other accountability with respect to the implementation of the declaration, and include measures for the review and amendment of the action plan.

[*Translation*]

Some have also wondered why this bill is being introduced right in the middle of a global pandemic.

We know that racism and discrimination have not stopped during the pandemic. On the contrary, COVID-19 exacerbated many existing inequalities and hit many people particularly hard, including indigenous people and Black or racialized Canadians. We must not delay efforts to make Canada more just, inclusive and resilient.

Bill C-15 could help structure discussions on addressing the inequalities and discrimination against indigenous peoples, which are the root cause of these many vulnerabilities.

[*English*]

There will be many benefits as we work together to identify new measures to reflect the rights and objectives in the declaration. Through the process, we will continue to renew and strengthen the nation-to-nation, Inuit, Crown and government-to-government relations; better respect and implement the individual and collective rights of indigenous peoples; build on the momentum to increase the ability of indigenous peoples to exercise their right of self-determination; support indigenous peoples as they restore and strengthen their governance systems and reconstitute their nations as they collectively address the impacts of colonialization and as we create a framework that will help increase clarity and certainty in the long term with respect to the rights of indigenous peoples and their implementation.

The bill would provide a road map for generational and transformational work, including how to support, while also getting out of the way of, indigenous self-determination.

I thank the leadership that has helped develop this and for the consultations that are continuing. I am happy now to answer any questions in this regard. I am proud to support the bill.

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to reiterate that on this side of the House we do support free rights and the process of reconciliation with the indigenous peoples of Canada, and we also believe that the path to reconciliation lies in taking meaningful action to improve the lives of indigenous peoples and ensure that they are able to fully participate in Canada's economy.

I listened to the minister's speech and note that some of the concerns that we have on this side of the House pertain to some of the broadly worded provisions and the implications of that wording and the lack of definition of a number of them. I will go a little further. The bill requires a plan to be developed within three years, but it really does not have a time frame to complete that work, nor are there clear and agreed upon objectives to be laid out in that plan.

If one does not even have an agreement or clarity on the work plan, on what basis can it be claimed that an entirely new approach based on free, prior and informed consent can be implemented?

● (1825)

Hon. David Lametti: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that there is support on the other side of the House for treaty rights and other indigenous rights. Hopefully that will lead to support for the bill more generally.

The fact that the action plan is only called for in the legislation within a three-year time frame is indicative of the fact that we have to co-develop that action plan with indigenous peoples on a nation-to-nation basis, as well as with other indigenous organizations across Canada in the variety of leadership structures that exist across the diverse indigenous peoples of Canada. Those include treaty holders, right holders, organizations representing a particular group such as indigenous women. We will need to co-develop that plan. We feel that we have given ourselves enough time to co-develop that plan with our partners.

It is actually a strength of the plan and indicative of what has to be a new approach in working with all peoples in Canada, indigenous and non-indigenous, to do things that better society.

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Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I think we can agree that Bill C-15 is certainly imperfect and is going to require some amendments. For example, we know in Canada that there is a growing white nationalist movement here and abroad. We hear in the news about issues of ongoing racism in policing, and issues with health care, where people are literally dying in hospitals as a result of racism. Let us not forget the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal ruling that required an immediate stop to racial discrimination against first nations, a ruling that this government fails to respect, a clear indication of systemic racism. I know the bill mentions systemic barriers. I do not think that goes far enough.

Would the minister be open to amending the eighth paragraph of the preamble and subclause 6(2) to include a reference to racism? I certainly know that the calls have been strong from the leadership and people on the ground that this be included in the bill. Would the minister be open to that amendment?

Hon. David Lametti: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her hard work in this area. I know that she has travelled across the country with a predecessor of the bill helping to explain it and really support its development.

As the Minister of Justice, I am open to discussing all good faith amendments brought forward in the view of making this a better bill. We certainly have recognized that systemic racism exists in Canada. I have done so publicly, and a number of my colleagues have done so publicly, and we have accepted the ruling of systemic racism from the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal. We have a difference of opinion over jurisdiction and are negotiating in good faith to resolve those cases in a number of class action processes. Certainly I am open to working with all members of the House to make this a better bill.

• (1830)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the minister very much for his work in this area. I want to also commend him for acknowledging the extraordinary work of former member of Parliament Romeo Saganash, and all the work that was done when it was a private member's bill.

I agree with the comment from the hon. member for Winnipeg Centre, but I have a sense, which I want to put to the hon. minister, that we will be disappointed. Article 19 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples makes it clear that before projects, administrative or legislative changes can happen that affect indigenous peoples, the state party, in this case Canada, must ensure free, prior and informed consent.

We bought the Kinder Morgan pipeline, and knew at the time we bought it that it was opposed in court by the Tsleil-Waututh, the Musqueam and the Squamish. We know that to this day it is opposed by the Tsartlip Nation. I do not know how we can go forward with the notion of free, prior and informed consent when many projects across Canada have been undertaken and, in the case of Trans Mountain, subsidized to the tune of \$17 billion in public funds in direct opposition to, and in violation of, the notion of free, prior and informed consent.

I know that, as the Minister of Justice, this is not exactly his responsibility area, but how do we square that circle?

Hon. David Lametti: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her dedication, both to the rights of indigenous peoples and the advancement of so-called indigenous causes, and also to the protection of the environment.

My understanding of free, prior and informed consent is that it targets a process in which indigenous and non-indigenous people work together from the beginning to evaluate and develop projects. I hope that will become enshrined in everything that we do as a result of UNDRIP. I hope that we can do a better job of moving forward with respect to the co-development of projects. I hope that free, prior and informed consent means partnership from the get-go and through all the stages in a very meaningful and significant way.

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for his leadership in this. This is a very important bill, as he has indicated, and I want to thank him for his work, as well as his entire team and those at Crown-Indigenous Relations.

The issue of reconciliation is imperative for Canada. It is really not a choice. It is something that we need to move forward on. Many of the TRC calls to action have been fulfilled, but this is one of those critical pieces that is still outstanding. In the minister's view, how important is UNDRIP, and implementing UNDRIP in Canada, toward the path of reconciliation?

Hon. David Lametti: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his work in helping us with the consultations that led to the tabling of this bill.

It is critically important. The metaphor that I like to use is that this becomes our North Star for reconciliation. It gives us a road map for generational and transformational work and really teaches us how to rethink the country such that indigenous people finally have an equal place. That is the dream of Canada. That is the goal of Canada, and this helps us get there.

Dr. Willie Littlechild, a former member of the House for the Conservative Party and one of the people who helped draft the UNDRIP at the United Nations, said, "We're at the starting line again, but this time we get to run the race together." That is really the way I feel about this, and it is a fantastic step forward.

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Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-15, an act respecting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This is a bill that has had seven iterations since 2008. Right from the beginning, Conservatives have seen the value in UNDRIP as an aspirational document that provides guiding principles toward reconciliation. We also recognize that many of the articles of UNDRIP are supportable. However, the impact of free, prior and informed consent and its impact on the cultural, social and economic development of indigenous peoples remains unclear. This is not coming as a surprise to the government. Conservatives have been clear from day one that this needed clarification. The fact that the government in its legislation has failed to clarify free, prior and informed consent yet again indicates it simply does not care about the implications that this bill would have for indigenous and non-indigenous communities.

Let me be clear. Conservatives support indigenous communities and their rights. We support the process of reconciliation with Canada's indigenous people, including the importance of education, economic development, and employment and training opportunities. We supported the Indigenous Languages Act and legislation relating to indigenous child welfare. We support many of UNDRIP's articles, but what we oppose is the government's lack of due diligence in putting forward legislation without reaching a common understanding of how free, prior and informed consent will be interpreted. We also do not think that enough consultation has been done with indigenous communities. This is something that has been echoed across the country, in fact. This will lead to uncertainty and could potentially undermine trust if expectations are not met, which could in turn set back reconciliation.

The government will say not to worry, and that this will be sorted out later. We have heard this many times. In fact, this is exactly what the justice minister told the Assembly of First Nations recently, but when it comes to taking action that will impact the lives of indigenous peoples, such as ending long-term boil water advisories, the Liberals have consistently failed to keep their promises. The Liberal government has a track record of saying it will sort it out later and then never delivering, so how can we trust them this time to do anything differently? That is why we have to worry with the Liberal government. We have to worry that the undefined statement of free, prior and informed consent could be interpreted as a de facto veto right, and thus have profound detrimental effects not only for a variety of industries across Canada, but for indigenous communities as well. National Chief Perry Bellegarde stated on May 12, 2016, that free, prior and informed consent "very simply is the right to say yes, and the right to say no."

What if two or more indigenous communities want different things? The exact impacts on workers across regions and industries are unknown. The impacts on indigenous entrepreneurs are unknown. However, with the uncertainty created by the Liberals around the interpretation of free, prior and informed consent, the cost to communities, labour unions, indigenous businesses, and provincial and territorial governments could be astronomical. If existing laws and regulations could be superseded by implementing UNDRIP, the regulatory burden on industries could increase and deter business in Canada. This uncertainty hurts both prospective development and indigenous communities. There is a lack of clarity

regarding how UNDRIP will work with Canadian jurisprudence and within each level of government. Everyone has a different interpretation. The only people who stand to benefit from a lack of clarity or a lack of definition are lawyers.

During a December 3, 2020, briefing for parliamentarians, representatives from the Department of Justice stated that Bill C-15 respects Canadian jurisprudence, while officials from Natural Resources Canada stated that the bill does not create requirements for industry, but for government. Which representatives were correct? We know from the Wet'suwet'en dispute that many indigenous Canadians believe the government and all industries operating in British Columbia, where a bill similar to Bill C-15 was passed, are bound by UNDRIP. In this case, hereditary chiefs maintained that they had not given their free, prior and informed consent for the pipeline. This was despite the proponent entering into agreements with all elected chiefs and councils along the approved route.

• (1835)

What if two or more indigenous communities want different things? Even within the same community, what if there is conflict between what the elected band council and hereditary chiefs want? Whose free, prior and informed consent trumps whose? Government officials appear to believe that the Indian Act and therefore elected chiefs would take precedence, but then why did the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations enter into an agreement with hereditary chiefs and ignore the elected chiefs of the Wet'suwet'en? There is not enough clarity.

There are many more examples.

Article 3 states:

Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

How does that work, regarding Supreme Court decisions such as Marshall I and Marshall II, which state there are limitations on economic rights subject to definition by the responsible minister and the Badger test?

Article 19 states:

States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free, prior and informed consent before adopting and implementing legislative or administrative measures that may affect them.

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How does that work with the October 11, 2018, Supreme Court decision, which clearly states that the duty to consult does not extend to the legislative drafting phase?

Further, article 28.1 states:

Indigenous peoples have the right to redress, by means that can include restitution or, when this is not possible, just, fair and equitable compensation, for the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned or otherwise occupied or used, and which have been confiscated, taken, occupied, used or damaged without their free, prior and informed consent.

What does that mean for the City of Ottawa, for example?

Furthermore, it should be noted that the Supreme Court established in 1901 that it does not need to be bound by previous decisions, meaning it could subsequently choose to revise certain decisions once UNDRIP is affirmed as a tool for interpreting Canadian laws, including the Canadian Constitution.

Another important question is that of how land claims and modern treaties will be affected by UNDRIP. Currently, for example, article 4 of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement lays out a division of powers within the territory. It includes a political accord granting powers, such as in other provinces and territories, to a public government and creating space and decisions that would affect the socio-cultural development of Inuit for input from the beneficiary organization. However, the lack of a clear definition of free, prior and informed consent may lead to the reopening of that land claim, as is already happening in Nunavut.

ITK president Natan Obed stated on December 3, 2020, in an interview with a news agency that "There are many things that the land claims are silent on." Since devolution has not occurred, these discussions can still happen between Canada and Nunavut Inuit.

Is it possible that modern treaties and established land claims across the country may move to reopen negotiations to reclaim rights groups feel they may have given up in exchange for self-government?

In its December 2008 resolution, the AFN specifically states that the relationship between first nations and the Crown has been, and must continue to be, governed by international law. It added that treaties concluded with European powers are international treaties created for the purpose of co-existence rather than submission to the overall jurisdiction of colonial governments, and that the Canadian government has at no point been able to provide proof that first nations have expressly and of their own free will renounced their sovereign attributes. This statement clearly suggests an unwillingness to accept Canadian jurisprudence as the ultimate authority, calling into question how discrepancies between Supreme Court rulings and UNDRIP articles would be resolved. That is of critical importance.

Clause 5 of the bill states:

The Government of Canada must, in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous peoples, take all measures necessary to ensure that the laws of Canada are consistent with the Declaration.

Not some laws, but the laws of Canada: not just federal, but provincial and municipal as well. Has the government consulted with the provinces and municipalities?

• (1840)

On November 27, six provincial ministers of indigenous affairs sent a joint letter to the government to share their concerns with this legislation. That included Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, New Brunswick and Quebec. They were concerned that they were only given six weeks to review the legislation and about the impact it will have on the laws and regulations in their provinces. The letter states:

...delay is necessary both to allow for appropriate engagement with provinces, territories, and Indigenous partners on the draft of the bill, and to allow time for Canada to fully and meaningfully consider and address the legitimate...concerns that we have already raised about the draft bill in its current form.

The letter goes on to say:

A hasty adoption of ambiguous legislation that could fundamentally change Confederation without the benefit of the widespread and necessary national and provincial consultation and consensus not only risks undermining reconciliation, but will create uncertainty and litigation and risk promoting deeper and broader divisions within our country.

The list goes on.

The lack of clarity in this bill could have sweeping implications. The purpose of legislation is to make the law clear. As I said earlier, this bill fails to do that. The Liberal government has failed to do the real work necessary to make good on its promise to implement UNDRIP. Instead, it has presented a bill that is woefully incomplete because all it wants to do is check a box, but this bill is nowhere near a promise kept. It is yet another in a long line of the Liberal government's broken promises to indigenous communities.

On December 17, the National Coalition of Chiefs wrote to the Prime Minister, expressing its concern:

While the affirmation of Indigenous rights is always welcome, there are implications to this legislation, as currently drafted, that is likely to have negative impacts on the many Indigenous communities that rely on resource development as a source of jobs, business contracts and own source revenues. I do not want to see symbolic gestures of reconciliation come at the expense of food on the table for Indigenous peoples.

That is worth repeating: The legislation "is likely to have negative impacts on many Indigenous communities". How is that keeping with reconciliation?

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Industry stakeholders are generally supportive. Like Conservatives, they share an understanding of the aspirational spirit of UNDRIP and the need for renewed nation-to-nation discussions on the path to reconciliation. However, they also share concerns, similar to those of Conservatives and many indigenous communities, that before Bill C-15 is passed, the government must clarify free, prior and informed consent. They are seeking clarity and want to ensure they understand the rules, but most concerning is the lack of consultation on Bill C-15 with indigenous communities.

The National Coalition of Chiefs expressed concern, stating:

...the lack of consultation is a flag for Indigenous leaders and communities across Canada. While the NCC was able to meet once with the Minister of Justice, there was an understanding that we would meet further to discuss our issues and concerns. The current comment period is far too short for us to consult with our representatives of Parliament.

Legislation of this magnitude only warranted one meeting.

On February 3, the elders of Saddle Lake Cree Nation wrote to the Prime Minister. They expressed deep concerns and indicated that they fully disapprove of Bill C-15 and the process that has been followed to date by the Government of Canada. This is because the government had not made any attempts to meet with them, or to provide adequate time and opportunity to consult.

The Liberal government has repeatedly demonstrated its inability, or perhaps just its unwillingness, to properly consult, let alone come to any agreements on the definition of “indigenous rights”. It is this uncertainty in the ability and willingness of the government to really deliver on Bill C-15 that has so many worried. Leaving interpretation to the courts over the ensuing years will lead to uncertainties that will have enormous implications for Canada.

While the Conservative Party supports the goals and aspirations of UNDRIP, we are concerned the government is going ahead with legislation, enshrining it into Canadian law, before we have developed a common understanding of what concepts such as free, prior and informed consent actually mean. There is currently a lack of consensus in the legal community. Without a common understanding, we risk creating uncertainty and misunderstanding in the future. That would mean letting indigenous Canadians and their communities down yet again.

• (1845)

Conservatives believe that the path to reconciliation lies in taking meaningful action to improve the lives of indigenous peoples and ensuring that they are able to fully participate in Canada's economy. We are concerned that a lack of clarity and common understanding about key concepts in the bill could have unpredictable and far-reaching effects that could undermine reconciliation in the long term.

Without a clear definition of free, prior and informed consent, there are several outstanding and troubling questions left unanswered. Whose consent must be sought when it is clear that consent has to be given? Could an unelected individual or group undermine the will of elected indigenous representatives or invalidate the decision of an indigenous-led process, an institution, or a public government?

I appreciate that the government feels that free, prior and informed consent does not mean a veto. The National Post reported the justice minister saying, “The word veto does not exist in the document.” In that same article, David Chartrand, the national spokesperson for the Métis National Council said, “We made it very clear, this is not a veto, we're not out to kill industry.”

Why not then include a definition of free, prior and informed consent in this document? Why not spell it out for all Canadians that it does not mean a veto? If this process is about providing clarity for indigenous communities, non-indigenous communities and industry, let us start with some clarity around Bill C-15.

When it comes to taking practical actions that will impact the daily lives of indigenous peoples, such as ending long-term boil water advisories, the Liberals have, unfortunately, failed to keep their promises. I feel that Bill C-15 may be just another failed promise.

• (1850)

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my friend's intervention today, but I fundamentally disagree with his approach, because a lot of what he said is what we heard during debate on Bill C-262. Members will recall that Bill C-262 was stalled at the Senate by Conservative senators. As a result, the hard work of former member of Parliament Romeo Saganash, in essence his life's work, did not pass in the last Parliament.

The consultation that he and many others did during that process was unprecedented. Essentially, with the member for Winnipeg Centre in many cases, he went community to community to do the consultations. Bill C-15 is built on the work of Bill C-262. The consultation has been extensive. It is never perfect, but it has been extensive.

On the discussion with respect to the premiers, and with the greatest respect to our provincial and territorial counterparts, it is worth noting that there has been 13 years to implement that essential human rights legislation. Sadly, many jurisdictions have not taken that step forward. One notable exception is British Columbia, which has implemented it in a fairly successful way—

The Deputy Speaker: We will have to end it there. We are almost at a minute and a half, and we will try to get a few more questions in during the 10-minute period for questions and comments.

We will go back for a response from the hon. member for Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock.

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend across the way for that question, and I do mean “friend” in the true sense of the word. I appreciate his work on the file as well. However, there are a number of indigenous communities that are concerned about the wording of Bill C-15. We have even had letters from provincial ministers responsible for those files saying the exact same thing.

As we come out of this pandemic, those in industry will be looking for certainty. They will be looking for markets that allow them to invest their money and have light at the end of the tunnel, if they meet all of the requirements.

Until we have a definition of free, prior and informed consent, that certainty remains up in the air. When we are trying to rebuild the economy, bring these jobs back and bring opportunities to some of these first nations communities that, in many cases, rely on natural resources as their source of revenue and jobs, we need to have that certainty.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, experience has shown us that failure to obtain consent for development projects often leads to crises involving indigenous peoples. That is what happened with the Oka crisis and with the Wet'suwet'en this winter.

Can the member tell us what the problem is with making sure natural resource development projects are carried out properly in accordance with the FPIC standard?

• (1855)

[*English*]

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Mr. Speaker, I agree that everything has to be done in the proper way. Whether it be natural resources projects, or anything really, the rules have to be clearly defined and outlined, so people undertaking the application process understand the path forward and if there is a path forward. If we do not know that at the beginning, it makes it very difficult to continue on a project or even start one in the first place.

That is why we keep saying that we approve of the aspirational part of UNDRIP and of Bill C-15. However, what we are opposing and questioning, which is no secret, is the lack of due diligence in putting forward this legislation without coming to a common understanding of what free, prior and informed consent actually means.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened closely to my hon. colleague's remarks. I have a lot of questions, and I know I only have a short time to ask them.

The member spent a lot of time speaking about this conflation between the concept of consent and the concept of a veto, which has been spoken to at length by legal experts and dozens of witnesses at committee. It is clear that there is a distinction between these two concepts, so it is unfortunate that he continue to conflate them.

Part way through his speech, he said something along the lines of supporting the goals and aspirations of UNDRIP. However, I lis-

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tened carefully, and 90% of his speech was speaking negatively about the risks he feels it poses. I am curious what parts of it he supports and feels are worthy of his support.

In his question for the minister, he indicated that he supports treaty rights. Does he support section 35 rights of indigenous people in the Constitution of Canada?

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Mr. Speaker, there is a lot to unpack there, and I will try to get through it as quickly as possible.

On his first point regarding free, prior and informed consent, if what he is saying is true, then why is it not included in the bill? If it is that simple and clear, why not put it in the bill and get unanimous support for this bill? The problem is that it is not there, which is causing issues.

We are in this chamber to discuss issues such as this, which could have profound impacts on the way forward. It does not have to be natural resources projects. I keep saying it is a larger impact than that. We should be debating this in the chamber. We should be debating it instead of pushing it through. If it is clear, let us make sure it is clear.

In terms of his negative comment, yes, there are lots of positive things in there addressing issues of discrimination and racism. However, what we are trying to do is reach a consensus on the part we disagree with so we can get to what we do agree with and get this passed. Let us address the issues that we have on this side of the House, which are with the definition of clear, free, prior and informed consent. If it is clear, put it in the bill and we will be a lot happier with that. I am sure industry will be as well.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague rightly pointed out some of the issues and questions on free, prior and informed consent with the Wet'suwet'en, where even within the band there were people who did not agree.

I have had conversations in my own riding with the leaders of various aboriginal groups. They had no expectation of having the right of veto. They agreed that no individual Canadian should be able to stand against something that is in the national interest. They asked why we could not just put a clarification in the bill to make that clear. They then asked if there was anything else we would not support.

Is there anything else, other than that free, prior and informed consent, that would keep the member from supporting the bill?

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● (1900)

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Mr. Speaker, that is a big part of it, but, as I said, we are not opposing UNDRIP per se. We are opposing the government's lack of due diligence. When it comes to free, prior and informed consent, that is a big piece of it. We saw, as the member rightly mentioned, this with the Wet'suwet'en community.

The elected chiefs and the band councils, which had just gone through an election process in which many of the candidates were victorious on pro-energy platforms, wanted to move ahead with the energy project that was pre-approved. Then the hereditary chiefs expressed concern. When we talked to the members of the elected bands and councils, they felt that their voices were not even heard in this debate.

This is why we need that clarity. This is why we need the certainty for industry and we need to ensure that consultations are done properly and in a meaningful way, so we have certainty and also the conversations to address any problems.

The Deputy Speaker: It being 7 p.m., the House will proceed with the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

CANADA PHARMACARE ACT

The House resumed from November 18, 2020, consideration of the motion that Bill C-213, An Act to enact the Canada Pharmacare Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise tonight to speak to the bill on pharmacare. I want to thank the member for New Westminster—Burnaby for bringing it forward. I am sure the reason he has brought it forward is to call for action. There has been a lot of talk about pharmacare but, to be fair, there has not been a lot of action.

By way of background, the Liberals have been talking about pharmacare since 1992. They have been studying and talking, but nothing really concrete has come forward. Therefore, I am glad to see we are talking about this tonight.

Members may want to pay heed to my commentary. As a former shadow health minister, I was on the health committee when we studied pharmacare. We have heard all kinds of testimony from every province and territory and from all sorts of Canadians about what they think about pharmacare as well as on related topics, like the drug approval process and rare disease medications, which are also important and need to be addressed.

All parties in the House are looking for a common outcome. We all want to see Canadians have access to prescription medications. The discussion is about the best route to get there. This bill proposes to put everybody on provincial coverage essentially. That may be an oversimplification, but that is what it is.

If we look at the situation today, between 95% and 98% of Canadians have prescription drug coverage, depending on which report we look at and depending on the types of coverage. Many people

have private plans. Those private plans typically cover more than 14,000 medications compared to the public plans that cover 4,000 to 5,000 medications. The private plans cover, in addition to the medications, many services. People are getting physiotherapy, orthotics, various and sundry, with their plans. However, not a lot of people who have a private plan would want to give that plan up to go on a public plan that would have less coverage. That is certainly one issue.

Most provinces have a plan that covers people. There are some exceptions. For example, in Ontario, people under 24 get coverage. If they are over 65, they get coverage. If they are on social assistance, they get coverage. Otherwise, unless they have a private plan, there is no coverage. There are some gaps there.

The other gap happens in the Atlantic provinces. In some cases, there is a plan there, but because the list of approved drugs is small, many people cannot get coverage for the particular drug they are taking.

This brings up an important consideration when we talk about the bill. The member's bill talks about the Canada Health Act and its requirements for accessibility and universality. If we talk about universality, it is difficult to have that in different provinces when each province has a different list of drugs that are covered. This is called a formulary.

Some Canadians move between provinces to get coverage for the medication they need because is not covered by their province. Through consultation and discussion with the provinces and territories, we could come to a more common list of medications that would be covered. That would go a long way.

Many people who do not have coverage may not be aware that they have access to a provincial plan. There is an opportunity to increase awareness in that way, and that should be done.

● (1905)

On the cost of these systems, the cost of transferring and putting everybody on provincial plans has been estimated. The Liberal proposition was for a single-payer federal system of pharmacare, and the Parliamentary Budget Officer costed that at about \$20 billion a year. However, some of the costs we were paying for prescription drugs were underestimated by about another \$20 billion. Therefore, we are looking at about \$40 billion a year for that. I think there was a lot of resistance in the public to that idea.

We have seen what happens when the federal government tries to implement things. For example, the Canada Revenue Agency has a 30% error rate with the advice it gives people and is not always friendly on the phone. I do not think people would necessarily want their prescription medications administered in that kind of system. However, people are fairly happy with the provincial systems, so filling the gaps that way is one option.

Other options could be considered, and it is certainly worthwhile thinking about them. C.D. Howe published a report that said if we put the people who did not have coverage on the existing provincial plans, the cost would be about \$2.2 billion a year. That would be reasonable.

As an engineer, when I was a contractor, I had to buy my own benefits. For \$1,200 a year, I could not only have prescription drug coverage but I could have dental and medical coverage. On a volume discount, if we take the 2% to 5% who do not have coverage and add it up, that is about \$2 billion a year. There is an idea where people could go on government benefits.

There are a lot of ways to approach this and the discussion needs to be about which way makes the best use of taxpayer money and takes advantage of some of the systems already in place.

Let me talk for a minute about rare disease medications, because this proposal would do nothing to address some of the issues with respect to that.

Today, to get coverage for rare disease medications, private insurance companies pool their money so not any one company has to take the risk of these very expensive medications, some of which cost \$250,000 a year or a million dollars a year. If the government infused money into that pool on the condition that everybody would get their rare disease medications covered, that would be another great way to ensure people would have coverage for some of the most difficult to cover drug costs.

Access to medications also depends on ensuring that drug companies want to market their drugs in Canada. Unfortunately, the Liberals have put changes in place to the drug approval process which will make the process longer and more costly. As a result, many companies do not want to market their medications in Canada because we are a small population and they would have to operate at a loss. This has also impacted the number of clinical trials happening in Canada. The government needs to definitely reconsider that poorly thought out policy.

If we look at some of the examples of innovation happening in the world, Chile has a great funding model that is infusing money into a rare disease fund, but also allowing people to buy government bonds that also kick into that fund. There are a number of innovative ideas around the world at which we should take a look.

I look forward to working with my colleagues on this bill toward the common goal of getting prescription medication access for all Canadians. A number of things could happen to our benefit out of this. We would have better volume leverage and could reduce the cost of drugs and take away some of the co-payer issues that provide barriers. I look forward to discussing all these things with my colleagues when this comes to committee.

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• (1910)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-213 builds on the Canada Health Act to establish a universal, comprehensive, single-payer pharmacare program.

The federal government would simply provide money to the provinces who would put in place a pharmacare program that meets the criteria it sets. The federal government can impose sanctions if it deems that the province's pharmacare program does not meet the federal criteria. The bill also creates a drug agency responsible for approving the drugs covered by the program and negotiating drug purchases.

The Bloc Québécois is against this bill primarily because we represent the voice of Quebec in Ottawa. If the government did not need NDP votes to stay in power, it would never accept the centralist agenda of this bill that completely violates Quebec's jurisdiction. In fact, the National Assembly of Quebec was unanimous on June 14. I will read the motion that was passed unanimously by all the parties at the National Assembly of Quebec: Québec solidaire, the Parti québécois, the Quebec Liberal Party and the Coalition avenir Québec.

The motion reads:

THAT the National Assembly acknowledge the federal report recommending the establishment of a pan-Canadian pharmacare plan;

THAT it reaffirm the Government of Québec's exclusive jurisdiction over health;

THAT it also reaffirm that Québec has had its own general prescription insurance plan for 20 years;

THAT it indicate to the federal government that Québec refuses to adhere to a pan-Canadian pharmacare plan;

THAT it ask the Government of Québec to maintain its prescription drug insurance plan and that it demand full financial compensation from the federal government if a project for a pan-Canadian pharmacare plan is officially tabled.

When our National Assembly speaks with one voice on an issue dealing with Quebec-Ottawa relations, we in the Bloc Québécois pay attention and make sure that that consensus is echoed in the House of Commons of Canada. Given that the National Assembly was careful to specify that Quebec would refuse to adhere to a pan-Canadian pharmacare plan, we would find it strange to ask for a program that would not apply back home.

The NDP adopted the Sherbrooke declaration in 2005, in which it said it recognized asymmetrical federalism and intended to give Quebec the systematic right to opt out, so it is odd that the New Democrats now seem to be writing off Quebec.

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There is no question that health is a Quebec jurisdiction. The Bloc Québécois finance critic, my hon. colleague from Joliette, took a similar position before the Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec, the FTQ. His position echoed that of the FTQ.

Let me quote from a statement from the FTQ, a labour organization that has been advocating for a universal public pharmacare program:

For the FTQ, the terms and conditions of a public, universal pharmacare program must first and foremost be discussed in Quebec and established according to the needs of its people.

That is why Quebec must be able to opt out with full compensation from any pharmacare plan...

Furthermore, the federal government cannot discuss pharmacare without addressing the problems in health care funding....The Liberal government's desire to expand public coverage of health care by including prescription drugs is not consistent with its intention to limit health transfers to the provinces....To ensure the viability of Quebec's health system, the portion of federal funding must be increased.

If Ottawa wants to move forward with its national pharmacare plan, Quebec must have the unconditional right to opt out with full compensation. Ottawa must respect the solemn moment on June 14, 2019, when the Quebec National Assembly unanimously adopted a motion calling on Ottawa not to interfere in Quebec's jurisdictions and to provide full and unconditional financial compensation.

It was impossible for the member for New Westminster—Burnaby to not be aware of this when he introduced his bill.

Quebec is a progressive nation. It is surprising that the NDP, which calls itself progressive, wants a nation that lags behind ours to tell us what to do. Generally speaking, Quebec society has more comprehensive social programs than Canadian society. Quebec has the best family policy on the continent, which includes parental leave and child care. Quebec has the best access to post-secondary education and the most progressive taxation on the continent. Furthermore, Quebec has a pharmacare plan that leaves no one behind. Everyone is covered by insurance.

● (1915)

Although it is not perfect, our situation is unlike any other in North America. Quebec's pharmacare plan has been leading the pack among Canadian provinces and territories since 1996. Quebec will not entrust the development of its social programs to the neighbouring nation, whose coverage does not compare to ours.

The members of the Quebec National Assembly are unanimously opposed to this initiative. The members of the Bloc Québécois, who rise in the House to impart the general consensus of the Quebec National Assembly, will not compromise at the expense of Quebeckers to salvage some votes in the west, in the east or in Ontario. Not to mention, Ottawa is not even able to manage its own affairs. Just look at the firearms registry, which ended up costing \$2 billion, or the Phoenix pay system; and yet people think Ottawa should manage our pharmacare program?

Quebec is quite capable of improving its own program without surrendering its autonomy. The \$3.6-billion price tag for Quebec's public pharmacare plan is fully covered by the Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec, or RAMQ, which covers health care costs. What Quebec needs is an increase in health transfers.

Since 2017, the health transfer escalator has been capped at 3%, but health care system costs are going up by about 6% because of factors like technological advances and the aging population.

The Bloc Québécois is asking Ottawa to respect the wishes of Quebec and the provinces and increase its share of health care funding from 22% to 35% unconditionally. Let us not forget that, back when the Canadian system was created, federal funding covered 50% of the cost.

The Bloc Québécois is also opposed to the creation of a Canadian drug agency that would tell Quebec how to use its drugs. Quebec is already managing its public prescription drug insurance plan expenses itself through the pan-Canadian Pharmaceutical Alliance, the pCPA, and the national institute for excellence in health and social services, or INESSS, and Quebec's system has rigorous criteria.

The INESSS supplies Quebec with its own expertise and updates the list of drugs covered by the RAMQ, Quebec's health insurance plan. A new Canadian drug agency would just duplicate the work being done in an area that is not under federal jurisdiction. That is nonsensical.

That is why I moved a motion on October 26 at the Standing Committee on Health to study how reforming patented medicine pricing could affect the whole life sciences ecosystem and patient access to innovative therapies.

During the election campaign, the Liberals said they wanted to do something about the cost of drugs used to treat rare diseases. They reiterated that intention in the throne speech, but we are still awaiting the strategy. The federal government needs to give us more details about its plans. Most importantly, it needs to tell us whether it intends to harmonize its rare disease strategy with Quebec's.

In closing, recognizing that Quebec's plan is the best one on the continent and emphasizing that Quebec has the right to decide does not mean that our plan is perfect, but Quebeckers are perfectly capable of managing it. The NDP and the Liberals have a harmful obsession with wanting to interfere and wanting to decide for Quebec where Quebec should spend its money. Rather than clinging to its centralizing vision, the government should instead agree to Quebec's demands and permanently and substantially increase health transfers so that Quebec can take care of its people.

● (1920)

[English]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to share my thoughts on this very important bill. It is an immense honour for me to take the mike right now and speak to my colleague's bill. I want to thank my colleague from New Westminster—Burnaby for bringing this bill forward. This is a very special opportunity that we have right now to make a massive difference in the lives of Canadians.

In Canada in this pandemic, we have seen millions of Canadians lose their jobs, and when they lost their jobs, they also lost their benefits. That means millions of Canadians were not able to purchase the medication they needed. This is on top of the millions of Canadians who already simply cannot afford their medication. Whether they do not have coverage at all or have coverage that costs too much, very, very many Canadians are not taking the medication they need because they simply cannot afford to.

I have spoken to so many families and so many people who tell me of the pain of not being able to afford their medication. I think of a family in which the father works in construction, and he has a heart illness that requires him to take medication to stay healthy, but he cannot afford that medication, and on top of that, his children need medication. Therefore, he has to choose not only between paying the bills or buying his medication, but also between buying the medication either for himself or for the children he loves. That is an impossible position to be in, and he is not alone. There are so many families that face the same decision.

We know that one out of five Canadians are not taking their medication, simply because they cannot afford to. We know that when someone cannot treat an illness, they end up at the worst stage of that illness, and it costs the system and the family and the person so much more. Having universal access to medication so that everyone in our country could afford it would dramatically improve the lives of everyone.

The Liberals have been promising universal pharmacare for 23 years. They promised again in 2019, but have people seen any difference in their lives when it comes to accessing medication? They have not. We have seen, sadly and again and again, that the Liberal government sides with the pharmaceutical industry instead of with Canadians who are desperate to stay healthy and afford their medication.

We have a concrete solution. The solution is to use the combined power of our entire nation to negotiate better prices so that everyone in our country can afford medication. This is so important. This is an opportunity to save lives. I am asking everybody to think about the millions of Canadians who cannot afford medication, to think about our health care system that allows someone to go to a doctor and be diagnosed with an illness but not to be able to afford the medication they need to stay healthy, to think about the only health care system in the world that provides universal health care but does not include medication coverage, and to pick up their phone and call their local MP.

I ask people to sign petitions and write letters. We have a week left. This vote on the first step to establish the first-of-its-kind, free medication coverage for all Canadians is next week. We can put pressure. We can show that this is the way forward and we can win. People have shown the power of organizing; they have shown again and again that when people come together, we fight and we win.

Once implemented, medication coverage for all Canadians would mean that no one in our country would have to worry about paying for medication. If someone needed medication in this country, they would use their health card and not their credit card. That dream can be a reality, and once implemented, it would establish a savings

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of at least \$4.2 billion that could be reinvested into our health care system.

Here is an opportunity for the Liberal government to back up its words. Its own report states that one of the key steps to establishing a universal public medication-for-all system is to pass a pharmacare act like the one we have proposed. It is far past time to pass such a measure and deliver universal pharmacare to Canadians. Let us get it done now.

• (1925)

[*Translation*]

No one should have to choose between paying the rent and filling a prescription. One in five Canadians is not taking the medication they need because they cannot afford it. Many Canadians are cutting their pills in half or even deciding not to buy their medication at all because they cannot afford it. Too many people are ending up in the emergency room or in the hospital for an extended stay because they cannot afford to take the medication they need. Hundreds of people are dying prematurely every year. Even those with private insurance are seeing the coverage offered by their employer decrease. People are in more precarious jobs, and their family budget is getting tighter and tighter. We need to help families, not make their lives more difficult.

I have met many families in Quebec who say that it is getting harder and harder to buy private prescription drug coverage. It is getting harder and harder to get drug coverage and buy medication. I spoke with unions that represent thousands of workers, and they all say that prescription drug insurance cost workers too much.

It is essential to have fully public pharmacare in Quebec and across the country. Canada is the only industrialized country whose health insurance does not include universal, public coverage of prescription medication. That does not make any sense.

The Liberals have not stopped breaking promises for the past 23 years. They would rather protect the profits of big pharmaceutical and insurance companies than help people. In 2019, they made yet another promise to introduce pharmacare, but they have done nothing concrete since to keep that promise. The Liberals say all the right things in public, but they keep putting powerful pharmaceutical companies' profits ahead of people's needs. They now have an opportunity to vote for our bill to give Canadians a comprehensive universal pharmacare program.

This bill is the first step toward creating a pharmacare program. If the Liberals really want to help Canadian families, they can work with us to provide the universal pharmacare program people need.

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I invite all Canadians to contact their MP and ask him or her to vote in favour of a universal public pharmacare program. We must vote in favour of Bill C-213, a bill to help families and save lives.

I am grateful I had the opportunity to share these words. Again, we have an opportunity to save lives, to help families and workers. It is essential that our health care system cover everyone and that also means providing a universal pharmacare program. Together, we can do this. I invite everyone to demand that we undertake this next step towards a universal, comprehensive health care system.

[*English*]

Mr. Darren Fisher (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to address Bill C-213. As all members know, I firmly support national universal pharmacare and the government knows that pharmacare is the missing piece of universal health care in the country. Pharmacare must remain a priority for all members in the House.

Implementing national universal pharmacare is one of the government's top priorities, as reiterated in the September 2020 Speech from the Throne and in the 2020 fall economic statement.

No Canadian should have to choose between paying rent or paying for needed prescription drugs. Too many of my constituents, too many Canadians, are experiencing this every day. The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed many unfortunate truths in the country and one of those truths is that too many Canadians are also a step away from this unfortunate reality.

While drug coverage is an area of provincial-territorial jurisdiction, the pandemic has reminded us that collaboration between governments is essential to support the health of Canadians. The federal government recognizes the important role that both orders of government must play to ensure all Canadians have the drug coverage they need. We understand that the federal government must support provinces and territories as they implement pharmacare so it will become an enduring element of our health system. This simply is not achieved by imposing federal legislation without consultation and without co-operation of our partners at the provincial and territorial level.

I firmly support national universal pharmacare and I will continue to work tirelessly with our government to move it forward. I will be opposing this private member's bill. The issue at the heart of the bill and the reason I will be opposing it is that it discounts the need for co-operation.

We know that in order to make national pharmacare a reality in Canada, we need to recognize the key role the provinces and territories play in providing health care for their citizens. The bill misses the mark and overlooks a wealth of experience built up about how to do that, not in Ottawa but in Dartmouth, Victoria, Quebec, Charlottetown and all across this amazing country.

Establishing universal pharmacare successfully requires a collective approach, a collaborative approach, where the federal government works with and through the provinces and territories. Unilateral federal action to impose national universal pharmacare as proposed under Bill C-213 would be akin to establishing public medicare for hospital and physician services without prior discussion with provincial and territorial governments and health system

stakeholders. Such unilateral action would contradict commitments the Government of Canada has made over the past three decades to take a collective approach to social policy issues of a national concern.

The government must be careful not to disregard the vital role that provinces and territories currently play in designing and delivering public drug coverage in Canada. Over time, provinces and territories have developed more than 100 distinct public drug plans, typically designed to provide coverage for vulnerable groups, including seniors and people on social assistance. If we are going to transform a complex patchwork of drug coverage into a national pharmacare program, we must do it in collaboration with our partners, relying on the considerable expertise that jurisdictions have in this area.

Our government has been clear in its commitments to national pharmacare. Now is the time for governments to take action and make it a reality. Co-operation from provinces and territories will not just get pharmacare up and running; it will ensure it continues to operate smoothly well into the future.

In the 2020 Speech from the Throne and the fall economic statement, the government reiterated its intention to accelerate steps to implement national universal pharmacare, including a rare disease strategy to help Canadian families save money on high-cost drugs; establishing a national formulary and a Canadian drug agency to keep drug prices low; and, perhaps most important, working with those provinces and territories that are willing to move forward without delay. We all know that actions speak louder than words, which is why I am pleased to say that our government has already started taking these steps.

In November, the government initiated discussions with provinces and territories on the strategy for high-cost drugs for rare diseases. Earlier this month, the government began engaging with key partners and stakeholders, including patients and patient groups. As public engagement continues, our government will also consult with clinicians, academics, researchers, health technology assessment organizations, pharmaceutical manufacturers, private insurance providers and indigenous partners.

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● (1930)

Budget 2019 also announced \$35 million over four years to establish a transition office. This office is being created to provide dedicated capacity and leadership to advance work on pharmacare-related priorities.

We are committed to taking the appropriate next steps to implement national universal pharmacare. We are rolling up our sleeves and putting the resources in place to make it happen. First ministers have initiated a dialogue on health care funding, and that conversation will continue. In parallel, the Minister of Health will seek to establish a collaborative process with willing provinces and territories to define the broad terms of the pharmacare plan.

As I have said, our government fully supports national universal pharmacare and will continue to do the work needed to make sure this becomes a reality for all Canadians. Although we support the spirit of Bill C-213, we recognize that imposing these criteria on the provinces and territories without working with them would be premature and would not build national pharmacare as an enduring final piece of Canada's universal health care system.

People do not frame and put a roof on a house without building a strong foundation first. That is why we are moving forward with willing jurisdictions to build a collective commitment to national pharmacare, guided by the advisory council on the implementation of national pharmacare.

Turning our current patchwork of drug plans into a coherent, comprehensive approach that benefits all Canadians will be no small feat. As we move forward, we need a thoughtful conversation about how best to meet this challenge together. We must work with the provinces and territories, as I have said, to implement a national pharmacare plan that works well for our residents. We must work with first nations, Inuit and Métis governments and representative organizations to make sure national pharmacare is appropriate for their communities. We must work with patients and providers to make sure a national pharmacare plan gets Canadians the drugs they need.

I am looking forward to discussions with provincial and territorial counterparts. Together, we are making progress toward a pharmacare program that will meet the needs of all Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

● (1935)

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the most difficult medication to buy is the one that is not available in Canada. It is the one someone finds out about after going to their doctor and being told that it is in the United States, and if they were an American citizen, they could get access to it. However, since they are a Canadian, they cannot. That is the news that too often happens to patients with rare diseases and to their families. My family is one of those families. The families dealing with cystic fibrosis, with SMA and with cystinosis are other ones. The list goes on and on.

Bill C-213 is a solution looking to address the wrong problem. The problem is access, and access is what I want to talk about this evening.

I have gone through the speech by the member for New Westminster—Burnaby. My colleagues from Calgary Nose Hill and Sarnia—Lambton went over a lot of territory in pointing out what is wrong with this particular piece of legislation.

The legislation is trying to address the wrong problem. I want to demonstrate that by sharing some of the issues I have with what the member for New Westminster—Burnaby said and address them piece by piece to demonstrate why this is the wrong bill.

It does not achieve any goals. The goal should be to provide access to patients in Canada through greater choice in drugs, drugs that will actually ensure they get over their condition or that will provide a therapy that reduces their symptoms, instead of looking at their American counterparts, citizens of America. Some of them are dual citizens, and they, for example, can have access to that medication when they go to the United States, but they cannot access it here in Canada unless they are one of the very few who have a special access program for it.

One of the NDP members mentioned that currently in Canada we have a patchwork of provincial systems. We know that in Canada, 90% to 98% of Canadians have access to some type of either private or public insurance. In fact, nearly all the provinces have a public insurer. In Alberta, it is the Alberta Blue Cross that people can get access to.

Two provinces that I am aware of have already said they will not participate in national pharmacare. In November of 2019, Alberta finance minister Travis Toews sent a letter to the federal government indicating that the provincial government, the Government of Alberta, would not participate in national pharmacare. It will want an opt-out. Members for the Bloc have said that their provincial government will not participate either. What will happen? We will have a patchwork system again. Again, because this bill does not consult with anybody or ask the provinces what they are thinking or recognize that it is in the jurisdiction of provinces, it does not achieve any of the goals.

Speaking of access, the Ontario government, the previous government, took a bunch of people and put them onto OHIP+. It transferred 2.1 million Ontarians who already had private plans onto a public plan at a higher cost, a plan that provided worse coverage than what they had before. I had many people explain their particular situation. They liked their private plan.

When a survey is done to ask people if they like the private plan they are on or the public plan they are on, most Canadians, by a wide majority, say that they do like the plan they are on. I agree that there are people who have difficulty paying for some of the copayments, but this bill does not address that. This bill proposes to centralize everything in Ottawa and then figure it out later.

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I have come to believe, after five and a half years here in Ottawa, that when someone says they will figure it out later, it usually will cause harm to Canadians in the long term, especially if they are one of those one in 12 Canadians dealing with a rare disease. Many people have someone in their life who has a rare disease. I have three children with a rare disease. I had a daughter pass away from a different rare disease three years ago.

The problem in Canada, as I said, is being made worse by federal government action through the PMPRB. This problem will not be addressed through anything in this particular piece of legislation. This measure is coming forward because of a false belief that it could somehow artificially reduce the price of medication coming into the market in Canada.

There is a PBO estimate that has been provided and repeated now by several members that the total spent on public health care will be reduced by \$4 billion to \$4.5 billion. They call it the universal discount. Actually, if we look at the data in the PBO report, 25% is completely random. This is one of the rare times when I disagree with the methodology used by the PBO. This 25% discount is already happening through the pCPA, the pan-Canadian Pharmaceutical Alliance, which is used by the provinces to negotiate with manufacturers. They are basically assuming an extra 25% discount “just because”. I do not think that is the way statistics should be done and I disagree with the analysis.

● (1940)

In fact, one of the members on the NDP side then went on to quote New Zealand as a good example of how it had been able to reduce drug costs. What people in New Zealand do not want to have is a rare disease. There is very little access to rare disease medication or the latest and greatest most innovative drugs to address their condition. There are countless examples online of New Zealand citizens fleeing to other countries to obtain access to medication. New Zealand is the worst example anywhere in the world if people have a rare disease.

There is a Yiddish saying, “He who runs away from fire, falls into the water” and that is what is happening here. There is a problem and the solution that is being called upon is a centralization of all the plans in Canada to wipe out the architecture, the jobs, the system that many Canadians rely on and generally like. It is not perfect; there are issues with it. We are running into a system, we are going to fall into the water and drown. Things would be made worse by the changes being proposed.

On the issue of PMPRB's costing, for example, we often talk about rare disease drug costs and how it puts a huge dent in provincial budgets. If we look at non-oncology drugs, 70% of what the PMPRB says is for rare disease medication is actually being used for secondary uses. Therefore, if people have a rare disease and there is a drug for, it is given by a doctor and it is used, but then there has to be a second, third or fourth usage. The medical system says that it can be used for those other purposes. That is being included in the final statistics. It is wrong to say that rare disease patients will cost the system more when in fact different types of medication are also used for other purposes or uses.

According to the annual report of the PMPRB, the changes in the cost are 2.5% to 2.6%. I will credit the Canadian Forum for Rare

Disease Innovators for these statistics and these points. It is very compelling evidence that the costs for rare diseases are not caused by rare disease patients. In fact, it is other uses for the same innovative medicine that is coming to Canada. To reiterate my point, the hardest medication to purchase in Canada is that which is not available in Canada.

I want to take a moment to credit and thank Alberta Minister of Health Tyler Shandro, for his January 17 interim agreement for Zolgensma, which is a groundbreaking, innovative medication for children with SMA type 1 spinal muscular atrophy, one of the most dangerous conditions that will kill children if they do not get access to a type of medication. This is the same minister who compassionately approved and ensured there was access in Alberta quickly for Spinraza, three weeks after he was named minister. I told him I would hound him until he made it happen. To his credit, he did, and compassionately years later he ensured there was access to Zolgensma for children under age 18 in Alberta. I do not believe a national pharmacare minister like that could act as quickly as a provincial minister could act when he feels the pressure from constituents, residents and elected officials.

We have cystinosis, examples of cystic fibrosis, and Trikafta and Orkambi. There is groundbreaking medication out there being made available to people living in other countries that is not available here. The bill would not fix any of those issues. There are other solutions to fill the gaps in place and I would love to discuss those solutions and look for ways to improve the system in different matters.

The member for Calgary Nose Hill brought up a few of them, so I will reiterate them. Common drugs are classified in different countries as over the counter. Australia does an amazing job of this, as does the United Kingdom. We can look at what the public health spends on certain medications and maybe find a lower dose that could be available over the counter. Some antibiotics come to mind. Some estimates suggest that just three of those drugs could save \$1 billion a year on drug spending.

There are other things we could do to reduce the bureaucracy in the system. Too many Canadians are trapped between the CADTH approval and the pCPA reimbursement agreement.

What I care most about is access for patients with rare diseases. Bill C-213 does not achieve any of those goals. I cannot support it.

● (1945)

The Deputy Speaker: Before we resume debate with the hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona, I will let her know that we are just short of the 10 minutes that are usually allocated, with leaving five minutes for the sponsor of the bill to have his right of reply.

Let us get started, and I will give her the signal as we get close to that time, which is around eight minutes or so.

The hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to speak in support of Bill C-213, sponsored by the member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

This bill is historic. It is a bill that would give us the potential to make history by finally getting pharmacare to Canadians who so desperately want it.

We have heard today that approximately one out of every five families in Canada struggles to pay for prescription medications, and we know that the claim that all Canadians have access to medication just is not true. It is not accurate. These are not statistics. These are real families.

Before COVID-19, when I was able to knock on doors and talk to constituents in person, access to prescription medicine was the number one issue I would hear from people. I remember talking to a man who struggled to speak as he was caught up with emotion. He talked to me about skipping days taking his blood pressure medication, hoping that he would get by: that he would make it and would not die. I spoke to a senior in my own neighbourhood who was sharing a prescription with her husband, because they could not afford both. I will never forget talking to one young father who implored me to get pharmacare passed. It was not because his family needed it. His family was doing quite well, but he knew families at his daughter's child care centre who did not have access, and he wanted to make sure that those children were taken care of. This was all before the pandemic, and before things got worse.

There is no doubt that COVID-19 has made Canadians' ability to access medication so much worse. Millions of Canadians who lost their employment due to COVID-19 also lost their prescription drug coverage. People who could count on their health plans before COVID no longer could.

In Alberta, when we were entering the pandemic about a year ago, our provincial Conservative government cut drug benefits for seniors, spouses and dependants so 46,000 people, mainly with ongoing health issues, including dependants living with disabilities, were suddenly without coverage. I find it shocking that the member of Parliament for Calgary Shepard can speak of Minister Shandro as being compassionate, when 46,000 Albertans lost their drug coverage. Many Canadians were facing the stark reality that our medicare system was not going to be able to keep them healthy. This pandemic has opened their eyes, and COVID-19 has shown us just how vulnerable we are.

Canadians have been waiting for this. Canadians have been waiting for nearly 60 years to get prescription medications included in

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our health care system. Twenty-three years ago, the Liberals first promised Canadians a national pharmacare program, and they have been repeating that promise ever since. We have had five public commissions on pharmacare, and study after study. If the member for Calgary Shepard does not want to believe the PBO report, perhaps he will believe the Hoskins report. All of these reports said the same thing: Canadians need pharmacare, and pharmacare will save Canadians money. However, here we are.

As Canadians face an unprecedented health crisis with COVID-19, there is another health crisis that we can and need to fix right now. Millions of Canadians are without access to medication, and we can fix that with Bill C-213. We need to vote yes to Bill C-213.

We have an obligation to learn from COVID-19 as well. We have a duty to Canadians to create a better Canada that will be more resilient to the crises of the future, including the next pandemic. We must build systems that protect all Canadians, not just some Canadians and not just Canadians who can afford it. When everyone has access to the medication they need, they are healthier and the burden on our health care system is lessened. It is really that simple.

The government has floated the idea of partial pharmacare that is not universal. That is not what Canadians want. Canadians want a simple program that includes everyone. Canadians want to go to the pharmacy and pick up their medications. That is the system we want, and that is the system we need: a national universal system protected against people like Jason Kenney who are determined to undermine it, and a system that will actually save Canadians billions of dollars.

There is something else vitally important that we have learned from COVID-19: Canada has the capacity to do this. We saw how fast Canada moved when the pandemic was declared.

● (1950)

The cost to enact pharmacare is pennies on the dollar compared to the savings. Pharmacare will save families on average more than \$500 a year, whether they are insured or not, and employers and small businesses will save \$600 a year per job. Pharmacare will reduce emergency wait times and free up more hospital beds for those who need them. It will save the government billions.

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I urge this House to follow the recommendations of the Hoskins report and apply them by supporting this bill. The Hoskins report recommends that the federal government enshrine the principles and national standards of pharmacare in federal legislation separate and distinct from the Canada Health Act. The Hoskins report also recommends that the five fundamental principles of medicare embodied in the Canada Health Act also be enshrined in federal pharmacare legislation. Those principles are universality, comprehensiveness, accessibility, portability and public administration. The Hoskins report also proposes that this legislation come into force no later than January 1, 2022.

Now is the time. Now is the time we can do this. As parliamentarians, this is something we can give to Canadians right now, at a time when they need it more than ever. Today is the day to support pharmacare for all. I implore my colleagues within the House to vote yes on Bill C-213.

• (1955)

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is rare that we have an opportunity in the House of Commons to make a difference in the lives of so many of our constituents. As we well know, over 90% of Canadians support the idea of putting in place public, universal pharmacare. Over 90% means that in every single riding across the country, the vast majority of Canadians support public, universal pharmacare.

When Canadians are asked what they are proudest of among our institutions, it is our universal health care system. Of course, the Canada pharmacare act would put in place the same principles around pharmacare that we already have in place around universal health care.

Any member of Parliament who consults with his or her constituents will get the same reply. Canadians want to see this. Particularly with the pandemic and the devastating impacts that we have seen both on the health and the financial well-being of so many Canadians, it is absolutely essential that we move forward and put in place public, universal pharmacare, which Canadians are asking for and desperately need.

We have been at this debate for a few months. Tens of thousands of Canadians have participated. They have participated by emailing their member of Parliament, by phoning their member of Parliament and by telling their member of Parliament to vote yes on Bill C-213.

During this debate, we have seen a number of facts come to light. We were made aware, through this debate, that millions of Canadians have no access to a drug plan. They have to struggle to pay for the medication their doctor has prescribed for their health and well-being. We have also learned that hundreds of Canadians die each year right across the country because they cannot afford to pay for their medication. Through this debate, we have also learned that for 60 years Canadians have been waiting to have the public, universal pharmacare they so desperately need.

The Hoskins report points out very clearly what the road map is, which is that we have to lay the foundation by ensuring we have the same principles around public, universal pharmacare that we already have around our public, universal health care system.

It would be dangerous to say no to this bill, because that would reject public, universal pharmacare. It would reject the expansion of our public health care system that Canadians are looking for, and it would reject the advisory council's Hoskins report. It would mean that there is no foundation to build the public, universal pharmacare that Canadians so desperately need.

[*Translation*]

During these debates we also learned that many people in Quebec are calling for a universal pharmacare program. Currently, many Quebecers are not covered, and that is why the major unions are calling for this type of public, universal program. More than 40 or so municipalities in Quebec are calling on MPs to vote in favour of Bill C-213. There is widespread support.

[*English*]

We have also learned that dozens of organizations with millions of members are asking all members of Parliament to vote yes on Bill C-213. We have doctors and nurses right across the country who are saying that it is absolutely vital for Canadians' health and well-being. We must listen to those voices.

I mentioned earlier this is a historic moment. It is one of those moments that determine the strength members of Parliament have in consulting with their constituents, and we need to think of our constituents at this key decision point in our history.

I am thinking of Cole and his family. He is a constituent in high school whose family struggles with \$1,000 a month in drug costs. Those drug costs, that medication, keeps the father of the family alive. That family struggles and every day has to decide how they can pay for that medication and whether they can also put food on the table and a roof over their heads.

Around kitchen tables right across the country, there are millions of Canadian families who are in the same situation. I ask members of Parliament to think of their constituents, more than 90% of whom who support this bill. If members of Parliament do that, I have no doubt they will vote yes next week on Bill C-213, the proposed Canada pharmacare act.

• (2000)

The Deputy Speaker: Accordingly, the question is on the motion.

If a member of a recognized party present in the House wishes to request either a recorded division or that the motion be adopted on division, I ask them to now rise and indicate so to the Chair.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: Mr. Speaker, we request a recorded vote.

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to an order made on Monday, January 25, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, February 24, at the expiry of the time provide for Oral Questions.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

[English]

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

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill will not be present to raise the matter for which the adjournment notice had been given. Therefore, this notice is deemed withdrawn.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there has been a great deal of discussion in recent days about the genocide of Uighurs and other Turkic Muslims in China. The evidence of that genocide could not be clearer, and I look forward to continuing to make arguments about this issue and calling for recognition by the government of that genocide and an appropriate response.

However, today I am speaking following a specific question that I asked about the Canada pension plan investments made in Chinese military affiliated tech companies that are playing a significant role in the surveillance, mass detention and, yes, genocide of Uighurs.

One of the particular characteristics of the Uighur genocide is its high degree of technological sophistication and the use of the latest technologies to screen, track, control, suppress and otherwise violate the rights of Uighurs. These technological tools are deployed to facilitate the internment and population suppression of Uighurs through measures that include a systemic campaign of sexual violence.

Certain companies that are in some sense private but are also very much state-affiliated are developing the technology for this genocide. People are sitting in office towers making investment decisions to maximize their profits and those of their shareholders by tasking researchers to find ways of better tracking and controlling other human beings.

The Canada pension plan invests money around the world with the goal of maximizing return for Canadian investors. It has important work to do in this respect. However, I would firmly contend that its only considerations should not be financial risk or financial return. During the tenure of the current government, our pension dollars have been invested in Dahua and Hikvision, two of the companies that are working closely with the Chinese government and supporting its horrific operations in East Turkestan.

We are not just talking about building components or tools that could be used in this context. We are talking about ongoing collaboration to facilitate the customization and deployment of this technology as part of this genocide.

When these issues have been raised in the past, the government has either ignored the question or defended the investment choices of the CPP Investment Board. When this was first raised in the House, the member for Louis-Hébert said, on behalf of the government, “I simply want to remind my colleague that the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board operates independently, at arms' length from the government, and we expect it to make wise investments in the interest of Canadians and Canadian pensioners.”

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Frankly, I expect better from the government than to support these investments or to shrug them off. Considerations must include Canadian values as well as Canadian interests.

While the Conservatives oppose efforts by politicians to micro-manage these investments, there must be some minimum moral standards. Those standards should involve clear and unambiguous criteria that exclude investments that violate international law and that involve deep and fundamental violations of international human rights.

I expect and hope for better from the CPP Investment Board, but to be fair to the board, while I want to see minimum moral standards, the board operates within a legislative framework set by politicians. Politicians have to set those minimum standards. They easily could, but they have not.

I would like to ask the government this again. Very specifically, what plans does it have to ensure that Canadian pension investment dollars are never again complicit in acts of genocide?

• (2005)

Mr. Darren Fisher (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the human rights violations in China affecting Uighurs and other ethnic minorities are deeply disturbing and of grave concern for Canadians, this government and the global community. The actions of the Chinese government in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, including repressive surveillance, mass arbitrary detentions and religious persecution, run counter to the basic freedoms enshrined in China's own constitution and violate China's international human rights obligations. This government has taken every opportunity to raise this issue, both directly with Chinese authorities and through multilateral institutions. We call on China to address and end the repression.

Canada is not alone in voicing concerns. We are working in collaboration with other countries to call on China to abide by its obligations under international human rights law, and we will continue to take action as part of a concerted effort by the broader international community.

This government recognizes the risks that the alarming human rights situation in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region poses for Canadian businesses and investors. This is one reason the trade commissioner service recently updated its guidance for businesses on the risks of doing business in China, including risks related to human rights abuses and forced labour in their supply chain. We expect all Canadian companies active abroad to respect human rights and adhere to the highest ethical standards.

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As members know, the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board was set up by the federal and provincial governments to prudently invest Canada pension plan funds. It is accountable to federal and provincial ministers of finance, but operates at arm's length, as the member said, from Canadian governments. CPP Investments is recognized internationally as a leading example of sound pension plan management. It has an independent, highly qualified board of directors and operates with a commercial investment mandate.

Companies that effectively manage environmental, social and governance factors are more likely to create financial value over the long term, improving investment performance. As such, CPP Investments considers ESG factors, including human rights, when evaluating opportunities, making investment decision and engaging with companies to seek improvements in business practices and disclosure. CPP Investments was a founding signatory and abides by the United Nations-supported principles for responsible investment, which provide guidance for incorporating ESG factors.

Just as Canada will continue to hold China to account when it comes to human rights violations, so will we continue to take action to ensure that Canadian supply chains are free of forced labour and that Canadian businesses have the tools they need to mitigate the risks of doing business abroad.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, that response was obviously a total farce. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs cannot even be bothered to show up here, so we have the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health answering questions on things that are totally unrelated to his file. He is not answering the question. In some sense I do not blame him for not answering the question, because this is not even in his file. He has been given a bloody sheet of paper to read on a fundamental issue of genocide, instead of actually engaging with the subject matter at hand.

My question was about whether the government is prepared to define fundamental minimum moral standards for our investment and whether it is willing to put in place standards to ensure that Canadian pension investments are not complicit in genocide. Essentially, the parliamentary secretary's response is no. To the extent that human rights might come into play when considering financial considerations, then they are brought in, but there is no willingness from the government to recognize this problem of Canadian pension investments complicit in genocide.

The government needs to do so much better if it is going to pretend to be serious about human rights.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Mr. Speaker, Canada's foreign policy will always be grounded in Canadian values, including the promotion and protection of human rights. Advancing human rights will continue to be a guiding principle in the Government of Canada's engagement with China. The government has taken steps to help Canadian firms mitigate the risks of doing business in China, and Canada will continue to stand up for human rights at home and around the world.

• (2010)

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to be here tonight and to speak.

We have heard from a lot of veterans about the carbon tax. They are paying a lot more carbon tax in their homes and there are a lot of concerns.

However, the carbon tax on agriculture is also growing significantly. We have the carbon tax and the clean fuel standard. It is sort of wreaking havoc in the agricultural sector. I have 50 dairies in my riding. Dairies are not located in cities. They need diesel trucks, huge trucks, to move that milk, which is an actual supply chain of food that we have in our own country, but the carbon tax and the clean fuel standard cost a lot, which they do not get to recoup. It is not rebated to them. We have a great industry in my riding in our country, but they are paying huge costs, and the cost is going to go higher.

This is tough. This is hard. At this time of year, there is a lot of heating of external buildings. We have calving, transporting of feed and shipping of the final product. Whether it is the cattle and calf industry or the dairy industry, the carbon tax and the clean fuel standard are really hurting our agricultural sector.

Then they have irrigation. There are 17 irrigation districts in Alberta, five in my riding. At \$30, the carbon tax is costing farmers in my constituency, as calculated, over a million dollars. Over a million dollars leaves my constituency from one of the five irrigation districts with the carbon tax at \$30. Imagine what that is going to be when it goes much higher. That is money that is leaving our communities. The carbon tax and clean fuel standard costs are not rebated. This is going to be tough. These industries are supply chains within our own country that we are penalizing. That is wrong.

Let us look at something else that is having a problem. The agricultural chain is working, but vaccine supply is not working well. The supply chain on vaccines is problematic. Instead of supporting companies like Providence Therapeutics in Calgary, which contacted Health Canada numerous times and got crickets for answers, the government went to China to try to make a deal. We have supply chains that work in agriculture, but not in vaccines. We need this to work in our country. We need those vaccines built here.

The last part of that is really interesting: The Liberals will not release the contracts. In other countries, the drug companies and governments have released those contracts to the public, but not in Canada. What are they hiding in those contracts that they do not want us to see? Again, if they had not gone to China, they could have done it here.

The last thing I want to talk about is gun legislation. We had a tremendous private member's bill that would have penalized those people who were in possession of illegal guns. That was a great piece of legislation that dealt with the real issue of illegal guns and those who are using them. What did the government do when we brought that to a vote? It voted against it. It was a piece of legislation that would have made a difference right where the issue is, which is not with legal gun owners but with the people who have illegal guns and are committing the crimes. That is where we should have focused, but the current government did not support that bill.

Mr. Darren Fisher (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend for what might have been a question, but he was not very clear in what he was asking. I will tell him, though, that he is someone with whom I have spent some time on committee, and I have a very good affection for this gentleman. I actually nicknamed him "the walrus" because of that beautiful moustache of his.

The member has given us a bevy of issues, all in a late show question, and in a short period of time it is difficult to speak to all the things he brought forward. However, this gives me an opportunity to talk about the diverse contracts that we have for vaccines for Canadians.

By the end of March of this year, we will have six million vaccines in Canada. By the end of September, every Canadian who wishes to have a vaccination will have a vaccination. From day one, this government has had the backs of Canadians. We have done everything we could possibly do to keep Canadians safe, and we will not stop. There is more work to do, but the good news is that Canadians know that we have their backs and Canadians know what it takes to keep them safe.

We know what worked in wave one with COVID, and we have learned an awful lot about COVID-19. On this side of the House, we have the backs of Canadians. We will continue to have the backs of Canadians. I invite my friend, the member from across the way, who has sort of asked me a question, to join team Canada, to hop on the bus rather than coming around in the middle of the night and trying to let the air out of the tires.

Adjournment Proceedings

I appreciate the time.

● (2015)

Mr. Martin Shields: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Nova Scotia for responding. We have worked together, and I agree that he is an honourable member. I have enjoyed working with him. We have often talked about issues and we were able to discuss things in what could be called a very parliamentary way. I appreciate that he does that.

I am very familiar with Team Canada. I have two former students who were Olympic athletes. I have been to the Olympics. I have been to Canada House. I have seen Team Canada and how it works, which is not like what we do. I appreciate what Team Canada is because I have seen it in motion at the Olympics and I know how it works.

I have one last thing on seniors. We have a tremendous number of seniors on fixed incomes. They are desperate. They write to me about what the carbon tax is adding to their costs. Their mental and physical health is deteriorating, and they identify those costs that are coming because of the carbon tax. That is a challenge for our seniors in this country.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Mr. Speaker, I share the member's thoughts on seniors. Our seniors are so important and have been quite impacted by COVID-19.

I am very proud of our government for having a minister of seniors. I get a chance to hear regularly from members of my community who are seniors and who are happy that we have started a ministry for seniors. We have more work to do, but we recognize that this extremely important segment of our population, who mean so much and who built this country, deserve to be taken care of in the best possible way by this government.

[*Translation*]

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 8:19 p.m.)

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