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# Standing Committee on International Trade

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Chair: The Honourable Judy A. Sgro





## Standing Committee on International Trade

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• (1105)

[English]

**The Chair (Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.)):** Good morning, everyone. I call this meeting to order.

This is meeting number 14 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on International Trade. The committee is meeting today, pursuant to Standing Order 106(4), as requested by four members of the committee, to discuss their request to undertake a study of the impact on Canada of the European Union transparency and authorization mechanisms for exports of COVID-19 vaccines.

Today's meeting is taking place by video conference and the proceedings will be made available via the House of Commons website.

To ensure an orderly meeting, I need to outline a few rules to follow. Interpretation in this video conference will work very much like in a regular committee meeting. Before speaking, please wait until I recognize you by name. Use the “raise hand” function to indicate your desire to speak and when you are ready to speak, click on the microphone icon to activate your mike. When speaking, please speak slowly and clearly. When you are not speaking, your mike should be on mute.

Should any technical challenges arise—for example, in relation to interpretation or a problem with your audio—please advise the chair immediately, and the technical team will work to resolve them. Please note that we may need to suspend during these times, as we need to ensure that all members get to participate fully.

To the motion that we have on the floor—

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Outremont, Lib.):** I'm sorry, Madam Chair, to interrupt so early in the committee meeting with a technical issue, but I do not seem to have a “raise hand” function option on my Zoom at this time. I wonder whether other committee members do and it is simply a technical glitch on my end.

**The Chair:** Can you check now and see if you have that ability?

**Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.):** No, we don't.

**Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC):** I do not have it.

**The Chair:** I see that no one has that.

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan:** Madam Chair, would you like to perhaps recognize people with their hands raised, literally? I'm open to your suggestion.

**The Chair:** Let me start by doing it that way. I do have a speakers list, so if we're consistent with what I was given as a speakers list, we'll be all right while they try to correct that, if that's okay.

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan:** Is that a speakers list for the debate on the 106(4) motion, Madam Chair?

**The Chair:** The speakers list is just for the panellists and the witnesses. For those of us on the committee, just raise your hand and make sure that I notice it.

To speak to the motion that we have before us, Mrs. Gray, go ahead, please.

**Mrs. Tracy Gray:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'd like to thank the clerk and the committee staff for putting this meeting together so quickly, and also to all of the members of this committee.

I'll be brief, as I understand that we want to go to the motion and that the minister is prepared to answer questions.

I'd like to thank Minister Ng for her responsiveness in coming to this committee. I think it's pertinent and very timely that we hear from the minister on what Canada is doing regarding the COVID-19 vaccine export control measures put in place by the European Union on Friday. As I understand it, Canada was not explicitly listed as a country that is exempt from these measures, unlike nearly 120 other countries. We also can't forget that our approved Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are shipped from Belgium and Spain respectively.

I hope to see all members of our committee support this motion due to the importance of this issue. Therefore, I move:

That, given the announced Transparency and Authorisation Mechanism for exports of COVID-19 vaccines by the European Union, the committee invite the Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade and her officials to appear before the Committee for no less than two hours regarding matters related to the European Union's export controls and its potential impacts on Canada's COVID-19 vaccination strategy, and that this meeting occur no later than February 10, 2021.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mrs. Gray.

Ms. Bendayan, parliamentary secretary, go ahead, please.

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would like to thank all of the colleagues on this committee and, in particular, to thank the Conservative member who has raised this important issue. Obviously, we have been working around the clock over the weekend. In parallel to that, I have been working in order to secure the minister's appearance before this committee at the earliest possible opportunity.

It is Monday morning, and I am pleased to advise all committee members that the minister is available to appear immediately after this discussion, so I would invite colleagues, unless they have any urgent matters to raise in connection with this debate, to move quickly to hear directly from the minister.

**The Chair:** Is there any further discussion on the motion before us? Okay. All those in favour, please raise your hand.

I'm sorry. Hold on. Mr. Blaikie wishes to speak to the motion.

Go ahead, Mr. Blaikie.

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Thank you, Madam Chair. It's just a quick word to put my support for the motion on the record.

**The Chair:** Is there anything further?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** It has been voted on unanimously that we move forward on the motion.

Madam Clerk, do we need to suspend to do a sound check with the panellists?

• (1110)

**The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Christine Lafrance):** We need to suspend because neither the officials nor the minister has been able to connect. They have received the information to do their connection. I don't know what's going on. I'm trying to check with the staff, but I don't have any news yet.

For now, we'll have to suspend.

**The Chair:** Okay.

We've adopted the motion. We will suspend momentarily until we have all our witnesses and the minister prepared to meet with the committee.

Ms. Gray.

**Mrs. Tracy Gray:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I just want a clarification on how long the minister would be with us today.

**The Chair:** Our meeting goes until one o'clock, so hopefully we're not going to lose very much time in getting everybody connected. Hopefully, we'll have lots of time.

The committee will suspend, for just a minute or two, until we have everybody connected. Thank you.

• (1110)

(Pause)

• (1125)

**The Chair:** I'm calling the meeting back to order. I'll call Minister Ng for opening remarks and hopefully by that time we'll have the officials connected.

Is it okay with everybody that we do it this way, so we don't lose too much time? I know everybody's schedules, especially the minister's, are very tight.

Minister Ng, would you like to give opening remarks, please?

**Hon. Mary Ng (Minister of International Trade):** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Good morning and, I guess, good afternoon to everyone, to the vice-chairs and of course to all the members of the committee.

[*Translation*]

I am pleased to be here today to discuss the steps our government is taking to ensure that critical vaccine supply chains remain open and resilient.

[*English*]

Madam Chair, securing timely and adequate supplies of COVID-19 vaccines for Canadians is our government's highest priority. We knew that vaccines would be vital to ending this pandemic and that is why Canada has seven vaccine procurement contracts covering the largest number of vaccine doses of any country in the world. Our government has diligently sourced vaccines manufactured in both Europe and the United States, countries with whom we have strong free trade agreements, to mitigate against any export restrictions or other potential disruptions.

On January 29, the European Commission brought into force a temporary transparency and authorization mechanism for exports of COVID-19 vaccines. Under this regulation, exporters require authorization before they ship their COVID-19 vaccines to ensure that advance purchase agreements with the European member states are being respected.

As soon as we learned about the forthcoming measure earlier last week, I immediately reached out to my counterpart, the European Union trade commissioner and executive vice-president, Valdis Dombrovskis. In that conversation on Thursday before the EU made their announcement, I pressed Canada's continued expectation that this mechanism not have an impact on Canada's shipment of vaccines. I reiterated that Canada has advance purchase agreements with vaccine manufacturers in Europe, and we expect those agreements to be respected.

Vice-President Dombrovskis provided strong reassurances that this mechanism will not delay vaccine shipments to Canada, and we both committed to continuing our work together as we have since the beginning of the pandemic.

Last week, Prime Minister Trudeau also spoke with the president of the European Union, Ursula von der Leyen, and received the same reassurances that our vaccine shipments would not be affected. I had a second conversation this past Saturday with Executive Vice-President Dombrovskis once the EU measure was officially announced. Once again, he assured me that the EU's measure would not have an impact on Canada's vaccines, and that we once again reaffirmed our commitment to continue working together.

Yesterday, Minister of Health Patty Hajdu spoke with the European commissioner for health and food safety, and she also received clear assurances that the EU mechanism would not affect shipments of vaccines to Canada. In addition to this, Minister Garneau will be speaking to his European Commission counterpart later this week, and Minister Anand is in constant contact with suppliers.

Given that we have vaccine shipments coming from Belgium, I also reached out to my Belgian counterpart, deputy prime minister of Belgium, Sophie Wilmès, and spoke with her yesterday afternoon. Deputy Prime Minister Wilmès also provided me with clear and explicit assurances that Canada will not be affected by this mechanism.

Let me be crystal clear. Canada has expressed our continued expectation that this mechanism will not impact Canada's vaccine shipments, and we have received repeated reassurances that shipments of vaccines to Canada will not be affected.

● (1130)

[*Translation*]

This is an urgent matter that we take seriously. Our government's top priority is to ensure that vaccines are distributed so that all Canadians have immediate access to safe and free vaccines.

[*English*]

Our heads of missions abroad have also been proactively engaging with decision-makers in the European Commission and key member states to ensure that there are no inadvertent impacts on Canada's shipments. In every interaction, our counterparts have confirmed that there is no intention to do so.

As a result of Canadian interventions from ministers and our diplomatic posts, there are efforts under way to streamline the process for Canada's shipments this coming week. From the beginning of the shipment process—prior to the introduction of this mechanism—our European posts have been working diligently with Canada's suppliers on the management of orders and other logistical issues to ensure that Canadians are able to access COVID-19 vaccines as quickly as possible.

Canada's diplomatic network across Europe is also keeping close track of how European Union member-state governments are carrying out their obligations under the mechanism. We understand that one motivation for the EU-wide mechanism was to pre-empt any local or national measures, making it even more clear that this will not affect—and it was not intended to affect—Canadian shipments of the vaccine.

We are taking a whole-of-government approach to this important issue, as we have done with the entire pandemic, engaging with the EU and member states at every level to ensure that Canadian vaccine shipments will not be impacted and that Canadians will have access to safe and free vaccines. We're also analyzing and monitoring the mechanism to ensure that the EU respects its trade obligations under the World Trade Organization rules. The specifics of how a measure is implemented are also important. We are looking closely at how the EU is implementing the new measure, and we'll continue to monitor to ensure that the mechanism is applied on a non-discriminatory basis as required by international trade rules.

The European Union is a trusted partner of Canada. We share close people-to-people ties, as well as a robust free trade agreement. Canada will continue to expect that the European Commission's mechanism will not affect Canadian vaccine shipments and that we will continue to work with the European Union with fair-

ness and transparency, including in our work of promoting rules-based international trade.

Since 2018, Canada has led the Ottawa Group on WTO reform, working with like-minded international partners, including the EU. We have made progress on multilateral, rules-based trading, and we are collaborating with like-minded partners to encourage all WTO members to resolve the appellate body impasse. When the pandemic arose, the world saw 97 countries respond to COVID-19 by implementing more than 220 restrictions on cross-border trade. Canada and the Ottawa Group members continue to do their work to strengthen supply chains and to reduce COVID-related barriers to trade. Today, only 138 of those restrictions remain in place, and the work continues.

Canada and the European Union have jointly championed the WTO trade and health initiative, which calls for no new, unjustified export restrictions on medical goods, including vaccines. Canada will also continue to leverage its leadership role within the WTO, the G20 and the G7 to promote universal access to vaccines. We will continue to work with all countries towards ensuring that responses to COVID-19 do not impose unjustified or harmful burdens, and to support equitable access to vaccines.

We know that COVID-19 has no borders. It is a global problem that needs global solutions. Both Canada and the EU know that we can only successfully fight this global pandemic when everyone has equitable access to vaccines. As long as one country is at risk, we're all at risk. Since the beginning of this pandemic, our government has been committed to a strong global effort to stop COVID-19 and to address its devastating health, social and economic impacts on Canadians and people around the world.

Securing a safe and effective vaccine for Canadians is the number one priority for this government. Canada will work steadfastly with our trade partners and will continue to strengthen and protect global supply chains.

● (1135)

If there's one thing we want Canadians to know, it is this: We are on top of this. We're always operating with urgency on anything concerning Canadians' getting vaccines rapidly. Ensuring supply chains stay open and resilient means a flow of food and medicines so that businesses can open again, kids can safely go to school, families can gather and both our society and economy can recover and thrive into the future.

[*Translation*]

We understand that Canadians are concerned and we are working hard to ensure access to these life-saving vaccines as quickly as possible.

[English]

Our government is operating with this sense of urgency every single day.

With that, I will now answer any questions you have for me.

[Translation]

Thank you.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Minister Ng.

To our clerk, do we have our panellists?

**The Clerk:** Yes, we have two officials connected. The ambassador has tried, but she can't connect. I think she is following the debate on ParIVU.

**The Chair:** Let's move on, then, to our speakers list.

Again, thank you, Minister, for being here so very quickly. We very much appreciate it. It's an important subject.

We will move on to Mrs. Gray.

**Mrs. Tracy Gray:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you, Minister, for being here.

Minister, I understand you've received assurances from your EU counterpart that Canada would not be affected by the COVID-19 vaccine export controls. Has there been an agreement signed in writing regarding this, and can you table this today?

**Hon. Mary Ng:** Yes, I have received repeated assurances from my counterpart, as the Prime Minister has from the president, and they have been through telephone conversations.

**Mrs. Tracy Gray:** Have you received any assurances that are binding or that might carry penalties if the European Union subjects Canada to export controls over the COVID-19 vaccine distribution?

**Hon. Mary Ng:** As I have said, I spoke to Commissioner Dombrovskis both before and after the measure was introduced. I have spoken to my counterpart in Belgium as well, and we have received repeated assurances that the mechanism that is in place will not affect the vaccine shipments that are coming to Canada.

However, we take this very seriously and will continue to work at it steadfastly.

**Mrs. Tracy Gray:** Minister, you don't have anything in writing from any of the officials. You have only a verbal assurance. Is that what you're saying today?

**Hon. Mary Ng:** I have received multiple assurances myself, and through Minister Hajdu and from the Prime Minister, that vaccine shipments to Canada will not be affected by this mechanism.

**Mrs. Tracy Gray:** The executive vice-president and commissioner for trade for the EU stated, "This time-limited and targeted system covers only those COVID-19 vaccines that were agreed by Advanced Purchase Agreements with the EU."

We don't see any statements that cover other countries, like Canada.

Can you table today information from the EU that advance purchase agreements, such as from Canada, are also included?

**Hon. Mary Ng:** The member rightly points out that the EU has specified in its regulation that it is mindful of the advance purchase agreements contracted and that it continues to respect them. I have been clear, as my colleagues have, that Canada expects that our shipments will not be delayed and will not be affected by this mechanism.

**Mrs. Tracy Gray:** Minister, can you table these telephone conversations?

**Hon. Mary Ng:** I shared the readouts publicly as soon as they were completed, and they are available publicly already.

● (1140)

**Mrs. Tracy Gray:** Is Canada being added to the list of exempted countries?

**Hon. Mary Ng:** Countries like our other trading partners—the United States or Australia or the U.K.—are also not on the exemption list.

As I have said to the honourable member, I have received assurances, as has the Prime Minister, and we will continue to work on ensuring there are no delays to Canada's vaccine shipments.

**Mrs. Tracy Gray:** Why would Canada not be on this list? Can you table information that outlines if Canada will be treated the same as countries that are on the exemption list?

**Hon. Mary Ng:** On the work that is being done by our missions on the ground by what I like to say are our the trade teams, Canada's trade teams, who are there to serve Canadians, they are working with their member state colleagues, as well as with the European Union and with the companies, to ensure that they are supported all the way along, so that they are meeting the requirements set out in this mechanism. We continue to do that work on the ground. I continue to do this work with my counterpart, as my government colleagues are doing as well.

**Mrs. Tracy Gray:** The other part is that companies seeking to ship vaccines outside of the EU bloc have to obtain prior authorization. Can you table any documentation of prior authorization allowing shipments of vaccines to Canada?

**Hon. Mary Ng:** I'm not sure I understand the question, but I think it is whether I can assure Canadians that the mechanism that the EU has put forward will not delay or impact Canadian vaccine shipments. There, the answer is yes, I have received assurances.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

We will go on to Mr. Dhaliwal.

**Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Madam Chair, as you know, some of us have been elected for many terms, and I've been on the international trade committee almost every term. I can tell you, Ms. Ng, that you are one of the best to appear on very short notice, and I want to thank you for being accessible.

Minister Ng, it's my understanding that 1.1 million vaccine doses have been distributed across Canada to date, and that not only is Canada among the top five G20 nations for COVID-19 vaccinations, but we are also in the top two contributors to Covax to ensure equitable access to vaccines around the world. Even if no additional vaccines are approved by Health Canada, the Prime Minister recently announced that Canada is expected to receive two million doses of Moderna and four million doses of Pfizer by the end of March.

Could you please elaborate on that and on whether we expect to receive the six million doses within the next two months? Also, it's good to know from you for my constituents—and I would also like to thank you—that the shipments of vaccines will not be affected by this EU mechanism.

**Hon. Mary Ng:** I want to thank the honourable member for that question. Being accessible and transparent and having the opportunity to speak directly to Canadians through this committee is absolutely important.

I very much appreciate the invitation that I received on this very important issue. I know how urgent this matter is for Canadians, and we are seized with it, which is why you heard me talk about how we are on top of it and we intend to stay on top of it, and how serious it is for me and for my colleagues and the Prime Minister to ensure that there is no disruption in the shipment of vaccines to Canada. Those are the reassurances that I have received directly from the executive vice-president, from Trade Commissioner Dombrovskis in the EU, but Minister of Health Hajdu has also received similar assurances from the commissioner of health in the EU, and the Prime Minister has as well, from the EU president.

The honourable member also talked about the number of vaccines and what we expect. We are expecting to be on track to receive the six million doses of vaccines from both Pfizer and Moderna. We expect that we will be able to vaccinate three million Canadians by the end of Q1 just with those vaccines that are approved right now.

As my colleagues have shared publicly before, Canada has procured a robust portfolio of vaccines for Canadians, and absolutely, we all agree—the EU and Canada—that COVID-19 has no borders and that we all need to work together to fight COVID-19 and to make sure that people around the world also have access to vaccines.

We're going to continue to work on this. We must continue to work on this. I want to assure you that it is absolutely my top priority to stay on top of this and to work on ensuring that the vaccines we get from the European Union are not disrupted through this mechanism and make their way here to Canada for Canadians.

• (1145)

**Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal:** Minister, what can Canada do to ensure that Canada's international supply chain remains resilient and operational in order to receive all those doses in the coming months?

**Hon. Mary Ng:** Canada has been working on the resiliency of supply chains throughout this entire pandemic, right from day one. As I said in my speech, we did see countries put up export restrictions during this pandemic. We've been working steadfastly with

our like-minded colleagues and trade ministers to ensure that open supply chains for critical medicines, including vaccines, remain barrier free. That work continues, and I'm pleased to lead Canada's Ottawa Group working with colleagues to do just that.

**Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal:** The Prime Minister has also clearly said that anyone who wants to have the vaccine will receive those doses by the end of September.

Are we still on schedule?

**Hon. Mary Ng:** Yes, we are. We are confident that Canadians who wish to have a vaccine will be vaccinated. It will be free, and it will be done by the end of September.

**The Chair:** We'll move on to Mr. Savard-Tremblay.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Madam Chair, thank you for giving me the floor.

Good morning, Madam Minister. Thank you for being here. Hello to my colleagues also.

Let's come back to the issue of vaccines. As everyone knows, no vaccine was received last week, and no further deliveries are planned either. The Pfizer plant in Europe has been experiencing problems, but we could not turn to the Pfizer plant in the U.S. because the former U.S. Trump administration passed an executive order for priority distribution of these vaccines to Americans.

Now there is a new President of the United States. His first call as president was to the Prime Minister of Canada to announce, among other things, that the Buy American Act would be strengthened and that there would be no Keystone XL oil pipeline. For the Prime Minister of Canada, these are two failures.

To your knowledge, has there been any discussion in this negotiation of requiring, in exchange, as a minimum, an exception in the supply of vaccines, at least during the short period when Europe will not be able to supply Canada?

Thank you in advance for your response.

**Hon. Mary Ng:** Thank you.

[*English*]

We have procured vaccines from Europe, but also from America. Of course, the vaccines that are due to arrive in Canada in Q1 are from the EU. The Prime Minister and the President of the U.S. did speak. In that conversation, the Prime Minister reiterated that Canada's supply chains and our interconnectedness between our two economies is absolutely critical.

He also reiterated that Canada and the United States will absolutely continue to work together, whether it be on COVID-19 or building back better, to tackle climate change and to create opportunities for Canadians and Americans alike by creating good middle-class jobs in Canada.

Today, I am pleased to answer your questions and to speak to the committee and Canadians about the efforts we are taking—and we are doing absolutely everything—to ensure that Canada's shipments of vaccines from the European Union are not delayed.

• (1150)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay:** I know you're working on that and that the United States is our number one trading partner. Logically, it should also be our first health partner.

However, I'll come back to my question, which was more focused. There was a conversation between the two heads of state at the end of the previous week. Was this discussed? Mr. Biden announced a refusal to the Prime Minister of Canada on two issues that are dear to his heart. That's 0 for 2.

Has there been any discussion in these negotiations about requiring even temporary supply? When Europe can resume its shipments, it will be normal for the United States to give priority to its population according to the order they passed, and that is their business. But at least for this period of time, was there any discussion of that?

[*English*]

**Hon. Mary Ng:** Thank you very much to the honourable member for that question.

The Prime Minister's Office has made public his conversation with the President. I want to assure Canadian workers and businesses that we continue to be actively engaged with our American partners at all levels through the President and the Prime Minister, and also certainly through our ambassador to the United States. I'm looking forward to speaking to my counterpart once the confirmation process is completed in America.

We certainly remind the Americans that Canada is the top customer. We are the largest customer to some 32 states, larger than Japan or even China, so the relationship between Canada and the U.S. is absolutely critically important, and we are committed to working together with our American neighbours.

We have a new trade agreement through CUSMA, which enables the two countries to continue our work, providing very important access to that very important market for Canadian businesses, small businesses, women entrepreneurs and so on. This is very important and we continue to do that work with our American colleagues. I'm looking forward to continuing to work with the American administration in an effort to build back—in this economic recovery, but also during COVID-19—for Canadians.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay:** I still think it's a shame. You spoke to us about the importance of having partners and how much you were looking forward to working with the new U.S. administration. We are very happy to hear that. However, I've asked you the same question twice. Unfortunately, you didn't give me an answer. So I'm going to venture to ask it again. I'll even phrase it a little differently.

Is it likely, yes or no, that we will benefit from a special supply from the United States during the weeks when Europe will not be providing any vaccine?

[*English*]

**Hon. Mary Ng:** I want to assure the honourable member that we are expecting six million doses of vaccines from Moderna and from Pfizer. This will enable three million Canadians to be vaccinated by the end of the first quarter, with many more vaccines coming.

We have secured—

• (1155)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay:** Madam Minister, how many doses are we talking about for this week and last week?

[*English*]

**The Chair:** I'm sorry but your time is up, Mr. Savard-Tremblay.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay:** You've been "saved by the bell", as they say.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Maybe we can get back to you when you have your next round of questions.

We will move on to Mr. Blaikie for six minutes.

Go ahead, please.

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you, Madam Minister, for being here at committee today.

The new European measures allow governments in countries where the vaccine is being produced to review the export plans of the drug companies for exporting the vaccine in the case that European supply would be jeopardized, and to ban the export of those drugs to the other countries, except those that are exempt from that potential ban.

Would you say that the verbal reassurances you've received from European officials offer a greater or lesser degree of protection than being on the exemption list would?

**Hon. Mary Ng:** I would point out that countries like Australia, the U.K. and the U.S. were also not included, but I am reassured by my colleague in the European Union as well as my colleague in Belgium. I will continue to do work with other member states as will our team.

This work is absolutely top priority, so we must continue to do this work to make sure that this mechanism does not affect the shipments of vaccines to Canada.

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie:** Would that ongoing work be required if Canada were on the exemption list, or would you be satisfied if we were on the list that our supply was protected?



**Hon. Mary Ng:** I think work that has anything to do with respect to COVID-19—and certainly anything to do with business supports and certainly with respect to vaccines, which we know are so important to Canadians and to the health of Canadians—we would continue to put absolute priority on just as we always have.

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie:** Am I hearing that you're indifferent to whether Canada is on the exemption list or not? Did you ask, at any time, for Canada to be on that exemption list?

**Hon. Mary Ng:** It's absolutely my top priority to do everything we possibly can to ensure that the advance purchase agreements, those contracts that Canada has negotiated, are respected; that the doses of vaccines and the shipments of vaccines come to Canada without delay; and that this is not impacted by this mechanism. It is absolutely my priority, absolutely with tremendous seriousness, and it is a whole-of-government approach, including the team we have on the ground that is working at all levels.

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie:** If the European Union were to offer tomorrow to put Canada on the exemption list, would you accept?

**Hon. Mary Ng:** Of course I would welcome that. I would welcome anything that is going to—

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie:** It is a higher level of protection than the verbal reassurances that you've received so far, to be on that exemption list. That would be a value-added proposition for Canada to get on that list. Do you agree with that?

**Hon. Mary Ng:** To make sure that we continue to have the assurance that Canadians get these vaccines without delay or interruption is going to be and continues to be my absolute top priority. I will work at everything to ensure that work continues with that level of urgency that we have applied and we will continue to apply.

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie:** Given the special relationship your government has touted between Canada and Europe—in fact, you mentioned it earlier in your opening remarks—given CETA, did you ask for an explanation as to why Canada wasn't included on that list of exempt countries?

**Hon. Mary Ng:** What I did right from the very beginning, upon learning that this mechanism was going to be introduced, was I reached out to my colleague and was very clear about Canada's expectation that our contracts be respected and that there would be no delay or interruption to our vaccines coming to Canada. This work, of course, this assurance, was received by the Prime Minister directly from the president, and we're going to keep doing this work as we need to.

I do have to give a thank you and support—and I hope everyone will—to my officials who are on the ground and who are working around the clock to make sure they are in touch with their EU counterparts as well as member-state counterparts to both monitor and work with the companies to make sure that, for any obligations that are required, they're helping the companies to meet those obligations, so that we really do ensure there is no delay.

• (1200)

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie:** Since the list of exempted countries was published, have you been in contact with anybody in the European Union to ask why Canada was not included on that list?

**Hon. Mary Ng:** I've spoken to Commissioner Dombrovskis and have been very clear with respect to Canada's expectations. As I've

repeatedly said, we have received assurances that this measure will not affect Canada's vaccines.

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie:** I hear you on the assurances. I'm wondering if you've received an explanation for why Canada was not on the list and whether you found that explanation satisfactory.

**Hon. Mary Ng:** I would also point out that Canada as well as countries like Australia, the U.K. and the U.S. are also not on the list. The countries that are on the list... I think Canada and the European Union would have steadfastly supported ensuring that least-developed countries continue to have access to vaccines and that they do not experience delays. It's why Canada has been participating in Covax and has been a consistent supporter of ensuring that the global community also has access to vaccines. I think everyone agrees—

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie:** Sorry, but does that, incidentally, Madam Minister, include supporting a waiver for the TRIPS provisions at the WTO?

**Hon. Mary Ng:** You know that Canada is a steadfast supporter of the WTO. Through my work with Ottawa Group colleagues, I continue to ensure and advocate for a rules-based international trading order that is respectful of the rules. What we are talking about and what we are absolutely focused on is making sure that access to the vaccines that Canada has procured does not experience impacts or delays as a result of this mechanism that the European Union has put in place.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Minister.

We'll go on to Mr. Lobb for five minutes.

**Mr. Ben Lobb (Huron—Bruce, CPC):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

The first question I have for the minister is in regard to the advance purchase agreements, the contracts. Is the government willing to publish the parts of the scheduled deliveries? Is the government considering that so that it's more transparent for Canadians?

**Hon. Mary Ng:** I thank the honourable member for that question. As the minister of trade, I'm not able to give you that answer; I think that question is better directed to my colleague the procurement minister. Suffice it to say that throughout all of this we have endeavoured, just as I am endeavouring today, to be transparent.

**Mr. Ben Lobb:** Okay. That is perfectly reasonable, but in your discussions, you have...or we as a government have kind of hung our hat on the fact that we have these advance purchase agreements. If a company like Pfizer is scheduled to deliver four million doses in March, and they deliver 3.5 million doses in March, is that a breach in your purchase agreement?

**Hon. Mary Ng:** Again, I want to make sure I am always providing, to my colleagues and to the committee and certainly to Canadians, accurate information. I'm just not able to give you the information specifics with respect to contracts, but I know that—

**Mr. Ben Lobb:** In fairness, Minister, you've gone on television, and I have your words about advance purchase agreements and how these contracts will be respected. When you come to the committee, I think it's only reasonable that you would be able to tell us about a breach, because that is what some of these export rules are really hinging on.

Let me ask you this question. In the advance purchase agreements, is it a schedule by month or by quarter, or is it a total dose at the end of a period of time? Can you tell us that?

**Hon. Mary Ng:** What I can tell you is that the consideration for advance purchase agreements that have been contracted by third countries like Canada will continue to be respected. That is the assurance I have received from my colleague in the European Union. We all operate on a rules-based system. As I indicated to you and to my colleague, Canada would expect that our contracts would be honoured and that this mechanism would produce—

**Mr. Ben Lobb:** We don't even know what's in the contract. With all due fairness, we don't even know. If we receive only 3.5 million from Pfizer by the end of March, is that a breach of contract? Is there anybody here today who can tell us that? Is there an official who has been advising you who can tell us if that's a breach? My next question really hinges on that.

**Hon. Mary Ng:** What I can say to you is that the advance purchase agreements Canada has with the companies are to be respected. We have been clear about that with our colleagues in the European Union. I have certainly been clear about that as well with my colleagues in member states such as Belgium—

• (1205)

**Mr. Ben Lobb:** I'm sorry to cut you off, but AstraZeneca CEO Pascal Soriot said, "Our contract is not a contractual commitment". That's what he is on the record as saying.

If I were a European Union commissioner, I'd say, "You know what? Fantastic. We will not do anything with the export authorization regulation as long as it adheres to your APA, because the APA is meaningless. It means nothing."

The CEO of a company has said that a contract isn't even a contractual commitment. We're at committee and we don't even know if it breaches a contract on four million. This is quite a situation. The government has put Canadians' lives at risk, I would say. What do you think, Minister?

**Hon. Mary Ng:** What I would say is that I think all of us, on all sides of the House, are very committed to making sure we are transparent with Canadians—

**Mr. Ben Lobb:** But that's not true.

**Hon. Mary Ng:** —and that we work—

**Mr. Ben Lobb:** You're not, because we can't see the contract.

**Hon. Mary Ng:** Excuse me. I think I can seek the same time to speak.

**The Chair:** Allow the minister to answer, please.

**Mr. Ben Lobb:** Fair enough.

**Hon. Mary Ng:** I think Canadians expect all of us to work together. I think we need to work together in an effort to ensure that there

are no disruptions, that Canadians get the vaccines that we have procured, and that the vaccine rollout to Canadians is done. Working closely with provinces and territories is one part of it. Making sure these vaccines get into the country is the other part of it. I think Canadians are looking to all of us to make sure we are working together to engender that confidence.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Minister.

We will now go to Ms. Bendayan.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would like to begin by thanking the clerk and all the officials who were available over the weekend to respond quickly and to organize this session with the minister.

[*English*]

I would also like to thank the minister for making herself available. I know that she had to move many important discussions in her schedule in order to make time for the committee and respond to questions from committee members. I also know that she feels it is important to come to committee and respond to our questions. I thank her for that.

Picking up on the conversation we were having a moment ago with respect to advance purchase agreements, I would like to point out that it is my understanding, from the text of the EU regulation, that the European Commission is mindful that advance purchase agreements contracted by third parties, including Canada, need to be respected and that they will work to ensure the expectations of all countries, including Canada, to obtain other deliveries will be met.

I wonder if you could speak a little more to that, Minister, and particularly the work of our government to conclude, many months ago now, many different contracts with, I believe, over seven different suppliers and how that put us on a solid footing to continue to engage with our allies and ensure that there are no disruptions to our shipments of vaccines for Canadians.

**Hon. Mary Ng:** I want to thank the honourable member for that question. Maybe I'll start answering where she left off.

We understand—and we share this with everybody on all sides of the House—the absolute urgency for Canadians to have access to life-saving vaccines and to make sure that they are readily available. This is the sense of urgency the government works with every single day, including me, all of my colleagues and the Prime Minister.

With more than 1.1 million vaccines distributed across the country to date, Canada is among the top five G20 nations for COVID-19 vaccines. We are on track to receive six million vaccines by the end of Q1, 20 million between April and June, and a total of 70 million doses by the end of September. That is just with the approved vaccines alone. Our government continues to stay on top of this.

The advance purchase agreement is noted in the EU's announcement. The regulation is clear in respect of APAs that have already been contracted by third countries, such as Canada. In the conversation I had with my counterpart, on two occasions—as well as the Prime Minister with President von der Leyen, and the health minister with the commissioner of health in the EU—we received repeated assurances that Canada's vaccine shipments will not be affected by this measure.

Having said that, we take this very seriously. We will continue to work on this here. The team Canada that is on the ground for the missions in Europe continues to work with the companies as well as the member states and the European Union to ensure there is no disruption.

• (1210)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan:** Thank you, Madam Minister.

I know you've had several discussions and will have more in the next few hours and days, but the reality is that this work has been going on for a long time.

[*English*]

You, me and many other representatives of government have been advocating for the continued free movement of goods across borders, even during COVID-19. As we saw other countries turn inward and, let's say it on the record, we saw other countries move toward protectionist policies, Canada was a leading voice to ensure that our supply chains remain open.

Perhaps you can take a step back and tell us a little bit about that important work and how that work is feeding into some of your conversations with your European counterparts.

**Hon. Mary Ng:** Thank you for that important question.

You're absolutely right. The work that Canada has been leading on with like-minded countries preceded COVID-19. Canada leads the Ottawa Group with a number of like-minded countries, like Australia and Japan—the EU is included in there—New Zealand, Singapore and Switzerland. We've been working to ensure that supply chains flow freely and that protectionist measures are not in place.

As I said earlier, we did see protectionist measures at the very beginning of this pandemic, in the order of 90 countries with over 200 restrictive measures. I am pleased that during COVID-19, the Ottawa Group and its members have worked on a plan to make sure there is greater transparency and that if measures are put forward, they are filed with the WTO to ensure that critical supplies like food and medicines continue to move around borders, and to make sure we are working on trade and health.

In fact, this is an initiative championed by both the European Union and Canada to ensure that we are enabling key goods—critical goods, essential goods—including vaccines, to move freely so that there are no impacts on people in our countries.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Minister.

We will move on to Monsieur Savard-Tremblay, for two and a half minutes, please.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Good morning again, Madam Minister.

You tell us that you are working intensively with the European Union to make sure that we get the supply. However, we know that unforeseen circumstances can arise. For example, Pfizer, on three occasions, has reduced the number of planned doses, and Moderna was to deliver 230,400 doses this week and next week, but will only deliver 180,000 doses in the end.

Do you have a specific plan in case the European Union cannot provide the number of doses planned? What will Canada's response be?

We're listening.

• (1215)

[*English*]

**Hon. Mary Ng:** Thank you for that question.

The delay or slowdown at Pfizer is a temporary situation. I want to remind the member that Canada continues to be well positioned to receive vaccines from both Pfizer and Moderna, and that Canada continues to be on track to ensure that every Canadian who wishes to have a vaccine will have one for free by the end of September. We are absolutely steadfast in ensuring that the plan to vaccinate Canadians continues to be on track.

My colleagues and I, and the government, are absolutely seized with ensuring that this is done without delay.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay:** Thank you.

I will check this in more detail and with more accuracy. In case these doses don't arrive, what plan will be deployed? What is plan B? Assuming that the number of doses sent is decreasing or that there are none at a given time, what plan will be deployed?

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Be brief, please.

**Hon. Mary Ng:** I'm going to attempt to answer a question that both my colleagues, the health minister and the procurement minister, work on. I am very focused on making sure that there is no delay through the mechanism. Suffice it to say that there is no priority more urgent than making sure that vaccines get into Canada.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Minister.

We'll go on to Mr. Blaikie for two and a half minutes, please.

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie:** Minister, I've heard two things that, taken together, I think are cause for concern. One is that Canada has paid a relatively high price for access to these vaccines. Of course, it's hard to verify because we don't have access to the purchase agreements. The other is that one of the motivating factors for the European Union's recent move is that drug companies are withholding vaccine shipments to countries that have paid lower prices in order to send them to jurisdictions that are paying higher prices. That would put Canada, if you take those two things together, on a potential watch list for places that are receiving vaccine doses, given what we're paying.

I'm wondering if you can provide a little bit of insight into what Canada is paying compared with other countries and some reflections on whether Canada's signing up early at a high price means that it's on a potential watch list of exports to watch underneath this new European accountability mechanism.

**Hon. Mary Ng:** Let me start with Canada and the EU. We're countries that respect the rule of law and the multilateral trading system. Canada is very proud that, on the advice of its vaccine task force, it has procured a portfolio of vaccines that ensures that Canadians will have access to vaccines and that its vaccination plan for the end of September is on track. The European Union has also said that the advance purchase agreements that Canada has entered into will be respected.

The EU is a trading partner of Canada's, and we are very clear in our expectations. Through the assurances that I have received—and that my colleagues and the Prime Minister received—we expect that these shipments of vaccine orders that we have placed will come into the country so that Canadians get the vaccines that they need.

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie:** As I hear your testimony, I can't help but think of all the Canadians right now who are struggling with letters from the CRA because they were told by the government, "If you apply in good faith for CERB, you're not going to be penalized later." A bunch of them are finding out that those reassurances from the government didn't really mean that much in the end. There's confusion about net income and gross income, and all sorts of reasons why people did apply in good faith, but then the terms and conditions changed underneath them.

What I'm hearing from you is that Canada has some purchase agreements. Nobody really knows the details of them. It's an open question as to whether the European Union has access to those agreements. We're being told, "Just trust us and take our good word that the rug isn't going to be pulled out from beneath you later." I'm wondering why Canadians who just lived through, and are living through right now, an experience of having a government say, "Just trust us," and are facing financial ruin are going to be open—without some more evidence, like details of the purchase agreements—to believing your government when it comes to something as important as vaccine deliveries as well.

• (1220)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Blaikie.

Minister, I'll turn it over to you if you can give us a brief answer.

**Hon. Mary Ng:** I think the nine million Canadians who helped to flatten the curve and were supported through CERB would say that

it was a necessary support. I'm thrilled that we all agreed to make that available and to continue to provide the supports—small business supports, overhead support, rent support, wage support—to Canadians. I think that we have to continue to be as diligent as possible and work with enough urgency to help Canadians get through COVID-19 through the measures that have been introduced and also by ensuring that life-saving vaccines are given to Canadians. As I said earlier, we are on track to do that for all Canadians who wish it, for free, by September.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Minister.

For your information, the officials have finally been able to get connected, so they are online. However, the ambassador to the EU, unfortunately, was not able to connect. The officials are there if anyone has questions for them.

We'll go on to Mr. Hoback, please.

**Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC):** Thank you, Chair.

Minister, it's good to see you. I wish you all success. I feel like we've been given a punch to the stomach here right now, so I'm really concerned about moving forward.

You've talked about how you have reached out to your colleagues in Europe—you, the Prime Minister and the health minister. What I'm trying to figure out is that trade is done through rules, not through diplomacy. Diplomacy is part of it, don't get me wrong, but rules are in place so that you can't have one country superceding another country. The rules are the rules.

Is it not fair to say, in this scenario...? Is it a diplomatic scenario where you can actually get an exemption, or is it something where you can't and now we're subject to the rules of the mechanism?

**Hon. Mary Ng:** It is good to see the honourable member, and I wish him a happy new year.

It's good that we all continue to work to make sure that our top priority is the well-being of Canadians and making sure that Canadians are supported through this. Certainly, making sure they get vaccines is absolutely critical.

The answer is that it is both. We must work with our allies in the European Union to make sure that the rules, which are the advance purchase agreement that Canada entered into, are respected, and that there is no delay in the receipt of vaccines. We must also make sure we are monitoring the mechanism to ensure the EU is respecting the trade obligations under WTO rules, and that the mechanism is applied on a non-discriminatory basis based on international rules. That is also what we are doing.

**Mr. Randy Hoback:** It's fair to say then that the diplomacy part of it is trying to get us an exemption. If we don't get the exemption, we're subject to the mechanism.

What's not clear in the mechanism is the triggering point. I'll use an example. We're behind in schedules right now. If there is excess capacity in these facilities in Europe, can we get access to that excess capacity, or does Europe just look at our schedule and say, "No, that's all you're allocated for this week, month or quarter"?"

How does that all work?

**Hon. Mary Ng:** The questions you're asking are exactly the details we are working very closely on with the European Union. You're familiar, as I am, with the terrific team we have on the ground that is working through this, making sure we have clarity of understanding. Monitoring how this mechanism will be implemented is exactly the work that is taking place right now.

**Mr. Randy Hoback:** Fair enough. The rules are still being determined.

You've received assurances that we'll be treated fairly, but it's fair to say you have no assurances other than that you'll be treated through the mechanism.

One concern I have is the domino effect of what the EU is doing here. You said that the U.S., Australia and some other countries were also in the same boat as us. What if they retaliate? What if they say, "You know what? We're not going to ship any vaccines to Canada either. We're going to keep what we have, because what we're expecting to get from some of these other countries isn't going to happen."

What's happening with our other trading partners in this scenario? Are we going to see a situation where the U.S. says, "No, we're not going to ship anything to Canada. We're going to keep it all for the U.S.?" It's not necessarily targeted at us, but we get side-swiped because we don't have the capacity.

• (1225)

**Hon. Mary Ng:** Throughout COVID-19, what has been absolutely important, and Canada has taken some leadership on this, is to ensure that protectionist measures are not used and that all of us fight against those protectionist measures.

**Mr. Randy Hoback:** But we're seeing that happen right now. This is a protectionist measure. Let's call it what it is. It can be done on two levels. It can be done at the EU level, it could be done at the U.S. level or a combination of both. The EU is very good at blaming one or the other. EU blames the U.S.; the U.S. blames the EU. In the meantime, we still don't get our vaccines. It comes back to my concern. What do we have for a mechanism to put pressure on the EU, and what do other countries have for a mechanism to put pressure on the EU that may cause it to react accordingly?

We're very vulnerable here unless we have some clear strategic plan for how we're going to react. It can't be just saying we're going to talk to somebody. We actually have to show some force here, possibly. Does that mean we pull out of NATO? Does that mean we draw a line in the sand? This is a protectionist measure, and this is really very serious.

I get very concerned, because I see these trade rules already coming under a tremendous amount of pressure. Now you're trying to say that diplomacy might have some influence. However, we're seeing the list for exempted countries, and we're not on that list. You

won't tell us why we're not on that list, and the EU won't tell us why. That, to me, is a problem. Why did the EU single us out?

You say, it's not just us; it's the U.S. and Australia and other countries. The U.S. has production capacity and Australia has production capacity, but we don't. It is a lot more serious for us than it is for those countries. How do we know where we sit going forward?

**Hon. Mary Ng:** That's very important, and where I agree with the member here is that we do treat this with absolute seriousness. This is a priority for the government, for me and for my colleagues. This is also a global problem that requires global solutions, so protectionist measures will not help. We need to work as a global community, together, to ensure that Canada gets our vaccines under the purchase agreements that we have entered into, but we must also work together to ensure that vaccines are indeed available to the world. One country is—

**Mr. Randy Hoback:** I'm sorry, Minister. I have one more question.

**The Chair:** I'm sorry, Mr. Hoback. You're already at your time, according to my clock.

**Mr. Randy Hoback:** You have a fast clock.

**The Chair:** Do you have a very brief question, Mr. Hoback?

**Mr. Randy Hoback:** It's for Mr. Verheul. What are our options to retaliate? Is this legal? Also, what are our options to enforce what we have in place right now with our contracts?

**Hon. Mary Ng:** I think the answer to this is that I have received repeated assurances from my colleagues—

**Mr. Randy Hoback:** I was asking Mr. Verheul.

**Hon. Mary Ng:** I think that as the minister I get to answer the question.

**Mr. Randy Hoback:** I was looking for a bureaucratic answer with certain detail, not a ministerial answer. No offence, but I just know that with Steve's extensive knowledge on this file, he could probably give us a good lay of the land on what our options are.

**The Chair:** We haven't heard from any of our officials to date. Does one of the officials want to answer Mr. Hoback's question, please?

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie:** I have a quick point of order, Madam Chair. It's not that I'm against hearing the answer, but time spent here is time that comes off the back end, where other members may yet have an opportunity to ask questions.

**The Chair:** All right. Thank you for the point, Mr. Blaikie.

Mr. Hoback, I attempted to—

**Mr. Randy Hoback:** You got your seven minutes.

**The Chair:** Let's see if we can't manage that again.

Mr. Sarai.

**Mr. Randeep Sarai (Surrey Centre, Lib.):** Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you, Minister Ng. I appreciate all your work on this.

I want to know this. We've signed CETA, and we have an investment court system, I believe, that resolves issues or potential issues that could come about. We probably had protective measures on particular incidents like this within CETA when we signed it. Do you think we are protected under CETA against any measures if in fact the European Union decides to do anything counter to the assurances they've given you?

**Hon. Mary Ng:** CETA is a robust and good agreement that is good for Canadian exporters. Perhaps on that somewhat technical question, I'm going to send it to my officials, who can provide a bit of a response.

• (1230)

**Mr. John Hannaford (Deputy Minister, International Trade, Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development):** Thanks, Minister.

I think we'll turn to Steve, given that he is the former negotiator.

**Mr. Steve Verheul (Chief Negotiator and Assistant Deputy Minister, Trade Policy and Negotiations, Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development):** Thank you, and good morning, everyone.

Yes, certainly we do have provisions in CETA that do specify that export restrictions are illegal. However, there are exceptions to that: in particular, if the export restrictions are applied on a temporary basis, if they're to prevent a critical shortage and if they relate to essential supplies. On those particular measures, the EU is probably on solid ground.

What we're looking at more closely is the application of the measure by the EU and, in particular, looking at the exemptions they've provided to certain countries. In that respect, we're looking to see whether there is a discriminatory approach being taken by the EU, and we're seeking assurances from the EU on that issue. We're also expecting that they will notify this measure to the WTO and explain how they feel it is consistent with their obligations under the WTO, as well as under CETA.

**Mr. Randeep Sarai:** I'll go further, Mr. Verheul.

Not to give our strategy away, but has Canada prepared a strategy if it comes to that, such that we would have a countervailing or punitive strategy against any member that would try to restrict their commitments to Canada, similar to what we did with the USMCA or prior to that? When some unfair steel tariffs were given, we hit back at the U.S.

I'm assuming that Canada has a strategy and is prepared to use something like that.

**Mr. Steve Verheul:** We're certainly doing a full spectrum of analysis of potential options that we may have to look at, but at this point, our primary objective is making sure that we get the vaccine deliveries, so we're waiting to see whether the EU process is going to pose any interruptions or not. We're certainly prepared, such that if this process does start to create problems, we will have steps we can take in light of that.

At this point, we're still under the expectation that the assurances provided to us by the EU will be upheld, and until we get some evi-

dence that it's not going to happen, we're not really in a position to pursue those other measures.

**Mr. Randeep Sarai:** Minister Ng, I want to thank you for fighting for Canadians' interests and fighting to make sure we have those assurances and that they continue going forward.

In the long term, is Canada looking at a strategy in future talks—this may not be imminent right now—to protect against some of these protective measures or strategies that countries are starting to get into where they're hoarding or not obliging on their commitments?

Going forward, this could have repercussions to them as well, obviously, on valuable pharmaceuticals that go to them or other trade imports that they do. Is Canada looking at a dialogue with other member states about safe, fair and honoured trade systems being respected going forward?

**Hon. Mary Ng:** This is exactly the work that the Ottawa Group has been doing on WTO reform. We've been very clear that this global crisis should not be an excuse to turn inwards, to stop trading or to levy protectionist measures. It's precisely why both the European Union and Canada, through our leadership, have put forward the trade and health initiative. It was launched in June of 2020 through the Ottawa Group ministerial. The Ottawa Group ministers have endorsed such a plan to engage the WTO membership. It was put forward to the general council in December.

Our officials around that table are now looking to identify specific actions related to export restrictions, trade facilitation, technical regulations, tariffs and transparency. This is precisely the work that Canada has always been doing, even before COVID-19. Certainly, COVID-19 has demonstrated the importance of this work.

We are continuing to pursue this work, not only with Ottawa Group members but with the larger group of WTO members, so that there are measures and rules that we can all work at to prevent the types of restrictive measures that we have been seeing around the world. Suffice it to say that this is important. I'm very pleased with the work that we have been leading on this front to ensure supply chains and predictability—particularly for essential goods and medicines to continue to flow freely across borders.

• (1235)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Minister.

We'll go on to Mr. Aboultaif.

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC):** Thank you, Chair.

I would like a point of order here.

Could we go 15 to 20 minutes longer to fulfill the delays we've had so far, between preparation and other stuff?

**The Chair:** There's a couple of things. First, our normal time would be up at one o'clock, but we did get started a bit late. The motion that was adopted by committee does indicate two hours. That's all subject to everybody's scheduling, though. It doesn't mean that everybody is necessarily available. Hopefully, they would be.

**Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal:** I appreciate the suggestion of the member from Alberta. In fact, I have scheduled meetings starting right at 10 o'clock PST and one o'clock eastern time, so I would not be able to stay here. I would request the minister finish this off while we can, and by one o'clock.

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif:** I would make the request again. I know Mr. Dhaliwal might have other arrangements, but I think it would be important for this very important discussion today since we have the minister.

We're thankful for her response coming back quickly on Monday morning to be able to be with us today. I think it will be great to get the full benefit of having the minister here.

**The Chair:** I will make a suggestion to the committee. The minister has been here answering all of the questions until now. We now have the benefit of actually having officials as well. Is it possible that the minister could leave and we continue with the officials? Is that something that the committee would be all right with?

I'll throw it out there as a thought.

**Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal:** We would like to have another round, actually, if that's okay.

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan:** Madam Chair, I suggest that the Conservative members are wasting precious time by engaging in this debate. Furthermore, we received this emergency 106(4) request on Saturday night, and the minister appeared on Monday and has moved calls with international counterparts on this very issue in order to appear before the committee. I would suggest that important work on behalf of all Canadians needs to continue. I would move that the Conservative member use the valuable time that he has with the minister still before him in order to ask questions.

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif:** Madam Chair, I was expecting the answer from you, with all due respect to Ms. Bendayan, but I will move forward and I would like to start with my questions, please.

Minister, there's a saying that if it's not in writing it never happened. Do you agree?

**Hon. Mary Ng:** What I would say is that assurances by a vice-president and commissioner of the European Union, as well as by the European Union president to a prime minister, are a good thing.

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif:** Wouldn't you rather, Minister, see the assurance in writing rather than have it verbally?

**Hon. Mary Ng:** We are all working very hard to ensure that—

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif:** The question is very clear: Would you rather see this assurance in writing rather than verbally?

**Hon. Mary Ng:** What we're working very hard on here is ensuring that the shipments of vaccines from Europe to Canada are not impacted as a result of this mechanism.

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif:** Speaking of which, the readout from your call with the European Commissioner of Trade mentions the words

“minimize the impact”, so there is an impact or at least a foreseen impact of their move. If we had this in writing, we could probably have a better assurance, wouldn't you agree?

• (1240)

**Hon. Mary Ng:** It's really important that I continue to do this work with the absolute urgency with which I am and with which the government is, to ensure that there aren't impacts on vaccines coming into Canada and so that the vaccines scheduled for Canadians continue.

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif:** I gather, Minister, that you probably don't see any difference between having a written assurance and having a verbal assurance, which I see as odd in any business dealing whatsoever. Did you ask for a written assurance from the European Union?

**Hon. Mary Ng:** I did not ask for something in writing. I did have two conversations with my counterpart, and in those conversations, as I have said, I made very clear that Canada expects that our advance purchase agreements will be respected and that vaccines to Canada will not be impacted by the mechanism that the European Union has put forward.

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif:** Then why does the readout say “in case of any impact”? I think that raises concerns amongst Canadians, and if anyone would read this readout, they would be able to at least gather that there is something that hasn't been told to Canadians. I believe that we are all here to provide full transparency to Canadians so we don't have to run into a problem and have to go beyond 2021 to vaccinate all Canadians.

**Hon. Mary Ng:** The member is absolutely correct that we all must provide transparency. That is why I make readouts. That is why we absolutely share readouts immediately, so that I'm able to share with Canadians the discussions that I've had. It's precisely why I thought it was absolutely important, upon the invitation by this committee, to come to the committee so that I would be able to speak to all of you and to Canadians.

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif:** Minister, under this cloud of uncertainty and lack of information, I think it would be very beneficial and very important if you could provide in writing the schedule of shipping or deliveries, whatever you want to call it, of receiving the vaccines, and I would like to see that tabled at this committee, please.

**Hon. Mary Ng:** With respect to the member's request, we will endeavour to do our best.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Minister.

We'll move on to Mr. Sheehan.

**Mr. Terry Sheehan (Sault Ste. Marie, Lib.):** Thank you very much, Minister, for appearing on such short notice. This underlines and highlights that you're working around the clock, and I really appreciate it.

Last Wednesday, on the 27th at 1:04 p.m., in Sault Ste. Marie, the first vaccine was administered at the Finnish Resthome. The recipient was a resident named Larry Grekula, and he said, “The vaccine means happiness, I am happy to get it and it is a start for the country to get back to normal...it feels good to be a part of making history.”

I thought that was really well said.

To my community and communities across Canada that are feeling those sentiments, could you please explain how the cabinet committee on the federal response to the coronavirus disease, working amongst yourselves—I know you're a member of it—but also working with provinces and territories, is getting vaccines distributed to, for example, the Finnish Resthomes and other rest homes in Canada?

**Hon. Mary Ng:** You've highlighted absolutely the priority we are all placing on this.

Yes, I serve on the COVID-19 committee of cabinet. The purpose there, of course, is to enable us to work in a whole-of-government way. It's to enable me, in this particular circumstance, to work very closely with Minister Anand, who is in regular contact with the drug suppliers, but also with Minister LeBlanc, who is working with top priority and urgency with provincial and territorial colleagues to make sure the vaccines are indeed making their way expeditiously, quickly and readily to Canadians.

There is nothing more important to all of us, on all sides of the House, than to fight COVID-19 and to be sure we are doing this using a team Canada approach, making sure that absolutely top of mind on the one hand is that emergency measures are there for Canadians and for businesses, and at the same time, making sure that vaccines come into the country and are deployed provincially.

There is nothing more important to Canadians than our government staying absolutely on top of this and working diligently and very hard, to the best of our ability, to make sure there is no delay.

• (1245)

**Mr. Terry Sheehan:** Thank you very much.

I guess the question that people are asking right now.... Everyone was very pleased to see how aggressive we were to get the vaccines and the agreements done well ahead of the expectations of some critics. We have made the statement over and over again that, by the end of September, vaccines will be available.

Minister, in your opinion, are we on track to meet our continued commitment to have a vaccine available to all Canadians who want one by the end of September?

**Hon. Mary Ng:** The short answer to that is, yes, we are on track to ensure that all Canadians who wish to have a vaccine will get one for free by the end of September.

Canada received vaccines, as all of you know, starting in December, which was ahead of many other countries. By the end of first quarter this year we expect to have three million people vaccinated, and the vaccines that we expect to come in—just the approved vaccines, so Moderna and Pfizer—will be in the order of six million doses by the end of March, 20 million between April and June, and over 70 million by the end of September.

That is just from the approved vaccines. There are other vaccines, of course, that Canada has procured and that are also going through the process of approvals at Health Canada.

We are absolutely working, with priority and urgency, to ensure that this work continues and remains on schedule.

**Mr. Terry Sheehan:** Thank you.

Do you feel that your work as trade minister and having secured a multitude of trade deals with pretty well every country in the world has made it easier for you to pick up the phone and get an answer right away, and to have those dialogues and that trust relationship?

One thing the readout doesn't give us is just the feeling. Can you give us a feeling about how your phone calls are going?

**Hon. Mary Ng:** I think that Canada has certainly been providing leadership work through the Ottawa Group, working with many like-minded countries that are part of those very agreements that you spoke of in Europe, as well as in Asia. Canada's reputation for being a country that respects the rule of law and the multilateral rules-based trading order, and the work we are doing working with the Ottawa Group around WTO reform, really enables Canada to work on issues that are shared among our colleagues, and certainly like-minded colleagues.

This work of ensuring that supply chains remain open, critical food and medical supplies continue to flow, was very much a part of this work before the pandemic, and that work during the pandemic is absolutely even more important.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Minister.

We will move on to Mr. Savard-Tremblay for two minutes.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay:** I'm going to ask the senior officials this time, if they are willing to answer.

We do not know at this time whether all vaccine supply contracts contain a schedule or a total number of vaccines. Why have there been problems in recent weeks? There have been unforeseen events, delays, detours and other problems.

What guarantee do we have that there won't be any more problems in the future, with all these great deals?

• (1250)

[*English*]

**Hon. Mary Ng:** Monsieur Savard-Tremblay, let me just say that this is absolutely a top priority for the government.

You asked it of the officials, so perhaps I will turn to my officials, who could give you a response on that.

**Mr. John Hannaford:** Thanks, Minister, and thanks, Madam Chair.

It has been a priority for us to be clearing the way, to the greatest extent possible, for the delivery of the vaccines that have been contracted under the APA. That continues to be the top priority for the government generally.

As the minister has been saying over the course of today's presentation, that has involved extensive conversations across our network in Europe to make sure there is full delivery of the vaccines we have expected to receive, and that work continues. We've received the assurances that we have, and we continue to make sure that that will unfold as is expected over the course of the next period of time.



That's why it's critical that we have the degree of engagement that we have at all levels, from the Prime Minister down.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

We will move on to Mr. Blaikie for two and a half minutes.

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

For over 30 years now, Liberals and Conservatives have taken arguments about the importance of trade between countries and lifted it up to a kind of blind article of faith that globalized trade is always the way to find a solution. I think the pandemic has really emphasized the inadequacy of relying solely on that dogma, if you will.

We're seeing it with respect to vaccines. We don't have domestic vaccine.... We do have some domestic vaccine production, but Canada doesn't seem to have secured the right to produce a vaccine here at home. We've heard that we have the capacity through the NRC to produce the AstraZeneca vaccine, but we don't have the right.

We've seen it in other sectors. We have an airline industry that's in distress and we don't have any meaningful strategy for the airline industry here. It's all laissez-faire. On oil and gas, we've lost a lot of the value-added work over the last 20 or 30 years, and we focus only on extraction and then shipping the raw resource out of the country.

This, to me, seems to be a bit of the hens coming home to roost. We hear the minister and other MPs on the panel today talk about the importance of strengthening global supply chains, but all our partners, who have also engaged in this kind of globalized trade, have hedged their bets, have understood that they still need industrial planning at home, that they still need to identify priorities like vaccine production in the case of a crisis. Canada seems to be one of the few countries in the west that hasn't done any of that hedging.

I am wondering if the minister has learned any lessons about that blind faith in globalized trade and that approach to managing Canada's economy, making sure that for important strategic industries or things like vaccine production, we have a plan for how to look after ourselves instead of simply relying on the good faith of international partners, which we've seen can change very quickly in a crisis.

**Hon. Mary Ng:** I want to thank the honourable member for that very important question. I'm not sure I can get in the full answer in the time I have, but let me give this a bit of a try.

I'm very proud to be part of a government where the trade agreements that are negotiated are inclusive. They are inclusive because the government believes, and I think the member opposite may agree, that where there is trade, the benefits of that trade must also accrue to workers and to people in those respective countries and certainly to Canadians—small and medium-sized businesses, indigenous entrepreneurs, women entrepreneurs, racialized entrepreneurs and new immigrant entrepreneurs. In the agreements that we have negotiated, whether it be the recent CUSMA, CPTPP or CETA, they have high standards that include particular chapters that have provisions for labour and provisions that protect the envi-

ronment. I think it's absolutely important that we have the arrangements we do and are steadfast at being able to ensure that trade and the benefits of it accrue to all Canadians.

I want to thank the honourable member for the work he championed around greater transparency, particularly around sharing with Canadians, seeking input from Canadians and our colleagues, before we enter into an agreement. I'm going to be looking forward to doing that, probably with the first one coming up, which is with the United Kingdom. Suffice it to say that inclusive trade and ensuring that, as businesses grow, workers are part of that growth, and more people are able to access the benefits through the economy, is very, very much the work that I look forward to doing every single day in this portfolio.

• (1255)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Madam Minister.

We will now go to Ms. Gray.

**Mrs. Tracy Gray:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Minister, it was reported that the EU's executive received notice from Belgium that would allow it to limit vaccine exports. Of course, this is a primary location where Canada would be getting vaccines from. We heard from you today that you don't have any written assurances or commitments from the EU.

Are you able to table today any written assurances or commitments that you've received from the Government of Belgium, where our Pfizer vaccines are shipped from, and from the Government of Spain, where the Moderna vaccines would be shipped from, to Canadians?

**Hon. Mary Ng:** I want to thank my honourable critic for that question. As I said earlier, I did speak to my Belgian counterpart yesterday. It was late yesterday, so perhaps the readout hasn't made its way out yet, but certainly it will be, as I always do that. I did get assurances from the deputy prime minister on Canada's shipments and that the mechanism will not affect Canada's vaccine shipments.

I am going to be speaking to my counterpart in Spain, which is the reason that I.... You know, I must do that; it is scheduled. In all of this, nothing is more urgent or important than to make sure that we are working with our colleagues, both member states as well as the European Union, to ensure that there's no delay.

**Mrs. Tracy Gray:** Thank you, Minister. A readout is not a transcript. A verbal assurance is not the same as a written commitment.

Minister, I want to go to a different topic here. Yesterday the Pan American Health Organization stated that countries in the Americas, including Canada, were notified of first COVID-19 vaccine allocations through Covax. With export controls now in the EU, do you anticipate similar measures affecting this allocation?

**Hon. Mary Ng:** That's a really important question, particularly around the Covax facility. Canada contributes to this. Indeed, our contribution to the global response to COVID-19 is around the order of \$480 million. As I think I said a little earlier, as long as one country is at risk, I think we're all at risk, so all of us are working together in support of the Covax facility to ensure that the global vaccination effort also takes place.

**Mrs. Tracy Gray:** Minister, can you table the letter or information that the Government of Canada would have received from the Pan American Health Organization?

**Hon. Mary Ng:** I'm just learning about that letter right now. Why don't I take it under advisement and come back to the committee, if that's all right?

**Mrs. Tracy Gray:** If you're not able to table that today, can you at least tell the committee how many doses Canada will be receiving through Covax? When will we be receiving them?

**Hon. Mary Ng:** I don't have that information readily available. The work with respect to Covax is ably handled by my colleague in international development, but I'm happy to return to the committee with that information.

**Mrs. Tracy Gray:** Minister, another concern with these export controls from the EU is that even if they do not restrict vaccine exports to Canada, bureaucracy and paperwork for approval will slow down the process.

Are you aware of this concern? Did you raise this with your EU counterpart? Can you table for the committee any analysis that your department has done on how this might impact our vaccine strategies for procurement to Canada?

• (1300)

**Hon. Mary Ng:** That's a really important question.

This is exactly why we have officials on the ground in the missions in the European Union. They're working with their counterparts and colleagues at the working level—both with member states as well as with the European Union and also with the companies through our trade commissioner service—to ensure that operationalizing this mechanism does not cause any delays and that we are supporting the companies as they need to meet their obligations under this mechanism.

We are working to ensure that this work is done not only at my level but at the working level, to ensure that there aren't any impacts on Canada's shipment of vaccines.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Minister.

One o'clock is our regular completion time, but I'm going to suggest that we excuse the minister to go and do the important work that she's doing. I understand the officials can stay for an additional 15 minutes. If that's okay with the committee, we can continue on for an additional 15 minutes with whichever members can remain.

Minister, thank you very much for your information. Good luck on the work you're doing on behalf of all Canadians.

**Hon. Mary Ng:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair, for having me here.

Thank you so much, colleagues, for all of your questions today.

**The Chair:** Mr. Arya, you have five minutes.

**Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

The minister has left, but I wanted to thank her and her colleagues for the excellent work that the government is doing in battling this pandemic. The people of Nepean and all Canadians appreciate

the work that is being done. I hope the officials will convey my sincere thanks to the minister and her colleagues.

On the question of the vaccines, there has been talk about the written agreement and the verbal assurances. I'm glad that we have a written advance purchase agreement, as the minister said.

Before I go to that, there has been a suggestion, if I'm not mistaken, that we have to retaliate. I wish the officials recognized that starting a fight with retaliation does not lead to any solution. The way this has been handled diplomatically is the right way to go. I hope the government continues to act in this way.

As the minister mentioned, this is a global problem and we need to find global solutions. In particular, I would like to know what the Ottawa Group is doing to face this problem with the vaccine supply.

**Mr. John Hannaford:** The Ottawa Group has been an extraordinarily important forum for discussing a range of issues that are confronting the World Trade Organization. We've been active now for a couple of years in convening the Ottawa Group with a view to talking about not only some of the reform issues that have been on the WTO agenda for a period of time now, issues like transparency, negotiation and dispute settlement, but also most recently, as a result of the pandemic, some of the trade aspects of dealing with the pandemic. These have included not only issues around trade measures but also issues around transparency and looking forward as to how to develop rules with respect to trade liberalization pertaining to health.

The Ottawa Group continues to be very active in that regard. We have conversations at the level of officials and ministers that advance that set of agendas.

The minister made reference earlier in this presentation to the communication that was developed through the Ottawa Group with respect to health, and that continues to be one of our central focuses in the work that we're doing. It really is with a view to ensuring the WTO is best placed to address the sorts of challenges that have been highlighted by the circumstances we are collectively facing.

• (1305)

**Mr. Chandra Arya:** Thank you.

Canada is a trading nation; 60% of our GDP comes from trade. This pandemic has created challenging times for international trade. Protectionist measures are being contemplated by fellow countries, but in the long run it is in our interest to see that trade goes on through the multilateral and bilateral mechanisms we have in place.

Are you witnessing any protectionist measures from any country, any region or any bloc that is affecting Canadian trade to date?

**Mr. John Hannaford:** We've been very alert to any of the possible ramifications of the pandemic on our supply chains. That's work we've continued to do and it has manifested itself in a number of ways. I've already mentioned the Ottawa Group and some of the efforts that have been pursued there, but we've also worked with other groupings of like-minded states to promote the most liberalized approach to trade during this period, with a view to making sure that supply chains remain open and that our vital interests are reflected through that kind of process. That continues to be a priority for us in the trade world, and we have been very active participants in those conversations.

**Mr. Chandra Arya:** In this pandemic have you seen any significant impact on Canadian imports or exports during the last 12 months?

**Mr. John Hannaford:** We've been reasonably successful in maintaining a free flow of goods during this period. It's due to a number of factors, not least the kinds of initiatives that we have been pursuing with key partners.

Our trade with the United States, for instance, has continued to be very positive during a period where obviously there have been particular challenges. It's a question of continued vigilance, and it is one of the reasons why the discussions that we're having and the fora where we are pursuing these issues, like the WTO, are important.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Hannaford.

I've just been informed that both our departmental people here have apparent conflicts.

Can we go to Mr. Hoback for five minutes, thank everybody and then move on? Is that okay with the committee?

Mr. Hoback.

**Mr. Randy Hoback:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll start off.

It looks like we're going to be in the mechanism. Do you have any idea of the functioning of the mechanism and how it's going to work?

What are the trigger mechanisms that we're beholden to? Can you give us some insight into that?

**Mr. John Hannaford:** Our understanding as to how the mechanism will operate is obviously evolving in the sense that this is still early days with respect to its operation, but this is one of the reasons why we are as engaged as we are across the network.

Our understanding is that the process will have two stages to it, in the sense that there will be a member-state level analysis that is done based on information that they will receive from exporters, and there will be an analysis that is done at the commission level. Those are to happen according to the regulation that's been promulgated within 48 hours, with the possibility of an extension in unusual circumstances. That is the process that's set out in the rule that has been developed.

**Mr. Randy Hoback:** With regard to the time frame for this mechanism to be in place, is there an end date in place? Is this just a short-term mechanism, or is this going to be something that could be extended out into a longer period throughout the vaccination period?

**Mr. John Hannaford:** Under the trade rules, as Steve was setting out earlier, it is required that these be temporary measures. The rule, as it's drafted, is basically in force until the end of March. That wouldn't necessarily foreclose the possibility of a replacement rule being put in place, but as it's drafted right now, it's the end of March.

**Mr. Randy Hoback:** Under this mechanism.... Again, we have a scenario now where we haven't had vaccinations for a couple of weeks. There's talk that we're going to have them back-loaded. Can you do that in this mechanism?

Can the company actually say, "Hey, we missed the shipment this week, so we're going to make it up and ship two shipments"? How is that measurement going on?

• (1310)

**Mr. John Hannaford:** Our objective is to make sure that there's no disruption. That's been our objective throughout the conversation since this began, and that continues to be where we are focusing. Those are the assurances that we've received. Our focus throughout the conversations that we're having, at all levels, is with a view to avoiding disruption.

**Mr. Randy Hoback:** Again, I'm trying to get through it from a layman's perspective sitting here.

The EU is short, let's say, three million doses this week. Do these companies now have to make up the three million doses before they can export to another country?

**Mr. John Hannaford:** What we have been told in the assurances we have received is that there will be no disruption to the exports that we are expecting. That continues to be the undertaking that we've been given.

**Mr. Randy Hoback:** That's where I have a problem. You have diplomats, or you have politicians talking to politicians. However, this is a regulation. This is actually embedded in law. If you see a scenario where the numbers don't lie—this is where we're at in the EU—and then the mechanism kicks in, it's going to have to impact us.

If it impacts us this week, will it also impact us next week when the numbers in the EU get back to normal? How does that function and what are the time frames around that?

**Mr. John Hannaford:** Madam Chair, I would just go back to the basic point. The undertakings we've been given suggest that there will not be a disruption, and that is the objective of all of our conversations.

**Mr. Randy Hoback:** I have a hard time with that.

They're running at 100% capacity as it is. How do they squeeze out some more next week to make up for the shortfall? If they could, they would have done it already. Are they going to pull from other capacity somewhere else in the world? Does that put it in better shape?

Also, there's the question of transshipment—shipments that come through the EU on their way to Canada. Do they get seized? How do they function and operate?

**Mr. John Hannaford:** Madam Chair, as I say, our objective here has been absolutely consistent, and the assurances we've been given stress that there will be no disruption. That is our objective, and that's our expectation.

**Mr. Randy Hoback:** Fair enough; I get that. However, it's put in place to protect the EU, to make sure they have enough vaccinations. To say that we won't be disrupted means we're being given preferential treatment over other countries. You can't do that in a regulation. That's why you have rules in place. If they do that, then I'm sure Mr. Verheul is going to be very excited to take them to the WTO, or whatever appropriate means, to make sure they don't do it again.

I think all we have are assurances that we're going to go through the mechanism and that it will be fair—that's it—and we really won't know that until we're through it.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Hoback.

Thank you to our departmental officials—we appreciate that—and the minister and all of the committee. I think some very valuable information was shared today.

**Mrs. Tracy Gray:** I have a point of order, Madam Chair.

I want to bring to your attention the fact that, during the course of this committee, a Liberal member of the committee took a screenshot of the back end of this committee meeting and posted it online, which I don't believe follows parliamentary rules.

**The Chair:** Absolutely, we are not encouraged or allowed to do that.

Whichever member would have taken that shot and posted it, would you please remove it? That is not something that any of us are to do when we are having our meetings.

Thank you for raising that, Ms. Gray.

I will move adjournment. Thank you all very much. We will see you all on Friday.

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