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# House of Commons Debates

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Friday, February 19, 2021

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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, February 19, 2021

The House met at 10 a.m.

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*Prayer*

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• (1005)

[*English*]

## PRIVILEGE

### LANGUAGE INTERPRETATION RESOURCES—SPEAKER'S RULING

**The Speaker:** I am now ready to rule on the question of privilege raised on February 16, 2021, by the member for Banff—Airdrie concerning the meeting of the Standing Committee on Health on February 12, 2021, and on the interpretation services made available to members for committee business.

Following a detailed description of the event that unfolded during the meeting of the Standing Committee on Health, the member argued that a breach of members' privilege occurred when the committee chair decided to suspend the meeting, invoking an anticipated lack of the support necessary to continue working. The member feels that there was an interference with the exercise of members' parliamentary functions. The member also mentioned a technical problem related to interpretation at the moment the member for Beauport—Limoilou was prepared to vote.

[*Translation*]

The members for Calgary Nose Hill, Salaberry—Suroît, Vancouver Kingsway, Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam and Brandon—Souris, as well as the 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, also added their comments on this matter.

[*English*]

The member for Banff—Airdrie raises an important question related to the administration services for which I am responsible. It would be remiss of me not to ensure that the support offered to parliamentarians, individually and collectively, meets their expectations in every respect. On that matter, the difficulties of communication and support for members encountered last Friday are regrettable. I wish to reaffirm for members that the House administration and its partners are wholly capable of providing the support necessary to committees' operations.

The question now facing the House is whether, in the context of the pandemic, certain situations, while quite justified, will eventual-

ly put a strain on the approach taken in recent months and the resources that are available to us. Despite best intentions, the exceptional dedication shown by the individuals involved and the clearly expressed desire to meet members' expectations, resources are not unlimited. We should seize the opportunity to ensure that this does not arise again while also ensuring that parliamentary proceedings continue to respect our rules and traditions. The new reality confronting us requires us to be particularly vigilant, to communicate and provide timely updates and to ensure close coordination with the staff required for each committee meeting.

[*Translation*]

I have therefore asked the administration, in collaboration with its partners, to review the organization of the service offer and to add a protocol to be followed in certain circumstances. This protocol would allow the whips to be informed at all times of specific situations that should be brought to their attention and to take the necessary measures in accordance with the order adopted last January 25. It is, in fact, up to the whips of the recognized parties to agree on the priority of use of the House's resources. I cannot overemphasize the importance of these discussions and I am counting on their co-operation.

[*English*]

I thus hope to respond to the suggestion of the chief opposition whip, who demonstrated openness by suggesting that he was prepared to envision a more effective and appropriate solution to the circumstances.

Lastly, while the Chair is aware of how important it is to members that our rules and traditions be respected and of certain issues that House committees sometimes face, there is a well-established practice that Speakers are required to follow that prevent them from intervening before the report from the committee has been submitted to the House. The member for Banff—Airdrie recognized that fact in his statement.

I thank the hon. members for their attention.

We have a question of privilege from the hon. member for Fundy Royal.

**Hon. Rob Moore:** Mr. Speaker, I am rising today on a question of privilege concerning the premature disclosure of the contents of Bill C-22, an act to amend the Criminal Code and the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act.

**The Speaker:** I want to interrupt for a moment. I am not sure the member's camera is on. If he turns it on, he can start from the beginning.

*Privilege*

**Mr. Gérard Deltell:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Given the decision you just made, I think you should reach out to the whip of the official opposition. He is trying to get in contact with us in the House of Commons by Internet and he is coming in a few seconds. There is some difficulty, and as you know, it was requested by him, so I think before addressing any other issue you should reach out to him.

**The Speaker:** I will ask the hon. member for Fundy Royal if it is okay for us to continue to the hon. opposition whip. We will then come back to the hon. member for Fundy Royal.

● (1010)

**Hon. Rob Moore:** Mr. Speaker, yes. Thank you.

**Mr. Blake Richards:** Mr. Speaker, in our age of Zoom, of course technical challenges can arise, and my service provider this morning decided it was going to be problematic. I just logged in, but I did not have a chance to hear the ruling. Of course, I am prepared to move the appropriate motion if you have found a prima facie case, but I unfortunately missed the ruling as a result of technical challenges and do not know whether it is appropriate for me to do so at this point.

**The Speaker:** There is no question of privilege, so there is no reason to move the motion. We will go back to the hon. member for Fundy Royal.

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**PRIVILEGE**

ALLEGED PREMATURE DISCLOSURE OF CONTENTS OF BILL C-22

**Hon. Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am rising on a question of privilege concerning the recent premature disclosure of the contents of Bill C-22, an act to amend the Criminal Code and the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act.

Yesterday, the CBC posted online, at 8:47 a.m., an article that outlined details of Bill C-22. Bill C-22 was introduced in the House later that morning. The article outlined several measures contained in the bill, including amendments to the Criminal Code and the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act and the elimination of several mandatory minimum penalties. The article also boasts a reliance on sources, not unlike in the case I raised with you, Mr. Speaker, on another matter of privilege almost one year ago.

On February 25, 2020, I was on my feet in the House defending the privileges of the House on the matter of the premature disclosure of the contents of Bill C-7, an act to amend the Criminal Code (medical assistance in dying). In that case, The Canadian Press posted an article that disclosed the details of the bill before it was introduced in the House and after the bill went on notice.

On March 10, 2020, Mr. Speaker, you came back to the House with your ruling. You said:

First, based on a reading of the Canadian Press article on Bill C-7 on medical assistance in dying, and in the absence of any explanation to the contrary, I must conclude that the anonymous sources mentioned were well aware of our customs and practices and chose to ignore them. It seems clear to me that the content of the bill was disclosed prematurely while it was on notice and before it was introduced in the House.

The rule on the confidentiality of bills on notice exists to ensure that members, in their role as legislators, are the first to know their content when they are introduced. Although it is completely legitimate to carry out consultations when devel-

oping a bill or to announce one's intention to introduce a bill by referring to its public title available on the Notice Paper and Order Paper, it is forbidden to reveal specific measures contained in a bill at the time it is put on notice.

As everyone knows, the Department of Justice, unfortunately, has a history of leaking the contents of government bills. On April 19, 2016, the Speaker found that there was a prima facie case of privilege regarding Bill C-14, an act to amend the Criminal Code and to make related amendments to other acts (medical assistance in dying). At the time, he said:

As honourable members know, one of my most important responsibilities as Speaker is to safeguard the rights and privileges of members, individually and collectively. Central to the matter before us today is the fact that, due to its pre-eminent role in the legislative process, the House cannot allow precise legislative information to be distributed to others before it has been made accessible to all members. Previous Speakers have regularly upheld not only this fundamental right, but also expectation, of the House.

Another question of privilege was raised on March 19, 2001, regarding, once again, the Department of Justice briefing the media on a bill before members of Parliament. In that ruling, Speaker Milliken said this at page 1840 of the House of Commons Debates:

In preparing legislation, the government may wish to hold extensive consultations and such consultations may be held entirely at the government's discretion. However, with respect to material to be placed before parliament, the House must take precedence. Once a bill has been placed on notice, whether it has been presented in a different form to a different session of parliament has no bearing and the bill is considered a new matter. The convention of the confidentiality of bills on notice is necessary, not only so that members themselves may be well informed, but also because of the pre-eminent rule which the House plays and must play in the legislative affairs of the nation.

The Speaker found another case of contempt on October 15, 2001, once again involving the Department of Justice, which does not seem to learn, after it briefed the media on the contents of a bill prior to the legislation being introduced in the House.

● (1015)

We are being asked once again to deal with the contemptuous actions of the Minister of Justice and his justice team. We have had countless rulings from the Speaker. The House has expressed itself on numerous occasions. We have had three debates and extensive committee studies.

The message is crystal clear, yet the responsible minister continues to draft bills and then leak those bills to the media, ignoring the will of the House. I ask, Mr. Speaker, that you find a prima facie case of privilege, and I am prepared to move the appropriate motion.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the government listened to what the member had to say and we would like the opportunity to respond at a later time. We would ask that you wait with your ruling until we have an opportunity to do that.

**The Speaker:** I will take this under advisement and return with a ruling in due course. That should give enough time to get things done.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### ECONOMIC STATEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2020

The House resumed from February 16 consideration of the motion that Bill C-14, An Act to implement certain provisions of the economic statement tabled in Parliament on November 30, 2020, and other measures, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our country faces an immense crisis. It is a health crisis and a financial crisis, the likes of which we have never seen before. Therefore, my remarks are for the millions of Canadians who worry about their future and worry about the country their children and grandchildren will inherit.

Yes, I am a grandfather, and I thank the CBC for recognizing that. In fact, I am an *opa* 11 times over. I love my grandkids and it is their future I am worried about. They are the ones stuck with the \$1-trillion bill created by this pandemic. It is our response to this crisis that will determine whether we leave them with a bright future or leave them shackled to crippling taxes, languishing economic growth and declining socio-economic outcomes.

The government faces an enormous challenge, that is clear, but our job as members of the opposition is twofold. We perform a challenge function. We hold the government to account for its actions and policies and provide parliamentary oversight. I know this is something the finance minister does not really welcome. She has demanded that we abandon those functions and simply rubber stamp hundreds of billions of dollars of borrowing and spending. That is downright reckless and we will not do it.

We have also proposed constructive solutions, like fixing the CERB and the wage subsidy programs, so I would like to propose a few more.

The government's fall economic statement, Bill C-14, should give us pause to consider whether the federal government has a robust plan for the future. I have concluded that it does not. It is true that the statement delivers badly needed additional support to Canadians in their time of need, such as a top-up to the Canada child benefit and interest relief on student loans. We support all those benefits. In fact, we called for them. However, thousands of Canadians still feel abandoned because of poorly designed and confusing programs and the Prime Minister's unwillingness to recognize the scope of the crisis in certain regions of the country.

Bill C-14 would do something else. It would dramatically increase the amount that the government can borrow by \$700 billion and would set aside \$100 billion of discretionary spending. With hundreds of billions of dollars at his disposal, one would expect that the Prime Minister would present Canadians with a cogent and defensible plan that both supports Canadians in their time of need

### Government Orders

and tackles the immense fiscal challenges ahead. He has not done so.

The Prime Minister boldly stated, "...Canadians are in for a hard winter. But we know that spring will surely follow. That is because we have a plan... plentiful vaccines are around the corner." He even audaciously claimed that things were in good shape. My message for the Prime Minister is this: Things are not in good shape. I have not met one constituent who believes that things are in good shape in our country.

In December, 53,000 Canadians became unemployed. Last month, over 200,000 more lost their jobs.

The government is heading in the wrong direction and the mounting deficits and debt are staggering. The Prime Minister is spending billions, yet millions of Canadians are being left behind.

The fall economic statement fails to put forward a serious plan for the future. There is no successful plan to roll out vaccines. There is no plan for job creation or for small businesses. There is no plan to secure our long-term future and no road map to manage the massive financial liability our country is incurring to support Canadians in their time of need right now.

The Prime Minister's number one responsibility is to give Canadians hope. They want their lives back, they want their jobs back, they want their small businesses back. They want their health, their schools, their places of worship and their communities back. However, the Prime Minister has provided no confidence that things might soon return to normal. All we have is a trail of broken promises on things like vaccines and rapid testing on containing the virus. The reality is that there is no plan, and a vague promise to spend billions more is not leadership.

What would Conservatives do differently and why do we believe we could do better? Let me answer both questions by providing, as I promised, some constructive advice to the government.

First, no recovery is possible until the majority of Canadians have been vaccinated. To date, the Prime Minister has failed to deliver vaccines as and when he promised. He should do what was promised: deliver the six million doses by the end of March and then keep his word and make vaccines available to all Canadians by the end of September. More than 52 countries around the world are now doing it better than the Prime Minister. While he is at it, he should remove the shroud of secrecy around the vaccines. Let Canadians see exactly what has been negotiated with Moderna, Pfizer and others.

*Government Orders*

• (1020)

Second, he should address the declining competitiveness of our economy. In recent years, Canada has lost a historic amount of domestic and foreign investment due to a loss of investor confidence. We lag far behind our fiercest competitors. The government must address the lack of access to capital and talent and the significant regulatory, commercialization and interprovincial barriers that discourage investors from creating economic growth here at home.

Third, there should be no more taxes. Canadians are already taxed to the max. The financial burden on Canadian families has only worsened, with carbon taxes, new taxes on Airbnb rentals and cross-border digital commerce, increased CPP contributions and a clean fuel standard. Stop. People are exhausted. There is nothing left to give.

Fourth, with close to a million Canadians out of work, the reality is that many of these jobs will not come back. Therefore, does the government have an effective plan for retraining unemployed Canadians for the jobs of tomorrow? I have not seen it.

Fifth, economists point out that our aging population is putting a tremendous squeeze on our labour force, undermining our competitiveness when we can least afford it. How do we replace the baby boomers as they retire and exit the economy? Where is the strategy to find talent and train the best and brightest to rebuild our country?

Sixth, small businesses are the lifeblood of our economy and employ over eight million people. Without targeted support, some 240,000 of these businesses will have to be shuttered forever. It is a tragedy in the making. Therefore, what is the government doing about it? Here is a suggestion: Small businesses, unlike the big corporations, need enhanced liquidity as they close up shop and wonder what is next. They need immediate emergency support and longer term financial tools to reorganize, reopen safely and adapt to a transformed business landscape. Will the government make improved support available?

Seventh, I note the Prime Minister has promoted ambitious investments in critical infrastructure, but most are still stuck in Ottawa. This is not the time for him to treat billions of dollars as his personal piggy bank to win the next election. I call for him to champion nation-building investments that make our economy more competitive. That should include things like gateway infrastructure, ports, railways, bridges and it should include energy infrastructure. I ask him to please get these investments out the door. So far it has been all talk and no action.

Last, and perhaps most important, our country faces a massive fiscal challenge. I am asking the government to exercise discipline and put in place the fiscal anchors, targets and rules that will stabilize our nation's finances so our children and grandchildren can actually see some light at the end of the tunnel. What is the government's debt target? How will it be achieved? What budgetary constraints is the government considering? Where did billions in spending go? Are taxes going up? Are we still committed to a declining debt-to-GDP ratio? Canadians have a right to know.

Canadians also have a right to ask us, the opposition, what makes us think we could do any better? I refer them to the great global recession of 2008-2009 when the country, like so many others, took a

hit. It was a Conservative government that skilfully managed spending and investment so Canada was the last G7 country to enter that recession and the very first to emerge. Then we carefully set the fiscal anchors, stabilizing our nation's finances and securing our country's future. Can we do it again? I believe we can, because our kids and grandkids are counting on us.

• (1025)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I want to congratulate the member on his appointment. Hopefully, he will resort to fewer personal attacks than his predecessor did. I encourage him and wish him the best in his new role. Congratulations on being an *opa* 11 times over. My father is one three times over, and to think of the immense joy the member must get out of having 11 grandchildren is truly incredible.

I find it interesting that he talked about this government not being interested in oversight, given that the previous government he was a minister in was involved in muzzling scientists and slashing funding to oversight boards. Relating specifically to the supports for Canadians, which he has been criticizing, he voted in favour of these supports. All members of his party voted in favour of these supports and these supports have made meaningful changes for Canadians.

Would he not agree that because of the supports he voted in favour of, many more Canadians were taken care of than otherwise would have been?

**Hon. Ed Fast:** Madam Speaker, on the issue of oversight, the Minister of Finance, in the last couple of days, issued a letter complaining that the opposition was delaying benefits to Canadians, which is patently false. We are dealing with hundreds of billions of dollars in spending. Oversight is critical.

I want to say that if the member had listened to my speech he would have noticed that I confirmed that we, as Conservatives, have actually supported all of these benefits and support programs. We will continue to support them. In fact, we are going to come up with our own programs that will serve Canadians well right now, in their time of need, while looking at the future as well where we will face an immense challenge fiscally.

*Government Orders*

• (1030)

**Mr. James Cumming (Edmonton Centre, CPC):** Madam Speaker, my colleague talked about the future and talked about economic growth for this country. I would like you to elaborate a bit on the lack of understanding it appears the government has around competitiveness, continuing to burden individuals and businesses with additional taxes and impeding their ability to compete. If Canada is going to grow out of this economy, we have to be competitive.

Do you have any thoughts on that?

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I just want to remind the member he is to address the questions and comments through the Chair.

The hon. member for Abbotsford.

**Hon. Ed Fast:** Madam Speaker, one of the biggest economic challenges facing our country is a lack of competitiveness, especially vis-à-vis the United States. The member will recall that when the previous American administration was elected, it dramatically reduced taxes on businesses across the United States. In Canada, we kept our taxes high. Over the last five years, we have witnessed a historic flight of capital from Canada. We have never seen it this bad before and we need to do much better.

In my speech, I mentioned a number of things that we have to work on, such as commercialization and improving how we deal with innovation in our country to make sure that we grow these businesses right here at home, rather than sending them abroad.

**Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP):** Madam Speaker, in response to the member's comments, a recent poll showed that three-quarters of Canadians support a tax on the super wealthy. This is an issue that could stimulate the economy, but also make sure that the people at the very top pay their fair share.

What is the member's opinion on that?

**Hon. Ed Fast:** Madam Speaker, one of the things that we, as an opposition, proposed in our dissenting opinion on the pre-budget consultations at the finance committee was to undertake taxation reform in Canada. We want a comprehensive review of taxation in Canada to ensure that taxation is fair, to ensure that everybody pays their fair share and to ensure that the tax burden on businesses, the job creators and wealth creators in Canada that generate prosperity, is at a point where we can actually compete and use that to leverage economic prosperity for our country.

**Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC):** Madam Speaker, today I am going to ask Canadians whom they trust. Do they trust the current government and its handling of the pandemic, or do they trust the Conservative Party? I hope we will earn their trust in the future and form a government.

I have gone through the Parliamentary Budget Officer's review of the fall economic statement, including the contents of the fall economic statement the government has proposed, so I think whom they trust is the best question to ask.

I love Yiddish proverbs, and there is a Yiddish proverb that states, "Trust one eye more than two ears." I have heard the debate so far, from various members, on the statement's contents and on

what is going to happen over the next few months regarding this update and what the government expects to do.

Let us admit a few things. The government does not have guardrails. We used to call these "fiscal anchors", which were the fiscal measures the government was going to test itself against to make sure it was not going to get Canada's public finances off the rails. Then it started calling them "guardrails". That is the language that appears in the fall economic statement. It also appears in the Parliamentary Budget Officer's review. In that review, the PBO said that between \$70 billion and \$100 billion of spending had nothing to do with the COVID-19 pandemic, but rather with pet projects of the Liberals. That spending really had nothing to do with addressing a national health emergency.

In that same fall economic statement, when we look at the different figures the government is proposing, \$86.8 billion is being proposed in new spending measures including add-ons to programs, new programs entirely and other changes. The biggest difference the PBO found between its analysis of the numbers, its projections and its modelling was that the economic assumptions on how fast the economy will rebound varied greatly. The biggest difference we find, when we look at the numbers, is that the government has very rosy projections on job growth, economic growth and the opportunities Canadians and residents of my riding will have to find a job post-pandemic, once everything returns to normal. That normal keeps being put off because the government has botched the vaccine distribution and has not made it possible for the provinces to get vaccines to the people who want them. A supporter in Lethbridge sent me a picture of a completely empty vaccination facility. It was waiting for vaccines to come from the federal government so it could get them to the people who want them. That is what we are facing in Alberta. We are facing a federal government that either does not care, is not competent enough or cannot be trusted to get it right.

We can look at the PBO's figures for jobs. In July 2020, the CBC reported that we were about two million jobs behind, based on Statistics Canada information that was probably the labour force survey. Two million Canadians had lost their jobs during the pandemic. It started to go down again in the summer months. More people were being employed or returning to the work they had before, but many of those jobs were lost again.

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Looking at the employment numbers predicted in the fall economic statement, it will take five years to recover the jobs we lost to get to the same level of employment we had pre-pandemic. That ignores things like population growth. It completely ignores the fact we had a high unemployment rate before, especially in Alberta and among young people. We have an unemployment rate of 9.4% officially, but that hides the fact that a lot of young people and students are underemployed and a lot of people are furloughed. Constituents in my riding are facing this. They have employment but are not being paid or they are only working one day a week. One cannot raise a family on one day a week of work. That is the reality. This is not captured in these employment numbers.

Looking at the employment numbers in the fall economic statement, it will take five years to get back to pre-COVID numbers. That does not account for population growth: the people who will immigrate to Canada to pick up jobs, grow our economy and start small businesses. That is a huge indictment and failure of the government to plan and put forward something people can actually trust. At the end of the day, small businesses, entrepreneurs and larger businesses will make investments based on their confidence in the economy, and in earning a return on the people they hire to manufacture new goods and provide new services to Canadians.

• (1035)

To me, that is an indictment. That is saying they do not trust the government. They do not trust the fall economic statement. They do not trust the numbers. They do not trust the plans. They have no trust in the future, so they are not going to invest large sums.

I am going to mention something the member for Abbotsford mentioned before, because I think he was exactly on point. On February 16, 2021, our leader received a letter from the finance minister, claiming that we were somehow delaying the passage of Bill C-14. I have looked at the Business of the House during this week, and the bill was up for debate once this week. Once.

The government sets the agenda. The government can decide which bills are being debated. If Bill C-14 is a priority, then the members of the Chamber should be given the chance to debate the merits of the bill, present the facts, look at the numbers and provide input from our constituents, instead of claiming that we are delaying something.

We have already seen this during the pandemic. We were pretty reasonable. Our leader has said that we were aggressively reasonable. When it was required, we made sure that the government got emergency legislation passed so that programs could be set up to help Canadians, every single time. We even met on Easter Saturday to pass a bill. We let Bill C-20 pass, despite the fact that we had a lot of questions about how the different reporting periods were going to work. We passed it in July 2020. Then, after the fact, we had to go back and fix the mistakes, or the government would have had to find regulatory means to fix various mistakes in the legislation.

Now we are being told, again, to rush things. Perhaps a member of the government caucus will stand and say that we voted for all the programs, and because we voted for them then we should keep voting for them now. We agreed to set up programs. If the government takes away Canadians' ability to earn a living, the government owes them compensation. It is a regulatory taking. It is a national

health emergency, so we should take it seriously. I agree with those ideas and those concepts.

It is important to pass meaningful legislation that would help people who need it. However, the government is claiming that we are somehow delaying it because we simply want to do the role of the opposition, which is to review the bill correctly and provide the voice of our constituents. People are frustrated at home. They have been stuck at home now for almost a year, in many cases. Depending on which province people live in, the restrictions have been deeper and more broad than in other provinces. People are frustrated because they want to see an out. They want to know what the plan is, and what normal will look like once the pandemic is over. It is a legitimate question.

Many members on my side have also pointed out that the unemployment numbers today are higher than at any point, going all the way back to the fiscal fourth quarter of 2015. That is how bad things have become. We are behind G7 countries. We are behind many of the G20 countries, our main competitors for new markets and our main competitors for manufacturing, factory building and services. We are behind.

When it comes down to the issue of trust, a lot of people in my constituency who are energy workers, oil and gas workers, have skill sets that could be used by the marketplace, but they just cannot find employment. I have been going around to businesses in my riding, big and small, to find out what the federal government could do to support them and come alongside them. The business owners do not want subsidies. They just want to be able to earn a living again by providing a service or product that other people want.

Last, on the claim that we are somehow delaying this unnecessarily, we are simply doing due diligence. This is an incredibly important fall economic statement that updates the numbers ahead of the budget that will come down. It is incredibly important, because how we get out of this pandemic will determine whether millions of Canadians will have opportunities to find jobs or not.

The question is, do Canadians trust the Liberal government? I do not.



*Government Orders*

• (1040)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, people cannot trust the Conservative Party. We will spend more time this week on Conservative-chosen debates and their agenda than we actually will on government bills.

The Conservatives prevented us from being able to debate Bill C-14 earlier this week. They often play a destructive role inside the House of Commons, choosing to filibuster and prevent legislation from passing. That is something they have consistently done. That is the reality.

The member is focusing on trust and confidence. Would the member not agree that the facts are there? Under 10 years of Harper, about a million jobs were created, and under fewer than five years of this administration, we have created over a million jobs. Once again, the reality is that Canadians can have more confidence in the Liberal Party of Canada than in the Conservative Party of Canada. Those are the facts and the reality.

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** Madam Speaker, the member obviously has not read his own fall economic statement. It will take five years before we recover the jobs we lost during this pandemic.

There should be some type of award given to the member. The member probably has the most words spoken in the last Parliament and this Parliament too, so if we are going to talk about a member filibustering his own bill, that member deserves an award for it.

**Mr. Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I heard my hon. colleague mention Canada's present unemployment rate and I have heard the Minister of Finance claim that our jobs are returning at a faster percentage rate than in our neighbour to the south. I wonder if my hon. colleague could comment, given that we still have such relatively high unemployment. This is simply mathematics based on the past unemployment rate, is it not?

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** Madam Speaker, my colleague's constituents are lucky to have him as a representative of Chatham-Kent—Leamington.

He is absolutely right. Again, going back to the job numbers in the fall economic statement and the assumptions that are made between the PBO's analysis and the labour force survey, we are far, far behind and we are going to stay behind, because there is nothing in the statement itself and nothing in the updated numbers to show more Canadians going back to work to offset and increase it beyond that, with our population growth, or a new opportunity to close the gap that existed before the pandemic for people who were underemployed or furloughed or who could not find job opportunities.

• (1045)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, to answer the member's question about who Canadians trust, according to Abacus Data on February 6, 71% of Canadians said they approved of the job that the government is doing in supporting the economic needs of Canadians. It is clear that Canadians trust this government to help them out.

As to the specific question, he talked about the amount of deliberation and reflection on the bill that the opposition members need before they can vote on it. Fair enough; that is legitimate. They need it to do their job. Could the member give us an indication as to how much time they need? Will the end of today be good? Do they need another week, or perhaps two weeks? If we could at least get a timeline, that certainly would be helpful.

I really wish Canadians understood the dynamics of the delay tactics that happen in here. Inevitably a member from the other side is going to stand and put forward an amendment, which resets the roster on everybody speaking again.

Could the member give us an indication of how much time is required?

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** Madam Speaker, I have the benefit of giving a short answer. I have the benefit of having been elected as caucus chair for the members on my side, and I look to them. They are the ones who will decide how long we should present ideas from our constituents to the House so that the government can listen to them, because it has not been listening to them.

We heard of one poll on one day. Ruling by polling is not the way to do things. We want things to work out for the best interests of Canadians over the long term. That is what Canadians want. Our constituents expect us to come here and represent them and their views as they call us and email us to complain about the various government programs that have botched the government's vaccine rollout.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ):** Speaking of trust, Madam Speaker, I just want to start by telling my colleagues that the Bloc Québécois is who Quebecers trust. Fortunately, we are here to talk about the content of the bill, so that is what I am going to do, because the Bloc Québécois works for everyone.

Of course, the Bloc Québécois will vote in favour of Bill C-14 because it contains some positive measures. Among other things, it amends the Children's Special Allowances Act to allow for a one-time increase, which seems like a good thing to us. The bill also makes adjustments to the Canada emergency rent subsidy to make an expense payable a qualifying rent expense, which is also a good thing.

However, there are still pieces missing. The Liberal Party should have paid more attention to the opposition's constructive suggestions. We have been proposing for a long time that assistance be provided to property owners, something that is still missing from the bill.

We also think that interest relief for students is a good idea. It makes sense to help students. However, Quebec has its own program, so we expect to receive equivalent compensation.

### *Government Orders*

The bill amends the Food and Drugs Act to essentially facilitate the importation, development and approval of vaccines during research phases. We think that is good.

Something important is missing, however. There is no amendment to the Patent Act and nothing to facilitate domestic vaccine development. We all know that, unfortunately, it is too late to develop a vaccine domestically this time around, but we can look to the future and learn from the appalling mistakes that are still being made. Look at what happened with Dr. Gary Kobinger of Université Laval, who developed a vaccine very quickly with the first \$1 million the government gave him. His request for an additional \$2 million was turned down. In response, the Prime Minister had the nerve to say that he did get help with that first \$1 million.

At some point, we have to see these projects through and we have to trust our people. Does the government not want to see any initiatives or a sense of pride in Quebec? Would it rather that we remain dependent on foreign countries? Would things not be better if we could stand on our own two feet in this area? The answer is pretty obvious. The Premier of Quebec thinks the project makes sense and decided to fund it, even though it is not up to him to do so. The federal government should be taking care of its affairs and properly funding projects under its jurisdiction, instead of interfering in the jurisdictions of the provinces and Quebec.

Extending the regional relief and recovery fund is another positive step. However, less than 25% of the funding will be awarded to tourism businesses. I will talk about that in a minute.

As far as health is concerned, there are plans for additional payments, including for long-term care. We know what Quebec needs and it is not a one-time additional payment. Quebec needs ongoing payments, health transfers.

The amounts borrowed and the financial forecasts are starting to be worrisome. The Parliamentary Budget Officer shared his concerns about the Minister of Finance having a massive capacity to borrow even more money. We have questions about the \$100 billion for the recovery. We still do not know who will get this money and how they will get it. We have no information about that.

The Bloc Québécois has some ideas about the recovery. I invite people in the Liberal Party to look at our little blue document, drafted in the fall, that outlines our party's COVID-19 recovery plan. During the summer, we spoke with real people on the ground, taking all necessary precautions, of course. It is important to mention that the needs are real. The recovery will be a promising opportunity to solve some long-standing problems.

One specific example is the pyrrhotite crisis in the Mauricie region. Just before Christmas, the Government of Quebec announced two new measures to help pyrrhotite victims, in response to the findings of a working group made up of representatives from the Government of Quebec and from the federal minister's office. The federal government was not part of that announcement. I hope that the recovery plan will allocate funding for programs like this one to address the long-standing issues from which people are suffering.

More than two months ago the government announced a highly affected sectors credit availability program. Once again, we cannot get any details. It is unbelievable. People in the tourism, hospitality,

arts, culture and events sectors need assistance and are asking us questions. We do not have any answers for them, since we cannot get answers from the government. We are prepared to work together. I am reaching out, I am open to working together, but the government needs to help us if it wants our help. Let us work quickly.

• (1050)

We raise case-by-case needs in the House, such as the local outfitter that could not access the wage subsidy because its facilities were flooded in 2019. I talked about that case in the House and worked with the Minister of Finance's office, but all the nice things that were said in the House and the positive reception did not amount to much in the end. Campground and sugar shack owners still do not have access to the subsidy either, and their industry is going through very tough times.

Nothing has been done for the aerospace industry yet. Is the government bent on destroying this industry? Does it realize that Montreal is one of the only places in the world where an aircraft can be built from start to finish? Is the government trying to dismantle this sector as it did with the pharmaceutical industry, making us even more dependent on other countries?

I have talked about independence in my speech. If Quebec were free to manage its own affairs, it would do so more efficiently. At the moment, by doing nothing, the federal government is hurting everyone in the aviation sector. The feds still have not forced airlines to refund plane tickets for trips that people had paid for in good faith. Now those people's savings are being used to finance multinational companies in the form of interest-free loans. The federal government is also not providing any assistance to the aerospace industry, even though it really needs helps. There is something wrong with this picture.

I want to come back to health transfers. The federal government was originally funding 50% of health care costs, but now it funds only 22%. It is absolutely ridiculous. In the 2020 fall economic statement, the government announced nearly \$1 billion for long-term care homes, on condition that those facilities provide detailed spending plans. That is out of the question. Health is a provincial jurisdiction. The federal government needs to sign the cheque and send it off to Quebec City, and it is up to Quebec and the provinces to manage it, whether the centralist New Democrats and Liberals like it or not. I urge my colleagues to read the constitutional contract that was signed without Quebec.

*Government Orders*

On the topic of long-term care homes, I want to come back to the Canadian Armed Forces report, which was very clear. Everything should have gone well, but the problem was that the institutions could not comply with the standards in effect because of a lack of staff, resources and money. The solution in this case would be to increase health transfers. I do not know how many times we will have to repeat this. People in the hardest-hit sectors need help quickly. As I mentioned, the federal government does not have the right to impose conditions, and the military's report on long-term care homes is clear.

I will now speak about the tourism industry. I would like the government to understand the importance of this industry. It employs 400,000 workers and contributes \$15 billion to Quebec's economy. This industry needs help, and the government must get going. Changes need to be made. Earlier I spoke about commercial rent relief, but there is also the Canada emergency business account. We have already raised the case of farmers who incurred expenses in the fall of 2019 but are not eligible for this emergency account. We have been telling the government for months that it makes no sense, but nothing has been done yet. In my view, that is not right.

Speaking of agriculture, I want to talk about a number of issues, including the compensation arising from the signing of new trade agreements. In a time of pandemic and crisis, businesses need cash flow. It would really help them. Why have dairy farmers had to resort to taking out newspaper ads to beg for the money they were promised? I just saw one earlier in *The Record*, a Sherbrooke newspaper, saying that dairy farmers are essential and that the government made them promises.

Horticultural producers are calling for bankruptcy protection. This would not cost the government anything, but it is turning a deaf ear. Farm businesses need cash, and the quick and easy solution would be to inject 5% into the AgriInvest program without requiring matching contributions and without needing to create a new program, but the government is turning a deaf ear. The emergency processing fund for the agri-food industry was too small and had very specific criteria. As a result, some businesses made investments but ended up not qualifying for reimbursement.

The government is failing those businesses, and it needs to get moving on these files. In closing, I would like to remind members that the Bloc Québécois is still calling for the creation of a committee that would examine COVID-19-related spending. We all remember the WE Charity scandal. We all want to help people, but we just want to make sure that the money is helping ordinary people, not friends of the government.

• (1055)

**Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Berthier—Maskinong  for his passionate speech on Quebec.

It illustrated once again that the parties in Ottawa, with the exception of the Bloc Qu b cois, have a dangerous tendency to interfere in the jurisdictions of Quebec and the provinces and to not be transparent.

At the end of his speech, my colleague addressed the issue of lack of transparency by referring to WE Charity. Sometimes we are told that there might not be enough money for certain sectors, but maybe that is because of the government's bad choices or poor investments. There are things we do not know, and a committee on the WE Charity scandal could shed light on money that could be invested elsewhere. I am thinking about the specific sectors my colleague mentioned, sectors that have been hit hard by the pandemic and are not receiving any targeted assistance. I am thinking about culture, for instance, which is so important to Quebec and to my riding of Shefford.

What does my hon. colleague think of these sectors that are so important to Quebec but that have been abandoned by Ottawa?

**Mr. Yves Perron:** Madam Speaker, I thank my esteemed colleague.

Simply put, the government needs to release support programs right away. What these businesses need is cash flow. My colleague mentioned the culture sector. Event spaces and theatres are still closed because people are staying home.

This is tragic for artists, yet they have been largely forgotten here. The real tragedy we will see in this sector is a brain drain. Stage technicians and crew members do not have the greatest working conditions. After a year of staying home, they have left this sector for other jobs. Will they come back?

I fear that some of our big institutions will have to close down. This sector is in urgent need of a cash injection.

• (1100)

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, what is very clear is that the Conservative Party of Canada and the Bloc Party do not support national standards of any form when it comes to long-term care. That is in contradiction to what many Canadians from coast to coast to coast want to see. Through the pandemic, we have recognized there is a need for a national role when it comes to long-term care.

I wonder if my colleague from the Bloc could at least recognize that even in the province of Quebec there is a desire to see the national government play a stronger role when it comes to standards for long-term care in Canada.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yves Perron:** Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to see that at least one government member understands that we want nothing to do with national health standards. Health falls under provincial and Quebec jurisdiction. It is set out in the contract that was signed without us. That is the first thing I wanted to mention.

Second, I would be very curious to ask Quebecers what they think, to find out who they trust to manage their hospitals and long-term care facilities.

*Statements by Members*

People look first to the Government of Quebec. If you ask any Quebecker to name their head of government, they will answer “François Legault”. They will not give the name of the leader of the Liberal Party, who I would be pleased to name, but, unfortunately, am not allowed to do so here in the House.

I invite my colleague to look carefully at the polls. Quebeckers think that the Government of Quebec is able to take care of this. However, Quebeckers want their money. That is the big difference.

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ):** Madam Speaker, in his speech, the member for Berthier—Maskinongé said that he had plenty of ideas. I would like him to prove it.

What does he want to do about help for farm work, for example?

Our farmers need help and resources. How can we provide them with tangible assistance?

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The member for Berthier—Maskinongé for a brief response.

**Mr. Yves Perron:** Madam Speaker, it is too bad you are asking me to be brief because, I was elated at the prospect of giving my colleague a long list, but I will stick to a quick summary of what I said earlier.

Right now, farmers need cash. Among other things, we are asking for an additional 5% investment in AgriInvest with no matching requirement for businesses.

How would that help?

It would enable farmers, the people who are literally on the ground and know what their businesses need, to decide what to do with their money rather than spend eight hours a day filling out forms only to be told no because they did not check the right box on the right form.

That is one concrete way to help people. Also, our horticultural producers—

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

Time is up. We will move on to statements by members.

The hon. member for Vaudreuil—Soulanges.

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

### SHARON BRAUNSTEIN

**Mr. Peter Schiefke (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, today I rise to honour the life of Sharon Braunstein. Sharon was best known for being a pioneer in Canada's beauty industry, bringing an unprecedented level of commitment and passion to her craft. For decades, she was focused on one thing, which was lifting, empowering and supporting the women around her.

However, that was not her only legacy. Throughout her life, Sharon wanted to help build a better community around her in any way she could. Whether it was organizing large beauty bashes, benefiting Hope & Cope, volunteering with B'nai Brith, or organizing

countless private events for the underprivileged, those who were sick, and children, she lived her life with purpose and kindness.

Among the hundreds of messages that poured out following her passing, perhaps this one summed up her most important attribute: “Anytime I was in her presence I felt her warmth and kindness. Sharon truly made everyone feel special.”

I offer condolences to her children, Tracy and David; her grandchildren, Joshua, Jason, Alexandra and Jacqueline; and all her family and friends. She was an incredible person who will be missed by so many.

\* \* \*

### RODNEY BOLL

**Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris-Moose Mountain, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Mr. Rodney Boll of Fillmore, Saskatchewan, who unexpectedly passed away on January 28.

Rod left an incredible legacy in his experiences as a world-class trap shooter. He represented Canada in the men's double trap event at the 1996 Summer Olympic Games in Atlanta, one of the biggest achievements in his sporting career. Rod also represented Canada at the Pan American Games in 1995 and 2003.

He captured four international, 23 Canadian national and 47 Saskatchewan trap shooting titles, with the most recent national championship in 2019. Rod competed in trap shooting competitions across the globe. He is also an inductee in the Saskatchewan Sports Hall of Fame. Rod was a proud farmer, a community advocate and an RM councillor. He loved the small-town lifestyle of Fillmore, Saskatchewan.

To his wife Terry, his sons Schön and Kahl, and the rest of the Boll family, I extend my sincere condolences on his loss. Rest assured that Rod and his legacy will never be forgotten.

\* \* \*

● (1105)

[Translation]

### PIERRETTE ARSENEAULT

**Mr. René Arseneault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is a privilege for me to rise today to talk about someone from my riding who is very near and dear to me.

Over the years, she has been a shining example to those she loves most in this world, teaching us to remain curious and, above all, to move forward in life without fearing the unknown. She is one of those individuals to whom all humanity will be eternally grateful for so much love and attention.

As members may have guessed, I am of course talking about a woman, a mother, my mother, Pierrette.

Today, February 19, is her birthday, so I would like to take a moment to pay tribute to her and to all the mothers of this world. I would especially like to thank her for the endless and unconditional love she has always given to her children.

Mom, on behalf of your great-grandchildren, your grandchildren, our sister who is watching over us from her star, my brothers and me, we love you very much. Happy 83rd birthday.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### COVID-19 IN CROSS LAKE

**Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP):** Madam Speaker, Cross Lake here in Manitoba is facing its third wave of COVID-19. There are 204 active cases and counting. Elders, children and essential workers, including water truck drivers, are sick, and self-isolation spaces are full. The community is scared and exhausted. Yesterday, nine flights left the community taking people to safety.

As overall numbers go down in Manitoba, the same is not happening for first nations such as Cross Lake. This has everything to do with the history of federal neglect. Cross Lake is a community of over 8,000 people. It has an acute housing crisis. One of the households affected by COVID has over 20 people living in it. Five years ago, the federal government promised Cross Lake a hospital; the community is still waiting.

At this time, the federal government must pull out all the stops for Cross Lake. The people need a full military response, including medical response. They need emergency infrastructure. Beyond this, Cross Lake needs an end to federal neglect. This is about saving lives.

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#### BLACK CULTURAL SOCIETY OF PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

**Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, here in Canada's smallest and nicest province we have a vibrant Black community supported by the Black Cultural Society of Prince Edward Island.

The organization has taken some major steps forward in recent months. Its first-ever executive director, Tamara Steele, was recently named one of 33 Black Canadians making change now by *Chate-laine* magazine, and it is not hard to see why. Under her leadership, the Black Cultural Society of P.E.I. launched a camp for female-identifying youth of colour to be and grow together, petitioned the P.E.I. legislature for a racially focused review of provincial legislation and co-organized a huge Black Lives Matter march. The organization recently launched a Black business directory including caterers, photographers, dance instructors and clothing designers, all contributing to the island's culture and economy.

I thank Tamara and the Black Cultural Society of P.E.I. for their hard work preserving the island's Black history, promoting racial equity, and creating programs and partnerships to further the success of the Black community on P.E.I.

#### Statements by Members

• (1110)

#### BLAIR WOODS

**Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC):** Madam Speaker, last November, southwest Manitoba lost one of its stalwart individuals with the passing of Mr. Blair Woods.

Blair was dedicated to helping his family and others. He loved farming, starting as a 4-H seed club member, participating in tractor pulls, operating long-haul trucking and sharing his knowledge with countless trainees from around the world through the Canadian Host Family Association. He was a charter member of the Elgin Lions Club. Blair served as president of the board of Manitoba Snowman Inc., and was the second vice-president of the Canadian Council of Snowmobile Organizations.

However, Blair's major service was local, as an RM Whitewater councillor from 1986 to 2002, reeve from 2006 to 2014, and re-elected reeve of the amalgamated RM of Grassland in 2015.

I want to thank his wife Ardelle, his son Brooks, and his daughter Hilary, as well as their partners and six grandchildren, for supporting Blair's tireless dedication and service to others.

May my dear friend rest in peace.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### HOCHELAGA

**Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Hochelaga, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, when it comes to COVID-19, health workers are our first line of defence against the pandemic. Hochelaga and eastern Montreal have been hard hit. Today, I would like to commend all health care professionals and thank them for their dedication. This crisis has taken a toll on their physical and mental health, but they are still here for us.

For Valentine's Day I sent some love to health care employees at the Dante and Marie-Rollet long-term care facilities in Hochelaga by way of chocolates from our local chocolatier, Joane L'Heureux. I also recognized the invaluable work of many workers, including the staff at the Santa Cabrini and Hochelaga-Maisonneuve hospitals, clinics, dentists, optometrists, and also the work of the convenience stores, pharmacies and grocery stores in my riding whose presence is essential.

We must continue to give these people our love and encouragement and our thanks. Most of all, we must continue to protect ourselves and follow public health measures, because we need to protect them as well.

*Statements by Members*

[English]

**DARYL GUIGNION**

**Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, today I pay tribute to Mr. Daryl Guignon, who passed away recently.

Daryl, perhaps P.E.I.'s most dedicated environmentalists, was one of the foremost spokesmen in his own quiet way for watershed conservation in P.E.I. His knowledge of our river systems was second to none.

With 40 years of teaching in the University of P.E.I. biology department, Daryl was famous for his field trips, visits to old-growth hardwoods and sand dune ecosystems, canoe trips to wetlands and snowshoeing in nature. His efforts resulted in the implementation of the Morell River Conservation Zone, the formation of the Island Nature Trust and protection of Greenwich, and numerous Atlantic salmon restoration projects.

Daryl received awards aplenty, but I want to conclude by thanking Rosie, his partner in life and in much of his work. It is said that pillow talk in their household was discussion of brook trout, salmon and smelts.

P.E.I. has lost one of its best. We extend our condolences.

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**ARMENIA**

**Mr. Bob Saroya (Markham—Unionville, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 33rd anniversary of the massacre of the Armenian community in Sumgait, Azerbaijan. In 1988, when Armenians demanded their right to self-determination, Azerbaijani nationalists subjected the Armenian community living across Azerbaijan to a bloody campaign of massacre and deportation. Over 200 Armenian men, women and children lost their lives to a state-sponsored campaign of hatred against Armenians, a policy that continues in Azerbaijan to this day.

On September 27 last year, history repeated itself as the Azerbaijanis unleashed a full-scale war against Armenia and Artsakh. Thousands of Armenians are still refugees, while Armenian POWs still remain under Azerbaijani custody. We must all learn from history and commit to standing up for justice and human rights all around the world.

\* \* \*

**HUMAN RIGHTS**

**Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, two years ago, I stood in the House to call for an end to the arbitrary detention of Senator Leila de Lima of the Philippines, who was imprisoned in February 2017 for speaking out on human rights abuses, including leading a senate inquiry into the extrajudicial killings in the Philippines' war on drugs. It is appalling that today she is still in prison.

The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention found her imprisonment to be contrary to international law. The European Parliament has called for her release and Amnesty International has declared her a prisoner of conscience. Senator de Lima is in prison because she is a human rights defender. She has not only been de-

prived of her freedom, but also her right to fulfill her legislative mandate and participate in democratic debate.

I ask all members of the House to join other parliamentarians around the world in calling for Senator de Lima's immediate release.

\* \* \*

**PUBLIC SAFETY**

**Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the latest Liberal gun policies are a farce in a long line of epic Liberal failures. Within days of announcing yet another attack on farmers, duck hunters and sport shooters, the Liberals have doubled down on their hug-a-thug agenda, repealing mandatory minimum sentences for violent criminals. Canadians are being killed by criminals in possession of illegal firearms, yet the Liberals plan to waste hundreds of millions of dollars on a buyback scheme. Meanwhile, gangs continue to roam our streets unopposed.

Given this threat to Canadians, Liberals should confront reality by getting tough on violent criminals and gun smugglers. Unfortunately, the Liberals do what they always do and attack hunters, farmers and duck shooters with new rules and regulations. It is time to stop attacking law-abiding firearms owners and fight gangs and violence.

\* \* \*

● (1115)

**COMMUNITY SERVICE**

**Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC):** Madam Speaker, temperatures in my riding and across northern Ontario have been around -30°C, or even colder very recently. This is especially dangerous for the homeless population. It is no exaggeration to say that this can be a life-or-death situation.

Volunteers with groups like Compassionate Kenora and Kenora Moving Forward have set up warming centres to shelter the homeless from this extreme cold. Other organizations like the Kenora District Services Board, the Dryden Mission and church communities across the riding continue to do great work, providing housing, compassion and opportunities for the most vulnerable. I know we are all very grateful for their selfless work during these cold winter days. I commend these local organizations, which have been the lifeblood of their communities, and I would like to encourage all Canadians to support their local charitable organizations in whatever way they can.

I am proud to represent the people of the Kenora riding, who consistently step up to support one another and help those in need. It has not gone unnoticed.

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#### SINGLE EVENT SPORTS BETTING

**Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP):** Madam Speaker, yet again I rise in the chamber to discuss single event sports betting, as the chamber voted overwhelmingly in favour of Bill C-218, which would permit each province to determine how to regulate legal betting so revenues can flow, jobs can be created and the billions of dollars feeding organized crime, bookies and offshore operators can end. The bill was originally proposed by NDP MP Joe Comartin, and later me, and I was pleased to withdraw it to permit the member for Saskatoon—Grasswood to join the efforts, and he has done good work.

This decades-plus adventure has been an exhilarating tale. Indeed, it passed in the House before dying in the Senate, but now some members, including the Prime Minister, have changed their vote. That is not a weakness, but a strength, speaking to the urgency of fixing the problem. Among the drama has been the recent government bill, Bill C-13, introduced with some doing victory laps, with chest thumping, high-fives and slapping backs, yet the government scuttled its own efforts, having never brought it to the floor for debate. Ironically, I defended the government, as I think the Minister of Justice deserves credit for drafting good legislation.

As we go forward, I want to thank the members who supported the bill, including unanimously from the NDP, the Bloc and the Green Party, and the Liberals and Conservatives who did not. I remain open to helping to work on this issue.

I thank David Cassidy and Ken Lewenza from Unifor 44, Mayor Dilkens, and Eddie Francis, Rakesh Naidu and Matt Marchand for being on this journey.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### DONALD HARGRAY

**Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I would like to tell the House about the initiative of a hero like no other.

When a blizzard dumped more than 30 centimetres of snow on the cars of hospital staff in Saint-Jérôme, Donald Hargray did something amazing. On the morning of Saturday, January 16, Mr. Hargray single-handedly cleared the snow off 150 cars, plus another 30 that afternoon, so hospital staff could finally go home and rest. Even though the first day was so gruelling, Mr. Hargray returned Sunday morning at 6:30 a.m. to clear off another 40 vehicles.

Armed with a squeegee, a snow brush and a shovel, this 65-year-old hero fought off winter, the doldrums and the hated virus. Mr. Hargray demonstrated that each one of us, in our own way, can do something good in unfortunate circumstances. He had no intention of drawing attention to himself, but his good deed could not go unrecognized.

#### Statements by Members

Thank you, Mr. Hargray.

\* \* \*

● (1120)

[English]

#### COVID-19 VACCINES

**Mr. Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister seems to be very smug these days, patting himself on the back for new vaccine deliveries. Without any sense of irony, he congratulates himself. Does he know that Canadians have been waiting for months to get vaccinated because of the government's failure to get vaccines delivered to Canada?

Now with a limited supply entering the country, the Prime Minister claims victory. Does he realize most of our health care and front-line workers are still not vaccinated? Neither are our seniors. In fact, we are now 54th in the world and dropping quickly, yet the Prime Minister beams with pride while Canada languishes with the worst unemployment rate in the G7. Does he realize there are still 850,000 people looking for work compared with a year ago?

All this points to a Liberal government that has failed the ultimate test: to protect our citizens in an emergency. We need to get the vaccine rollout right in order to secure jobs and secure our economic future.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### BLACK HISTORY MONTH

**Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos (Saint-Laurent, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, February is Black History Month.

This month is an opportunity for all of us to celebrate and honour the legacy of Black Canadians and their communities. It is a time to reflect on how far we have come as a society and what more we can do to improve.

Instead of focusing on the shortcomings of our society and what we have not yet achieved, I choose to focus on my vision for the world that I want to continue to help build, a world where we can all feel safe, a country where we are all treated equally and with respect and dignity.

[English]

I want to continue to help build a world where not only are we all considered equal in the eyes of the law, but we are treated fairly in the application of the law, in the workforce, in the schoolyard and in our neighbourhoods. I invite all Canadians to help build this world.

### Oral Questions

I urge teachers and parents to talk to their kids about racism and discrimination. Instill in them the desire to fight racism and all forms of injustice. Teach them empathy and love, that what affects one of us affects us all and that our fates as Canadians, whether we are Black or white, are all interconnected.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

### HEALTH

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC):** Madam Speaker, as the new U.K. variant starts to spread, Canadians were looking for some reassurance today from the chief public health officer, but this is what she said: “For the next months we’re not going to have a lot of people vaccinated, that’s a fact.” She is right. We are now ranked 52nd, and 51 countries in the world are vaccinating quicker than us, many countries at six, seven and even 20 times our rate.

What is the Prime Minister's plan now? Is he just going to lock us down forever?

**Mr. Darren Fisher (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, we are taking a multi-layered approach to keep Canadians safe. As we have said many times in the House, we are working with the provinces and territories to protect our communities from outbreaks of new COVID-19 variants. As part of that work, we have announced \$53 million to create a variants of concern strategy, which will increase our monitoring and surveillance of new COVID-19 variants in Canada. By partnering with experts in research and public health, this will increase our ability to detect, track and address outbreaks of COVID-19 variants in Canada.

\* \* \*

### PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the purchase of vaccines is the most important procurement since the government bought arms in the Second World War. Thousands of lives and tens of thousands of jobs depend on it. When the Prime Minister thought about who he should buy them from, he looked around the world and said, “I know: the country that is holding our people hostage.” Members can imagine the PRC politburo filled with bureaucrats rolling around on the ground in gut-splitting laughter at the Prime Minister's naivety.

I have a simple question. When he wasted 100 days in the PRC, what the hell was he thinking?

**Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, we have distributed almost 1.6 million doses of the vaccine to Canadians and this week we received the outstanding news that 14.5 million Canadians will be vaccinated by the end of June, leading to every Canadian who wishes to receive a vaccine being vaccinated by the end of September. We have one of the most comprehensive vaccine supply portfolios in the world, and we will continue working with the provinces and territories to—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### THE ECONOMY

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Madam Speaker, vaccines are essential to the economic recovery. We cannot get our economy back to normal until people are vaccinated. It is crucial. We are going to hit a wall if we do not do something.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business has said that one in six businesses is at risk of closing down this year if nothing changes. This would put more than 2.4 million jobs at risk.

How does the government plan to protect businesses and jobs?

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

Since day one of the pandemic, we have been taking action to support our SMEs. As the member is well aware, over 850,000 businesses received assistance from the Canada emergency business account. We are paying the wages of Canadian workers across the country.

We are there for our small businesses. We have been there from the beginning, and we will be there until the end of this pandemic.

● (1125)

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Madam Speaker, Canada has spent more than any other G7 country.

However, the reality is that Canada has the highest rate of unemployment in the G7. If the government's plan were working, our unemployment rate would not be so high. Clearly the plan is not working.

To make matters worse, although this government claims to be feminist, women are the ones who have been hit the hardest. Unemployment among women has risen by 40%.

What is the government's plan for getting Canadians back to work?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I welcome that question because it gives me an opportunity to share something concrete that we can all do to help small businesses and workers, and that is pass Bill C-14. I would like to quote Dan Kelly, who said that this bill has some important measures for small business and urged all parties to ensure this support is passed quickly.



That is one thing we can all do to help Canada's workers and small businesses.

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I would actually encourage the Minister of Finance to go see the 213,000 Canadians who lost their jobs last month and tell them that the guy she quoted just now says everything will be fine. That is not the reality of the situation.

Since the minister wants to talk about Bill C-14, is the government ready to accept our proposal to split Bill C-14 so we can resolve things for businesses and workers once and for all right away?

That is our proposal. Why did they say no the first time?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague just quoted the CFIB.

I will stress once again that the concrete action we can all take to help small businesses in Canada and workers in Canada is to vote in favour of Bill C-14.

This is not a time for partisan disputes. This is a time to unite and help Canadians.

\* \* \*

#### PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

**Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ):** Madam Speaker, plans to develop a vaccine in partnership with China and CanSino failed.

On February 2, the Bloc Québécois asked the Minister of Health why the government had chosen China over Canada's own production capacity. She replied that "the decision about which candidates we should place our bets on was guided by the advice of the experts on the vaccine task force." Yesterday, however, the task force confirmed that, on the contrary, it had recommended against moving forward with CanSino.

Why did the government go against the recommendations of the experts and, more importantly, why did it cover that up?

**Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, as the member well knows, and as all Canadians know, we entered into negotiations with many vaccine manufacturers to ensure that we would have the most diversified vaccine portfolio in the world.

Some 14.5 million Canadians could be vaccinated by the end of June, and all Canadians could be vaccinated by the end of September. That is excellent news.

**Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ):** Madam Speaker, my question is on the recommendations and the fact that the government says it is relying on science, but scientists are publicly saying that this was not the case with CanSino. That is a big transparency problem.

The government says it was guided by science when it refused to give \$2 million to a very advanced Quebec vaccine project at Université Laval. It also says it relied on science to invest \$54 million

in CanSino, but we now know from scientists themselves that that is not true.

Will the government release the expert recommendations that led it to stopping the Quebec vaccine or are we to presume that it was a purely political decision?

**Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, obviously we are guided at all times, especially during the entirety of this pandemic, by experts, scientists and our groups of immunization and vaccine scientists.

That is precisely how we ended up with a very diverse vaccine portfolio, including a Quebec vaccine candidate from Medicago. Obviously we are pleased about that.

\* \* \*

● (1130)

[English]

#### COVID-19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE

**Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Madam Speaker, two weeks ago, I told the House about my constituent, Robert Major, who applied for the CERB in good faith because he was unable to work due to health issues. Robert was asked by the CRA to repay that money.

Last week, the government finally relented and recognized its mistake in clawing back CERB for self-employed Canadians, but it still refuses to recognize its mistake in forcing people like Robert to pay back the CERB.

We are in the middle of the second wave. People are terrified for their future. Why will the government not remove the entire unfair clawback?

**Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, when the pandemic hit, we quickly introduced the CERB, helping more than eight million Canadians put food on the table and keep a roof over their heads.

We know this continues to be a difficult time for many, and we will continue to be there for Canadians who need help. That is why we are allowing self-employed workers who applied for the CERB based on their gross income to keep their payments, as long as they met all other eligibility requirements. For people who may still need to make a repayment, no one is required to do so at this time.

As the Prime Minister said, we will work with Canadians who need to make repayments in a way that is flexible and understanding of their circumstances. There will not be penalties or interest for anyone who erred in good faith.

*Oral Questions***THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP):** Madam Speaker, Canadians are tired of waiting for the government, tired of watching it miss every single climate target it sets. When the Liberals finally introduced climate accountability legislation, not only was it full of gaps, putting off accountability for a decade, but now the government seems to be putting off debate on the bill indefinitely.

We have said that we are willing to work constructively to improve this bill, to make sure there is accountability built in before 2030, but now it has been months and there is no sign of this urgent climate legislation coming back to the House.

Why is the Prime Minister once again putting off climate action?

**Mr. Peter Schiefke (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, we are proud to be the first government in history to put forward a bill that legislates carbon neutrality between now and 2050.

We are diligently working, not only with Canadians but community groups as well as opposition parties, including the hon. member, to look at all possible ways that the bill could be improved upon. We look forward to moving through that process in the House as well in the committee in order to deliver to Canadians the best possible legislation we can. We know we are doing it for our kids and our grandkids, and we want to get it right.

\* \* \*

**HEALTH**

**Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC):** Madam Speaker, this morning the government released new modelling with regard to the spread of variants in Canada. The government has suggested that more lockdowns are needed, but there is something that could fix this problem, and it is a vaccine.

The CBC's John Paul Tasker just tweeted that Dr. Theresa Tam said this morning, "For the next few months we're not going to have a lot of people vaccinated. That's a fact...."

With today's modelling, are the Liberals admitting that their failure to vaccinate Canadians has made Canada vulnerable to variants and will create more lockdowns?

**Mr. Darren Fisher (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, Canadians are proud that we have secured one of the strongest vaccine profiles in the world; more doses per capita than any other country. Health Canada regulators have been working around the clock to complete a thorough and independent review of vaccine candidates.

It is with a bit of pride that I can tell the House that we have now sent 1.56 million vaccines to provinces and territories. We are on track to ensure that every Canadian who wants a vaccine can get one by September. We will continue to have the backs of Canadians.

**Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I think the member has just said that he is proud of the fact that modelling shows that our country is going to have an extreme spread of the variants, that we are going to have to be facing more lockdowns and that the head of the Public Health

Agency has just said, "For the next few months we're not going to have a lot of people vaccinated. That's a fact...."

A portfolio does not mean that vaccines are here right now. The government has left us in a tinderbox situation where these variants and the modelling they are showing might lead to more lockdowns, more lives lost and more jobs lost. This is crazy.

Will the government admit its failure and tell us what it is doing to fix this problem?

• (1135)

**Mr. Darren Fisher (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, as I said earlier, we are taking a multi-layered approach to keep Canadians safe. We are working, as we have from the start, with provinces and territories to protect our communities from outbreaks of these new COVID-19 variants.

As part of that work, we did announce \$53 million to create a variants of concern strategy, which does increase our monitoring and surveillance of new COVID-19 variants in Canada. We will partner with experts and research in public health. This will increase our ability to detect, track and address outbreaks of COVID-19 variants in Canada.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD**

**Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC):** Madam Speaker, today marks the start of an advertising campaign for dairy, poultry and egg processors.

Since 2015, these groups have been waiting for government compensation as a result of the free trade agreement with Europe and the TPP. The Liberals have had six years to honour their commitment. They have not done so despite their promises. The government must give our local processors the compensation that was promised.

What are they waiting for to take action?

[English]

**Mr. Neil Ellis (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, Canada's supply-managed dairy, poultry and egg farmers play a critical role in keeping our rural communities vibrant. In order to offer dairy farmers more certainty, our government announced that the remaining \$1.4 billion of compensation would be delivered over a timeline of three years.

For Canada's 4,800 chicken, egg, broiler hatching egg and turkey farmers our government also announced \$691 million for a 10-year program.

We will always be there to defend supply management. We will not make any further market access concessions.

[Translation]

**Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC):** Madam Speaker, if I were a member of the Liberal government, I would be embarrassed to repeat the same thing week after week. I wonder if the Liberals even believe what they are saying. The new Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement was signed last year.

How long will it take to get this compensation, given that they are waiting on the two others? Our local processors are closing their doors and family businesses are being lost.

What is the government waiting for to take action?

[English]

**Mr. Neil Ellis (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, we promised to fully and fairly compensate the supply-managed sectors, and that is what we did. For the dairy sector, to give an example, that represents \$38,000 each year for the owner of a farm with 80 dairy cows. For chicken, egg, broiler hatching egg and turkey sectors, these programs will drive innovation and growth for farmers.

We will always be there to defend supply management and will not make any further market access concessions.

\* \* \*

#### CANADA REVENUE AGENCY

**Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC):** Madam Speaker, earlier this week, the CRA suspended 100,000 taxpayer accounts after learning that their log-in credentials were found on the dark web. Individuals were informed that in order to unlock their accounts, they would have to contact the CRA. However, as many Canadians have found during this pandemic, it is very difficult to get hold of the CRA.

This is a challenging problem for many people as they are depending on their pandemic benefits as well as filing their tax returns to the CRA. What is the minister going to do to ensure that Canadians are not harmed by CRA's actions?

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the protection of Canadians' personal information is a priority for the CRA. Individuals signed up for My Account alerts may receive a notification from the CRA indicating that their email address has been removed from their account. This step is taken proactively by the CRA as a security precaution. Let me be clear that there was no breach of CRA systems. Those affected by this measure can expect a letter by mail with instructions on how to unlock their accounts in the coming days.

**Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC):** Madam Speaker, with respect, that is not good enough, as 100,000 Canadians have had their information put onto

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the dark web. Yes, it was not through the CRA but through others; however, a chain is only as strong as its weakest link.

The CRA has been breached twice now within the last year. What will the minister do to keep Canadians' information safe?

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, as I stated a second ago, the CRA's top priority is to protect the privacy and data of all Canadians and all information contained within the CRA systems. There has been no breach to the CRA data of any personal information of Canadians. We will continue to work with all Canadians so they can access their accounts again in a safe and secure manner.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ):** Madam Speaker, on February 2, I asked the Minister of Health, in committee, why the government favoured China over Canada's vaccine production capacity. In response, she said that the decision was guided by the advice of the experts on the COVID-19 vaccine task force.

Yesterday, however, Roger Scott-Douglas, the secretary of this vaccine task force, told me that the task force had recommended the opposite.

I will ask my question again because it is still relevant, since Canada is the only G7 country that is not producing a COVID-19 vaccine.

Why did the government first favour China over production—

● (1140)

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. The hon. minister.

**Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, what Canada favoured was securing vaccines as quickly as possible. That is why we acted quickly, guided by experts and scientists, to secure the best portfolio of vaccine candidates in the whole world.

Thanks to this strategy, we will be able to vaccinate 14.5 million Canadians by the end of June and all remaining Canadians by the end of September. This is very good news.

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I look forward to getting my 10 doses, but realistically, I will not get vaccinated for quite some time.

The United Kingdom took a different approach. At the beginning of the crisis, it strengthened its production capacity. It brought together a consortium of experts to work on developing a vaccine long before the end of June. They manufactured it locally and are currently conducting widespread vaccinations.

Canada ignored the advice of its own experts and chose instead to work with China. That approach failed.

Why did the government put all of its eggs in the foreign procurement basket? Why did it not set up a parallel program here?

[*English*]

**Mr. Ali Ehsassi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry (Innovation and Industry), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, allow me to reassure the member that since the start of this pandemic, we have pursued a very aggressive strategy.

However, it is important that I point out to the member that he is incorrect about what the secretary of the vaccine task force said yesterday. This is what was stated:

I think that, Madam Chair, with great respect, CanSino was not at the heart of the Canadian strategy by any means. It was a much more balanced approach.

I think we should continue to be guided by what was said by the secretary.

\* \* \*

**AIRLINE INDUSTRY**

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC):** Madam Speaker, we saw it again in *The Globe and Mail* on Monday. The government is finally ready to release a plan for the airline sector, but we have been disappointed before. We saw the same story in *Reuters* in December. Negotiations only started in November. Why should tens of thousands of airline workers who have had no jobs for the past year believe the government this time?

**Hon. Omar Alghabra (Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for inviting me yesterday to the transport and infrastructure committee, where we spent quite a bit of time talking about the necessity and importance of supporting our aviation sector.

I want to reassure her and all the Canadians who are watching that we are committed to supporting a resilient and strong airline sector. We are in the midst of negotiations with the airline sector and we are hoping to move these negotiations along as quickly as possible.

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the minister is correct. He did appear yesterday at committee. Unfortunately, he got his facts wrong again about purchasing tickets to sun destinations. The minister said that it takes multiple tickets for an American carrier to take a Canadian to a sun destination, when in fact it only takes a single ticket. When will the minister get his facts straight, and when will he fix this problem?

**Hon. Omar Alghabra (Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I will argue that she needs to get her facts straight. I said “multiple trips”.

Let me be very clear to all Canadians. We are asking all Canadians to suspend discretionary and vacation travel. In fact, as of next week, all Canadians who are returning to Canada from a non-essential trip will be asked first to conduct a test prior to boarding a flight. Then, once they arrive into one of the four major airports, they will be asked to spend up to three days at a government—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The hon. member for Calgary Rocky Ridge.

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**COVID-19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE**

**Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC):** Madam Speaker, for months opposition parties have questioned the government about small businesses that have fallen through the cracks of their support programs, especially new businesses, and the government has said, “Don’t worry; these businesses can apply for funding under the regional relief and recovery fund.” However, that fund’s criteria leave the same small businesses behind.

How many loans have actually been made to struggling small businesses, or is this fund another program failing to meet its objectives?

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the member’s question is a timely question. In fact, at the moment the Minister of Small Business is working with the Minister of Finance in order to address this very issue.

We have created numerous programs. We also ensured that the regional relief and recovery fund would be there for businesses that otherwise fell through the cracks. Obviously new businesses created during the pandemic are in a particular situation. Some of them are doing very well, having been created in order to respond to the pandemic, and some of them really need our help.

We are working on criteria in order to make sure the money spent by this government, taxpayer dollars, is being spent appropriately and that we are—

• (1145)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The hon. member for Beauce.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**CANADA REVENUE AGENCY**

**Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC):** Madam Speaker, do you think it is right that Canadians have to wait for weeks or even months to get answers from the Canada Revenue Agency?

Tax season is here, and many Canadians are feeling stressed and anxious. Over 400,000 letters were sent to Canadians by the CRA, which only recently hired 2,000 new employees to work in its call centres. As usual, the Prime Minister reacted too slowly.

When will these employees be fully trained and start working? Does the Prime Minister think this will be enough to deal with the major increase in the number of calls?

[English]

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the CRA is up for the job this year. We know this tax season is going to be like no other for Canadians, especially the nine million Canadians who applied for and accepted the CERB as a result of being impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

We have hired, and we are in the process of hiring 2,000 more call centre agents. We have received over one million calls to the CRA in a given week, versus 70,000 to 80,000 in the year prior. We know Canadians need the assistance and we will be there to help them.

**Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP):** Madam Speaker, many women have contacted my office complaining that the CRA and Service Canada penalize them when they flee abusive partners. One woman fled a 30-year relationship and got a peace bond against her spouse, only to be told she would have to wait 90 days before her benefits would be changed to single. However, if her partner went to jail, the change would be automatic.

Financial hardship is one of the main reasons women remain in abusive relationships. When will the government reduce this barrier by removing this pointless 90-day waiting period?

**Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Rural Economic Development, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, my colleague brings to this House a really important point. Nothing keeps women trapped like poverty. I appreciate his advocacy, and we will follow up.

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#### AIR TRANSPORTATION

**Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Madam Speaker, Air Canada says there will be no passenger refunds without a bailout. The government says there will be no bailout without refunds. We are a year into this pandemic, and somehow the government has allowed billions of dollars of air passengers' own money to become a bargaining chip in negotiations. The U.S., the U.K. and the EU all found ways to mandate refunds; why are other countries so much better at protecting passenger rights than Canada's government is?

**Hon. Omar Alghabra (Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, this is an issue that we also talked about yesterday at committee. I want to assure the member, as we are right now in the midst of discussions with the major airlines, that the issue of refunds for Canadians who had to cancel their trips through no fault of their own is on the table, so I can assure him and all Canadians that this is an important aspect of our discussion.

#### Oral Questions

[Translation]

#### PUBLIC SAFETY

**Mrs. Lyne Bessette (Brome—Missisquoi, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I would like to refer to something that was said recently by Jan Reimer, former mayor and current executive director of a provincial council of women's shelters.

According to her, the proposed legislation is a step in the right direction. She said that we see women being threatened with a gun, and that is perhaps the major cause of death for women in domestic violence relationships. She believes that better control does not take anybody's rights away, but it does protect women's rights to safety.

Here in Quebec, people have seen brutal acts of violence against women—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Order. The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness.

**Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Brome—Missisquoi for her question.

I know that this issue is especially important to her. I think it is safe to say that no other government has done as much to improve gun control in Canada. For example, our Bill C-71 enabled background checks. On May 1 of last year, our government banned 1,500 military-style assault weapons. This week, we are reinforcing that ban with Bill C-21, which also introduces “red flag” and “yellow flag” laws that make it possible to remove firearms and limit individuals' access to firearms if they pose a threat to themselves or to their family and friends. The goal is to fight violence against women and intimate partner violence. This measure was welcomed by the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, by the coalition of doctors for—

• (1150)

[English]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The hon. member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola.

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#### COVID-19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE

**Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC):** Madam Speaker, a small business right here in Ottawa is being told by Parks Canada that it is not eligible for the 75% rent support because its six-month lease is considered an annual lease. As the minister is no doubt aware, six months and a year are two very different things. The government loves to pat itself on the back, but then it actually ignores helping the people who need it.

### Oral Questions

Why is Parks Canada taking the absurd step of counting a six-month lease as an annual one?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am so glad the hon. member shares my concern for helping Canadian small businesses. While we continue to fight COVID, they do desperately need our support, and that is why I would like to ask the hon. member, and all of his Conservative colleagues, to join us in getting Bill C-14 passed.

In fact, Dan Kelly, the head of the CFIB, has called on all of us to get this done. He said that the CFIB urges all parties to ensure this support—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The hon. member for Kelowna—Lake Country.

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### VETERANS AFFAIRS

**Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC):** Madam Speaker, numerous veterans in my riding have come to me expressing concern over extensive delays with Veterans Affairs Canada. One veteran's disability benefit application went in four years ago, and it still has not been processed. Another veteran's application has been undergoing a departmental review, and this has now been since 2019. These are unreasonable and unacceptable delays.

Why is the minister leaving veterans waiting up to four years for their disability benefits to be processed?

**Mr. Darrell Samson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, our recent investment of nearly \$200 million will allow us to hire hundreds of new staff and speed up the process, ensuring that veterans receive faster decisions.

Veterans should receive the benefits and services they are entitled to in a timely manner. As I have said, the backlog is unacceptable. This is my number one priority, and we are going to do everything we can to ensure that we tackle and clean up this backlog.

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### EMPLOYMENT

**Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the government has smashed records when it comes to deficits and debt, but when it comes to jobs, the government gets an F. Canada lost nearly 300,000 jobs in December and January. We have the highest unemployment rate in the G7, at 50% above the G7 average.

For all of the spending and all of the debt, where are the jobs?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, Canada has in fact recovered 71% of the jobs lost in the wake of the pandemic, and that is compared with just 56% recovered in the United States. At 64.3%, Canada today has a higher labour force participation rate than Germany, the U.S., Japan and South Korea.

In January, in the midst of lockdowns, total hours worked in Canada actually increased. Canadians are resilient. They are doing their jobs and getting Canada back to work.

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### HOUSING

**Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the Liberals' newest housing program gave half a billion dollars to big cities but left the little guys to compete for the rest. They say this initial allocation went to cities with severe housing needs, which I do not doubt, and that it was data driven, which I do doubt. Why? We learned in the HUMA committee that CMHC literally has no way of measuring homelessness in rural and remote communities.

Why has the Liberal government turned its back on rural Canada and ignored their housing needs?

• (1155)

**Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the opposite is in fact true. The rapid housing initiative is a remarkable \$1-billion investment directly into the communities that need support to support vulnerable Canadians as they look for housing in this COVID pandemic, as well as through the housing crisis.

I will remind the Conservative member opposite that the policy his party put in place required federal dollars not to be spent on homeless people unless they had been on the street for six months. It was six months before they could receive a penny of support through reaching home in rural, urban and northern communities. That would put a teenager on the street for six months in the middle of winter without any support.

I will take no lessons on fighting homelessness from the Conservatives. They had no fight—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The hon. member for La Pointe-de-l'Île.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** Madam Speaker, everyone across Quebec wants the federal government to subject federally regulated companies to Bill 101.

That is not at all what is being announced today. The minister's solution is to make companies comply with her Official Languages Act, not Bill 101. In other words, the feds want to extend the Air Canada model to other companies. Air Canada leads the way in every category of complaints, and yet that is the model the feds want to use.

Why does the government refuse to subject federally regulated businesses to Bill 101?

**Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages (Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his question.

All Quebecers have the right to work and to be served in French, and that is exactly what we are proposing. Since we respect our jurisdictional responsibilities, we are acting within those limits. The Government of Canada has a role to play in the protection of official language minority communities, and it will do so in partnership with the provinces and territories.

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** Madam Speaker, the federal government is overstepping its bounds and invading Quebec's jurisdiction.

Bill 101 needs to apply to federally regulated businesses. That is what Quebec is asking for. Quebec wants Quebec businesses to be subject to Quebec legislation within Quebec's territory. What the Liberals are proposing is to make them subject to an official languages commissioner who does not even have the authority to give violators a slap on the wrist.

When will the government heed Quebec's demands and apply Bill 101 to federally regulated businesses?

**Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages (Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I wonder why my colleague is using that tone, because if there is one thing we share, it is a love of the French language.

Today we are proud to be tabling an ambitious reform with excellent measures that will help us make progress. This is a big part of our plan to better protect French in this country, give French a boost and increase the rate of bilingualism in Canada.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### PUBLIC SAFETY

**Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC):** Madam Speaker, there is one thing Canadians can count on. When dealing with an embarrassing scandal, such as their failed vaccine procurement, the Liberals will use law-abiding gun owners as their punching bag to create a distraction. They wasted billions on their failed gun registry and now they are focused on buying back something the government never owned in the first place: firearms from people who are following the law.

When will the government stop harassing farmers, small business owners and law-abiding gun owners and instead focus on real criminals?

[Translation]

**Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I want to reassure all hunters, farmers and sport

#### Oral Questions

shooters they are not being targeted in any way and that we have the greatest respect for them.

Our bill actually targets criminals who are smuggling and trafficking firearms. The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police says it wholeheartedly endorses all efforts to strengthen border controls and impose stronger penalties to combat firearms smuggling and trafficking. That is exactly what we are doing with Bill C-21 and several other measures that will make Canadians safer.

[English]

**Mr. Bob Saroya (Markham—Unionville, CPC):** Madam Speaker, there was a bill that would have tackled gun violence in the GTA. It was my bill, Bill C-238, which the Liberals shamefully voted against. After five years of sitting on their hands, the Liberals have introduced a gun bill that will not make the GTA any safer.

How is the minister not ashamed of Bill C-21?

[Translation]

**Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, Bill C-21 is an important step towards better gun control in our municipalities and elsewhere.

It fulfills a commitment we made during the last election campaign to give municipalities more power so they could, for example, ban the storage of handguns within their boundaries. This is a solution we put forward that is being applauded not only by the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, but also by Doctors for Protection from Guns, which stated that it is a comprehensive bill that will save lives, and that is our objective.

\* \* \*

● (1200)

[English]

#### PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

**Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC):** Madam Speaker, last week, the Liberals did everything in their power to avoid releasing the details of the vaccine contracts they signed. The Liberals filibustered the Conservative motion at the health committee. They then wanted to shut down the committee.

Other countries have made vaccine contracts public. The premiers and federal minister disagree about the contents of the contracts. What were in those contract? What are the Liberals hiding from the Canadian taxpayers?

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, we have shown notable transparency. Of course, we communicate dose information to the province and territories and coordinate our vaccination effort very well. Let me quote Innovative Medicines Canada, which represents a number of our vaccine suppliers. It said, “We urge all parties to respect the confidential nature of these commercial contracts which were entered into in good faith, and to ensure that commercially-sensitive and proprietary information is protected from disclosure at this critical time.”

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**JUSTICE**

**Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg (Bourassa, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the COVID-19 pandemic has made the inequalities that already existed in Canada even worse. It has had a devastating effect on racialized and marginalized groups that were already among the most vulnerable. One example is addiction, which continues to claim many victims across Canada.

Yesterday, the Minister of Justice announced major changes to the criminal justice system. Can the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada tell the House about those changes?

**Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Bourassa for his dedication to the most vulnerable Canadians and to the fight against racism.

We listened to Canadians, who asked us to make our justice system fairer and more effective. We announced a number of measures to fight racism. They will provide police officers with alternatives so that substance use can be treated as a health issue. It is time to turn the page on the Conservatives' failed policies and move toward a justice system that really keeps our communities safe.

\* \* \*

[English]

**CARBON PRICING**

**Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris-Moose Mountain, CPC):** Madam Speaker, recently at the public accounts committee, the assistant deputy minister for finance struggled to respond when asked if Canadians are charged GST on the carbon tax, eventually stating that no, they are not. This is both false and misleading, as one of my constituents, who owns a small transportation company, has already paid over \$2,500 in GST on the carbon tax since April 2019.

Why is there such a discrepancy between what top finance officials are saying and what small business owners are actually experiencing?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, our government is absolutely committed to supporting small businesses, and I would love to see members of the Conservative Party join us in that commitment. We disagree about a lot, but if we all believe we need to support small businesses, let us get behind Bill C-14. Dan Kelly was

out there yesterday urging us all to pass this law. It would deliver concrete support. Let us do that.

\* \* \*

**NATURAL RESOURCES**

**Hon. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I have asked this exact same very simple yes-or-no question twice before, in November and December, and got incoherent non-responses from the government, so I am going to try again.

We are importing tens of millions of barrels of oil per year into Canada from Saudi Arabia, Nigeria and Algeria. Is this oil subject to the same rigorous regulations on upstream and downstream emissions as oil coming from Alberta, Saskatchewan and the minister's very own home province of Newfoundland, yes or no?

**Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, let me speak to impending projects in this country. There are 32 oil sands projects in Alberta that are approved and ready to go. They are just waiting for the provincial government's approval or investment from the private sector, but they are ready to go. This is in addition to our support for TMX, NGTL and Line 3. We approved them and are building them. In the case of TMX, we bought it. We are creating thousands of jobs for oil and gas workers because we are proud of them and we are proud of this industry as it continues to lower emissions.

\* \* \*

● (1205)

**EMPLOYMENT**

**Ms. Jag Sahota (Calgary Skyview, CPC):** Madam Speaker, over the last six years, Alberta's economy has been devastated by the policies of the Liberal government. The COVID-19 pandemic has only served to exacerbate these issues. For years we have heard the government say that the best interests of Canadians is its priority.

When will the government stop offering words to Albertans and start taking concrete action to protect our jobs?

**Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I will reiterate to the House: on TMX, we approved it. We are building it, with 7,000 jobs so far. On the Line 3 pipeline, we approved it, with another 7,000 jobs created. On NGTL, in 2021, we approved it, with thousands of jobs created. On LNG Canada, we are building it, with thousands of jobs created. On orphan and active wells, \$1.7 billion, with thousands of jobs created. There is also the wage subsidy, with more than 500,000 workers kept in their jobs in the pandemic in Alberta alone.

That is our record and we are proud of it.



### SMALL BUSINESS

**Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the pandemic has dramatically impacted many small businesses and our federal government supports for programs like the Canada emergency wage subsidy and the Canada rent subsidy have been lifelines for businesses and very much appreciated. However, some new, legitimate businesses opened after March 2020. Many of them had signed leases and contracts in the months prior to the pandemic and cannot qualify for these benefits. Izibele and Century Park Tavern are just two examples in my riding.

Can the minister update the House on what our federal government is doing to support new businesses?

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, obviously my colleague knows there is nothing more important to us than helping our small businesses and Canadian employees right across the country, but there is also no one-size-fits-all solution for this relief. We created a very wide range of supports and programs to help small businesses, including the regional relief and recovery fund, which is there and designed, really, to help support businesses that do not qualify for other programs.

That being said, my colleagues in government, along with me and the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Finance had a very productive meeting last week, looking at solutions, particularly for new businesses. I encourage the member—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The hon. member for Vancouver East.

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### COVID-19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE

**Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP):** Madam Speaker, my constituent has been earning \$5,000 to \$7,000 each year as a busker. He has diligently declared his self-employment income on his income tax return for the last two years. The pandemic has seen his income reduced drastically. In applying for the CERB, he was told by the CRA that his income tax return was not good enough. The CRA wants to see receipts or bank deposits for the \$20 to \$25 he earned in loose change as a busker each day. That is just absurd.

Is the government treating shareholders of big corporations the same way, or is this just for low-income residents? Will the minister take immediate action to correct this unjust treatment?

**Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, our government has been clear from the beginning of the pandemic that we will always be there to support Canadians. The Canada emergency response benefit eligibility criteria clearly stated that a person had to earn at least \$5,000 in 2019, or over the last 12 months, from employment income, self-employment income or provincial benefit payments related to maternity or paternity leave.

CERB eligibility was not dependent on having filed a tax return, but the CRA encourages everyone to file their 2019 tax return so that the agency can confirm their eligibility.

### Points of Order

#### INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

**Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Fredericton, GP):** Madam Speaker, exactly one year ago today, an emergency debate took place in the House addressing the Wet'suwet'en fight for their inherent right of self-government on their ancestral territory. Time has passed, but nothing has changed. Land guardians in Nunavut are now forced to defend their rights and their territory in the face of the Mary River Mine expansion. Once again, indigenous voices are trampled on, ignored or distorted. The Minister of Infrastructure recently said that government investments are almost binary, that we either increase emissions or reduce them.

If it is binary, on which side is the government? Will it fight the climate crisis or pretend to do so? Will it respect indigenous rights and international covenants, like UNDRIP, or legislate them out of existence?

**Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, in 1997 the Supreme Court of Canada encouraged the parties in its decision in the Delgamuukw case to pursue good-faith negotiations regarding aboriginal rights. This MOU establishes a path for substantive negotiations toward agreements that would describe the implementation of the Wet'suwet'en rights and title. The parties are working toward an agreement on recognition of rights and the title that will set the stage for future negotiations and implementation. Such agreements, once reached, will be taken back to all Wet'suwet'en people through a ratification process that must clearly demonstrate their support.

\* \* \*

● (1210)

#### POINTS OF ORDER

##### ORAL QUESTIONS

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The hon. member for Calgary Midnapore is rising on a point of order.

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC):** Madam Speaker, during question period, the Minister of Transport implied that my facts were incorrect regarding the ability to purchase a single ticket to a sun destination.

I was just on Expedia and had the ability to purchase a—

*Routine Proceedings*

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** That is a point of debate and I ask the member to please take her seat.

On another point of order, the hon. parliamentary secretary.

**Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I believe this is a proper point of order, especially as it deals with the usage of inappropriate and unparliamentary language. I believe that in one of the opening questions, the member for Carleton referred to the opposite of heaven in raising a question and trying to emphasize a point.

I do not think the usage of the term “hell” is parliamentary language, and I would ask him to retract it and for you to encourage the use of parliamentary language.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I appreciate the point of order that has been brought forward. I will look at Hansard to see what exactly was said and come back to the House if needed.

I would just remind members to please be mindful of the language they use to ensure that it is acceptable language within the House of Commons.

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

### OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the Government of Canada's public reform document for the modernization of the Official Languages Act, entitled “English and French: Towards a Substantive Equality of Official Languages in Canada”.

\* \* \*

### OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, every time I have risen in this House over the past year, I remember how things have changed.

Almost a year ago to the day, we were all gathered here, not knowing what to expect. Since then, we have had a difficult year, a year marked, yes, by upheavals and mourning, but also by the resilience, courage and compassion of our fellow citizens.

[English]

In saying that our world has changed, I am just stating the obvious, because across time and place change is the only constant, last year, this year and the next, and when it comes to change, we really only have two options. We can try to fight it or we can choose to see the possibilities that come with it. Time and again Canadians have chosen the latter.

[Translation]

The country we know today was shaped by people who have managed to adapt to and seize the opportunities of a changing world, a country that is strong in its diversity and, of course, proud of its differences, a country that is bilingual. Having two official languages is one of Canada's greatest strengths. Our two official languages set us apart and help us stand out on the world stage.

Each of us has our very own personal history when it comes to official languages. My history is that of a unilingual francophone family, established in a neighbourhood in the suburbs of Montreal where children, regardless of their origins and languages, had made friends. My story also carries the dream of my mother, a teacher, who always insisted that her children become bilingual, convinced that English would open all doors for them.

I was lucky enough to grow up in an environment where French and English come together. However, this bilingual country in which we live is no accident. If the French language is still so alive in North America, it is because Canadians, and Quebeckers in particular, are committed to protecting it and making it flourish.

More than 50 years ago, we collectively chose a modern vision of the state, a state where our two official languages, those two languages that unite and define us, occupy a central place not only in the affairs of our country, but also in our lives. In fact, we owe a lot to the Official Languages Act. Thanks to this act, millions of francophones have the right to be served and to live in their language from coast to coast to coast. Thanks to this act, our young people who live in official language minority communities go to school in their mother tongue, a right that their parents were sometimes denied.

From Moncton to Whitehorse, Sherbrooke to Sudbury, the Official Languages Act protects language rights and ensures the vitality of our communities.

● (1215)

[English]

So many of us benefited from growing in a bilingual Canada: kids from the Prairies who studied in French immersion, teenagers in New Brunswick who met their best friend in English class, francophones who learned English on the slopes of B.C., anglophones who fell in love with cities like Montreal and Quebec. In Canada, language is not some abstract concept. It is our connection to the past. It is the vector through which our stories get told and retold.

In fact, language is not just an important part of who we are as individuals, but how our country can be. It is part of our DNA. This is true of French and English, of course, but also of indigenous languages, which any language policy in the country should and must take into account.

That is why, in 2019, we introduced the Indigenous Languages Act to reclaim, revitalize, strengthen and maintain indigenous languages. This was historic legislation, but we know that the work being done by indigenous communities to recover and reclaim their language continues, and they can count on our government's steadfast support.

[*Translation*]

Our world is changing. More than ever, we are interconnected with each other. Globalization has had the effect of imposing certain languages to facilitate trade beyond our borders. At the same time, the rapid development of international trade and digital technologies, including social media and content delivery platforms, are promoting the use of English.

In the face of these changes, our two official languages are not on equal terms. There are eight million francophones in Canada in a North American ocean of more than 360 million inhabitants, most of them anglophones. The use of the French language is on the decline in Quebec and elsewhere in the country. It is up to us not only to protect our language, but to offer a modern vision of our linguistic duality and its future.

The time has come to act. We must act to ensure that all our citizens are reflected in the objectives of the Official Languages Act. We must act to ensure the sustainability of a strong and secure francophonie in the country, including in Quebec. We must act in the face of contemporary challenges that directly impact the development of a francophone identity in our children. We must act to promote our Acadian, Quebec and francophone cultures across the country.

[*English*]

Whether people are part of the English-speaking majority, a French-speaking Quebecker or a member of an official language minority community, their unique reality should be reflected in our laws. That is exactly why our government is introducing a series of reforms so our two official languages stand on more equal footing.

• (1220)

[*Translation*]

Today, our government is presenting a reform aimed at establishing a new balance in our linguistic policies. As French is a minority language in the country, there must be real equality between our two official languages. The government has a responsibility to ensure that we can learn, speak and live in French in Canada, as is the case with English. Today we are sharing our game plan.

First, for a language to be alive, its culture must be strong. Francophones must be able to make their voices heard, especially in the digital space where English dominates. To do this, our federal cultural institutions, such as Telefilm and the NFB, must support and encourage the production and distribution of French content. The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission also has a role to play. On this point, Bill C-10 is crucial to the future of broadcasting. We are also committed to protecting CBC/Radio-Canada as a flagship cultural institution and a vehicle for the dissemination of our two official languages and bilingualism across the country.

### *Routine Proceedings*

Our government also recognizes that the private sector has a role to play in ensuring the protection and promotion of French. People have the right to be served and to work in French in federally regulated businesses in Quebec and in other regions of Canada with a strong francophone presence. These rights and their recourses will therefore be established in federal legislation, in consultation with the affected sectors.

That said, when it comes to ensuring respect for bilingualism in the workplace and ensuring the right to work in one's first official language, the federal public service must lead by example. After all, it is Canadians' primary point of contact with the federal government. That is why we are going to create a central body within the government that is responsible for ensuring compliance with language obligations.

We will also strengthen the powers of the Commissioner of Official Languages, and we will continue to defend and promote French abroad in our embassies, in our missions and within major international organizations, such as the UN and the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie.

The Government of Canada will also make a point of attracting and facilitating francophone immigration outside Quebec. Increasing the demographic presence of francophones outside Quebec is a priority for us. For some communities, it is even a matter of survival. Over time, immigration has changed our language and enriched our communities, and that must continue.

Finally, all our institutions must be bilingual, including the highest court in the country. The Official Languages Act must require that judges appointed to the Supreme Court be bilingual.

[*English*]

As part of our efforts to modernize the Official Languages Act, we will also take steps to promote bilingualism from coast to coast. It should be easier for English Canadians to learn French, but right now too many parents have to get on a wait list or go through a lottery system before they can send their kids to French immersion. These parents and their kids are being turned away because there are not enough available spots. This is unacceptable. We will get rid of wait lists for French immersion.

All official languages communities, English-speaking Quebeckers and francophones in the rest of the country have constitutional rights. Our communities are only as strong as their institutions, as strong, of course, as their schools, their universities and their cultural centres. That is why the federal government will continue to support those who seek to uphold their constitutional rights. We will stand by their side.

[*Translation*]

The history of our two official languages is one of resilience marked by persistent demands. This is the story told by Gabrielle Roy, Michel Tremblay, Dany Laferrière and Antonine Maillet.

*Routine Proceedings*

[English]

However, that story, our story, has been told through the works of Leonard Cohen, Rufus Wainwright, Margaret Atwood and Gord Downie. This is the beauty and the strength of our country. Defending our official languages is defending who we are as a country.

• (1225)

[Translation]

Our history has stood the test of time. It has also taught us that we can never take our linguistic duality for granted. We always have to do more, especially when it comes to protecting the French language. With this reform, we are paving the way for the next 50 years. We are adapting to a world that is rapidly and constantly changing. We are preparing for the challenges that arise and those that await us.

Our government's vision is rooted in studies conducted by House of Commons committees, the Senate and the Commissioner of Official Languages, but it is above all rooted in the hard work of those who are passionate about our official languages, those whose mother tongue is French or English, those who have learned our official languages or who are working on it, those who enroll their children in French immersion programs and those who are proud to say that two of their languages are international languages.

I am grateful to all these people. Their ideas and work have been a constant source of inspiration, and we look forward to continuing to work with them, as well as all official languages partners and allies across the country. Our society, our country and the future of our children in our two official languages will be all the better for it.

**Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking the minister for presenting her discussion paper this morning. I want to acknowledge her work on the official languages file, as well as some of the measures she is taking or says she will take. I do truly believe that she cares about protecting French and promoting our two official languages. However, the means the government uses to attest to that do nothing to prove that this is in any way a priority.

[English]

Let me take a moment to congratulate my hon. colleague for her work on this file, but, to be honest, there are a lot of words but few actions.

[Translation]

Consultations on modernizing the Official Languages Act have been ongoing across the country for years. It is important to remember that the Liberals have been in power for over five years. Organizations have been consulted, the Commissioner of Official Languages has made his recommendations and the Senate has looked at the issue.

To know which government one is dealing with, and what it will be able to accomplish in the future, one must look to the past. Over the past several months, examples have been piling up of the Liberal government's failures in the area of official languages. One only has to think of WE Charity, a unilingual anglophone organization; the text messages sent to Quebecers only in English in the middle

of a pandemic; the report on Governor General Julie Payette that was submitted in English only, even though it was commissioned by the Prime Minister's Office; federal public servants who have said they feel uncomfortable speaking French at work; and the fact that the minister has not implemented any of the recommendations in the report of the Commissioner of Official Languages. Franco-phone universities are fighting to survive due to a lack of funding. Many surveys and studies indicate that French is on the decline in Quebec and across the country. Multiple calls by many stakeholder organizations for the Official Languages Act to be modernized have gone unheeded.

Everyone was expecting a bill to be introduced today, but instead, here in the House, we can see that the government hatched an inaction plan. It is not an action plan, but an inaction plan because there is no scope and it does not contribute in any way to addressing the problems I have raised, at least not right away. Despite the fine promises, the minister is committing only to investing to reduce the wait lists for French immersion schools for anglophone students. She is not proposing anything new to support the French-language educational institutions in minority communities that are struggling. Every school board in the country urgently needs help.

The Liberals are also rejecting the unanimous call from stakeholders to create an official languages administrative tribunal to allow minorities to better assert their rights. The Liberals continue to ignore the request of the Legault government and every member of the National Assembly of Quebec from all parties to protect French in Quebec by applying Bill 101 to federally regulated private businesses.

Instead, the government presents an electoral campaign plan and hopes that everyone will drink the Kool-Aid without saying a word. Why should francophones across the country believe the Liberals today? Are the Liberals known for keeping their promises? The answer is no.

In my view, what is even more frustrating is that the Liberals are being partisan in their handling of the official languages issue. They were supposed to introduce a modernization project last spring, but then postponed it to the fall. When the Liberals began feeling the pressure of the opposition's efforts in the fall, they postponed everything to the beginning of this year. However, the Standing Committee on Official Languages, which has Liberal members, voted in favour of introducing a bill before the holidays. Then, at the start of the new year and to everyone's surprise, the minister announced with a drum roll that a white paper rather than a bill would be tabled. This took everyone by surprise when the news was reported in print media. Unfortunately, no one and no official languages advocacy organization in Canada knew about it.

• (1230)

In the end, it is not even a white paper. It is just a working document with intentions and no action items. It is disappointing to see the Liberals still drawing things out and not making official languages a priority, as they should be doing. They believe that with two or three photos, some pretty words and a few flashy ideas, francophones and minority language communities in Canada will not notice.

I am truly appalled. I will reiterate that there is only one party that will make good on its commitments, and that is the Conservative Party and its leader, the next prime minister of Canada.

[*English*]

When we pay attention to what our leader is presenting, francophones and anglophones in minority situations all across the country will see that our proposals are clear, real, achievable and, above all, that they will be implemented in the first 100 days of a Conservative government.

[*Translation*]

At the heart of our message is the recognition that our country was built on a compromise between the two founding peoples, one francophone and one anglophone, along with the first nations. The French language is the essential component of that agreement.

It is the federal government's responsibility to ensure the vitality of francophone communities all across the country. This country was born in French and we must not forget that. A country that does not protect its founding partnership is sadly destined for failure.

As it stands, the act is based on the principle of reciprocity between the two official languages, but if we are being honest, that statement does not reflect reality. For decades, the Liberals have refused to acknowledge that French is the only language at risk in Canada. Let me be clear. The federal government must develop an asymmetrical approach that prioritizes protecting the French language.

The Conservative Party of Canada is proposing a number of practical measures.

[*English*]

First, the wording of the Official Languages Act must be changed to be stronger in meaning. Second, where the law remains vague is in speaking of positive measures. We believe positive measures should be described with concrete actions.

• (1235)

[*Translation*]

Third, the Conservatives believe that all of the implementation and enforcement powers of the law must be centralized under the Treasury Board.

Fourth, it is also time to set up an administrative tribunal that would meaningfully address complaints and improve the services offered to francophones throughout Canada. We were very surprised that the Liberals ignored that unanimous request from organizations representing francophones across the country.

Come to think of it, I can understand why the Liberals do not want their actions toward francophones to be brought before a tribunal. We need only think about what has happened in recent months with WE Charity, the texts in English and the English-only report on the Governor General. Why would the Liberals want to have to account for their actions when we see what is currently happening in Canada?

### *Routine Proceedings*

These four measures will help to modernize the Official Languages Act.

We also know that funding for our francophone schools is problematic. Our leader has pledged to support them urgently. Our teachers are front-line workers who provide a francophone education to the next generation, and they deserve stable funding. The Conservative Party is pledging to provide significant funding support for francophone post-secondary education in minority communities and to create a new funding envelope. These universities play an important role in helping francophone communities thrive, so they are eminently deserving of the federal government's attention in partnership with the provinces.

Let us remember that the last time it was in power, the Conservative Party convinced the House of Commons to recognize the Quebec nation. We gave Quebec a seat at UNESCO. Our former prime minister, Stephen Harper, always started his speeches in French no matter where in the world he was. Former prime minister Brian Mulroney was the last prime minister to reform the Official Languages Act.

All of the big changes came about under Conservative governments. The big difference between Conservatives and Liberals is that Liberals are all talk, whereas Conservatives take action and make things happen.

What does modernizing the Official Languages Act mean?

It means a renewed spirit that prioritizes protecting French across the country. It means funding for our francophone universities in minority communities and respect for Quebec's jurisdiction, especially relating to Bill 101. That is the Conservative Party of Canada's vision for official languages.

I can confirm that we will take action very soon, as soon as we are back in power.

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Official Languages talked to us about the inevitable changes that come with globalization, the capacity of Canadians to adapt, but in terms of language, the primary change we have seen in Canada from day one is the decline of French.

After all sorts of assimilation measures, after successfully making francophones in Canada the minority after 1867, we went from 29% to 20.5% of francophones in Canada from the point of view of language spoken at home in Canada.

For francophones outside Quebec, those hit the hardest by all the assimilation measures, they went from 4.3% of francophones in terms of language spoken at home in 1969 to 2.3%.

The rate of assimilation, of anglicization of francophones outside Quebec increases with every census. The rate is now 40%. It is completely unacceptable and it proves that the Official Languages Act is a complete failure.

What Quebecers and Canada's francophones have demonstrated throughout history is not a capacity to adapt, but resistance. We have resisted assimilation and English Canada's repressive laws against francophones.

*Routine Proceedings*

The history of language in Canada is nothing like the fairy tale the Minister of Official Languages presented. The British and Canadian governments knowingly used anglophone immigration and laws prohibiting French schools to anglicize francophones and keep them in the minority.

As francophones rose up and the independence movement grew in Quebec, the federal Official Languages Act was like a Band-Aid on a gaping wound. Under this legislation, services in French were inadequate and spread too thin to counteract the assimilation of francophone communities. In Quebec, the legislation essentially reinforced the use of English.

When Pierre Elliott Trudeau became prime minister, he was quick to dismiss the demands of André Laurendeau from the famous Laurendeau-Dunton commission. André Laurendeau was calling for the collective rights of francophones and Quebec's special status to finally be recognized.

The federal government does not recognize French as a minority language in Canada and North America, even in Quebec, so federal funding for official language programs in Quebec is provided only to the anglophone community and its institutions, which are already well funded, even though it is the French language that is at risk and on the decline in Quebec. That is how things were 50 years ago, and that is how they are again today.

Yes, Quebecers, not the federal government, rallied to protect and promote their national language. The Quebec government, led by René Lévesque, adopted the Charter of the French Language on August 26, 1977. Since then, the Liberal Party of Canada has been a fierce opponent of Bill 101. The current Prime Minister's father denigrated it from the start, fighting it and weakening it with his strategy of repatriating the Constitution in 1982. The federal Liberals rejoiced every time a Canadian court struck down our law.

The numbers do not lie. Between the 2001 census and the 2016 census, French as the language spoken at home dropped by 2.5% in Quebec. The numbers have never been so low or dropped so much over such a short period of time. Charles Castonguay's book clearly shows this. The cause is not immigration but the anglicization of allophones and, increasingly, of francophones in Quebec.

Quebeckers know it and are legitimately concerned. They are clearly expressing their attachment to the language and their desire to strengthen Bill 101 and the Official Languages Act to improve the status of French in Quebec.

According to the most recent survey, 77% of francophones want those laws to be strengthened, and 78% support the Bloc Québécois's proposal to apply Bill 101 to federally regulated businesses. The Liberal Party of Canada has opposed Bill 101 for 40 years. However, today, armed with this opinion data and despite the doubts expressed by many of its members, the party recognized two things that Quebec has known for a very long time.

● (1240)

They are two very obvious things. First, French, unlike English, is a minority language in Canada. Second, French is in decline in Quebec and outside Quebec. The minister needs to take action.

We have the right to ask why the Liberal government is refusing to respond favourably to the Government of Quebec's official position on the modernization of the federal Official Languages Act. What Quebec is asking for is clear and reasonable. It wants the federal government to recognize that the Quebec government must have sole authority over language policy within Quebec. That means that the federal government must fully respect Quebec's legislative authority and recognize that the Charter of the French Language takes precedence over the federal Official Languages Act. In no way and at no time should the federal policy undermine Quebec's language policy. However, the opposite is happening.

Before implementing any language measure in Quebec, the federal government should have to get the consent of the Government of Quebec. That is what the current Government of Quebec is calling for.

Workers in Quebec should all have the same rights. That is a fundamental principle. The minister's proposal means that this value will not be respected. The solution, a simple and logical one, has the support of the majority. The Liberal Party is all alone. It alone is refusing to let the Charter of the French Language protect the rights of all Quebec workers. People across Quebec have spoken up, demanding one simple thing from the federal government: apply the requirements in the Charter of the French Language to federally regulated businesses located in Quebec. It is not complicated. This is what is being called for by the Government of Quebec, a unanimous National Assembly, the mayors of our biggest cities, major unions, the Union des artistes, the Union des producteurs agricoles, and the list goes on.

The Bloc Québécois has been asking for this for a long time, and it is bringing the issue forward again by introducing its bill, which clarifies the application of the Charter of the French Language in Quebec. The Minister of Official Languages is against it. We are dealing with more than just a disagreement over public policy. Language is the basis of Quebec's uniqueness and the identity of the Quebec nation. It is the glue that binds us together as a people. We would be more than happy to see the Government of Canada finally fulfill its responsibilities towards the francophone and Acadian communities. It is all well and good to have bilingual judges and to fund immersion schools, but these schools often serve to assimilate francophones outside Quebec. Should the federal government not start ensuring that all francophones outside Quebec have access to French-language schools run by and for francophones? That is even more important for universities and post-secondary institutions.

It is all well and good to promote francophone immigration outside Quebec, but what is the point of that if the newcomers are anglicized once they arrive? As the only francophone state in North America, Quebec has a huge responsibility towards francophones across the continent. The leadership of Quebec, along with a change in approach at the federal level, would benefit all francophone and Acadian communities. For this to happen, the federal government will have to recognize, in its own legislation, that Quebec has sole authority over linguistic planning and development in Quebec and that Quebec, with or without Canada, is the sole master of its own destiny.

On November 27, 2006, the House unanimously adopted the following motion:

That this House recognize that the Québécois form a nation within a united Canada.

Even though that motion has never resulted in anything concrete, and even though I think Canada has never been a united Canada, this government's choices continue to diminish the words of the Quebec National Assembly. By refusing to recognize Quebec's cultural and linguistic sovereignty and by refusing to accept the consensus of the Quebec National Assembly, the Government of Canada is proving that its recognition of the Quebec nation was nothing but a decoy, a trick, a sham.

• (1245)

Ottawa continues to deny the collective rights of Quebecers, their right to self-determination, their right to ensure the future of their language, and their right to truly live in French in the only state where they consider themselves the majority and feel at home.

In fact, the Minister of Official Languages made a fine speech full of good intentions, but there is really nothing tangible for Quebec, just crumbs.

Will the federal legislation on official languages stop justifying the watering down of Bill 101? Will the federal legislation recognize that French is the only minority language and the only official and common language of Quebec, instead of always promoting more services in English and institutional bilingualism?

Bill 101 was established to counter institutional bilingualism and to make French the common language of all Quebecers. It is not a factor of exclusion, but of inclusion. Bill 101 is the biggest gesture of integration and inclusion that the Government of Quebec has made. That is why we speak proudly of the children of Bill 101.

However, French is steadily losing ground in Quebec and Canada. If we do not make any major changes, it will become increasingly more difficult to turn this around and make French the common language in Quebec. The federal government needs to acknowledge that fact and acknowledge that Quebec has to be the master of its language policy. That way we could make French the true common language of Quebec and ensure the future of French in Quebec.

In the wake of the speech by the Minister of Official Languages, the only thing that will happen is that the federal government will show once again that the only path to ensure the future of French in Quebec is independence, which would in fact allow Quebec to fully support francophone communities outside Quebec.

• (1250)

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today to participate in this extremely vital and important discussion on the document tabled by the Minister of Official Languages.

I want to take a moment to say that, as a Quebecer, I had the good fortune to be born into a francophone family. My father was a poet and a writer, so I grew up in a home where I was literally surrounded by books. All of the walls were bookshelves filled with books. My brother and I had a very happy childhood filled with Quebec music, including that of Félix Leclerc, Gilles Vigneault, Pauline Julien and Claude Gauthier. We also had the opportunity to

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meet poet Gérald Godin a few times. All of this helped us to develop a love of the French language. We also grew up listening to music by French musicians, such as Jacques Brel, Georges Brassens, Barbara and Léo Ferré. The French language is part of my DNA, and it is also part of the DNA of my political party, the NDP, which, on many occasions in the past, has taken action and proposed sensible and effective measures to help the French language thrive in Quebec and throughout Canada.

I am pleased to participate in this debate because I want to express my concern, which is shared by many of my colleagues, about the ongoing threats to the survival, maintenance and development of the French language in Quebec and across Canada. I think virtually all of us would agree that French is in jeopardy at the moment, that we must take urgent action, that there has been a marked decline in Quebec and the other provinces, that the French language requires greater support and that federal institutions and the Government of Canada should be more respectful of it.

Once we realize that, we have to choose our words carefully. Saying that French and English are on equal footing in theory is perfectly acceptable. For example, we agree that Quebec's anglophone minority has historical rights and institutions that must be preserved and protected, but people also have to understand that only one of our official languages is vulnerable and under threat, and that language is French.

We need to protect the French language, and doing so will require measures and additional assistance. French is a beautiful language loved by all, but it is in the minority in North America. There are some nine million francophones in a sea of around 370 million anglophones. We neighbour the United States, the largest producer of cultural content, such as music and film, in the world. The United States may come behind India, but we have fewer influences from India here. We need to acknowledge this and do something about it. Some francophone communities have been on the decline in recent decades. We need to stop the decline once and for all and support francophone communities. Some of these communities are vibrant and captivating and they are achieving great things, while others are very much struggling.

In some parts of Quebec, even, the situation is bleak, and downtown Montreal has struggled in recent years on the customer service front. We all need to be able to acknowledge this situation and then take action. I want to talk about the phrase "take action", because that notion came up a number of times in the minister's statement, but I am not too sure what she meant by it. The government seems to use the notion of taking action when it is holding consultations but not actually doing anything about the situation.

The federal government has presented a document, a plan to reform and modernize the Official Languages Act. This act has not been amended much since 1988 and its current structure makes it difficult to fully respect the principle of linguistic duality and makes it difficult for communities to access services in the official language of their choice.

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• (1255)

That is why francophone minority communities and the official languages commissioner asked the Liberal government over and over again to introduce a bill to modernize the Official Languages Act.

Despite the urgency of the situation and the marked decline of French in Quebec and across Canada, the Liberal government continues to delay the implementation of tangible measures. The Liberal government actually began its consultations on the modernization of the act in 2018. It held numerous consultations in 2019. The minister also acknowledged that between March and May 2019, the federal government held other cross-Canada consultations on the modernization of the act, which concluded with a national symposium in Ottawa attended by more than 300 people.

I must also add that the Liberal 2019 election platform promised the introduction of a bill to modernize the Official Languages Act and the enhancement of the powers of the Commissioner of Official Languages, as well as the appointment of bilingual judges to the Supreme Court.

With respect to bilingual judges on the Supreme Court, I have the impression that the government, which rejected this principle until recently, has seen the light, like Saint Paul on the road to Damascus, and suddenly decided that it was a good idea and would include it.

Seriously, though, the minister says it is time to take action. After all the consultations that were held, after all the reports that were released, after the work of the Standing Committee on Official Languages, after the work of Senate committees that studied this issue and tabled reports, what is the government actually giving us now? It is giving us a working document that will lead to the creation of a committee that will conduct more consultations, which will lead to a report being tabled with recommendations that may provide some inspiration for a bill that may be introduced someday. That does not seem very serious to me.

If the government really felt a sense of urgency around taking action for the French language in Quebec and across the country, it would not create a new committee; it would draft a bill.

The Liberal government could have introduced a bill three, four or five years ago. Right now, a minority government has been in power for 18 months, and the situation is deemed to be so urgent that the Liberals are planning to strike a committee that will hold consultations and produce a report.

I do not think that members of the NDP define the phrase “take action” that way, despite the fact that the minister used it many times in her speech. The NDP has taken action and we will continue to take action to protect and promote the French language.

I want to mention something that happened eight years ago. When we formed the official opposition, our former colleague, Alexandrine Latendresse, introduced a bill that was passed by the House. The purpose of that bill was to ensure that all officers of Parliament are able to understand and speak French, to ensure that all commissioners, such as the commissioner of the environment, the commissioners for various departments, and the Auditor Gener-

al be bilingual. That changed things, and that is a practical measure brought in by the NDP that has been successful and produced results.

Recently, I had a motion passed by the House recognizing the fragility of French and the need to promote and defend it. The motion was unanimously adopted.

Today, I get the impression that we have before us a discussion paper that is just a bunch of pious wishes. Believe me, I am not against virtue. The statements and approaches seem worthwhile, but it has no teeth. There are no real measures and no real sense of urgency.

We are glad to see the right to work in French and to communicate in French with the employer in federally regulated businesses finally implemented. The NDP has long been demanding that the principles of the Charter of the French Language be applied to federally regulated businesses. Currently, two sets of language rights apply to workers in Quebec. Those who work for the Caisse populaire have certain language rights to use French at work, but Bank of Montreal or Royal Bank employees do not enjoy the same rights. There is a bit of a contradiction here.

There finally seems to be some willingness to move forward. It certainly took a while. The NDP has been clamouring for this for 10 years. Neither the Conservatives nor the Liberals had done anything until today. We will see if this amounts to anything.

There is also the possibility of extending this right to francophone workers outside Quebec. That is an interesting idea, but it looks like it would apply only where there is a heavy concentration of francophones or where the francophone presence warrants it. It is not really clear.

• (1300)

This morning in an interview, the minister did not seem to be able to provide specific criteria saying that this committee would study and make recommendations on what this really means. However, there is already a rule in the Public Service Employment Act about the right to work in French. It requires a 5% presence of francophones as a threshold for exercising the right to communicate and work in French. I wonder why the Liberal government has not taken a rule that already exists in the federal public service and applied it to workers in the private sector who could exercise similar rights to work and communicate with their employer in French.

Instead of reinventing the wheel and going back to square one, there is a rule that everyone agrees on and is accepted by everyone, but is not being applied. This will give rise to another debate, namely what constitutes a community where the proportion of francophones is enough to claim this right.

Going back to the question Patrick Masbourian asked this morning, are we creating a two-tier system? I think the answer is yes. What we are looking at here is a two-tier system where, for instance, someone working for Rogers in Moncton would be able to claim French language rights with their employer, but someone working for the same company in Calgary could not do the same because language rights for francophones outside Quebec vary from region to region. For the NDP, that is a major issue.



The government is also giving more powers to the Commissioner of Official Languages. That is also something that the francophone and Acadian communities had been calling for for a long time, and we are happy to see that. However, it seems like the commissioner would have new powers to issue orders, but not to impose financial penalties. It does not look like the official languages commissioner would be able to impose financial penalties on institutions, organizations and businesses that fail to comply with the act. Why is that? In my view, it is a major aspect of strengthening the commissioner's powers. We are going to keep pushing for that.

Most francophone and Acadian communities have asked for an administrative tribunal to handle appeals of certain situations. This is also missing from the document before us today. However, it would be an important and worthwhile element to have in the next few years. There are many other things that can be done and that the federal government should do to promote and defend the French language. I am referring specifically to the Official Languages in Education program. There has been a significant increase in the number of students at the 700 French-language schools found outside Quebec. There has been a 16% increase in the past five years. However, the budget for the Official Languages in Education Program has been frozen for about 10 years. They are not receiving more money. There are more students, but the budget is the same.

The minister seems to be challenging my claims, but we can review the figures and discuss them. This is the kind of thing that is problematic because this program funds many cultural and sports activities in schools. If they do not have the money they need to have interesting programs for students, this may result in elementary students choosing to go to English-language secondary schools if the services and programs offered—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I am sorry to interrupt, but the hon. member's time is up.

[*English*]

**Mrs. Jenica Atwin:** Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I am seeking unanimous consent to respond to the minister's statement.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Does the hon. member have unanimous consent to speak to this matter?

There being no opposition, it is agreed.

The hon. member for Fredericton.

• (1305)

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Fredericton, GP):** Madam Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise in reply to the ministerial statement. I welcome the government's plan to modernize the Official Languages Act.

I come from New Brunswick, the only officially bilingual province in Canada. I am proud to represent the riding of Fredericton, where so many people live and work in both official languages. That reality exemplifies the vision for society that Canadians adopted more than 50 years ago.

As mentioned by other colleagues today, the French language unites millions of people across Canada. In every province and ter-

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ritory, people share stories, love and dream in French. It is of the utmost importance not only to protect the language, but also to take steps to ensure it thrives and flourishes.

[*English*]

I have a deep personal connection to what language represents and an endless empathy for what it means when someone has lost the ability to express their deepest thoughts in the language that once belonged to their ancestors. Language is the reflection of our soul. It is the means by which we are able to better describe the world in which we live, without hesitation or doubt, with love.

When my stepfather was growing up, he and everyone he knew was shamed for speaking Wolastoqiyik. Shame is a powerful weapon. It cuts deep and almost totally severed the connection of his people to their language, the language that should be passed on to my children. Language is at the root of identity. Once this land was a diverse forest of cultural identity, and it can be again with the proper nourishment.

As we protect the two official languages of this country, let us also ensure that the ones spoken on this land for millennia take root to stand proud and strong once again. I am encouraged by the minister's statement affirming the unfailing support of our government toward preserving and revitalizing indigenous languages—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I am sorry, but I have to interrupt. Some members do not have their microphone off. I remind members to please ensure that their microphone is off. Otherwise, their conversations will be heard in the House, which interrupts the proceedings.

The hon. member for Fredericton.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Jenica Atwin:** Madam Speaker, learning a new language is not easy, but it opens up a world of opportunities and adventure.

Immersing yourself in another culture and learning to communicate in a second language is enough to make your head spin. Searching for the right words and not knowing exactly how to answer a question is intimidating. In a way, I am proof that it is possible to reconcile both identities, to be receptive and to celebrate what makes us unique from coast to coast to coast.

However, only by giving ourselves the means to take ownership of this unique Canadian reality will we be able to collectively claim that our two official languages are finally truly equal.

We can sometimes forget what linguistic rights truly represent beyond "Hello, bonjour". Quite often, they directly affect people's safety and security and their dignity.

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During this pandemic, which only causes more stress, the ability to express ourselves in our language and receive a service in that language is essential to ensuring everyone's well-being, whether we are talking about people crossing the border, so that they can understand the quarantine guidelines, or unilingual francophone seniors in my own province, who were unable to receive services in their language at the care centres during a COVID-19 outbreak. This only added to their suffering.

Being able to access education and the resources necessary for schooling in French is also an eternal struggle for francophone minorities, and the burden has been borne by generations from Charlottetown to Victoria. Nothing will ever be achieved until the Supreme Court of Canada proclaims that French and English have equal of status and equal rights and privileges in Canada.

[*English*]

Because there is a difference between having a right and having a right respected, ensuring that the oversight body has the appropriate tools to reinforce the act is also crucial. I am encouraged to see that the government is moving in that direction.

During these last months, I thought a lot about the meaning of the word “resilience” and how we collectively had to learn how to navigate between grief and sorrow and moments of unity and hope. Resilience is the strength that minority linguistic communities have mastered through the decades.

● (1310)

[*Translation*]

“In unity there is strength.” This Acadian slogan encapsulates what will enable us to prosper after the pandemic and, more importantly, what will enable our communities and families to stay vibrant.

[*English*]

I believe it is only by working together and upholding the values of respect and diversity of this country that we will be able to re-establish this new linguistic balance in all aspects of Canadians' lives: at work, at play and at home. Let us be an example of unity beyond our borders.

[*Translation*]

I hope that the plan presented by the minister will be a turning point toward a new, long-awaited chapter.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I wish to inform the House that because of the ministerial statement, Government Orders will be extended by 57 minutes.

\* \* \*

**GOVERNOR GENERAL'S ACT**

**Mr. Simon Marcil (Mirabel, BQ)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-271, An Act to amend the Governor General's Act.

He said: Madam Speaker, today I am pleased to introduce a bill to reduce the amount of money that Quebecers pay to support the monarchy. I am sure that all of my colleagues will be pleased to support it out of respect for the taxpayers they represent.

The monarchy is an outdated, archaic and undemocratic institution based on the idea that we are not equal. To remain connected to it in any way is tantamount to saying that we agree to submit, which is obviously out of the question. It goes against our values of freedom and equality.

It is outrageous to pay \$270,000 a year to a representative of the monarchy. We are told it is a symbolic position, so let us solve the problem by providing only a symbolic salary for this position. We are proposing a salary of \$1 a year. We are also proposing to do away with the generous retirement pension for the Queen's representative. To be frank, even \$1 is far too much, but as members know, our party is all about compromise.

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

\* \* \*

[*English*]

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND ETHICS  
COMMISSIONER'S REPORT**

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I wish to remind the House of the provisions of section 28(12) of the Conflict of Interest Code for Members of the House of Commons, which reads as follows:

If no motion pursuant to subsection (11) has been previously moved and disposed of, a motion to concur in the report shall be deemed to have been proposed on the 30th sitting day after the day on which the report was tabled, and the Speaker shall immediately put every question necessary to dispose of the motion.

[*Translation*]

Given that the motion of the member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes has not been disposed of and given that today is the 30th sitting day after the day on which the report was tabled, the Chair is obliged to proceed.

Pursuant to subsection 28(12) of the Conflict of Interest Code for Members of the House of Commons, a motion to concur in the report of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner, entitled “Maloney Report”, is deemed to have been moved.

[*English*]

The question is on the motion.

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

The hon. member for London—Fanshawe.

● (1315)

**Ms. Lindsay Mathysen:** Madam Speaker, the New Democratic Party caucus requests that this motion be adopted on division.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Does the hon. member have consent to adopt the motion on division?

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Call in the members.

*During the taking of the vote:*

• (1405)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Before we continue, I want to remind members they are only to state whether they vote in favour or against, and not to add anything else to that: not “absolutely”, not “indefinitely” or whatever else.

The other issue I want to raise is the discussions that are being had in the House, and how disrespectful it is to talk while the vote is going on. It is difficult enough for the clerks to do their jobs, but to do them under those circumstances is really not acceptable. I would hope that at the end of the vote, those members will apologize to the clerks for the goings-on.

• (1425)

[Translation]

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

(Division No. 54)

### YEAS

#### Members

Aboulttaif	Aitchison
Albas	Alleslev
Allison	Arnold
Baldinelli	Barrett
Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Benzen	Bergen
Bergeron	Berthold
Bérubé	Bezan
Blanchette-Joncas	Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)	Block
Boudrias	Bragdon
Brassard	Brunelle-Duceppe
Calkins	Champoux
Charbonneau	Chiu
Chong	Cumming
Dalton	Dancho
Deltell	d'Entremont
Desbiens	Desilets
Diotte	Dowdall
Dreeshen	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Epp	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Fast	Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock)
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Fortin
Gallant	Gaudreau
Généreux	Genuis
Gill	Gladu
Godin	Gourde
Gray	Hallan
Harder	Hoback
Jansen	Kelly
Kent	Kitchen
Kmiec	Kram
Kurek	Kusie
Lake	Larouche
Lawrence	Lehoux
Lemire	Lewis (Essex)
Lloyd	Lukiwski
MacKenzie	Maguire
Marcil	Mathysen
Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McColeman	McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Melillo	Michaud
Moore	Morantz
Morrison	Nater
Normandin	Paul-Hus
Pauzé	Perron
Plamondon	Poilievre

Rayes  
Rempel Garner  
Rood  
Sahota (Calgary Skyview)  
Scheer  
Shin  
Simard  
Stanton  
Ste-Marie  
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Therrien  
Trudel  
Van Popta  
Vidal  
Vignola  
Wagantall  
Waugh  
Williamson  
Yurdiga

### NAYS

#### Members

Alghabra	Amos
Anand	Anandasangaree
Arseneault	Arya
Atwin	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Battiste	Beech
Bendayan	Bennett
Bessette	Bibeau
Bittle	Blair
Blois	Bratina
Brière	Carr
Casey	Chagger
Champagne	Chen
Cormier	Dabrusin
Damoff	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Dong
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Dzerowicz	Easter
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Ellis	Erskine-Smith
Fergus	Fillmore
Finnigan	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fragiskatos	Fraser
Freeland	Fry
Garneau	Gerretsen
Gould	Guilbeault
Hajdu	Hardie
Holland	Housefather
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Ien
Jaczek	Joly
Jordan	Jowhari
Kelloway	Khalid
Khera	Koutrakis
Kusmierczyk	Lalonde
Lambropoulos	Lametti
Lamoureux	Lattanzio
Lauzon	LeBlanc
Lebouthillier	Lefebvre
Lightbound	Long
Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney	Manly
Martinez Ferrada	May (Cambridge)
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	McCrimmon
McDonald	McKay
McKenna	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)

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McLeod (Northwest Territories)	Mendès
Medicino	Miller
Monsef	Morrissey
Murray	Ng
Oliphant	O'Regan
Petipas Taylor	Powlowski
Qualtrough	Ratansi
Regan	Reid
Robillard	Rodriguez
Rogers	Romanado
Sahota (Brampton North)	Saini
Sajjan	Saks
Samson	Sangha
Sarai	Scarpaleggia
Schiefke	Schulte
Serré	Sgro
Sheehan	Sidhu (Brampton East)
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Simms
Sorbara	Spengemann
Tabbara	Tassi
Turnbull	Van Bynen
van Koeverden	Vandal
Vandenbeld	Vaughan
Virani	Weiler
Wilkinson	Wilson-Raybould
Yip	Young
Zahid	Zann
Zuberi— 153	

## PAIRED

Nil

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I declare the motion lost.

[*English*]

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I want to address a comment you made during the vote. You are absolutely correct: I do owe an apology. During the vote, the member for Carleton and I got into a heated exchange, and I know it distracted from the work of the table and the House. It was not appropriate to do that, so for my part in it I sincerely apologize to the table, to you and indeed to the entire House.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre:** Madam Speaker, on a point of order, if our conversation was slightly too loud, slightly too energetic and slightly too distracting, I join with my colleague from Kingston and the Islands in offering an apology for it.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** It being 2:27 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business, as listed on today's Order Paper.

**Mr. Steven MacKinnon:** Madam Speaker, will you be proceeding to presenting petitions?

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** No. We are now going to Private Members' Business. There will be no presenting of petitions today, unfortunately.

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

● (1430)

[*English*]

## ENVIRONMENTALLY CONSCIOUS LABELLING

The House resumed from November 20, 2020 consideration of the motion.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Resuming debate, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons. I want to remind him that he has six minutes left.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak to the motion, which asks us to instruct a committee of the House of Commons to study the possible implementation of consumer-friendly environment grading labelling on all products available to Canadian consumers. I think it is a very positive initiative.

There are a number of issues that come to mind when I think of motions of this nature. First and foremost, we underestimate the true value of providing information through labelling. I think anything we can do to enhance that, the better it will be. One only needs look at what is on a can or food product labels. There is a very clear indication of the amounts of trans fats, sodium or calories from consuming that product, and a lot of people like to watch their calories. I believe it meets an interest that Canadian consumers have. To that degree, through this motion, I think the member is providing for a positive educational aspect. The motion recognizes the importance of educating the public on our environment and expanding that sense of consumer awareness.

I had a chance to make some comments on it when it first came up. It was not my intention to necessarily prolong that, but to state what I believe is very important. Indeed, when we talk about the issue of consumer labelling in general, it is a very strong positive. Earlier today we had a ministerial statement on the importance of bilingualism. When we think of labelling, that also applies. I believe we need further discussion on this issue, which could generate some positive ideas of how to be consumer friendly in public education. That is a good thing.

With those few words, I want to compliment the member for bringing the motion forward. I know that the House will get an opportunity to vote on it shortly.

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Carleton. He is a tough act to follow, so I am very grateful that I am here first. With a little luck as well, I will also catch my flight back to Calgary.

Of course, as my colleague from the other side of the House just mentioned, this has to do with the labelling of products for environmental indicators and perhaps health indicators. I thought that with my time today I would start with a story of my family business.

My mother, as I have said before in the House of Commons, is from the lovely province of Quebec, and my father, who is a teacher, is originally from Saskatchewan. When they went to Saskatchewan, they had the wonderful occasion of meeting my godfather, John Varian. Together, he and my father made the bold decision to move to Calgary, where I was born and raised in my riding of Calgary Midnapore. They started a business there. They started with an incredible gift business called the Oriental Emporium. They had three locations throughout the city. However, my father noticed something, which was that 40% of the sales were wicker and rattan. With that information, he made a decision to go into the wicker and rattan business, which was really something. Again, he started that business in retail fashion.

In coordination with my mother, who served as his business partner, he had three stores at the height of his business. Decisions were made around the dinner table. Whether or not it was a good day at the store determined how dinner went in the evening. It really was a strong family legacy.

My father made the decision with my mother to sell the business in 1988. From there they proceeded to, three years later, open up a similar concept as a larger box store, a warehouse-style format, but again with wicker and rattan products.

It is very interesting. I have really reflected about wicker and rattan throughout my years. It is no—

• (1435)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I will interrupt the member for a second. I will stop the time.

I wanted to double-check on something. We do not often see someone asking to split their time during Private Members' Business. Is that really what the member was asking? If so, then she would need the unanimous consent of the House to split her time. Are you taking the full 10 minutes?

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:** I will take 10 minutes. Excuse me.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Okay, then there is no splitting of time. Perfect. I will continue the clock.

The hon. member for Calgary Midnapore.

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:** Madam Speaker, I guess we have changed our speaking times. My apologies for the confusion for the Chair, and for the table as well. I am sincerely sorry.

They started a warehouse format. As I said, I have had a lot of time to reflect on wicker and rattan throughout the years. We are very fortunate. My younger brother made the decision to accept the business from my parents after several years.

Upon reflection on the business and, most important, the product of the business, I recognized maybe five years ago that it was to be of more interest to Canadians, society and the world in general. People were thinking of buying responsibly and choosing responsible products, and for years my family had been contributing to the environmental cause by selling a renewable product.

This is something that struck me as quite significant. All this time, as this evolution in the world had been going on toward the

### *Private Members' Business*

environment and a greener existence, my family had been contributing to this effort for over three decades.

My message is that the market will always determine these things. The market will make the decision as to the products that are successful within our society and the products which are not successful. Oddly enough, unforeseen to my family and my family business, this pandemic has been a time when wicker and rattan have thrived, as Canadians, Calgarians and people B.C., where we have extensions of our business as well, look to have products to beautify their environments and their back yards, since they are stuck at home at this time.

My fundamental point regarding all this is that there are already voluntary rules that exist for this. Business owners, if they feel so inclined, may certainly put whatever labelling they want upon their products in an effort to indicate what is within the product or how environmentally friendly it is. As the story of my family's business proves, the market chose an environmentally responsible product, and I am very proud of this.

It is always very dangerous when the government tells us what we should buy and what we should not buy. The current government has been terrible at that. It has consistently chosen winners and losers throughout industry and throughout our economy.

Unfortunately, I have seen up close the end result within two sectors. The first is the natural resources sector in my home province of Alberta, where we have seen industry-killing legislation such as Bill C-69 and Bill C-48. This is what happens when government intervenes incorrectly, as could be the case with this private member's bill, which is that industry dies.

I have also seen this up front and personally with the airline sector. This was a case where the government should have intervened. It should have come forward with rapid testing, testing on arrival and on departure, and certainly with, what we had hoped for, what should have been the good distribution of vaccines. Unfortunately, to the disappointment of all Canadians, it has not. Again, it is always very dangerous when the government intervenes within business. We have seen this in both the natural resources sector as well as the airline sector.

I would like to point out the incredible burden that this would place upon businesses, and small businesses in particular. We know that the government has been no friend to small businesses at all during its time.

• (1440)

Who can forget 2017 and the changes that the government tried to implement against small businesses, things that would have major impacts, such as income sprinkling, passive income, passing on businesses within families, something I referenced earlier in my speech? Thank goodness my colleague, the member for Brandon—Souris, put forward legislation that would at least attempt to go against that. Fundamentally, it is never a good thing when government attempts to intervene, to control and direct markets. Also, that legislation would do what the government does not do well, and that is to keep focused on the big picture. At this time, coming out of this pandemic is about restoring the economy and bringing jobs to Canadians.

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This motion would not allow businesses to focus on this. It would force them to focus on labelling at a time when they should be thinking about increasing revenues, employing more Canadians and bringing the economy back. Unfortunately, the motion does not focus on that.

Who could have foreseen the legacy of my family business, which started and thrived in Alberta and beyond, would have been with the use of an environmental product. In fact it was, it succeeded and the market chose that. We see the government's intervening has destroyed the natural resources sector. Make no mistake about it. It was a joint effort in Alberta with all levels of government to bring my poor city to the place it is now. This year, 2021, brings the opportunity for change at the civic level and perhaps we will see that.

Unfortunately, I cannot support this private member's motion. I do not believe the opposition will not be supporting it. The market knows what it is doing and this private member's motion does not support that.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I can see that everyone in the House agrees that labelling is an important issue. However, we will not be supporting the motion either, unfortunately.

This motion seems well intentioned. We agree that Canadians and Quebecers are aware of the threat of climate change and want to change their consumption habits. We agree that consumers have the right to know the environmental impact of products. I also think it is increasingly clear that industries have much to gain by adapting.

The pandemic revealed a growing desire to buy local. That desire is motivated by safety concerns, of course, but also by a growing interest in protecting the environment. People are more aware of the impact of transporting food, and they want to source their food closer to home. We think that is a good thing.

The problem with the motion is its recommendation, which seems to be preordaining the outcome of the study it wants the committee to do. We have no choice but to oppose that, as always. The motion also calls for uniform labelling on all products, including imports, which seems unrealistic to us.

A coherent and constructive approach would be to focus on sector-specific labelling of products. As an extreme example, it would be very difficult to compare the environmental impact of a fish and that of a two-by-four. If we think carefully, we can see that having the same labelling for both will not work. What we need is a system that will let us identify the difference in the environmental impact of one car versus another, for example. Incentives can be introduced at that point, and I will speak more about that later.

The other problem with the motion is that it asks the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development to hold 12 meetings on this issue. I do not know if members realize it, but 12 meetings on this issue will tie up the committee for a very long time, and we believe that it has more urgent issues to deal with.

The motion seeks to establish a uniform labelling regime, and we do not think that it is a good idea. Instead, we should study what is already being done, given that the current market provides a vast array of environmental labels. We recognize that this may be confusing to the average person who wants to purchase products with the lowest environmental impact. A more pragmatic approach would be to examine how we could foster the development of sector-specific practices and identify models with growth potential. It would also be a good idea to study how to regulate labelling rather than dictating a solution.

Moreover, the motion fails to take into account the jurisdiction of the provinces and Quebec in this matter. We in the Bloc Québécois are always on the lookout for things like that and we are raising a red flag.

We know that there are different types of eco-labels. According to Environnement Québec, type I labels meet a program's pre-established requirements, usually with regard to a product's full life cycle, and ensure that the product's performance is verified by a licensed and independent organization. That is the kind of certification that should be given preference.

The full life cycle of a product takes into account the environmental impact from manufacturing to disposal, its recycling potential, etc. I am referring to what the previous speaker said about reusable products.

There are other types of certifications. Type II eco-label certifications apply to self-declarations made by anyone who promotes a product. Obviously, this poses a greater risk of abuse because declarations are based on data that is verifiable but not necessarily verified. It is less accurate.

● (1445)

Type III eco-label certifications present quantitative data on the environmental impact of a product, and this data is collected using techniques that are in accordance with ISO 14040 and ISO 14044.

We believe that a study like this needs to be highly focused. It should be up to the members of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development to decide how to approach this issue. It should not be handed a motion that dictates everything in advance and that ties up the committee for 12 of its meetings, which is a very long time. The committee is tasked with studying and adopting concrete and pressing measures. We are worried that it would become paralyzed.

Honestly, that seems to be the purpose of the motion. The Bloc Québécois obviously cares about labelling, but it needs to be done right and done effectively. We need to be aware of all of the problems the process entails.

I could also mention greenwashing. Some companies are dishonest and do not label things properly. Consumers do not always realize this. The government has a duty to oversee these certifications coming from the private sector. The member who spoke before me talked about self-regulation in the private sector. The Bloc Québécois falls somewhere in the middle. We should set some guidelines that allow for a little flexibility, but there need to be some limits.

The various certification processes should be evaluated to determine which one could be improved and used. This needs to be strictly regulated. I mentioned this earlier, but it is worth repeating that each product category needs to be dealt with separately, because it is too hard to assess a tomato versus an item of clothing. There should be a standard. Consumers need to be able to compare products. At the end of the day, we want to encourage consumers to buy the tomato that was grown in Quebec rather than the one grown in Mexico. It would be useful to have a label indicating the greenhouse gas emissions from transportation.

I said earlier that one of the problems is that they want to apply a single label on every product. It is impossible to control foreign production methods. I know I am a broken record always taking examples from agriculture, but take for example American milk that we are allowing to enter under the new treaties. There are hormones in that milk that we do not use in Canada. It would be nice for people to know that, for it to be written in bold letters that this milk is from somewhere else.

When we buy frozen chicken pot pie from a big company and the chicken does not come from Canada or Quebec, that should be indicated in bold letters. This is the type of thing we need to look at. We would be much more efficient and quicker and we could avoid paralyzing a committee for 12 long meetings, which would give us the opportunity to talk about a green recovery.

Obviously, I will take this opportunity to talk about the Bloc Québécois's recovery plan. I know that I am tiresome about that too, but I invite people to have a look at our recovery plan. We are proposing a green recovery based on research, innovation, and an energy transition. We urgently need to start thinking about what we are going to do with the money that is left from Trans Mountain. People in western Canada do not need to worry, we want to put that money in Alberta. I think we need to invest it in a smart transition.

We will work together to ensure we are going in the right direction, with a focus on electric transportation, research and innovation. That is how we will truly be able to better protect the environment.

• (1450)

[English]

**Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to talk about this important subject.

In regards to this issue, there are two things I will focus my comments on. First is the process that we have right now, because I think it is important for the member and the general public to understand how we actually proceed with parliamentary business. Second is the subject matter and the appropriateness of the issue at hand.

### *Private Members' Business*

These issues are very important, and I am glad that the member for Sydney—Victoria has raised them. They are worth debating and discussing in our chamber, but the process that is being suggested is very surprising, because it appears that the member has not been well supported by his own party with regards to the process. What I mean by that is that when one is selected for private members' business, it is like winning the lottery so to speak. At different times in my career, I have been selected at the very top; other times, like now, at the very bottom, and so at the moment I have no hope of getting a private member's motion or proposed legislation into this chamber. However, what the member has presented, quite frankly, is something that could have been done by the Liberals at committee. It is kind of bizarre that we would be spending time on this motion on the floor of the House when it could be done at committee on any particular day or time. Therefore, to waste this opportunity by putting the motion here in the chamber for other political parties to gauge versus other work seems to be an unfortunate loss of an opportunity, especially given that committees are supposed to be their own kind of entities.

I remember the days of the Jean Chrétien regime when I was first elected, when we did not have parliamentary secretaries at committee. That practice was changed by the Liberal administration under former prime minister Martin. Thereafter, the government could access its cabinet to control or influence committees, and that continued throughout the Harper administration and now the present administration. The situation is different from what it was in the past when committees were the masters of their own domain.

To have the House direct the committees is very much like the tail wagging the dog. Committees were supposed to be a bipartisan opportunity for members to get through a number of bills, to make sure they were important and to be looked at and screened through a more professional and less partisan lens. However, I have seen that process tainted, because parliamentary secretaries, despite their best intentions, individual reflections and so forth, have access to information that is different from what other members have, as well as having political motivation, because they are part of the entity running the government at the particular time. It is just a thing that happens in the process. It is not underhanded or whatever, but just what takes place in the job of a parliamentary secretary, who is, in fact, privy to more information than other members of Parliament.

It was noted that the motion before us would take a minimum of 12 meetings at committee, and I know there is a potential amendment for it to move to the industry committee, which I sit on. However, when members look at our parliamentary schedule, they would see that we only have a few more sitting weeks left in March that would be available, and then we would be into April and May. The study the motion calls for would basically be at committee for months. At the same time, the content process calls for a further study from there, and then on top of that, it is to be reported within a year. Parliament would have to continue beyond a year for this process, and the government would then have a chance to look at the study and respond.

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We are probably looking at a baked-in process here of about a year and a half, which would take the place of other issues that, in many respects, deserve a qualitative and quantitative debate right now. In fact, we would be kicking down the road other very important issues, such as buying local and labelling, which, as has been rightly noted, many of which are provincial jurisdiction. There are also language issues, which we would miss the opportunity to discuss. The motion would push farther down the line things that are important for us to talk about and decide, and might obstruct our accomplishing and completing some things in the meantime if we invited these witnesses.

● (1455)

We have legislation that does not go through 12 meetings. That is important to note, because the business of the House of Commons, for example the environment or industry, will be compromised by acting on a series of other things. We will not have that time. On top of that, we have reduced translation service capabilities, which are crucial right now with regard to COVID-19 in the House of Commons. We have a whole series of compounding factors taking place.

I want to credit the member for Sydney—Victoria. Despite the process elements that we have here, some of the things that he is raising are important and they have to be discussed. I have worked on a number of different things that have been either differently labelled or administered differently, and we have changed our practices. I point to some of the things that have taken place that are quite significant in this chamber related to the environment, whether it was labelling on products or registering through a different type of process through regulatory means.

One motion that was passed was in regard to microbeads, something that I worked on for a long time. It passed as a motion to be listed as an item of concern, and now it is being managed. The motion helps our Great Lakes, our water and a series of things. That process was adopted by all in the chamber, and the Harper administration made it part of regulations. These are very item-specific things that can be done. I would hate to see some item-specific issues held up because we were doing a comprehensive study in another committee and that work was duplicated or stalled, or an issue was challenged later on.

Again, when we talk about labelling that we have changed over the years, an example is pesticide spraying and what can be done about that. When I was on city council, we moved to stop that in our public areas and then were challenged by the courts on it. To make a long story short, the country has moved in an entirely different direction now and we have reduced pesticide spraying. These things relate to some intentions of this motion, but again, the vehicle we are looking at is becoming very problematic.

There will be a lot of changes with regard to plastics and their labelling. We cannot wait to do some of those things. The NDP has proposed several strong ways to enhance consumer and environmental protection in a fair way that involves businesses. Again, these are things that should not wait, as a study might be lengthy. It seems that we end up kicking many good things down the road and tying up resources in the House of Commons during COVID-19. It

would seem to be a significant burden for ourselves and for the intent of the motion.

I am going to conclude by thanking the member for Sydney—Victoria for bringing this up. I am sorry that the New Democrats are not going to support it. It is entirely tied up, with regard to the processes. I am surprised that there was not any type of coaching or support for the pitfalls with regard to this, because it is obvious that there are some good ideas here that are important. However, because the process is burdensome and fraught with potential issues of duplication, lost work and time, and also the disadvantage we lose to other matters, I cannot support this.

● (1500)

**Mr. Majid Jowhari (Richmond Hill, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking the member for Sydney—Victoria for introducing this motion and for his consistent advocacy on this topic. If adopted, this motion would launch a committee study on the creation of an environmentally conscious labelling regime on all products available to Canadians.

Before I begin discussing why I support this motion, I would like to speak on a topic that is of utmost important to me, many of my constituents in Richmond Hill and many Canadians.

Climate change is a serious concern that presents a great threat to our lives and the lives of our children and grandchildren. The rise of greenhouse gas emissions from humans into the earth's atmosphere has led to an increased concentration of atmospheric carbon dioxide, ultimately affecting the earth's climate and the way we live as humans.

The effects of climate change are already being seen today. Global surface temperatures have been on the rise since the 1990s, leading to extreme weather conditions such as droughts, floods and high temperatures, affecting our agriculture industry, forests, glaciers and wildlife.

As a father of two, I constantly think about the impacts of climate change and hope I personally can reduce my carbon footprint as well as my family's carbon footprint to create a better environment for my future grandchildren. I am looking forward to having grandchildren at some point.

Many Canadians, especially in my riding of Richmond Hill, feel the same way I do. The main question for us is, what can we do to ensure that the future is safe, not only for our children but our grandchildren? This motion makes it a lot easier for parents like me to be able to answer questions like that.

The heart of this motion is designed to support the Canadian consumer who wants and deserves to know the environmental impact of the product they are purchasing, allowing them to make informed decisions that impact their families.



We also know that many Canadian industries and businesses have already started selling sustainably produced and locally grown products, and have seen the benefits to the environment and to their bottom lines. Our government can work to bring consumer interests and the specific needs of Canadian businesses together by creating a clear metric that assesses the environmental impact of the products we are buying.

Two weeks ago, I held the first meeting of my community environmental council. This council is a space where constituents from Richmond Hill are able to have a forum to discuss their priorities and feedback for our government that are related specifically to the environment. These individuals are diverse in their ages, backgrounds and life experiences, but they all have one thing in common: their passion for the environment and the future we are leaving to the next generation.

In this meeting, I realized how universal my own values are. Canadians are concerned about climate change and saving our environment. We are introducing clear environmental labelling with an accessible grading system. Consumers will have the power to know the effects on the environment of the products they consume and can make the conscious decision to shop sustainably.

Canadians would be informed on the waste created and the greenhouse gas emitted from the products they use and would be able to clearly identify the products that are more sustainable. Industries will then have the opportunity to reflect on these practices and make sustainable changes to their products as well. A standardized system across Canada will ensure that the information is accurate, science-based and transparent.

Currently, large corporations have the means and resources to be able to invest in PR that advertises their sustainable practices. This often hurts our small local producers, who are not able to invest in such advertising. A consistent metric on all product labels will ensure that companies with large budgets will not have the advantage and that consumers can judge products accurately. This will drive a green shift in the market, and businesses will be inclined to adhere to more sustainable practices.

We know that Canadians are concerned about the future, and I know that given the choice, Canadians will make the right decision. Informative labelling on Canadian products is not new, and statistically there are positive effects. Nutritional labelling has been mandatory in Canada since 2017, giving Canadians the power to base their decisions to buy food on the food's nutritional values.

● (1505)

It is a simple and effective way of informing consumers of the ingredients of the products they consume. Researchers from the American Journal of Preventive Medicine have found that the standardized nutritional information on products reduces consumer purchases of unhealthy choices by about 13%. This system could be very similar to how products are graded based on several indicators of sustainability, including but not limited to, greenhouse gas emissions, water and energy usage, waste creation, chemicals in the products, recyclability and durability. We can safely assume that when the grade is clearly outlined on the front, a consumer will be more likely to make the sustainable choice.

### *Private Members' Business*

The Canada Environmental Protection Act already requires authorities to label products, for example, for containing mercury. We have also seen labelling requirements under the Canada Consumer Product Safety Act, the Pest Control Products Act, and the Food and Drugs Act. Canadians are already comfortable with reading labels on products.

I imagine a scenario where a conscious consumer is deciding between two different brands of the same product. They want to make a decision that will result in a lower carbon footprint, and with this they would have an accessible way of easily knowing which is less impactful on our environment. I also imagine that this would help our local Canadian producers and manufacturers. Lower emissions of greenhouse gases from a faster and more sustainable transportation method would make for a higher grade and help promote our local businesses.

By passing this motion, sending it to the committee and engaging in this study, we will have already established Canada as committed to climate action and providing a better future for our next generation. By investing in equal labelling regimes, it would be a step in Canada's transition into a circular economy that would encourage businesses to take responsibility for the products they sell to Canadians, including for their recycling potential.

In closing, we have already begun this transition through the Canada-wide strategy on zero plastic waste, which endorses a shift toward extended producer responsibility for the recycling of plastic products. I imagine that we will be much closer to a green-tech economy through this initiative as well. I hope that this motion passes and that we continue on our path to saving our environment and ensuring a sustainable future for the next generation. I support this motion moving to the committee for study. I am part of the industry committee, and I look forward to receiving this motion at the committee to be able to study it.

● (1510)

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC):** Madam Speaker, today we are debating a motion that seeks “consumer-friendly environment grading label on all products available to Canadian consumers” I could not agree more with the goal of this environmental labelling proposition. Therefore, today, I am going to take it one step further and help write some of the warning labels that might actually be used if this proposal is implemented.

*Private Members' Business*

Let me start with a product that is our number one export in Canada, and I speak of course of petroleum. It is also an import. Because we do not have pipelines to get our oil to ourselves, we import almost a million barrels a day from abroad. My idea is that we not just have a label but actually a loud speaker that could tell people where the oil that made the gasoline that they are pumping into their cars actually came from and what the money was used for.

This is how I see it. People are pumping gas into their automobiles and a voice comes over a loud speaker, "Dear valued customer, because the government blocked the energy east pipeline, which would have taken a million barrels of western oil to eastern refineries, Canada imports almost a million barrels a day." The voice goes on and it might say that the gasoline they are putting in their car comes from the 100,000 barrels of oil Canada imports from Saudi Arabia every day, that their gas is going to, in the words of Amnesty International:

The authorities escalated repression of the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly. They harassed, arbitrarily detained and prosecuted dozens of government critics, human rights defenders, including women's rights activists, members of the Shi'a minority and family members of activists.

Saudi Arabia failed to co-operate with an inquiry by the UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions into the murder. The inquiry concluded in June that Jamal Khashoggi was the victim of a deliberate, premeditated extrajudicial killing for which Saudi Arabia was responsible.

Then it says that their payment today will fund the surveillance equipment, prisons, whips, execution chambers or other resources that make state torture and assassinations possible. Finally, it thanks them very much for filling up with them today.

That could be one of the notices that we could have when Canadians are using oil from abroad.

Oil is not just fuel; it is also used in things like smart phones and eyeglasses, but let us stick with smart phones. Perhaps when Canadians are buying one, they could have this label written on the phone, and it quotes directly from BBC. The BBC is of course talking about Nigeria, from which we import 12,000 barrels of oil every single day and countless other barrels embedded in the products that we buy. It would say:

Continued oil spills from the activities of multinationals have also cast doubt on the impact of the clean-up exercise. 'Things are getting worse by the day,' Celestine Akpobari, an environmental activist from Ogoni, told the BBC.

Mr Akpobari says people can no longer fish or farm because of the devastation. 'People are dying, there are strange diseases and women are having miscarriages' from the pollution, he says.

UN scientists have found an eight-centimetre layer of refined oil floating on top of the water that supplies the communities' drinking water, vastly higher than is legally permitted.

The notice could thank them very much for buying this smart phone which includes Nigerian oil, that they were funding this devastating pollution abroad, that unfortunately the oil in the smart phone was not from Canada, where none of the aforementioned practices are undertaken, and enjoy their product. That is another thing we could put on our product labelling if we were so intent on passing this proposal.

I am happy to write labels all day for all kinds of products, because we forget that oil is used for everything from textiles, basket-

balls, combs, prosthetics and countless other products that we do not even realize contain petroleum. Perhaps it is time to have warning labels about all the dirty foreign oil that goes into those products, because the clean, green, environmentally, ethically and economically responsible oil produced in Canada cannot actually make it to the markets.

• (1515)

Before our friends stand up and say we will not need oil anymore because we are all going to go electric, there will have to be, of course, a warning label for that. It is going to be on electric cars when we pass this motion. Forgive me if I quote the CBC:

Lithium mining, needed to build the lithium ion batteries at the heart of today's EVs, has also been connected to other kinds of environmental harm. There have been mass fish kills related to lithium mining in Tibet, for example. The freshwater supply is being consumed by mines in South America's lithium-rich region. Even in North America, where mining regulations are strict, harsh chemicals are used to extract the valuable metal.

I will quote Wired magazine:

In May 2016, hundreds of protesters threw dead fish onto the streets of Tagong, a town on the eastern edge of the Tibetan plateau. They had plucked them from the waters of the Liqi river, where a toxic chemical leak from the Ganzizhou Rongda Lithium mine had wreaked havoc with the local ecosystem.

There are pictures of masses of dead fish on the surface of the stream. Some eyewitnesses reported seeing cow and yak carcasses floating downstream, dead from drinking contaminated water.

By buying an environmentally friendly electric car, people will be sending money back to mines just like the one described in this warning label, and they will be thanked very much for buying the automobile. By the way, dear customer, none of these kinds of practices are carried out by Canada's clean, green energy sector, which, in contrast to the aforementioned foreign suppliers, actually has the support of its surrounding communities.

There is a different kind of warning label we could put on our products. We could actually highlight the successes of Canadian energy, by contrast.

For example, we could talk about the countless reserves and other indigenous communities that have signed benefits agreements to receive billions of dollars of revenue from our energy sector, lifting countless first nations people out of poverty. Twenty out of 20 of the first nations communities that surrounded the proposed Teck Frontier mine supported it. Every single community along the path of the Coastal GasLink project supported it.

We could tell people in a warning label that if they buy products that use Canadian energy, they will be helping to fight poverty in first nations communities. They would also be buying oil with GHG emissions that are lower than the average per barrel produced. In fact, in the last 20 years, dear customer, those who have filled up their cars with gasoline originating in western Canada's energy sector have put in their vehicles an energy source that resulted from a 36% reduction in GHG emissions per barrel of oil in the last two decades. By the way, dear customer, those who buy this or that product containing Canadian oil are supporting the industry that paid over \$600 billion in taxes to all three levels of government to fund schools, hospitals and roads. They will also be putting money into an industry that faces the highest and most intense regulations on the environment, on labour and on human rights. These are all things we could find a way to put in a label on the products that emanate from Canada's energy sector.

I encourage us to continue this dialogue. As Conservatives, we are prepared to come forward to help in the drafting of these labels that are now going to go on our products, so that Canadians can distinguish between the dirty, unethical, polluting and oppressive sources of energy from around the world and the clean, green, world-leading sources of energy around the world.

• (1520)

We might even tell Canadians on these warning labels that the first carbon-negative oil company, Whitecap Resources, which puts more GHGs back in the ground than it does in the air and actually takes greenhouse gases out of the atmosphere, is a Canadian company. Maybe that could go on one of the labels we are going to produce as a result of today's proposal.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The sponsor of the motion, the hon. member for Sydney—Victoria, has five minutes for his right of reply to the motion.

The hon. member for Sydney—Victoria.

**Mr. Jaime Battiste (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, when I first presented this motion in the House I spoke about a climate crisis, and the profound threat it represents to our children and our grandchildren. The alarm bells have rung. The United Nations has been adamant about our need to cut our carbon footprint in half globally within 10 years.

The scientific evidence is clear. Poll after poll clearly shows that Canadians understand this, and we must all do our part to combat climate change. We have struggled together through an unprecedented global pandemic. We have witnessed first-hand how vulnerable humanity is to germs, pathogens and diseases. In many ways, this pandemic is a dark preview of the looming environmental crisis, which some have argued has already begun. Now is the time for environmental reconciliation.

### *Private Members' Business*

*Netukulimk*, a Mi'kmaq concept for enviro-sustainability, is something that I have been taught. Indigenous teachings share that all things are interconnected and humanity must be stewards of our environment. When we nurture and respect our environment it will nurture and heal us. Unfortunately, we have allowed greed and profit to contaminate our relationship with our environment. However, as a country, we are waking up to a brand new reality where we can work to mitigate the impacts of climate change. We can all do our part, and Canada can lead the way.

During COVID-19, we have each shouldered burdens economically and emotionally, all for the greater good of survival, but we need guidance. We need to be armed with the scientific knowledge of how we can effect change in our day-to-day actions. I would tell colleagues that is what environmental grading labelling, if done right, can do. It can give Canadians the ability to make better choices every day that will fight climate change and work toward a better, more sustainable future for generations to come.

We need to transition to an economic model that is sustainable, that is just and that works within our planet's social and ecological boundaries. Environmental grading would not only enable Canadians to make environmentally conscious choices, but would encourage them to support local industry and agriculture. When it comes to environmental impacts, local would have an advantage over the larger footprint of international alternatives. Environmental grading labelling would also give Canadian industries, which often exceed environmental and ethical standards, a way to demonstrate those commitments clearly and concisely to Canadian consumers.

Before I conclude my remarks, I would like to address some of the concerns and comments made by my colleagues during the debate. There have been a number of interesting points raised. Many were already addressed in the proposed amendments. I would ask my opposition colleagues to see if the amendments already proposed and accepted address some of the issues raised, especially that of reducing study meetings to seven, as raised by my colleague, the MP for Windsor West. I believe committee would be a fantastic venue to study it and explore all these issues that have been raised.

I thank my colleague, the member for Victoria, for her comments in the first hour. I appreciate that she saw the potential for an environmental grading label and incentivizing positive choices that could drive a shift to sustainable green economies. However, I would also like to acknowledge her concerns; namely, that there are some questions as to how effective eco-labelling would be in practice. This concern highlights the need for a federal approach to green labelling.

*Private Members' Business*

Simply seeing the difference in calories between two items on a menu can be enough to change what one orders at a restaurant. Inconsistent eco-labels, however, designed independently by different companies, lack the ability to be cross-referenced and compared, which is confusing to an average consumer. With a uniform federal approach, consumers, even those who lack expertise or specialized knowledge, would be able to quickly compare products and alter their purchasing decisions with ease, thereby making informed decisions that would encourage more sustainable and environmental choices, which in turn would encourage companies to make sustainable and environmentally friendly products.

Colleagues should think about the art of the possible. Canada can be a global leader on this front. I humbly ask members to join with me and allow this motion to be studied for the process to move forward.

• (1525)

Finally, I will end with an indigenous—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I am sorry, but the time has expired.

It being 3:29 p.m., the time provided for debate has expired. The question is on the motion. If a member of a recognized party present in the House wishes to request a recorded division or that the amendment be adopted on division, I would invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair now.

• (1530)

**Ms. Lindsay Mathysen:** Madam Speaker, the NDP requests a recorded division.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Pursuant to order made on Monday, January 25, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, February 24, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

[*Translation*]

The motion that the House do now adjourn is deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until Monday, February 22, at 11 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 3:30 p.m.)

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