



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

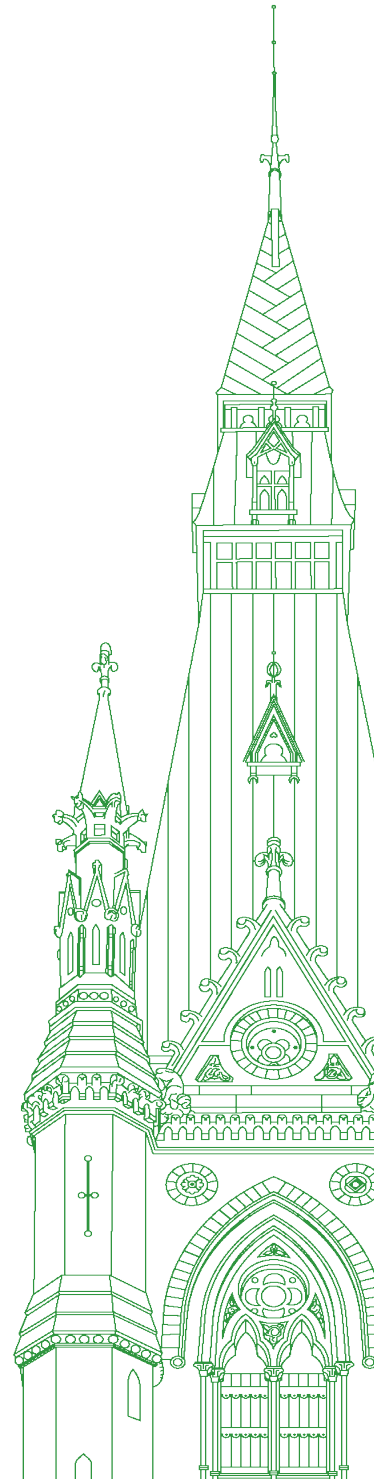
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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, September 30, 2020

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayer

• (1405)

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of the national anthem led by the hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP): Mr. Speaker, today is Orange Shirt Day, when we honour and remember residential school survivors and bear witness to their healing journey. It is important to recognize the destructive harm of Canadian governments and policies that sought to destroy the cultures, languages and way of life of indigenous people.

True reconciliation requires action. Sockeye salmon are not just an iconic species on the west coast of Canada, they are also sustenance for coastal first nations and a key part of their culture and traditions. True reconciliation demands that we protect wild salmon, but this year salmon stocks have crashed to an all-time low.

Today is also the deadline to implement recommendation 19 of the Cohen Commission report. Despite overwhelming evidence that net-pen salmon farming poses a risk to migrating wild salmon, the government has not shut down these fish farms. It is time for the government to take action to protect wild salmon in B.C.

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INTER-PARLIAMENTARY TASK FORCE TO COMBAT ONLINE ANTI-SEMITISM

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Monday was Yom Kippur, the holiest day in the Jewish calendar. As the Jewish new year begins, there has been an alarming increase in anti-Semitic incidents across the globe, most of which originate online. We need to find better ways to combat online hate.

As such, we have launched the Inter-Parliamentary Task Force to Combat Online Anti-Semitism. The hon. member for Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley and I have joined this bipartisan group of members of the national legislatures of Australia, Israel, the United Kingdom and the United States to help confront anti-Semitism online.

The task force has the following goals: holding social media platforms accountable; adopting and publishing transparent policies related to hate speech; raising awareness about anti-Semitism on social media platforms; and underscoring that the fight against anti-Semitism and other forms of hate is a non-partisan consensus in Canada and other democratic countries.

As we move forward with our work, I look forward to collaborating with members of the House across party lines on this incredibly important issue.

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[*Translation*]

2020 PLÉIADES AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE

Hon. Steven Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the pandemic will not stop the dynamic Lévis chamber of commerce from celebrating the outstanding achievements of its local businesses. Over 1,000 people participated in the 2020 Pléiades virtual awards gala, which was broadcast by Groupe Satir studios.

I want to commend the entire team at Sinox Concept on being awarded the Grande Distinction Desjardins. I also want to congratulate MTI Canada and Groupe d'Anjou. I tip my hat to École Marcelle-Mallet, Enviro Confort, Clean International, Newtec Électricité, Village Aventuria, Métal Bernard, Teknion Roy & Breton, Parikart, St-Joseph Design d'espaces, Sport Expert/Atmosphère Lévis and Mr. Bubble, winner of the Coup de coeur award, which is chosen by the public.

Finally, I want to say bravo to our talented dancer, choreographer and entrepreneur Nicolas Bégin, who was awarded the 2020 business personality of the year award thanks to the worldwide phenomenon *Hit the Floor*.

I would like to remind the House that our leaders and their businesses are at the heart of our collective wealth. We thank them for that.

Statements by Members

● (1410)

*[English]***OUR GLOBAL VILLAGE CHARITABLE FOUNDATION**

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize the amazing work of Our Global Village Charitable Foundation and the women of that volunteer organization, which has been serving Surrey for the past seven years. They stepped up once again to help the community when the COVID-19 pandemic engulfed the entire world.

Since April, dedicated volunteers have produced over 17,000 handmade masks for children and adults, which were provided to non-profits, workplaces deemed essential and the general public. At a time when we were experiencing a shortage of personal protective equipment, these amazing women answered the call and contributed to our efforts to flatten the curve.

I want to recognize the leadership of Meera Gill and thank her and her wonderful team for all their efforts.

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*[Translation]***JOYCE ECHAQUAN**

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Joyce Echaquan of Manawan has died in hospital, a victim of abuse and racism.

Let me be clear. If not for this racist behaviour, Joyce Echaquan might still be alive. The Bloc Québécois offers its humble but sincere condolences to her family, to the Manawan community and to the Atikamekw nation.

Ms. Echaquan went to the hospital for help. What she got there was abuse. This is not a jurisdictional issue. The disgust I am feeling has nothing to do with politics. My outrage stems from the despicable picture that this incident paints of many of us, for which we all deserve to hang our heads in shame.

There is a grim reality we must acknowledge. When that nurse was hurling abuse at a patient, within the walls of a public institution for which we are collectively responsible, what she was attacking was her patient's indigenous identity.

The time for reports, symbols and messages of dubious sincerity is over. We need to ask indigenous nations, as equals, how they want to be treated, how they want us to respect who they are. First, however, we demand justice for Joyce Echaquan.

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BROSSARD—SAINT-LAMBERT

Mrs. Alexandra Mendès (Brossard—Saint-Lambert, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have spent all year under the weight of a pandemic that has demanded a superhuman effort from each and every one of us.

Today I want to extend my thanks and appreciation to all the organizations and volunteers in Brossard—Saint-Lambert that have stepped up to help the people who have been hit hardest by the pandemic.

I want to single out Mission Nouvelle Génération, the Islamic Community Center, Maison Desaulniers, the Sikh community of the south shore, the Les Cuisines de l'Amitié mutual aid foundation, and the Maison internationale de la Rive-Sud. All of these organizations continued to offer in-person and remote services and resources. In spite of operational challenges and constantly rising demand, these organizations answered the call and adapted to the new reality.

Lastly, a huge thank you to all the Canadians taking the health and safety measures seriously.

[English]

Together, we will get through these trying times.

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SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, small businesses have been devastated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Many were already struggling under the weight of a sluggish economy, new and higher taxes, and increasing costs, even before the pandemic. Now, some businesses have been forced to close their doors for good, while others that closed temporarily last spring have reopened with higher costs and fewer customers.

The owners, employees and customers of small businesses are our friends and neighbours. Their shops and restaurants, as well as their personal, professional and contractor services, are the lifeblood of our communities and the backbone of the national economy. Sadly, many small businesses have been forced to lay off employees, while the owners exhaust their life savings and plunge into debt amid uncertain futures.

Many small businesses have been left behind by the federal government. They have been left behind by programs that were poorly designed and that the government has failed to fix. Conservatives stand with our small businesses; it is time the government did too.

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COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Mr. Patrick Weiler (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when the pandemic first reached our shores, the West Vancouver Seniors' Activity Centre, with the help of dedicated volunteers, made over 6,600 calls to check in on the most vulnerable in the community. This COVID-prompted outreach revealed that in this community, like many other affluent communities, poverty and food insecurity is lying just below the surface.

*Statements by Members***SACKVILLE—PRESTON—CHEZZETCOOK**

Mr. Darrell Samson (Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this summer I travelled across my riding of Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook to visit local businesses and organizations to hear the stories of how they got through COVID-19.

At almost every stop I heard stories of how our community of Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook championed the “buy local” mentality and rallied around businesses to help them get through the pandemic. Businesses like Kaiser's Subs in Lower Sackville adjusted to curbside pickup and has been busy since. In the Eastern Passage, Jamie, the owner of Boondocks Restaurant, told me how impressed he was with our government's support programs for businesses. The extra 10,000 Canada summer jobs helped many organizations in my riding, like the local organization Hope for Wildlife in Lawrencetown or the Lakeside Recreation Society in Porters Lake.

These are just a few of the positive stories of our activities, business and local activities, and of the organizations in our riding.

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[*Translation*]

YANNI GOURDE

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Tampa Bay Lightning won the Stanley Cup with the help of a player from Saint-Narcisse-de-Beaurivage in Lévis—Lotbinière. I am extremely proud to congratulate the very talented Yanni Gourde, a tenacious, hard-working and talented person we can all seek to emulate. He has shown us all that following our dreams and never giving up is the key to success.

Today, we can all see why Yanni Gourde's family, friends and steadfast admirers, who have supported him ever since his early days in Lotbinière, are so proud of him. His determination is an inspiration to the next generation of hockey players in my region and a sure sign that our society will always recognize excellence.

Yanni Gourde has just made history. Who knows what the future holds for him? I am sure his future is very bright. As always, he will be a beacon of pride, courage and passion. He is a superstar to people in our region and the nation he represents.

Go, Yanni, go!

With generous support from our government's emergency community support fund and the West Vancouver Foundation, the West Vancouver Seniors' Activity Centre has responded by creating a program to deliver 850 meals each week to vulnerable seniors since April 2. Local youth have also gotten involved by creating colourful compassion cards to include with these meals, allowing this program to nourish both the body and spirit. This program has been a life-changing moment for many seniors, bringing some to tears with how the community cares for them, and this is just one example of the many important initiatives that our community foundations and charities are supporting and that non-profits are undertaking when it is needed more than ever.

I thank them for the work they do to build our community.

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● (1415)

PETER DOWLING

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Mr. Peter Dowling of Howe Island, Ontario, who recently passed away. Peter was a central figure in the National Farmers Union for nearly his entire life. His parents, John and Joyce, were founding members of the organization, and it was noted that Peter was “raised in the NFU”.

Peter was a tireless advocate for local foods, sustainable agriculture and small family farms. He was involved in many of the important agriculture policy battles of the day, including supporting supply management, advocating for farmers on free trade issues, opposing the introduction of rBGH hormone into our dairy system and leading the Save Our Prison Farms efforts, where he was among those who took cattle to Parliament Hill to protest the closure of prison farms in Kingston.

With his wife Dianne, he ran Doublejay Farms, now an organic farm, where he provided a ready ear for young farmers, offering advice and mentorship.

We offer our condolences to Dianne and the Dowling family.

* * *

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the people in my riding are deeply concerned. They are concerned for their future. Will they be able to keep their businesses afloat or keep working? For those who are not, will they be able to find a job or continue to support their families? Will their children have a chance at a normal life, to live in a prosperous nation, or will they be burdened by the overwhelming debt of past generations?

The Prime Minister had an opportunity to address these concerns. Instead, the Speech from the Throne was full of recycled promises and no real plan. A future with the current government in power is looking bleaker every day. Every day I hear from constituents telling me they do not have confidence in the current Prime Minister.

I echo their concerns, and I echo their verdict. We have no confidence in the Prime Minister.

Statements by Members

• (1420)

[English]

MORTGAGE DEFERRALS

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, nearly 800,000 Canadians have deferred their mortgages over the past six months. This week, the mortgage deferral window comes to a close, bringing many people close to the edge of a cliff.

Going back to March, with businesses shutting down and workers being laid off, many people deferred their mortgages due to a lot of uncertainty. Now, with concerns over the second wave of COVID-19 and businesses and workplaces potentially facing closures again, the government has done very little to tackle this uncertainty.

I am hearing from families in the Okanagan who are very concerned about making ends meet due to lost income. With mortgage payments coming due, this is causing extra stress to their families. I was disappointed to see that the Speech from the Throne did not even mention mortgage deferrals as an issue, which is affecting so many people. British Columbia has some of the highest costs for home ownership in the country, and this just adds to the financial impact on everyday families.

The government must give families and workers certainty and hope, and outline clear paths to relaunch our economy.

* * *

ACCESS TO HEALTH SERVICES

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today, I want to acknowledge the important work of the Victoria Sexual Assault Centre. I have spoken before about how the clinic provides confidential, trans-inclusive and culturally sensitive clinical space. Recent survivors can access forensic exams, crisis support and options for reporting to police, but the clinic needs stable funding.

I also want to highlight one of the vital programs that the centre supports: the indigenous response network. It is made up of local first nations, friendship centres, indigenous sex workers and two-spirit folks. Indigenous people experience higher rates of gender-based violence, but they also experience higher rates of discrimination when accessing health care systems and the justice system. This network is so important in beginning the work of addressing the barriers that indigenous people face, beginning to address the trauma of gender-based violence and also the intergenerational trauma that so many indigenous people experience.

Also, today is Orange Shirt Day. I want to recognize the work of Eddy Charlie and Kristin Spray in Victoria and thank everyone across Canada wearing orange today to honour the survivors of residential schools.

* * *

[Translation]

JOYCE ECHAQUAN

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I offer my condolences to the family of Joyce Echaquan and the entire Manawan Atikamekw community. My

thoughts go out to her seven children, who just lost their mother when she was only 37 years old.

While my heart is full of sadness, the rest of me is seething with rage. Racist, degrading, hateful and unacceptable comments were the last thing Ms. Echaquan heard before passing away in shocking circumstances. A serious independent inquiry and clear answers are needed. The Viens commission stopped in Joliette and heard testimony that was equally troubling. The AFNQL just presented its action plan to address systemic racism. Hundreds of people gathered in my riding yesterday to show solidarity with the family, the Atikamekw people, first nations and white people. From one nation to another, *Motetan mamo*.

This has to change. Justice must be done, and the system must change. This can never happen again. When I think of Joyce Echaquan's seven children, my heart breaks. *Ni kackeriten*. Justice for Joyce.

* * *

• (1425)

[English]

ORANGE SHIRT DAY

Mr. Gary Vidal (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize national Orange Shirt Day.

In 2008, then prime minister Stephen Harper apologized on behalf of the Canadian government for the residential school system and created the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, both important steps in the reconciliation relationship.

In 2013, Phyllis Webstad provided the inspiration for this day by recounting her impactful story as a six-year-old who had her brand new orange shirt taken away on her arrival at a residential school, never to be returned.

The importance of this day can be seen in Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River and across the rest of Canada, where students of all ages learn of the historic injustice of the residential school system. These discussions, questions and activities that students participate in will continue into the homes and around the supper tables of families across the nation, providing an opportunity for our younger generation to take a leadership role in reconciliation.

I hope all members will join me in recognizing that every child matters.

ORANGE SHIRT DAY

Mr. Tony Van Bynen (Newmarket—Aurora, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today, September 30, is recognized as Orange Shirt Day. On this day we encourage all Canadians to wear orange to raise awareness of the legacy of residential schools and to honour the thousands of first nations, Inuit and Métis survivors.

As colleagues know, there is no relationship more important to us than the one with indigenous peoples. That is why our government introduced a bill to establish a national day for truth and reconciliation on September 30. I would like to highlight that the NDP has seconded the introduction of this bill and to recognize the work of Georgina Jolibois, former member of Parliament for Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, on this file in the previous Parliament. This bill would implement the 80th call to action in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report.

Public commemoration of the tragic and painful history and legacy of residential schools is vital on the path toward reconciliation.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by thanking all colleagues and indeed thousands of Canadians for their warm wishes and prayers to my wife Rebecca and I as we recovered from COVID-19. I thank Canada.

The Prime Minister's record when it comes to reconciliation is the same as his record in general: all talk and no action; big announcements, zero follow through. Indigenous communities need the Prime Minister to roll up his sleeves and get down to work.

Could the Prime Minister advise the House why the government has not yet delivered its measurable goals called for in the 19th call to action as part of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will have many opportunities for questions and answers, but I too want to begin by wishing the Leader of the Opposition a welcome back to the House after his health scare. Seeing him in good health, seeing the leader of the Bloc Québécois back in the House as well, is a good thing. We all want good health for everyone.

I look forward to exchanging, particularly on the topic of reconciliation. There is an awful lot we need to do across party lines on that, whether it is passing UNDRIP legislation or concretely delivering for indigenous communities across the country. I am very encouraged to see the Conservatives lead off with a very important question.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be very encouraged with an eventual answer.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

The Prime Minister's record on reconciliation is the same as all other records. He is always all talk and no action. Indigenous communities need the Prime Minister to get down to work.

Why have there been no measures to address the health-related recommendations in the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said, I am very pleased to see the Conservatives take an interest in reconciliation with indigenous peoples, an issue we have been working on for the past five years.

We have delivered on our commitment to end long-term drinking water advisories. We still have work to do. We are currently working on new schools and health care centres, as well as new treaties and agreements. We committed to introduce legislation on the health of indigenous peoples, and we hope to work with the Conservative Party on that.

* * *

[English]

HEALTH

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the United States has been approving rapid testing for months. The European Union has been approving them since spring. Our European trade agreement actually requires us to deem the processes for medical investigation to be equivalent to the EU. Germany, Italy and the U.K. have been having tests for months, while Canadians wait hours in line.

When are Canadians finally going to receive rapid testing?

• (1430)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, from the very beginning of this crisis, we have worked with provinces and territories to enhance testing capacity. We have given more funds and resources to Health Canada to approve the new technologies coming on the market.

Indeed, yesterday the Minister of Public Services and Procurement and the Minister of Health announced the purchase of 7.9 million rapid point of care tests from Abbott rapid diagnostics, pending Health Canada approval.

This afternoon, Health Canada authorized that Abbott ID. We can now deploy to provinces and territories, with deliveries coming in the coming weeks.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I guess where there is a will, there actually is a way.

CETA is Canadian law, and it has been for three years. We have recognized Italian, German and British health regulators as equivalent to Health Canada for three years, but thanks to the government, all these countries and their citizens get access to rapid testing and we do not.

Oral Questions

The Prime Minister likes to say that Canada is back. Why is he sending Canadians to the back of the line by not adhering to the CETA provisions to accept European rapid testing?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, from the very beginning, we have worked with all provincial authorities, all Health Canada experts, to ensure that the products we are approving in Canada are done quickly but are also safe for Canadians. We saw examples in the spring of approvals given that then had to be rescinded. We need to make sure that at every step of the way we are putting the health of Canadians at the forefront.

We will continue to work with partners around the world as we deliver the products and the technologies that Canadians need. Every step of the way, we promised to have Canadians' backs. We will continue to have Canadians' backs.

[Translation]

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on May 22, the Prime Minister said that rapid testing was essential to keeping businesses and schools open during a second wave.

It is now September 30, and rapid testing is not available. Businesses in Montreal are having to close.

What exactly will the Prime Minister do to make rapid testing available to all Canadians?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to confirm that, yesterday, the ministers of Health and Public Services and Procurement announced that we have purchased 7.9 million tests for Canada.

Health Canada approved these rapid tests today. We will be making these tests available to Canadians in the coming weeks.

Every step of the way, we have put science first and listened to the experts. We have not put politics first. We will keep doing whatever it takes to protect Canadians.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the new leader of the official opposition. I hope he will be as good for Canada as the Bloc is for Quebec.

I have a question for the Prime Minister. Let's talk about competence. Competence refers to what we know how to do, what we are capable of doing and what we do well. We also talk about competence in the sense of responsibility. Health is a provincial responsibility.

Does the Prime Minister realize that health is a responsibility of Quebec and the provinces?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at each stage of the pandemic we worked with the provinces and territories to protect people across the country.

We were there with health transfers from the start of this pandemic. We allocated \$500 million to help the provinces. We were there with \$19 billion to support a safe recovery that includes even more health transfers. We were there to support the provincial responsibilities, such as reopening schools.

We will continue to be there, as a partner, to help the provinces protect Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, no matter the question put to the Prime Minister, he answers with an amount, and that amount always comes out of our pockets.

Can the Prime Minister tell us how many doctors on the federal payroll directly treat Canadians and Quebeckers?

How many nurses on the federal payroll directly treat Canadians and Quebeckers?

How many federal hospitals directly treat Canadians and Quebeckers?

• (1435)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we respect the provinces' jurisdiction over health care, but there are health issues that are a federal responsibility, in particular the provision of medical services to indigenous people and the military.

It is a good thing that we have that expertise in the military because we were able to put military doctors to work for our seniors in Quebec who really needed them. We are fortunate that the federal government has expertise in certain fields that it was willing to offer to Quebeckers and Canadians during this crisis. As Canadians, we help one another. That is what we do.

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, with her last breath, Joyce Echaquan asked for help, as she lay dying in a hospital bed. An indigenous woman died at the hospital while hospital staff mocked her.

I am very sorry, Joyce. Your final moments should not have been like this.

Systemic racism robs people of their dignity and kills them. The time for rhetoric is over.

Will the Prime Minister commit to finally taking real action to address systemic racism?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all Canadians were shocked to see the video of Joyce Echaquan's final moments. I offer our sincere condolences to her family and to the people of Manawan in these incredibly difficult times.

This was the worst form of racism at a time when someone was most in need of help. This is another example of systemic racism, which is completely unacceptable in Canada. An investigation must be completed quickly to determine whether Joyce was the victim of more than racist comments.

Oral Questions

We commend Quebec's decision to act quickly to launch an investigation, and we will do everything we can to condemn all forms of racism and discrimination and to support those affected.

[*English*]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, throughout the pandemic, we have heard the very sound public health advice that we need to wash our hands. In a second wave, this is all the more important. However, for so many indigenous communities, there is no access to clean drinking water. They simply cannot drink that water or even use that water to wash their hands.

In the throne speech, the Liberal government mentions nothing about its 2021 deadline. In a time like this, with the technology that we have, there is no excuse for every community in our country to not have access to clean drinking water.

Will the Prime Minister commit to basic human rights and ensure that every indigenous community in Canada has clean drinking water?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, not only do I make that commitment today, but we made that commitment five years ago and we acted on it. Over the past five years, we have eliminated over 80 long-term boil water advisories that had gone on for decades. We continue to work very hard.

We recognize the May 2021 deadline is fast approaching. There have been slowdowns because of COVID, but because of that, we are doubling up on our efforts to try to ensure that all Canadians have access to safe drinking water, particularly in our first nations communities.

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[*Translation*]

HEALTH

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this government only has two speeds: turbo and park. It used turbo speed with Bill C-4 to offer a uniform approach that will unfortunately leave many businesses and Canadians behind. When it comes to health transfers, however, it is in park. Quebeckers do not want the government in park, they want it in turbo mode. We support stable, predictable transfers with no strings attached.

When is the government going to start taking action?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been taking action for several months. We immediately paid out half a billion dollars in health transfers when the public health crisis broke out in March. We then paid the provinces \$19 billion to support a safe recovery, plus another \$2 billion to send children back to school safely.

We are still working with the provincial premiers. We have pledged to sit down with them to discuss health transfers, because we recognize that our system has some flaws that have been exposed by this crisis.

• (1440)

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to health transfers, the government is giv-

ing us the same line we have been hearing about the Canada emergency business account, support for people with disabilities, and other measures. They say that they are going to take action, but when? What is the Prime Minister waiting for? When will he act with the provinces in a spirit of co-operation instead of confrontation?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, perhaps my hon. colleague did not speak to small businesses, but I can tell him that the Canada emergency business account has given out over \$30 billion across the country and that 758,000 small businesses have received help to cover their expenses during the pandemic.

We will continue to be there with the wage subsidy and with a new version of the CERB, which will be paid through the EI system. We will continue to be there to support small businesses, workers and families during this pandemic and in the coming months.

[*English*]

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, right now nobody in Canada, not a single person, has access to rapid testing. That is a failure of the government. Today the Prime Minister did not answer the question from the Leader of the Opposition, which is what everyone is asking: When are we going to have access to this? When is it going to be deployed? When is it going to be in a long-term care facility or a school?

For the mom who this morning had her child present a runny nose and sore throat, and who does not know what to do because she cannot stand in line for a test, when is that test going to be available to Canadians?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill should perhaps check with her Ontario colleagues. They apparently got access to some private, secret, rapid test that Health Canada had not approved just months ago. Maybe she could find out why they did that particular test, and what it was useful for.

What I can say, and what I did say to the Leader of the Opposition, was that in the coming weeks, the Abbott ID NOW rapid test will be deployed to help Canadians across the country with rapid testing, because we signed a deal with them for 7.9 million tests just yesterday.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the reality is that the Prime Minister of Canada is responsible for making testing for COVID-19 an elitist principle in Canada. That is the reality right now.

In Canada, somebody who wants to visit their father with Alzheimer's in a long-term care facility has to stand in line for eight hours and then isolate for days to get their test results before they can take that compassionate step. It is because of the Prime Minister's failures.

Oral Questions

Why will the Prime Minister not answer the question? He cannot answer the question. He has not done his job. When will these tests be in the hands of Canadians to use?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for the third time, the Abbott ID NOW test will be out in the coming weeks, across the country. Health Canada has delivered on approvals rapidly, because that is what Canadians expect.

Every step of the way, we have put science first. We have respected our scientists. We have listened to them, and we have made sure that we are protecting Canadians.

On the issue of helping the vulnerable, quite frankly the Conservatives, who keep telling everyone that we should have helped businesses first and not the most vulnerable Canadians, are not anyone to give lessons on this.

The Speaker: I understand the hon. members are concerned about social distancing, but shouting across is not the way to do that. If members want to talk to someone, please go to within six feet and talk to them at a level that would be respectable within the House.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, we learned that the government put 7.9 million tests on order with Abbott. The Prime Minister told journalists that he could not expedite the process and that politicians could not get involved to speed up the assessment. That is funny, because 24 hours later, we got an answer and the test has been approved.

Now I want to know when. We are not talking here about scientists who have a decision to make. We are talking about logistics. When will the provinces and families be able to get these tests?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, we signed an agreement with Abbott for 7.9 million tests pending Health Canada's approval. Yesterday, we got that approval, after weeks of work by Health Canada. We know that the tests will begin to be deployed in October, in the coming weeks.

This is something that will help Canadians. From the beginning, we have been there to help Canadians from a financial and a health perspective. We will continue to do that in partnership with the provinces and territories.

• (1445)

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, now we are getting somewhere. Five questions in, the Prime Minister finally mentioned October. October starts tomorrow. Could he be more specific? Will someone from the government be able to share a detailed action plan tomorrow or this afternoon?

People are waiting. They have stood in line for the other test, and it takes ages to get their results. Kids are not going to school, and that is a problem.

Can the government give us a detailed plan? Can it tell us if these tests will be deployed in a week, in three days, in two days? Can we get a specific answer, yes or no?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to take a step back. From the beginning, we have been working to help the provinces and territories with testing, contact tracing and PPE. We will keep doing that. We have worked with the provinces to provide equipment and training to technicians. We are continuing to work with the provinces.

Things are going very well in many parts of the country, but other parts are facing bigger challenges. We are and will continue to be here to help.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I see that our esteemed colleagues from the government and the official opposition have serious concerns about speed. I would remind hon. members that when the Conservative leader needed a rapid test he was sent to Quebec by the House of Commons. If not for that he might not be here today.

When the Prime Minister talks to us about respecting the jurisdictions of Quebec and the provinces, I get the impression that he neither wrote nor read the Speech from the Throne. Would he not agree that the best way to help Quebec, the provinces and seniors is to make a health transfer immediately without conditions or interference, to the provinces and Quebec?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we send \$40 billion to the provinces every year for their health system. As soon as the pandemic hit, we sent more money to help them.

It took more than money to help Quebec with their long-term care centres. That required help from our military and the Canadian Red Cross and we were there for that. We will continue to be there in partnership to meet the needs of Quebecers and people across the country. The federal government is there to help and always will be.

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, 81% of Quebecers want the government to increase health transfers. That figure is 73% among Canadians. The Quebec National Assembly has unanimously demanded an increase, and that is 100% of its members. All provincial premiers want an increase in health transfers. In other words, everyone in Canada and Quebec wants money for health care to win the battle against COVID-19.

It is high time to make up for 25 years of health cuts by Liberal and Conservative governments alike. What could be more important than taking care of the sick?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have said from the start, we will be there to support Canadians across the country.

I spoke with Premiers Legault and Ford the other evening. Working with the provinces and territories, we created the \$19-billion safe restart agreement to safely restart the economy and support the capacity of our health care systems. This agreement is in addition to the \$40 billion in annual health transfers that we send to the provinces and territories.

We will continue to work with the provinces and territories to help Canadians fight COVID-19 and maintain the integrity of our health care systems.

* * *

[English]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I commend the government for reimposing sanctions on Belarus, sanctions the previous Conservative government put in place in 2006, sanctions we have been seeking for some time, sanctions the government lifted in 2017. China is violating human rights and international treaties, like the Geneva convention, in its treatment of Canadians Michael Spavor and Michael Kovrig, the Uighurs and the people of Hong Kong.

Will the government now impose sanctions on those responsible in China and Hong Kong?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first, with regard to Belarus, we will not be silent as the Government of Belarus continues to commit systematic human rights violations. That is why, in coordination with the U.K. and in support of the people of Belarus, we are imposing sanctions against the Government of Belarus' officials, including Alexander Lukashenko.

With regard to China, we continue to stand up for the interests and rights of Canadians. We continue to demand the safe return of the two Canadians arbitrarily detained by China for political purposes. We continue to raise the plight of the Uighurs. We continue to express concern over Hong Kong and the 300,000 Canadians there.

We will continue to work with the international community on standing up strongly.

• (1450)

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that answer shows the government's complete incoherence on China.

In July, the foreign minister tells us he is looking at sanctions on Chinese officials. The next day, the government tells Reuters that is off the table. Two weeks ago, the foreign minister tells The Globe and Mail that he is abandoning free trade with China. The same day, Ambassador Barton says we should expand trade and do more in China.

When will the government get its story straight and get serious? When will it start defending Canadian interests and place sanctions on those responsible in China and Hong Kong?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every step of the way, this government has stood up to defend Canadian interests, whether it was canola farmers, whether it was

Oral Questions

our beef and pork producers, whether it was standing up for the two Michaels who have been arbitrarily detained.

We will continue to work with the international community on issues around Hong Kong and issues around the Uighurs, and continue to express our deep concern with the direction that China is taking in its international diplomacy and international actions.

We need to stand united as a world. We will do exactly that.

* * *

[Translation]

COVID-19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is a very difficult time for the economies of Quebec and Canada. Small businesses are struggling to find workers. Farmers are desperately looking for ways to save their crops, and dairy producers are still waiting for the compensation they were promised. What have the Liberals been doing? They have been meeting with Chinese agricultural investors behind closed doors to try and accommodate them. While the Liberals are helping Chinese investors, our farmers and small businesses are still waiting for the compensation they were promised.

Why?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been there all along for Quebeckers and Canadians, for small businesses, for vulnerable people and for families. We will continue to be there for them.

We were there for the 8.8 million Canadians who accessed the CERB. The wage subsidy supported 3.5 million jobs at more than 320,000 businesses and totalled more than \$40 billion in support. We also implemented the Canada emergency student benefit. The Canada emergency business account provided nearly \$30 billion in assistance. The Canada emergency commercial rent assistance program helped more than 120,000 small businesses.

We will continue to be there for Canadians.

*Oral Questions**[English]***AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD**

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, dairy farmers are being left behind by the Liberals. Farmers continue to wait for the Liberals to deliver on compensation for losses from trade deals, while senior Liberals, including top advisers in the PMO, are busy bending over backwards for China-owned food processors operating in Canada. In fact, the former government official who opened the door to China-owned firms is now sitting on the board of one. It smells a bit sour to me.

When will the government stop catering to these well-connected insiders and start putting Canadian farm families first?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, even as we moved forward to sign historic trade deals around the world, such as with Europe, restoring and protecting NAFTA and moving forward with the CPTPP in Asia, we have compensated farmers for those first trade deals.

We will continue to move forward and support the incredibly hard-working agricultural producers across our country. We know how important it is that they continue to be supported, and we will be there as we have promised to be.

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals announced their so-called national housing strategy, and they promised that soon after there would be a strategy to finally address the horrific housing conditions of indigenous communities across this country. Today, we are all wearing orange shirts to respect and honour the residential school survivors of our country, and here we stand in the House, where the Liberals make mistakes again and again, promises again and again, and nothing ever changes.

The member for Nunavut talked about houses and described them as mould boxes. Imagine, during these times or at any time, living in a mould box.

Housing is a basic human right. When is this government going to honour indigenous communities and grant them that?

● (1455)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, from the beginning we have demonstrated that we understand how important it is to work in partnership with indigenous communities and close the gaps that exist. We closed the gap on education funding. We have made serious investments in infrastructure. We have made serious investments in health and in ending boil water advisories.

Of course, there is much more to do, but it is, quite frankly, irresponsible of the NDP to suggest that nothing has been done over the past five years, because the partnership that has been established and the leadership shown by indigenous communities across this country on making things better are not to be ignored, even by the NDP.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today is Orange Shirt Day, and the Anishinaabek Educational Institute is selling T-shirts to raise money for the defence of the St. Anne's residential school survivors.

The Prime Minister does not need to sell T-shirts, because his government has spent millions of taxpayers' dollars trying to deny them justice. Government lawyers have suppressed evidence and have ignored court orders. They have used every possible legal tactic to deny justice and wear down the survivors, but the St. Anne's survivors are not being intimidated. It is time to do justice.

When will the Prime Minister end his government's legal vendetta against the St. Anne's survivors?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the past five years, we have come to agreements worth billions of dollars with indigenous communities, with victims of terrible moments in Canada's past, and we will continue to work to resolve the terrible events of the past, support people today and build a brighter future. That is the commitment we made and that is the commitment we are holding in partnership as we move forward on this path of reconciliation.

We have much more to do, and we will continue to do it in partnership, in respect, because that is what we remember today and that is what we celebrate every day we move forward in partnership.

* * *

HEALTH

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Orléans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there has been a lot of discussion lately about COVID-19 vaccines and when they might become available. All Canadians are waiting anxiously to find out when the first vaccines will be available for public use. We know that there are many risk factors associated with vaccines and that we need to ensure we are not providing a vaccine that has not been fully tested.

Can the Prime Minister please tell us what the government is doing to ensure that Canadians have access to a viable vaccine when it is ready?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Orléans for her tremendous hard work.

We have been talking to many companies to ensure that we can deliver vaccines to Canadians as quickly as possible. It is one of our central priorities. We have now secured access to a guaranteed minimum of 174 million doses and up to 282 million doses of other potential vaccines. Canada now has one of the very best portfolios for potential vaccines in the world to make sure that Canadians can be first in line as a vaccine is found.

* * *

[Translation]

ETHICS

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when Canadians were struggling to survive the COVID-19 crisis, the Prime Minister's priority was to send a cheque for half a billion dollars to a group that had paid his family half a million dollars. When we tried to look into this scandal, the Prime Minister redacted the documents. Hundreds of pages were blacked out. Now we are trying to get our hands on those documents without the redactions.

Will the Prime Minister let Canadians see every word written in those documents, yes or no?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while the Conservatives remain focused on playing politics and looking for things that are just not there, we remain focused on the pandemic. We will continue to support families across the country. We will continue to support workers who have lost their jobs. We will continue to support small businesses. That is what we remain focused on as Canadians. The Conservatives can focus on whatever they like, but we will remain focused on the future and health of Canadians.

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the only family he was seeking to deliver for was his own. They are the ones who received half a million dollars from this group. Then he turned around and personally intervened to give half a billion dollars to the group that paid his family off. As for getting the work of Canadians done, he is the one who shut this place down for six weeks to make sure nobody could get at the truth.

I have a simple yes-or-no question. There are hundreds of pages left out. Will the Prime Minister remove the ink and let Canadians read every single word, yes or no?

• (1500)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives have enthusiasm for this one issue. They can certainly continue to talk about the WE Charity and spin conspiracy theories. We are going to stay focused on delivering for Canadians.

The member for Carleton talked about the fact that he does not believe in big government programs. We know that from the Conservatives. However, 8.8 million Canadians received the CERB and 3.5 million jobs have been saved by the wage subsidy. These are the things we have been focused on, and I was very pleased to see the Conservatives unanimously endorse our plan to move forward last night and continue to support Canadians through this pandemic.

Oral Questions

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in April, Canadians were shocked at the rampage that ended 22 lives in Nova Scotia. Two months ago, the public safety minister told victims' families their losses were worth only an internal review. After a week of outcry, he finally agreed to a public inquiry. Anne McLellan agreed to lead the review, but backed out of the public inquiry because she could not commit the time, proving the Liberals never intended to do a thorough job for victims' families, who are still asking, "how?" and "why?". When will the Liberals announce a replacement, so the inquiry can start?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the tragedy in Nova Scotia affected not just families in Nova Scotia but those all across the country. When I spoke to the families of the victims, they expressed to me a need to find out exactly what happened. I assured them that all Canadians want to know. That is why we put together a review to be able to find those answers quickly and thoroughly.

The families expressed concern that they wanted a national public inquiry, so we agreed to move forward on that. We are ensuring that they have the tools to be able to find all the answers in terms of what happened, what lessons need to be learned from this and how we can move forward. I thank everyone involved for doing the right thing on this.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Agreed, so the Prime Minister must answer my questions.

Mr. Speaker, it has been five months since people lost their loved ones. Two weeks ago, Nova Scotia's government said it has a replacement, but the public safety minister's office said the process is ongoing and the Prime Minister did not answer or give any details.

Harry Bond, whose parents were victims, said, "When we find something out it's through the media.... It's hurtful and you don't know what to believe."

Families deserve answers. On what day will the role be filled, when will the terms of reference be set and when will the inquiry start?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I had the sad privilege of speaking to many of those family members, and I heard their anguish and I heard their desire for answers. That is why we set in motion measures that are going to find those answers in a way that gives them comfort.

We are working extremely hard on being able to move forward as quickly as possible, but the families also indicated that it needs to be done in the right way and we are ensuring that it will be done in the right way.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

AEROSPACE INDUSTRY

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in the Speech from the Throne, Ottawa says it wants to help industries that have been hard hit by COVID-19, but there is not a single word about the aerospace industry.

That omission represents Quebec's primary export sector, 43,000 good jobs, \$18 billion in sales, and the third largest aerospace hub in the world.

The Prime Minister is an MP from Montreal. Aerospace is key to the economy of greater Montreal.

Will Ottawa finally stop ignoring this cutting-edge Quebec industry and bring in an aerospace policy?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the aerospace industry in Quebec and across Canada is an extremely important industry when it comes to jobs, innovation, and the future we are building here in Canada. We will always support that industry.

Many industries have been affected by the COVID-19 crisis. That is why we brought in measures like the wage subsidy and the Canada emergency response benefit, to help workers and these industries.

We continue to work with the industries that have been hit hard so that we can help them. We will always be there for the aerospace industry in Quebec and across Canada.

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we need targeted programs and a comprehensive policy, not rhetoric or piecemeal measures that lack vision. The Prime Minister's indifference towards this sector is nothing new. In 2016, he said that what is good for a Montreal MP is not necessarily good for a Toronto or Calgary MP. That is ironic, because when Toronto needs help for its auto sector, the government is there. When Calgary needs help for its oil sector, it gets it.

When Montreal needs help for the aerospace sector, where is the Prime Minister?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

• (1505)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the laughter from different parts of the House shows that these remarks do not really ring true. As people know very well, our government was there for all Canadians before this crisis, during this crisis and, naturally, in the years to come. We will do whatever it takes to create good, long-term jobs in Canada to protect our environment, support our natural resources and help our leading manufacturing sectors, such as the aerospace industry and other industries. We will be there to create a better future for all Canadians.

[English]

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Gary Vidal (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, earlier this week it was reported that the government is no longer planning to meet its March 2021 target to eliminate long-term drinking advisories on first nations. As my colleagues can imagine, this has left many nations across Canada, including Ministikwan in my riding and Bearskin Lake first nation in northern Ontario, wondering whether indeed they are a priority for the government.

Can the Prime Minister tell us, if not in 2021, when will these long-term drinking water advisories actually be lifted?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, some of these long-term boil water advisories have been in place for decades, which is absolutely unacceptable. That is why we made the commitment to lift all long-term boil water advisories on reserve by the spring of 2021. We are working extremely hard to reach that deadline. We have already eliminated well over 80 of those long-term boil water advisories and are working very hard on the next ones.

COVID challenges brought a bit of a delay, but that is why we are further accelerating our efforts and working extremely hard, not to meet some deadline, but to make sure that all Canadians have access to safe drinking water.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today the Prime Minister has been patting himself on the back for what he believes has been a quick response to the pandemic. Clearly, the Liberals are saying where there is a will, there is a way. As of today, we have 61 long-term drinking water advisories with two more that were added over the weekend.

The government has tossed aside its promise to have projects completed by March 2021. Where is the Prime Minister's will?

Canadians have been told to wash their hands frequently to fight this pandemic, so indigenous families are asking how they are supposed to do that without clean water.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have to say on Orange Shirt Day, as I would on any day, I am extremely pleased to see the level of engagement and interest in indigenous issues that the Conservative Party is showing. It has been a long time coming. I can tell them that we have eliminated almost 90 long-term boil water advisories and are working very hard to eliminate the last ones.

We will continue to redouble our efforts as we move forward, because we know that is something that all Canadians, not just indigenous Canadians, expect.

Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, millions of rural Canadians do not have access to quality Internet services. This means a lack of opportunity for personal and economic growth. However, two weeks ago, the Liberal government pulled the plug on a \$55-million contract to bring Internet services to indigenous communities throughout Manitoba.

The Liberals promised to connect Canadians five years ago. Could the government explain how cancelling a \$55-million investment is connecting indigenous communities?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will follow up on that specific investment the member opposite is talking about.

I can say that we recognize that high-speed Internet access is essential. As we confirmed in the throne speech, we will accelerate the connectivity timelines and ambitions of the universal broadband fund that will ensure that all Canadians, no matter where they live, have access to high-speed Internet. This is in addition to Canada's first comprehensive national strategy to connect all Canadians and the billions of dollars we have made available to achieve universal connectivity.

* * *

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Ms. Jean Yip (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every year people of Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Vietnamese and other Asian heritage gather with their families to celebrate the Mid-Autumn Festival.

The festival marks the end of autumn harvest, and families use this time to enjoy the fruits of their labour, give thanks to the gods and contemplate the full moon, believed to be a symbol of blessing and prosperity. Today this 3,000-year old tradition is celebrated all around the world and across our country.

Can the Prime Minister tell this House how the Government of Canada is recognizing and celebrating the Mid-Autumn Festival this year?

• (1510)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking the member for Scarborough—Agincourt for her hard work and her tireless advocacy for her community.

It is a time to thank and remember the sacrifices of our ancestors, parents and grandparents. This year in particular, at the Mid-Autumn Festival, as we see an increase in anti-Asian racism all across the country, we are reminded of the importance to speak out against discrimination in all its forms, to celebrate our differences and, mostly, to stay united.

We join many Asian communities in Canada and around the world to celebrate this Mid-Autumn Festival.

* * *

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it has been six months since the World Sikh Organization

Oral Questions

reached out to Liberal ministers about a prejudiced beard policy against Sikh and Muslim RCMP officers.

No other jurisdiction in Canada, including the Peel region, has implemented this ridiculous policy. It is wrong, and they know it. However, the minister refuses to stand up for ethnic minorities, simply saying it is under review.

Why does the minister continue to drag his feet, and on what date will he end this blatant discrimination against these Canadian heroes?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, both the Minister of Public Safety and I have been very clear over the past days that this is absolutely unacceptable.

We have asked the RCMP to review its policies to make sure that this example of systemic racism is put aside. We need to correct the faults within our system. We need to make sure that these extraordinary law enforcement officers who step up to protect their communities do so with full respect of their human rights.

We will see action taken.

* * *

HEALTH

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada has two national health crises: COVID-19 and opioids. The opioid crisis impacts one in three Canadians, and it has impacted my family. My brother-in-law passed away due to an overdose, and in recent weeks one of my brothers overdosed a number of times. He is alive today because of our frontline heroes: police, firefighters, ambulance technicians, doctors and nurses, who unbelievably sometimes have to purchase their own naloxone kits and personal protective gear.

The throne speech could have given families hope, but instead it offered nothing. This is a national health care crisis. Why is the Prime Minister missing in action?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, COVID-19 is compounding the ongoing public health crisis of opioid overdoses and deaths in far too many communities. I am deeply sorry to hear about my colleague's family's loss. Our hearts are with those who have lost a loved one.

Oral Questions

To help people with substance use disorders, we have made it easier to access medication like Suboxone and methadone. We have made it easier to set up overdose prevention sites. We have supported community-based products through the substance use and addictions program. We will continue to rely on science. We will continue to listen to experts. We will continue to use harm reduction and safe consumption sites as a way to move forward in protecting vulnerable people and respecting public health advice.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Bob Saroya (Markham—Unionville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, illegal casinos, organized crime, shootings, murders, property theft and robbery are out of control across the GTA. We need more resources, not empty Liberal promises that GTA residents are sick and tired of.

The throne speech outlined hundreds of billions in new spending. Why was there not a cent for the safety and security of people across the GTA?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to hear the concern of the GTA member from the Conservative caucus on gun control. That is why we have committed to stepping up on controlling the illegal importation and the use of military style assault weapons in Canada. We have committed to working with provinces, territories and municipalities to further restrict handgun use. I look forward to the support of the member of Parliament on moving forward to restrict handguns in the GTA and in other places across the country.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I want to remind hon. members that some of them have wonderful voices that really resonate, but they do not realize how strong they really are, so I want to remind them to keep it down a bit.

The hon. member for Bourassa.

* * *

● (1515)

[Translation]

GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg (Bourassa, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government acknowledges that a long history of racism, discrimination and prejudice against Black people has had a serious impact on these communities.

Business communities rely on informal support systems or family members, friends and other Black business owners for help. The pandemic has highlighted and magnified the inequalities that Black business owners face. As the throne speech acknowledged, there is work still to be done.

I congratulate my government for announcing the new \$211-million Black entrepreneurship program. The Prime Minister of Canada, the member of Parliament for Papineau, met with several members of Black communities.

Can he tell us how—

The Speaker: The right hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Bourassa for the extraordinary work he is doing to support the community and combat systemic racism.

We are working closely with the Black business community to develop the Black entrepreneurship program, which will include a loan fund for businesses. In addition to providing loans, this program will strengthen ecosystems by working with business organizations and will collect disaggregated data on the experiences of Black business owners to help us develop our policies.

We are proud to be implementing this important program. We recognize that systemic racism also exists in the business world and that we need to combat it. Entrepreneurship is important.

* * *

AEROSPACE INDUSTRY

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, before the pandemic, Canada was the only industrialized country without a national aerospace strategy.

The crisis sent the entire aviation industry into free fall. At stake are 240,000 good jobs, the vast majority of them in Quebec. Lay-offs are on the rise, orders are being cancelled, and workers are worried about their future. Today, the machinists' union is sounding the alarm and demanding an emergency response plan and a national strategy, which the NDP supports.

Everyone in the aerospace sector is wondering if there is actually a pilot on board.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the pandemic has hit some sectors, such as tourism, air transportation and aerospace, harder than others.

That is why we are here to support workers above all. However, we will keep working with the industry to make sure this vital segment of our economy remains competitive internationally and keeps innovating and creating good jobs for future generations of Quebeckers and Canadians. We will keep supporting the aerospace industry across the country.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

MAIN ESTIMATES, 2020-21

A message from Her Excellency the Governor General transmitting estimates for the financial year ending March 31, 2021, was presented by the President of the Treasury Board and read by the Speaker to the House.

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the Main Estimates, 2020-21.

As a former page myself, I also want to take this opportunity to welcome the new cohort of pages on behalf of all members. I thank our pages in advance for the valuable services they will be providing to the House and to our nation as a whole over the coming months.

* * *

• (1520)

[English]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages the treaties entitled, first, Annex VII to the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade, Procedures and mechanisms on compliance with the Rotterdam Convention; second, amendments to Annexes I and II to the 1998 Protocol on Persistent Organic Pollutants to the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution, and amendments to Annexes A and C to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants; third, Agreement between the Government of Canada and the Government of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas on Air Transport; fourth, Audiovisual Coproduction Treaty between the Government of Canada and the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine; and last, amendment to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction.

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[Translation]

FEDERAL OMBUDSMAN FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the 2018-19 annual report of the office of the federal ombudsman for victims of crime.

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[English]

ORANGE SHIRT DAY

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today it is truly important that I recognize that we are gathered here on the unceded territory of the Algo-

Routine Proceedings

nquin people. The spirit of their ancestors must guide our work here in Parliament.

[Translation]

On this day, September 30, Canadians across the country will be wearing orange to raise awareness of the tragic legacy of residential schools and honour the thousands of survivors.

[English]

The residential school system was a tragedy born of colonial policies that harmed children, their families and their communities.

Orange Shirt Day was inspired by the story of Phyllis (Jack) Webstad, a residential school survivor. At the age of six, Phyllis went to the St. Joseph's Mission Indian Residential School wearing a new bright orange shirt bought by her grandmother. On the first day of school, her new shirt was forcibly taken from her, along with her dignity and her pride in her language and her culture.

[Translation]

As we move forward on the path to reconciliation, we must never forget the tragic impact of residential schools, and we must learn from survivors who have bravely shared their experiences.

[English]

On Orange Shirt Day, we acknowledge the denial of rights and the wrongdoings of the past. We recognize the present-day impacts across generations, including the trauma carried by survivors and their families and the negative impact it has had on the social, economic and educational outcomes for first nations, Inuit and Métis.

Today is a day when all Canadians learn more about the lived experience of residential school survivors, the abuse they suffered, and how their lives and the lives of their families and communities were changed forever. We remember those children who died and never returned home. We can see in our mind's eye the graveyards with the tiny crosses next to the schools, and we pledge to help the families who still are searching for answers as to what happened to their loved ones.

• (1525)

The Speaker: I have to interrupt the minister. We have a point of order from the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, the television image was of you, but now the technical staff has shifted it to the minister. These are very important statements. I just wanted to make sure that the minister was actually on television broadcasting to the nation, as well as the other speakers today.

The Speaker: My apologies to the minister. Please continue.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Mr. Speaker, it is only by increasing our collective understanding of the damage done by the perceived superiority embedded in colonial policies that we will be able to confront and meaningfully address the racism toward indigenous peoples that shamefully exists in all of our institutions in Canada.

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[Translation]

We encourage everyone to learn more about their role in the reconciliation process.

[English]

Today we ask Canadians to take time to read or reread the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 calls to action. We need all Canadians to understand the specific actions we can take as individuals, communities and institutions to advance reconciliation with first nations, Inuit and Métis in Canada.

When I was elected in 1997, I had no idea the last residential school had closed only the year before. I have learned from the courage of parliamentarians like Ethel Blondin-Andrew, Romeo Saganash and Wilton Littlechild. Today I acknowledge the leadership of the member of Parliament for the Northwest Territories, himself a residential school survivor.

Today is a day for all of us to learn more about our shared history, including the painful chapters, a day for each of us to determine what role we will play in making the changes necessary to build a better future that respects and better understands the beauty, the wisdom and the importance of indigenous knowledge and culture and an indigenous world view.

As parliamentarians, we have an opportunity to pass legislation to honour the survivors of residential schools and survivors of other colonial and hurtful policies: the forced relocation of Inuit, the killing of their sled dogs, the execution of Louis Riel.

We have a responsibility to understand what was almost lost with policies of assimilation and how Canada will benefit from listening to, learning from and building new relationships with first nations, Inuit and Métis, paternalism to a partnership built upon genuine respect.

[Translation]

We will continue to work to advance reconciliation and nation-to-nation relations between the Inuit people and the Crown and government-to-government relations with the indigenous peoples based on the recognition of rights, respect, co-operation and partnership.

Meegwetch. Nakurmiik. Marsi.

• (1530)

[English]

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I have the honour to join from my home in Kamloops in recognizing Orange Shirt Day.

Like many across Canada, the first day of school for my children meant new shoes and new clothes. They returned home excited at the end of the day to share stories about their new teacher and who they got to sit beside. For many residential school survivors, the first day of school was often a day of horror and pain.

Orange Shirt Day was launched in my home province of British Columbia, and it is based on the heartbreaking experience of Phyllis Webstad. She was six years old when she began attending St. Joseph's Mission School in Williams Lake. On the first day, a bright

new orange shirt that had been a gift from her grandfather was taken from her. She wrote, "The color orange has always reminded me of that [day] and how my feelings didn't matter, how no one cared and how I felt like I was worth nothing."

As stated in the residential school apology, the Government of Canada built an educational system in which very young children were often forcibly removed from their homes, often taken far away from their communities. Many were inadequately fed, clothed and housed. All were deprived of the care and nurturing of their parents, grandparents and communities. First nations, Inuit and Métis languages and cultural practices were prohibited in these schools. Tragically, some of the children died while attending residential school and others never returned home.

The fallout from the residential schools continues to create tragedy and trauma. Clearly, Canadians continue to see horrific acts of racism toward indigenous people, whether it be in our hospitals, as we saw in the very troubling story this week, in our justice system, in education or far more.

Orange Shirt Day began in 2013 to educate students about the history and painful legacy of the residential schools. It has spread across the country in these few short years, now involving thousands of students and bringing this message home to their families and their communities. We join them today on the journey of reconciliation.

Every child matters. Their traditions, families, communities and dreams matter.

[Translation]

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my heart is filled with emotion as I rise here today on behalf of my party, the Bloc Québécois, to recognize Orange Shirt Day. Seven years ago, survivors of St. Joseph's Mission Residential School gathered at Williams Lake, British Columbia, to commemorate the experiences they lived through.

That is when residential school survivor Phyllis Webstad told the story of her first day of school. Hers is the story of a six-year old girl who was happy to wear the orange shirt her grandmother had given her. Hers is the story of the same little girl whose shirt was taken from her, never to be seen again, much like the way children were taken from their mothers to better strip them of their language, culture and ancestral heritage.

Her story is the story of more than 150,000 people across Canada who lived through the trauma of residential schools. It is the story of thousands of children who were beaten, mistreated and far too often abused.

Why did this happen? It is simply because until just a few decades ago the Canadian policy on indigenous peoples aimed to quietly erase them into oblivion.

The last residential school closed its doors 24 years ago. When you think about it, 24 years seems like yesterday. The entire policy of assimilation was based on a false premise: the supremacy of the white race, its civilization and its religion.

The purpose of the residential system was to kill the Indian in the child. Colonial society wanted to turn these children into white children. In fact, there was such a strong desire to make them white that the children were sometimes washed with bleach. That is hideous, abominable and cruel. It is racist and it is cultural genocide.

We must never forget this chapter of history, just as we must never forget the white paper proposal, the killing of sled dogs, the Métis uprising, the Indian Act, the Oka crisis and all the rest. Since then, we have had the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. Governments have created many commissions and produced many papers, but have shown little commitment.

Reconciliation is an ongoing process based on respect. We cannot and must not forget the past, but we live in the here and now. That is why we must take action in the here and now.

Yesterday, the Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador unveiled its action plan on racism and discrimination. The Assembly's chief, Ghislain Picard, was proudly wearing an orange shirt for the occasion. He called on Quebecers to become allies in the fight against racism and discrimination toward first nations.

Today, we are answering this call. The Bloc Québécois reiterates its commitment to forever being an ally of indigenous peoples. We are looking to the future. We are looking to reconciliation.

Tshinashkumitin, meegwetch.

• (1535)

[English]

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today is Orange Shirt Day, a day to honour residential school warriors who were kidnapped from their communities and shipped off to residential schools. Some made it home and some perished in the schools, a legacy of cultural and social disruption that left many survivors struggling to regain identity and place for themselves and their loved ones, a violent violation of human rights with impacts that continue to reverberate in our communities and families today.

There is no reconciliation in the absence of justice, which includes heeding and legislating all the calls to action by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

This attack against our communities was perpetrated for no other reason than because of who we were in all our beauty and grace, living out who we were as indigenous peoples; violence perpetrated against our little children whose resilient spirits experienced unimaginable violence. They are loved and valued. I, along with

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our caucus and with thousands and thousands of others, honour their strength, resiliency and hearts today.

I have heard countless stories about the heartache parents felt when our communities fell silent each September, when our children were robbed away. Once again there was anguish. There was no more laughter or play. Today I honour the parents of those who had their kids wrongfully taken away. There is deafening silence.

There are warriors who are kind, resilient, loving and patient, like my partner Romeo Saganash. As we figure out our way forward, learning how to love and trust in a relationship, it is messy. Colonization has made relationships messy, but we move forward with understanding, compassion, love and fun, including travelling across the country, fighting for Bill C-262, to realize the full adoption and implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

I was touched by a story Romeo told me almost five years ago about how, for over 20 years, he would frequent the local flower shop every Saturday in Quebec City to buy flowers, up until the 2011 election when he informed the flower shop owner that he was moving and would not be by for flowers. She said that it was too bad, that "I am sure she will miss getting flowers." He told her that the flowers were for him, that nobody had ever bought him flowers. The store owner was so touched that she proceeded to cry and so did I upon hearing that story. I told him that I would always buy him flowers, and I have kept that promise. Flowers give him joy.

I also accompanied this gesture with a poem I published to share the very deep love I have for him:

He said he never received flowers
 A blossomed heart
 An orchid to be cherished
 He said he never received flowers
 A spirit they tried to break
 In residential school
 Behind walls
 That grew weeds of genocide
 There were no flowers
 They had no flowers
 For an artist's spirit
 Whose creativity was born out of kindness
 He said he never received flowers
 A spirit so worthy to be embraced
 By kindness and love
 So here is your flower
 Let the smells fill your room
 With the beauty of your sacred heart.

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I extend my love to my partner, my relatives, my friends, all the residential school warriors who I have not had the honour to know and the attendees of residential schools who never made it home from these schools. Here is their flower. Let the smells fill the room with the beauty of their sacred heart.

● (1540)

Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am seeking the unanimous consent of the House to say a few words on behalf of the Green Party.

The Speaker: Does the hon. member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith have the unanimous consent of the House?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Paul Manly: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank all of the speakers who came before me today for sharing their powerful words and to recognize this day.

I recognize that we are on the traditional territory of the Algonquin first peoples. I stand here before the House as the descendant of white settlers who are, in part, responsible for the actions of our government and our churches.

Today is Orange Shirt Day, when we honour and remember residential school survivors and bear witness to their healing journey, it is important to recognize the destructive policies of governments of our past that sought to destroy the cultures, languages and way of life of indigenous people in the country.

I have had the honour and privilege as a filmmaker of working with first nations elders in my community, in the Snaw-Naw-As, St'zuminus and Snuneymuxw First Nations. I worked on a project with the Hul'qumi'num' Health Hub for a film called *Tat ul utul'*, "Getting to Know Each Other". It was to educate people who went into the health care system in the Cowichan District Hospital, so health care workers understood the history of colonialism in the country, how it affected people and why indigenous people did not seek health care when they had health issues.

When I talked to those elders, they talked about their residential school experience. They talked about the Indian hospital in Nanaimo, which has a horrible legacy as well. They talked about their experiences and shared a lot with me. During that time period, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission testimonial came through the community. I also heard testimonials from family friends, who have known me since I was a toddler. They told me stories I had never heard before, horrific stories. Canadians need to hear these stories to understand.

People should hear these testimonies from the survivors of the residential school system. We need to do more than listen. We need to act. We need to implement the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. We need to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. We need to implement the recommendations of the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Inquiry. We need to take the words and turn them into action, and follow through. That is our responsibility in this place.

I want to indulge in a personal story.

In 1959, my father, Jim Manly became a United Church minister. He was a minister at a logging camp, but when he married my mother, Eva Manly, they moved to Kitamaat Village. That was his first calling and their first place together as a couple, in Kitamaat Village with the Haisla people.

Five years later, I was born and six years later my parents adopted my sister, Heather, who is indigenous. We were surrounded by indigenous family and friends who taught us about their culture and gave us the unvarnished truth about what happened to indigenous people in the country. They taught us a lot.

At two years old, I was adopted. My grandmother on my father's side died when my father was 19. We were adopted by Granny Irene Starr. She took us into her arms. She was such a loving, caring woman that the kids in the village would justglom onto her. They were all attracted to her beauty and her loving nature. I loved Granny Irene dearly. She went to a residential school, but she never talked about it. It was not an experience that she shared.

When we were teenagers, we figured out that all of these family friends were actually my sister's biological family. Granny Irene was her grandmother and Auntie Vina Starr was her mother. Vina Starr was the first female aboriginal called to the bar in British Columbia. My sister, who has spent 25 years with the Ontario Provincial Police, working in indigenous policing in the north, is now working on the bar exam. I wish Heather Manly good luck with her bar exam, following in the footsteps of her mother.

● (1545)

In the early nineties, when Willy Blackwater was taking his case against the Alberni residential school, the United Church and the Government of Canada, my parents stood with him because they felt a responsibility as members of the church and my father a minister. My father was looking for research on the Alberni school, but he found a letter in the archives written in 1898 by a woman called Elizabeth Shaw.

It was an 18-page scathing letter. This woman came from the east and went to the Port Simpson school run by Thomas Crosby, and she outlined 18 pages of systematic abuse of kids. This letter was written 122 years ago. My father found the letters of the government ministers and church officials who all shut her down as a whistleblower and called her crazy. She lost her faith and ended up dying in a mental institution in Brockville. The people who read those letters in the film that I co-produced with my mother, called *The Awakening of Elizabeth Shaw*, were all connected to this story. The ministers read the voices of the ministers. Government ministers read the voices of government members, and my father read part of it. The Dudoward girls read the voices of the chief and the chief's wife from Port Simpson.

My mother asked Granny Irene to sing a hymn in the film called *Flee as a Bird*. My mother explained to her when we were recording that the children in these homes could not escape because of the ocean and mountains. There was nowhere for them to go. When Granny Irene sang this song her voice broke and trembled and at the end, when she finished singing, she wept. She had never talked about residential schools, but I knew that she had suffered trauma and a lot of pain, and so had all her children and grandchildren, from what happened at the residential schools.

Knowing the truth, now is the time for reconciliation, and it is incumbent upon all of us to turn words into action and to do that work here in this place.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Marilène Gill: Mr. Speaker, I would like to raise a point of order. If I am not mistaken, the member for Malpeque was eating during the time provided for speeches.

• (1550)

[*English*]

The Speaker: Did the hon. member for Malpeque want to respond?

Hon. Wayne Easter: Mr. Speaker, you have my apologies. I had a piece of a bar because I did not have lunch.

The Speaker: I want to remind hon. members that eating in the chamber is not permitted.

* * *

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-246, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act and the Canada Student Financial Assistance Act.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise today to introduce an important bill to Parliament called the post-secondary education financial assistance for persons with disabilities act, with thanks to the hon. member for Courtenay—Alberni for seconding it. This legislation will provide tuition-free post-secondary education for all Canadians with disabilities. This is not only fundamentally just. It is an investment in our citizens that will level the playing field and benefit our society.

While there has been progress in broadening inclusion for students in Canadian colleges, universities and trade schools, there is still much more work to be done. I hope all parliamentarians will support this vital initiative to help Canadians with disabilities reach their full potential and share their talents, skills and energy with us all, because when people with diverse abilities succeed, we all succeed.

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

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HOUSE OF COMMONS CALENDAR

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr.

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

I move:

That, notwithstanding any standing order or usual practice of the House, for the 2020 calendar year, Standing Order 28(2)(b) be amended by replacing the words "September 30" with the words "October 9".

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

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

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

(Motion agreed to)

Mr. Blake Richards: Mr. Speaker, I rise to seek unanimous consent for the following motion:

That the chair of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs be instructed to convene a meeting of the committee at 11 a.m. on Thursday, October 1, 2020.

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

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: We do not have unanimous consent.

* * *

PETITIONS

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, many members have been moved by the horrific events happening toward the Uighur community in China. The petitioners would like to specifically emphasize the actions that Canada's Parliament can take in response to this issue. In particular, we can use the Justice for Victims of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act, the Magnitsky act, to sanction and hold accountable those who are involved in these horrific crimes. I note the government is listing officials from Belarus, but there is still a lack any list of those involved in human right abuses in Xinjiang or in any other part of the PRC.

I commend this petition to the consideration of the House.

• (1555)

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise once again to present a petition from young people across my riding of South Okanagan—West Kootenay and the neighbouring riding of Kootenay—Columbia.

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The petitioners point out that the accelerating effects of climate change are causing anxiety among young people around their uncertain future. They point out that Canada has agreed with the Paris accord but has targets that do not match those agreements. They want jobs that are sustainable and are not for a short-term gain at the expense of future generations.

They call on the Canadian government to uphold Canadians' obligations under the Paris agreement by adopting a real climate strategy with a real plan that includes an effective carbon tax, eliminating fossil fuel subsidies and redirecting those investments into renewable energy, energy efficiency, low-carbon transportation and job training.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Kenny Chiu (Steveston—Richmond East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I find it very appropriate today, on Orange Shirt Day, that I have the privilege of presenting a petition on behalf of Canadians to draw the government's attention to the Uighur situation.

Canadians would like to bring the atrocities happening in China against Uighurs and Muslims to the attention of the government. They are fulfilling the definition of genocide in the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Canadians would also like the government to act beyond just mere concerns and use the Justice for Victims of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act to sanction those responsible.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present this electronic petition, e-2607, with 1,845 signatures on behalf of my constituents in Hamilton Mountain and many other Canadian residents. It is regarding the situation in Kashmir.

WILD SALMON

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to have the opportunity to present this petition.

Today being September 30, it is the day cited in the Cohen Commission report that came out eight years ago. Recommendation 19 called for the removal of the toxic fish farms found in and around the Discovery Islands.

These petitioners reference the significant crisis in the Pacific salmon populations. They call on the government to exercise the precautionary principle and implement urgently all 75 recommendations of the report of the judicial inquiry of Mr. Justice Cohen.

PSYCHOACTIVE PLANTS AND FUNGI

Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present e-petition 2534.

Almost 15,000 Canadians have signed this petition calling for the decriminalization of psychoactive plants and fungi that have traditionally been used for medicinal and ceremonial purposes by indigenous people since time immemorial. The petition points out that there is a growing body of peer-reviewed evidence that these traditional remedies support recovery from addiction and help people suffering from PTSD, treatment-resistant depression and end-of-life anxiety.

I would also like to thank the Minister of Health for giving an exemption to several people who are at the end of their lives for the use of psilocybin-assisted therapy.

The petition calls on the Government of Canada to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, the Food and Drugs Act and regulations to distinguish and exempt these organisms when used for therapeutic practices as adjuncts to medical care, healing ceremonies, or solitary spiritual growth and self development.

I would like to thank Trevor Millar and MAPS Canada for bringing forward this petition.

● (1600)

ACCESS TO MEDICINES

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to introduce a petition on behalf of my constituent, Jocelyn James, whose son, Steven, lives with cystic fibrosis. His access to life-changing new medicines has been put at risk by the government's proposed price restrictions, which have stopped new treatments from coming to Canada.

Over 17,000 Canadians have signed this petition. They are calling upon the Government of Canada to repeal the changes to the patented medicines regulations that were adopted in 2019; engage in substantive, transparent and evidence-based consultations with stakeholders on any changes to the Patented Medicine Prices Review Board, and; work with patients, clinicians, provincial health systems, researchers and medicine developers to inform the federal price review regime so that it does not prevent Canadians like Steven from gaining access to life-changing, and potentially life-saving, medicines and clinical trials.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: I wish to inform the House that, because of ministerial statements, Government Orders will be extended by 27 minutes this evening.

PRIVILEGE

ALLEGED PREMATURE DISCLOSURE OF CONTENTS OF BILL C-7— SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I am ready to rule on the question of privilege raised on September 25 by the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent requesting that a question of privilege found to be *prima facie* in the previous session be considered once again in the current session. At the time, the matter involved the premature disclosure of the content of Bill C-7, an act to amend the Criminal Code with regard to medical assistance in dying, while it was on notice awaiting introduction and first reading.

[English]

In this intervention, the member reminded the House that the question was raised earlier this year, on February 25, and was referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs on March 10, when the Speaker gave leave to move the appropriate motion. I want to thank the member for the clarity of his remarks and for the precedents he cited to bolster his case. Both helped me to understand the issues in play. The parliamentary secretary to the government House leader also intervened, focusing his remarks on the timelines for raising the questions of privilege.

As members are well aware, when questions of privilege are raised, the role of the Chair is to determine if the claim relates to the breach of privilege or a contempt that deserves priority of consideration over all other business before the House. It is not the responsibility of the Chair to decide whether there is an actual offence or its seriousness. Such a matter is determined by the House itself. This is one of the two criteria that the Speaker has to consider in assessing an alleged breach of privilege. The second criterion is whether the matter was raised at the earliest opportunity. In considering the revival of a question of privilege in this new session, the Chair is bound by the same criteria and has to take into account current circumstances.

[Translation]

In reviewing the precedents raised by the member, the character of the complaint in each case is important in determining if and to what extent it is relevant to the case at hand. For example, in his ruling of February 6, 2004, Speaker Milliken was considering the extent of privilege afforded to a member when called before the courts as a witness, more specifically the immunity from testifying in court during a parliamentary session. The other case related to the evident gap in the law and the practices of the House relating to members found to be in contravention of the Canada Elections Act. Both cases had far reaching implications that were not bound by the limits of the session.

The circumstances involved in the issue before the House are now substantially different. Bill C-7 is no longer before the House, nor is the infraction of its premature disclosure. Eight months have elapsed and as a result of prorogation, all proceedings including any outstanding legislation as well as any order of reference have been terminated.

The Address

• (1605)

[English]

With regard to the notice requirement, the Chair has observed that the issue was not raised at the earliest opportunity. While we might understand why there would be reluctance to raise a question of privilege on the opening day of a new Parliament or session, notices should be submitted early. This seems particularly pertinent in a case that seeks to revive a question of privilege from the previous session.

Given these circumstances, the Chair does not find that the matter should take precedence over all other business of the House. Grounds are not sufficiently compelling in this case. I therefore rule that the question of privilege has not been made out.

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

[Translation]

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed from September 28 consideration of the motion for an address to Her Excellency the Governor General in reply to her speech at the opening of the session, and of the amendment.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be back in the House with my colleagues and to tell Canadians about my plan to support their jobs and their families.

[English]

Speaking of families, I want to start by saying how proud I am of mine. I know my wife, Rebecca, my kids Mollie and Jack, and my parents are probably watching this speech that I give on my first day as Conservative Party leader in the House of Commons.

What an honour it is for me to represent Durham, the area I grew up in, as a member of Parliament, to stand and represent them, and to be the leader of the party that founded this great country. What an intense honour this is for me. I will try to live up to the incredible precedent set before me.

I want to start by thanking the thousands of Canadians who reached out and said good words and sent prayers and their best thoughts for my family as Rebecca and I were overcoming COVID-19. I also want to thank the incredible health care workers we interacted with, like Josée, our personal health care office guide, who called and checked in almost every day. People like her are working tirelessly for Canadians in every corner of this country. I thank them for the sacrifices they are making. I have seen them in action, and at the edge of a second wave, I want, on behalf of the Conservative Party, to thank all of our front-line health care workers for everything they are doing throughout this pandemic.

[Translation]

Canadians can be proud of their guardian angels in health care. Doctors, nurses and PSWs have been there when we needed them. They have been on the front lines of the fight against a disease that our country did not see coming.

The Address

Canada was not ready, but our health care professionals were ready to risk their health for us. Now that the fight against the second wave has begun, we know we can count on them.

On behalf of the Conservative Party, I thank each and every one of them.

[English]

Two weeks ago, my wife Rebecca and I bundled the kids, Mollie and Jack, into a car and went and waited hours in line for COVID testing, just like thousands of other families did across this country the very same day. We waited for hours, only to be turned away. The health care worker who was managing the line and going through and apologizing to each family as they were sent away wanted to tell us where to go to get another test, but he said every testing site was so busy that places were not even answering their phones. That dedicated health care worker looked more disappointed than we were that day because there was no hope or news they could provide to those families.

We went home. We are fortunate. I have an office now that helps me call around, and I found out that my workplace provided a test. A few days later, our family took advantage of that test. However, as we did that, Rebecca and I talked about all of those other hundreds of families in line with us that day. How many of them did not have a workplace that could help them out of days and days of waiting? How many of them had to take more days off of work because their children could not return to school without a clear test? How many of them had to change plans to take care of an ill neighbour or a grandparent? How many were left stranded? That is all we could think about. We were fortunate to get tested.

Just a year ago, if we were experiencing some of these cold or mild flu-like symptoms, we would have just powered through. Many Canadians actually take pride in never having taken a sick day, always stepping up for their classes, always stepping up for a shift and not letting a cold or a flu hold them back. I admire these work characteristics. This the sort of hard work and perseverance that built this great country. However, in a pandemic, those same characteristics can also cause public health challenges. That same approach, Canadians should realize, could spread the coronavirus to other Canadians. Times have changed, and we have to be cautious and change with them.

● (1610)

We think about the people who do not have options. A single mother who may be working a few jobs to make sure all the bills are paid cannot risk missing one to have to take care of a child at home. A new Canadian who may have been in their job for just a few years may be worried about potentially missing work, and may want to keep their co-workers safe and healthy, but knows they need to make the next rent payment. There are millions of Canadians, like that new Canadian family and like that single mother, who were left out of the throne speech last week. There was nothing but empty words in there for them.

The throne speech, particularly after prorogation, which this Prime Minister said he would never do to avoid a scandal, could have provided a clear and distinct plan on the eve of a second wave of this pandemic. It failed to do that.

One way the Prime Minister could have given these Canadians more peace of mind is through rapid testing, particularly for asymptomatic patients and for families so they could avoid the lines. The Prime Minister knows this. In fact, the Prime Minister himself has said:

We know that massive testing has been part of the solution in places that have managed to contain or slow the spread of COVID-19...

The trouble is, the Prime Minister said this in March during the first wave of the pandemic and, like many things, when the TV cameras are off and the tweets have been sent, there is no follow-up. There is no leadership. There is no accountability. In the Speech from the Throne, we saw an absence of leadership at a time when Canadians, with thousands in line and many waking up at three in the morning to line up, are desperate for some leadership. All they get with this Prime Minister is disappointment after disappointment.

Fifteen other developed countries, our closest allies, already have available rapid-test options that give their citizens answers in minutes. As I said today, the Prime Minister does not seem to realize that CETA, the European trade agreement that my friend for Abbotsford negotiated, allows us to recognize the regulatory approval for medical kits and diagnostic tests from those countries. The Liberals talk about it, they tweet about it, but where was the action? There was just more disappointment.

Half a year after the Prime Minister said that rapid testing was important, and half a trillion dollars later, there are tens of thousands of Canadians in line and forgotten. Canadian families deserve better than this. They were looking for some answers. They were looking for a second wave plan in the throne speech. They heard nothing.

Also, the Liberals had no sense of purpose for the economic recovery for our country. In fact, because they prorogued Parliament all of the programs, from the CERB to rent assistance, were expiring. The Liberals decided to prorogue to avoid difficult questions from some of my colleagues on the WE scandal rather than get Parliament to work diligently towards a plan for small businesses and families for the second wave.

Hashtags and photo ops do not prepare this country for a crisis, and that is why the Conservative government-in-waiting will start to offer that plan to Canadians.

The Address

• (1615)

Let us look back, because we still have not been told by the Prime Minister or the health minister, whom most Canadians lost faith in early in March, why they closed the early pandemic warning system, the Global Public Health Intelligence Network, in May of 2019. They closed it with no answer. Experts have shown that it could have helped not just thousands of Canadians, but the world with a better response to COVID-19.

The government was warned of risks in December of last year and in January of this year. I am aware of at least five departments of the federal government that knew of the pandemic risks to Canadians, including health and economic risks, in January. By then, with no response and no plan, they were already letting hundreds of cases into Canada. By February, they had already sent critical personal protective equipment to China, at a time when their own departments were being warned that Beijing was trying to rally a global supply of PPE. While they were not being transparent on the full extent of the outbreak of the coronavirus, and while departments were warning them of the inadequacy of our own supply, they were sending supplies and tweeting rather than planning.

The government not only ignored our questions about the border, including my colleague in Prince George asking in January about closing the border to flights from at-risk countries. They accused the opposition of being intolerant. “We’ve got this,” the health minister said. In fact, for a month and a half she downplayed the risk to our country from this pandemic. That is why I say most Canadians had already lost faith in the health minister by that point.

Conservatives proposed using the EI system to prepare the economy for outages. Later on, when that was not used, we asked the government to push from a 10% wage subsidy program to 75% so we could preserve jobs and there would be something to return to after the closures of the first wave. We proposed this, we proposed the GST remittance, and we proposed faster and more direct rent relief to small businesses, not to the big landlords who unfortunately took their time to often opt out. The Liberals, sadly, got most of their programs slow or wrong. They had to introduce not one, but two emergency bills because the first one was insufficient.

We were all working hard. The whole world was responding, but Canadians expect their government to also work smart. They expected their government, their Prime Minister and their health minister to learn the lessons when they dropped the ball in the first round. When the Prime Minister said in March that rapid testing was Canada's priority, we should be rolling out hundreds of thousands of rapid tests today. Who is accountable there? Five departments of the federal government knew in January. The Prime Minister pledged to be prepared for the first, let alone the second, wave, and just yesterday they bought a rapid test and approved it the next day.

Rather than competing for the bottom, we should be looking to see how New Zealand, Taiwan, Australia and Vietnam responded and learning the lessons, not just looking at the poor response and the poor results in the United States. It reminds me of my land survival training in the air force. One of the wise old trappers in Hinton, Alberta, was asked a question when we were put out into the wilderness to survive as young air force officers. Somebody asked

how to survive a bear attack and the wise old trapper said, “You just have to run faster than your friend.” That seems to be the Prime Minister's self-assessment of his response to COVID.

• (1620)

We seem to be running slightly faster than our friends to the south, but we are not learning from the countries that got it right. Hashtags, inaction and ethical scandals are the consistencies we see with this Prime Minister. Canadians, particularly during the biggest crisis of our lifetime, expect more. They expect a plan and they expect a response when families are worried about a second wave.

[*Translation*]

As my colleagues know, when I talk about health, I am talking about a government's most important role, namely to keep Canadians healthy and safe.

We know that the government did not fulfill its role in Quebec. By rolling out the CERB without first implementing a wage subsidy, it jeopardized jobs. By dawdling for months over a rapid testing system while refusing to use our allies' system, it jeopardized Canadians' trust. By keeping the borders open for the sake of political correctness, it jeopardized Canadians' health. Families in Quebec and across Canada sacrificed a lot during this pandemic: visits with grandparents, weddings, graduation ceremonies.

Many Quebeckers know at least one family member who fell ill. The long-term care homes faced major challenges. We all know the sad story of the Herron long-term care centre, but what really bothers me is knowing that the Liberal government waited far too long to send the army in to our seniors' homes. Even when the Government of Quebec asked for federal help, the Liberals hung back. Canadians are proud of our armed forces. Our men and women in uniform stepped up to help us at a time of crisis. They would have stayed longer if the Liberals had just let them do their job.

Now the Prime Minister is playing petty politics by foisting his own health care priorities on the provinces. Canadians have seen the Liberals stumble so many times that they do not trust them anymore.

The Address

My plan is clear. I will increase health transfers to the provinces by providing stable, predictable funding, no strings attached. This is about respecting the jurisdiction of the provinces, our partners, because we can count on our partners, our orderlies, our nurses, our doctors, and our soldiers, but we cannot count on this government.

● (1625)

[English]

Who is going to make sure Canada is better prepared next time? Who is going to make sure that Canada learns the lessons from the first wave and fixes the gaps and some of the problems that have put our citizens at risk? Who is going to make sure that working Canadian families stop getting left behind by the government?

Canadians are still getting to know me as the new leader of the Conservative Party and leader of the official opposition. Only the most dedicated political animals saw my speech live at 1:30 in the morning. My second big speech was from my doorstep. Through adversity to the stars.

As more Canadians get to know me, they will know that I set high standards for myself and this incredible team. We are a government in waiting, and we do not accept the poor response and the lack of lessons learned by the current government in a time of crisis.

Canadians will also get to know that I have tried to spend my entire life standing up for this country. I was not born with a sense of entitlement to lead the country, but I have worked hard for my entire life to serve Canada and its people, to earn the chance to lead. That is what we need in public life when we face a national unity crisis, a pandemic, economic rebuilding and uncertainty on the global stage: someone who will fight to ensure that no Canadian family gets left behind; someone who understands the importance of service and community.

Many Canadians know I am very proud to be a veteran. I am also proud to be a Legion member and a Rotarian. In fact, in this House there are probably dozens of Lions, Legion members and Knights of Columbus, Kinsmen, Optimists and Kiwanis. For decades, service clubs, faith organizations and community groups have been the pillars of strong communities, allowing Canadians to come together to accomplish great things together: service above self.

As a kid who grew up in a General Motors family, I also know that some of those organizations that help build strong communities are unions. Organized labour helps build strong communities. Unions foster community and workplace cultures where workers know that someone has their back.

An hon. member: Did Harper tell you that?

Hon. Erin O'Toole: Mr. Speaker, workers know that someone is fighting for them, as opposed to just agreeing with whatever the government says, like that member; someone who will fight for them when they are sick; and someone who fights for them to avoid the steel and aluminum tariffs that the government allowed to be applied on our hard-working families across the country.

I grew up on a street where neighbours looked out for one another. I have talked personally about when my mom was ill. My family and our neighbours were there to help. They were there for the

meal. They were there to make sure the kids were okay. Strong communities take care of each other and foster a culture that values the health and well-being of those in their community. They value everyone.

Conservatives do not believe that big government programs are the solution to all problems. In fact, big and massive government can sometimes be part of the problem. Government can, by its very nature, stand between people. A government can give us clemency, but a government can also give us dependence. Only a community and our belonging to it can give us solidarity.

The Prime Minister does not understand the challenges facing our country because he has never had to understand the challenges facing the average Canadian family. Under the current government, Canada has become less united, less prosperous and less respected on the world stage. A large reason is that our Canadian community is being weakened under this Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister likes to preach that we are all in this together, but Canadians have seen time after time with this Prime Minister that this is not true. Millions of Canadians were already left out of the throne speech. They are not, as the Prime Minister likes to say, all there. In fact, they have seen many times that “all in it together” for the current government means the friends and family of the Liberal Party first and regular Canadians second; connected lobbyists for big corporations first and the Attorney General in their own caucus second; the family of the Prime Minister benefiting and the former finance minister arranging a program for the charity that helped the family.

● (1630)

In the middle of a pandemic, the Liberals were helping their friends and connected insiders. In the middle of a pandemic, they were suppressing the ability for Parliament to oversee spending, while they were creating a multi-million dollar plan to pay volunteers. When I talked about that sense of community earlier that we see in unions, service clubs and faith communities, the great thing about it is the altruism. They do not have to be paid. How novel is that, for the big government and connected insiders party? Canadians are left behind if they are not a Liberal insider with the government.

The Address

The Liberals gave a sole-source contract to an MP whose seat was hardly cold because he had just left the seat. They are applying national security exemptions to cover up decisions related to tendering during the pandemic. Think about that: the government is claiming national security grounds so that Canadians will not get to see who got contracts for hospital gowns or N95 masks. Is national security actually at risk or are the Liberal re-election chances at risk?

The Prime Minister has built his electoral success on dividing Canadians, province versus province, industry sector versus industry sector, rural versus urban; friends of the Liberal Party, the Laurier Club, versus everybody else. Now the Prime Minister continues that approach with the throne speech. He has not made Canada stronger or more resilient. He has not shown that we have learned lessons from the first wave of the pandemic, yet he is leaving people out of his vision for building back better.

The Liberals are demonizing Canadians who work in the resource sector or grew up hunting with their family. They are cancelling out people because of a difference of opinion or someone's religious faith. Groups that were doing summer jobs programs and intending to grow a sense of community have been cut off because they were associated with a church, mosque, gurdwara or synagogue. How is that bringing people together?

People may not always get along with their neighbours, but in the winter when someone shovels their neighbour's walk before they get home at the end of the day, they are grateful for them. When someone takes a neighbour's recycling bins in for them, or offers to walk their dog, a sense of community is felt. Rebecca and I have felt that on a daily basis as friends and neighbours have dropped off meals for us. Her best friend, Dhan, dropped off Tim Hortons after ringing the doorbell and driving away.

That is what keeps a country strong. That is what gives people hope on the edge of a second wave, because Canadians know that community means that someone will return the favour if they should get into an entanglement or if they are in lockdown because of COVID-19.

Would not most Canadians help that neighbour, just like ours helped me when I was a little kid and neighbours helped our family this week? Would people not help that neighbour because they worked in the oil patch, or came from Alberta, or Newfoundland and Labrador? Is that what we are starting to see with the approach of choosing who will be a part of building back better?

That appears to be the path that the government is on. It is the vision presented in the throne speech where a person is judged by the job they have or where they live, if they are lucky enough to even have a job after COVID: a Canada where the government decides what jobs people have and what cars they drive, a Canada where millions of Canadians are knowingly left behind and are told the country will be building back better without them.

The Prime Minister attacked me for suggesting that we have national unity challenges. Five years ago, when I was sworn into the Privy Council, the Bloc Québécois was not an official party. There was no such thing as the Wexit movement.

• (1635)

Now there are more members signed up for an email, looking into separation, than there are members of the Liberal Party of Canada. That is the Prime Minister's record. We are going to be holding him to account.

As I said in my first conversation with him, the most important job of a Canadian prime minister is supporting Canadian families and keeping our federation united. What we should do is respect the inherent dignity that goes into working, whether in the forestry sector in western Canada or Quebec, in the oil patch, in manufacturing or aluminum in the Saguenay. When people use their sweat equity and dedication to save for a home or for their children's education, there is a fundamental aspect of their character attached to the nobility of work. They believe they are part of something bigger than themselves. Their vision of work gives them value and dignity that is far greater than a paycheque.

It is time that government thought this way and valued tax dollars, and Canadian workers and the work they do, rather than the sector they are in.

[*Translation*]

The Liberals always seem to forget this, but the federal government has a key ally in managing this pandemic. This ally is very familiar with what the people need, and it works hard to educate them, care for them and put them to work. I am talking about the provinces.

The Liberals always govern as though power were their birthright. Just ask the Prime Minister. When a party is the country's so-called natural governing party of Canada, it tends to take a confrontational approach to governing instead of a collaborative one.

The Liberals are mistaken. Our country is a confederation, an alliance of the provinces. The provinces have a shared destiny and a shared dream. The Prime Minister of Canada must be the one to bring them together.

As Prime Minister, I will be a partner; I will not be paternalistic. My vision of federalism is a decentralized one that trusts the provinces, that supports resource development in the west and that respects the Quebec nation. These topics are taboo for the Liberals. They are not modern enough for them. This Liberal arrogance needs to stop. The country was not founded by Pierre Elliott Trudeau. It was founded by John A. Macdonald and Georges-Étienne Cartier.

Canada is not a postnational country without history or identity. Canada is an alliance between two founding peoples, in collaboration with the first nations. The Liberals do not have a monopoly on Canadian identity. They do not have a monopoly on freedom of speech. They certainly do not have a monopoly on national pride.

The Address

The Prime Minister likes to use scare tactics when talking about right-wing ideology. He likes to claim that we are intolerant. He does not realize that under his governance, western separatism is now a threat to our country and the Bloc Québécois has returned in full force, all because of the arrogance of this government.

The time has come for a Prime Minister who will unite Canadians. We cannot allow ourselves to be divided. We have a country to rebuild.

• (1640)

[English]

For too many Canadians, the dignity of work has taken a blow with the impacts of COVID-19, particularly on family-owned small businesses. Going back to strong communities, often small businesses, entrepreneurs are at the core of that sense of community.

The music store in downtown Belleville, Ontario, Pinnacle Music Studios, owned by Ken and Janet Harnden, just closed their doors after 25 years. At their peak, they had 600 students taking music lessons every week. Great Big Sea's Alan Doyle would drop by when he was in town. They played a major role in bringing people together through music and community. Their supply chain was devastated by COVID-19 and none of the government's programs worked for a small, family-owned business like theirs. They recently made the tough decision, after a generation, to close.

The legendary Ranchman's Cookhouse & Dancehall in Calgary, synonymous with western culture for half a century, closed its doors due to COVID-19. This month the property is for lease for the first time in its history. Restaurants like Campagnolo and Federico's Supper Club in Vancouver have had to permanently close their doors.

Small businesses that put communities on the map, like Caribou Crossing Trading Post near Carcross, Yukon, have been struggling as COVID-19 has shut down tourism. Generations of guide outfitters across Canada's north, who not only play an important role in the rural economy but are dedicated stewards to the environment and to wildlife populations, have had nothing to fall back on. Others have remortgaged their homes just to keep businesses on main street open. Some have pivoted their businesses to find new ways to help their communities in a crisis, like the mompreneur who owns Sohma Naturals in Digby Naturals in Digby, Nova Scotia, which switched from making diaper balm to hand sanitizer during the pandemic.

These small businesses are at the heart of strong communities. Canada does not need them to build back better. They do not need the Liberal government in Ottawa to tell them that their contributions have value.

Canada needs to build back stronger and smarter by setting up small businesses for recovery and success post-COVID-19. We need to ensure that more Canadians are not left behind, like they were in the throne speech. Picking winners and losers in the midst of a pandemic, as the Prime Minister seems intent on doing, is a failure of leadership and an abandonment to a commitment to the community of Canada.

Indigenous communities have also been left behind with an Ottawa-knows-best agenda. Indigenous communities have been strengthened by entrepreneurship and small business ownership only to watch opportunities vanish, from catering services to remote mining operations to security and construction. The prosperity of the country, including our resource sector, can be shared by all Canadians, including indigenous-led businesses and families.

Indigenous communities have known more than their share of tragedy. That is why I, like many members here today, wear orange to show support for reconciliation. It is why we asked several questions on the subject today. It is also why I was disappointed to hear the Prime Minister's condescending remarks about how happy he was to hear the Conservatives talking about reconciliation.

Both parties have a bad record when it comes to the indigenous experience, particularly surrounding residential schools. The condescension comes from ignorance. The last prime minister in our lifetime to open residential schools was Pierre Trudeau. Brian Mulroney closed the program, and I was proud that Stephen Harper apologized for it. We have a lot to do on this side, but the Liberals certainly have a lot to do as well. Indigenous Canadians are tired of the photo ops, the hashtags and the inaction on progress.

To Conservatives especially, and to indigenous entrepreneurs, reconciliation means opportunity, means collaboration and means participation in the Canadian economy. Encouraging indigenous businesses, building strong economies in indigenous communities, developing indigenous supply chains and giving indigenous young people brighter futures is part of our commitment to reconciliation.

• (1645)

Indigenous businesses are hiring local workers and reinvesting in their communities, yet they still do not have access to compete for procurement in federal government contracts. This, too, was not addressed in the throne speech. Almost half a trillion dollars has gone out the door, and today my colleague talked about cuts to high-speed connectivity for rural indigenous communities. Is that his priority? It is certainly his record.

[Translation]

We need a serious government, a government that saves for a rainy day, a government that encourages economic growth, a government that fosters peace, order and sound ethical governance. That is what our ancestors always did. That is what the Conservatives want to continue to do and that is what I will do as Prime Minister.

The Address

A time of crisis and uncertainty is not the time to conduct social experiments like those set out in the throne speech. It is as though simply ensuring that Canadian families have good jobs is not prestigious enough for this Prime Minister. It is as though hashtags, tweets and impressing the UN are absolutely necessary. It is as though all Canadians have to work for a high-tech company to be happy. Perhaps the Prime Minister needs to meet ordinary people, small business owners who risked everything for their company. I am thinking of La Normandise in Saguenay, a family business that has been around for 30 years and had to close its doors because of the pandemic and poorly designed federal assistance. I am also thinking of Montreal institutions like L'Entrecôte Saint-Jean and Librairie Olivieri, which were hard hit by the uncertainty. Small businesses are fed up with roadblocks, taxes and red tape, but the Liberal government is still cruising down the spending highway.

They even turfed the finance minister because he wanted to avoid a spiralling debt. If the money were at least going to Canadians and not the Liberals' friends at WE, it would not be so bad. Either way, our kids and grandkids will have to pay off that debt, which is quite real. When the Liberals refuse to develop our resources, when they refuse to fight for softwood lumber, when they refuse to stop illegal blockades, they are jeopardizing our social programs. Funding for our hospitals, our universities, our seniors' pensions, the Liberal debt puts all that at risk. It is time for a serious government. The country needs it.

• (1650)

[*English*]

The number one job for the Prime Minister of Canada when representing our country abroad is to stand up for the national interest and our values as a country. We must also foster strong communities with our allies. Putting the national interest first does not mean we have to go alone.

For the last three decades, an uneasy compromise has existed with the engagement of non-market economies and countries that resist democracy and rules-based diplomacy. Our belief, as Conservatives, in free markets and the positive influence of capitalism has fought for equal position with our commitment to international freedom and democracy when it comes to communist China.

As Conservatives, we normally believe that tariffs are bad for consumers. Free trade is supposed to lead to more free nations and greater prosperity as the market allocates economic resources to places that allow for goods to be produced and marketed for the greatest benefit of the greatest number of people.

I still believe in free trade, but I also believe in fair trade where countries follow the rules; free trade among free and democratic nations. I believe in free markets, free trade, even free movement with the U.K., Australia and New Zealand in CANZUK. I also believe that we have to resist the protectionist instincts of our American friends because we do more than \$1 billion of business with them every day, because the aluminum in Kitimat and in the Saguenay has been a North American enterprise that helped win the Second World War, because since the 1960s and the Auto Pact, we have had an integrated manufacturing and steel industry in North America. We have to remind our American friends about that. Sadly, we have to remind the Canadian government about that.

I believe we should build new relationships, particularly grow our relationship with India and establish closer economic ties with the democratic regime in Taiwan. The price of market outcomes is too high when it comes to the Communist regime in Beijing. The price for Canadian auto workers, steelworkers and aluminum workers is too high. The price for access to safe and reliable PPE and medical products in a pandemic is too high. The price for Canadian communities and Canadians being left behind is too high.

China has ignored almost all of the conditions under which it entered the WTO. Its interference through its state-owned enterprises would not be tolerated from any other WTO member. For more than a decade, the chief economic exports from China often have been IT infringement, counterfeiting and digital privacy. I saw this first-hand when I worked in the private sector fighting the rise and export of dangerous counterfeit goods from mainland China. All of this is before we even raise the terrible ethnic cleansing of Uighur Muslims, the establishment of a police state in a once free Hong Kong under a one country, two systems agreement, the rapid expansion of its military into the South China Sea, the assertion of China as a near-Arctic nation and the suppression of Christian communities in China.

Let there be no mistake. I am in favour of free trade, but the cost of market outcomes with Beijing is simply becoming too high and the approach of the government is simply out of touch. Do we continue to ignore re-education camps in western China to grow our exports, or do we open new markets, work with our allies and rebalance global trade to show the Communist Party in Beijing that the one thing not for sale is our values? To do this we must help Canadian businesses grow new market opportunities, particularly in the Indo-Pacific and break dependency with China.

We must also show a commitment to free trade alongside the value of freedom. Under the Prime Minister's leadership, Canada has become less united, less prosperous and less respected on the world stage. Tonight I talked about some of the tens of thousands of Canadians left behind in his throne speech. Our communities are becoming weakened, families are worried and our Confederation is strained.

• (1655)

[*Translation*]

The Prime Minister is dividing our country between east and west, erasing our history and embarrassing us on the international stage.

*The Address**[English]*

Our small businesses are in crisis. After being attacked as tax cheats three years ago, family-owned enterprises were largely left out of the COVID response and now tens of thousands of them are teetering on the edge of insolvency. They do not need to build back better, they need to stay open so the family can survive.

Canadians are tired of being pitted against one another, sector versus sector, rural versus urban, west versus east, because it is really neighbour versus neighbour.

At a time when we need, more than ever, to be united, to work together, to have each other's backs, Canada does not need another slogan or hashtag. It needs a plan. It does not need a poster boy, it needs a handyman. People do not need the cold shoulder of indifference, but the hope that comes from a helping hand that gets them back to work. It needs to build back stronger and the only way that can happen is with a united Canada, where prosperity is shared from our outpost communities in Newfoundland, to the Saguenay, to the factory floors in Windsor, to the oil patch of Alberta and the lower mainland of British Columbia. It is a Canada where no Canadian is left behind.

[Translation]

Canada needs someone who will fight for our workers and for people who are proud to work.

[English]

Canada needs a leader for all Canadians with a plan for all of Canada, not just the parts where the Liberal government finds its votes. Canada is a great country that was built on the communities that have always had one another's backs without question. That is why so many Canadians feel left out by this prorogation and the WE-scandal-avoiding throne speech. I want all those Canadians, especially those feeling forgotten, those in lineups for rapid tests and those worried about job losses in the second wave of COVID, to know I am proud to lead a strong, united Conservative government-in-waiting, and my goal in the coming months is that more of these Canadians will see a Conservative looking back at them when they look in the mirror each morning.

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for North Island—Powell River, Veterans Affairs; the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, Foreign Affairs.

- (1700)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, on a personal note, let me congratulate the member on winning the Conservative leadership. Having said that, I hope he is the Leader of the Opposition for many years.

The leader of the Conservative Party said that when he met with the Prime Minister he emphasized two points: first, that as a gov-

ernment we need to be there to support Canadians; and second, that the role of the Prime Minister is to keep the country together.

With the rollout of all the many programs to support Canada at a time in which we needed to be there in a real and tangible way, we have supported almost nine million Canadians through CERB. We have supported businesses through the wage loss program, which saved tens of thousands of jobs. We are talking about millions of people who have been affected: seniors, students and a wide spectrum of Canadians. The government has been there and has been listening.

That brings me to the second point: the issue of unity. This government has worked with all levels of government. We have a phenomenal group of stakeholders, provinces and municipalities that have come together to combat the COVID-19 crisis.

Let me quickly read a quote from the premier of Manitoba that deals with the first 10 minutes of the leader of the official opposition's speech with respect to testing. The Progressive Conservative premier of Manitoba said, with respect to the safe restart agreement:

This federal funding will help support work already undertaken by the Government of Manitoba to increase daily testing capacity from a baseline of 1,000 tests to more than 3,000 tests per day.

We heard from the Prime Minister earlier today, in response to the leader of the official opposition—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I would remind the hon. parliamentary secretary to make a statement, maybe a comment, but to keep it short, please.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Erin O'Toole: Madam Speaker, I have not been up in the House in many months and I might have been a little rusty, but one thing that has not changed is that the deputy House leader is still talking a lot.

Let me correct him a little on my conversation with the Prime Minister, who called me the day after I won the leadership. I raised two issues. First was the unity of the country, because I am worried about it and I love this country. The second thing was the return of committees. My friend seemed to leave that out.

Was the prorogation really about writing the speech that has been widely panned, or was the prorogation to stop my friend from Carleton from asking difficult questions, or my friend from Rideau Lakes from asking difficult questions? What was most disappointing, of course, is that the Prime Minister promised, and this is broken promise number 28 or 29, that he would never prorogue Parliament to stop embarrassing questions from happening. I think those were his words.

The Address

The final thing I will say, which the deputy House leader raised, is that he wanted to give us binders full of stakeholders the Liberals talked to throughout this pandemic. Of course Parliament was suppressed and was not sitting. The Liberals starved the Auditor General of a budget to really look over the extent of the spending. They are using national security exemptions to hide which countries won some of the tenders. With such minimal information out there, we already found out about the Kielburgers and WE, and we already found out about their old pal, Frank, who got a contract at Baylis Medical just months after leaving as an MP.

The stakeholders of the Liberal government are Laurier Club Liberal donors, and Canadians are tired of being left out of the elite inner-circle politics of the Prime Minister.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to welcome the new opposition leader and congratulate him on being elected.

I am detecting a change in tone compared to what we got used to from the Conservatives this past year. The party seems to be projecting a more compassionate, more human and more sensitive image to Canadians. I like it, but I want to know if this new tone will be sustainable.

Will it be sustainable in the sense of sustainable development, a term that did not come up in the opposition leader's speech just now? Can we look forward to the Conservative Party coming out in favour of sustainable development at the expense of things like the oil sands?

• (1705)

Hon. Erin O'Toole: Madam Speaker, I am proud of our party and especially of its extraordinary Quebec members. Our party is compassionate. We will fight for the well-being of Quebecers in all sectors.

Regarding the forestry sector, one of my priorities will be to negotiate a softwood lumber agreement. It is also time to negotiate agreements for the Saguenay's natural resources and Abitibi's mines.

We are here to create post-pandemic job opportunities for Quebecers. That will be one of my priorities. I am proud of that because I was born in Quebec and raised in Ontario. I will fight for all Canadians.

[*English*]

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the new Conservative leader on his first speech in this role in the chamber. I also want to say, on behalf of all New Democrats and hopefully everyone in the House, how pleased we are to see him in good health and that we wish the very best for his family.

Today I am wearing orange because we are recognizing the residential school survivors of Canada. I want to take this opportunity to recognize my husband, who spent a large part of his childhood in two different residential schools and has many very sad stories to share, and a lot of that are realities in our lives together that we face as a family.

I have a concern and I would love to hear from the member on this. When Stephen Harper was in government, and I would remind everyone that the member was a minister of that government, the former aboriginal affairs department, which was there at the time to deliver all the services to indigenous communities, held back about \$1 billion of social spending between 2010 and 2015. When I look at the history of this country and the realities today, the Liberals can take a fair share with their challenges and lack of action. However, I wonder how any indigenous community can trust the member in a role in this country when that money was taken. I think about what that \$1 billion could have done over that five years to help alleviate the desperate concerns in those communities.

Hon. Erin O'Toole: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for North Island—Powell River for her words about my family and our health. It is appreciated. One of the first cancellations due to COVID was my trip to Vancouver Island, a very special place in this country that I look forward to having a few more blue spots on in the near future.

I appreciate the member sharing her own family perspective. I said quite frankly in my speech that my party has to work on reconciliation. The Prime Minister's arrogance seems to make him think he does not have to work on reconciliation. It is a commitment I have made and tried to live up to before I became a parliamentarian. It was a commitment I made when I met with Chief Atleo and Chief Bellegarde in my capacity as a minister of the Crown.

I have spoken to Chief Bellegarde several times and he knows of my time doing pro bono work with the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business because, unlike the Prime Minister, I want real progress, not just photo ops. That is what we owe indigenous communities, particularly on a day when we are wearing orange. We owe a commitment. I told Chief Bellegarde how disappointed I was when the last bill in the last Parliament from the Prime Minister was the child welfare bill.

If we read the Tina Fontaine report from Manitoba, multiple levels of government failed that Canadian. The Prime Minister crammed the bill in during the final months of Parliament, had to use closure for its passage and had not even done proper consultations. That is not serious reconciliation. The more Canadians, including indigenous Canadians, get to know me, they will know I want serious progress and less symbolism.

• (1710)

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos (Saint-Laurent, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook.

The Address

I am thankful for the opportunity to speak today in favour of the Speech from the Throne, one that I hope my colleagues across all party lines will support, because it will allow our government to continue supporting Canadians in what is probably one of the most difficult times of their lives.

[*Translation*]

Over the past six months, Canadians have faced an unprecedented situation, one like no other.

COVID-19 has completely changed our lives and affected Canadians in so many ways. Thousands of families have lost a family member to COVID-19. People who are isolated are experiencing mental health issues. Thousands have lost their jobs or the businesses they built and in which they invested heavily. Parents are anxious and scared when they send their children to school.

Although we find ourselves in an unprecedented situation because of this pandemic, our government did its best to support Canadians from the outset. As the virus quickly spread and our economy came to a halt, our Liberal government did everything it could to put in place measures to help Canadians as quickly as possible.

[*English*]

This pandemic has exposed some of the major flaws that exist in our social systems. Perhaps the biggest disappointment and devastation of them all is what happened in our long-term care facilities, in our CHSLD.

For all of the aforementioned reasons, I am in favour of the throne speech because I see it as the quickest way to bring help to Canadians who need it during these uncertain times. Canadians and business owners need to know that the government will be there to support them in their time of need.

Before I go on, I would like to take a moment to express my gratitude, on behalf of my constituents, to all of our guardian angels who bravely fought on the front lines in order to keep Canadians safe and healthy. A big thanks to everyone who went to work every day amid this public health crisis, whether they work in the public health sector, in a grocery store, in food production or in any other essential service. It is thanks to them that we got through the first wave, and together we will get through the second wave.

[*Translation*]

Unfortunately, the second wave has hit many regions of the country, including Quebec, my home province. We expect that this wave will be far worse than the first. However, we fortunately know more about this virus now and are much better prepared.

Wearing a mask, physical distancing and respecting the other public health guidelines will help us keep COVID-19 under control and ensure that we will not have to shut down our economy again. That is why our government invested and will continue to invest in personal protective equipment, commonly known as PPE.

By keeping Canadians safe and protected, and by ensuring that we have a big enough supply of PPE for all Canadians, we are giving our economy the best possible chance to recover quickly once the situation improves.

[*English*]

The best possible way of keeping Canadians safe and protected is by ending this virus once and for all, and one of the quickest, most effective ways of doing so is with a safe and effective vaccine.

From the very beginning, our government has been advised and guided by our brightest public health officials. In a similar way, we are being guided by the best scientific minds through the Vaccine Task Force and the Immunity Task Force. We have made investments in Canada's capacity for vaccine distribution and have secured access to vaccine candidates, while also investing in manufacturing right here at home.

[*Translation*]

Until a reliable vaccine is available, our government will help the provinces expand their testing capacity so that Canadians do not have to wait days to get tested.

We are also looking into new technologies and other types of tests to make everything go quicker. This will help limit the spread of COVID-19 while allowing a bigger part of our economy to remain open in the meantime.

The federal COVID Alert app was created to improve contact tracing and I was happy to learn that Quebec has finally adopted it. It will help us considerably limit the spread of the virus.

• (1715)

[*English*]

More recently, as we were inundated by emails from worried parents expressing their fears of sending their kids back to school, we invested \$2 billion in a safe return to class fund to keep teachers, students, administrators and support staff as safe as possible as they began their school year. This fund was given directly to provinces so that they could improve the protection measures for our schools in the best ways they saw fit.

I was thrilled to see that in the throne speech we committed to setting new national standards for long-term care so that our seniors, the members of our society who have contributed so much and who have spent their lives helping build our country, get the support they need. They deserve to live and be cared for with dignity. We will also help seniors stay in their homes for longer, as home care is often the best and preferred option for them.

Furthermore, because COVID-19 has disproportionately affected Canadians with disabilities, our government will implement a disability inclusion plan to help them receive a basic income and employment opportunities.

The Address

We know that COVID-19 has not only had an impact on our health and our health care systems, it has taken a major toll on our economy as well. Businesses big and small had to shut down for months due to public health regulations. Millions of Canadians were laid off in the early days of the pandemic, uncertain of what they would do next. The CERB was our government's way of getting a safety net to Canadians as quickly as possible when they stopped receiving paycheques. Nine million Canadians received help through the CERB when businesses were closing left and right and there was no work available. Now that our economy has started up again, CERB recipients will be supported by employment insurance. For those who have never qualified for EI in the past, the government will create a transitional Canada recovery benefit.

[*Translation*]

In order to help businesses that were allowed to remain open during the months of quarantine or those who quickly adapted to telework to keep their operations going and their employees on the payroll, we created the Canada emergency wage subsidy, which helped support 3.5 million jobs across the country. The Speech from the Throne announced the continuation of this program that so many businesses have come to rely on to stay open. I was pleased to see this wage subsidy extended until next summer.

[*English*]

Furthermore, in order to help businesses survive the second wave, we will be expanding the Canada emergency business account to help more businesses with their fixed costs. The government will also work to target additional financial support to businesses that have temporarily shut down as a result of local public health decisions and to those that have been the hardest hit.

We know that this is not enough. The unemployment rate is high, and it is women, racialized Canadians and young people who have been the most affected by job losses across the country. To help Canadians land good, reliable jobs, the throne speech mentioned that the government would launch a campaign to create over one million jobs, using a range of tools at its disposal. We will be directly investing in the social sector, infrastructure and in training programs to give workers the skills they need to take advantage of new opportunities. We will also be scaling up the youth employment and skills strategy to keep our young people active and working. Finally, we will create an action plan for women in the economy to ensure that women and their realities are taken into account in our recovery plan.

As much as this pandemic has taken over our lives, we cannot lose sight of our very important priorities, whether they be protecting our environment, making Canada a fair and more inclusive place for everyone or making Canada stronger on a global scale. This pandemic has exposed our weaknesses and the gaps in some of our systems, such as our health care system and our social systems. We should use this major setback as an opportunity to build back better for a stronger and more resilient Canada.

We have an opportunity to rethink our future and to ensure that everyone is included in our recovery, so in the future our economy can benefit all Canadians. We have an opportunity now to align ourselves and our recovery plan with our ambitious climate change

goals so future generations can have a chance at a normal life on this planet.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I would remind the hon. member to use the language button when she alternates between English and French. This will help the interpreters who are having a hard time following.

The hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot.

• (1720)

[*English*]

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, a number of changes have been made to the Canada emergency business account, CEBA, which is available to small and medium-sized enterprises. Those changes have increased access to this important program. However, many of my constituents are still left with questions when they were turned down without clear explanations and faced long questions. Officials went further and told the staff in my office that there was no way a member of Parliament could assist in the process of finding answers related to that.

Could the member answer the question on whether the government can commit to ensuring that MPs' offices can get the services that are required to ensure their constituents are well served by programs like CEBA?

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: Madam Speaker, CEBA has been expanded to benefit even more businesses. In the beginning, the government was not sure how long this would last and tried to help as many as possible, but we saw that many of them fell through the cracks. In the throne speech we have committed to help some of the businesses that were the hardest hit and the ones that have not necessarily received much help up until now.

I will mention this to members of my caucus, the Prime Minister and ministers to ensure we find a way to get MP offices more resources to help businesses in their ridings.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, during my colleague's speech, I asked my colleague from Jonquière which is emptier: a vacuum or a void. We still have not found the answer.

I mean no offence to my colleague, but this is how I have been feeling every time I hear a Liberal's speech. Was the throne speech a vacuum or a void? I could not tell you.

The Address

There are things our constituents want to hear. I want to talk about how the regions are still waiting for high-speed Internet. I do not know how many times this has come up in the House, but high-speed Internet is essential to our economic recovery. The provinces and Quebec are still waiting to find out what will happen with the money the government promised to accelerate the connectivity timelines.

Could my colleague help me out and fill in this emptiness I feel every time she and her colleagues have spoken since the throne speech? Maybe she could tell me when this money for high-speed Internet will be available?

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question, although I am not able to give a specific answer.

This was one of the objectives mentioned in the throne speech. Many Canadians are earning a living by working from home because of COVID-19. Most of their work is being done at home, so it is very important for everyone to be connected to the Internet. As everyone knows, this can be difficult in some parts of Canada. The government has made this a priority, and I am sure that the ministers responsible will work—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Windsor West.

[*English*]

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for her work on the industry committee, and as well the member from the Bloc in front of me, who has done wonderful work on that committee. As she knows, prorogation killed the reports and work we did at committee, including a study on fraud that all members of the House worked on with a special component on COVID and COVID fraud. I would like to know if the Liberals will support a unanimous motion to restore that work. Otherwise, we will lose six months of work, tens of thousands of dollars, witness testimonies and so forth, and most importantly the recommendations that are ready to be tabled in the House.

Will she and the Liberal Party support that?

• (1725)

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: Madam Speaker, I definitely believe we will be supporting that. I can speak for myself anyway. I know I would support that because I know we did great work during the summer. I would like to thank the member for the work he put into the committee as well, and for initiating the study on fraud.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Darrell Samson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am delighted to be here today and to take part in the second session of the 43rd Parliament.

It is extremely important to be able to debate the throne speech, which, I believe, lays the foundation for success for the years ahead.

[*English*]

There is no question that we had to look at the areas faced with this pandemic to know how we could make sure Canadians were protected and safe. That was the most important thing. The second was how we could help them get through this pandemic, which is extremely important. The third was how we could make things better, because the turf underneath our feet has changed because of the pandemic. There are certain things we must look at and change, and others we must ensure we put forward as soon as possible. Then we have to look, as a country, at what the areas are where we can support more people and make Canada even greater, which is essential.

There is no question about protecting Canadians. Nova Scotia has done an outstanding job. Premier McNeil was outstanding in guiding us through the pandemic. At one point, he said, “stay the blazes home”, which went viral. I am sure members have heard that one already.

I also want to thank Dr. Strang, our chief medical officer, who guided our government through this. We were then able to work with Atlantic Canada, and I want to praise all of Atlantic Canada. Today, it is the safest bubble in North America. We have zero cases in three of the four provinces, and I think one active case in the other province, and we are tracking that. Atlantic Canada is the safest place in North America. That is impressive. As far as a bubble, we have done our part, and I hope we can learn from that experience.

How do we protect Canadians? We protect them with PPE. It is extremely important that we have the equipment and tools necessary to help Canadians. That is why our government moved forward quickly and asked businesses to come forward with ideas and to put forward proposals that would help find equipment that would help Canadians, including face masks, gowns and hand sanitizer. We all needed those things in this country because we knew globally it would be a challenge to get that equipment. We had over 1,000 companies come forward and many across this country. A company in my riding called Stanfield's produced over 300,000 gowns.

The next important thing is the vaccine. We have now invested and secured candidates to move forward and we have agreements with six countries. I am hopeful, as all members are, that we will find this vaccine for Canadians within the next six to 12 months, which would be extremely important.

How are Liberals helping Canadians through this pandemic? That is an extremely important question. The CERB is the first program we put out. Almost 9 million Canadians accessed the CERB. That is how important it was for us to come forward and help Canadians as quickly as possible.

We then moved into the Canada emergency wage subsidy, which provided 75% of workers' wages. In my riding, I spoke to the owner of Boondocks and he told me that he had laid off all his workers and then, shortly after we put the program out, he was able to bring them all back. That is why this was such an important program, as was the program to help businesses.

We were quick to support seniors because it is extremely important to do so. We used a top-up through GST. We then increased it by \$300 tax-free for those on the OAS, along with an extra \$200 tax-free for those on the GIS. I do not know if members know how much money that is, but in Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook it was \$7.3 million. To multiply that by 338 MPs is approximately \$2.5 billion to support seniors in this country. That is very impressive.

• (1730)

Initially I was doubtful that young people would have summer jobs. We were not sure how things would unfold, but companies stepped up and opened their doors again. The students went to work supporting their communities, the businesses and the organizations.

I spoke to the Lake & Shore Recreation Society in Forest Lake. Its representatives told me if they shut down, they would never have reopened if it had not been for student summer jobs. They were able to offer the summer camp once again, which is a very important program.

Another is our veterans. It is extremely important that we were able to support veterans quickly as well. We approved almost \$200 million to move forward on the backlog, which was extremely important so veterans could get services they deserved. On top of that, we included in the veterans disability payment \$600 and that cheque should come soon for disabled veterans, which is extremely important.

We have also added a question in the census to identify veterans. It has not been there for 51 years. How will we help veterans if we do not know who they are? That was extremely important. Yesterday, we passed Bill C-4, which allows for \$20 million to help veterans through organizations that work closely with them on the ground, and that was extremely important as well.

We are moving forward on early learning and child care. We have been talking about it for years. It is essential. We have to get it so that both spouses who are working know that their kids have child care and early learning. Now with the pandemic, we need to accelerate that much faster.

Here is where building better is extremely important. Not only do we help move forward, but we also create other types of opportunities. Investing in the social sector is crucial. We are creating jobs and also systems that are necessary to move forward. Investment in housing to eliminate chronic homelessness is very important.

My colleague spoke about broadband. It is essential. We have seen the gaps. It became evident very quickly in this pandemic. If people do not have broadband and connectivity, they will not be able to contribute as much they should. If we want people in rural communities, we need to do that ASAP.

The Address

We also have to up our game in skilled workers. The throne speech announced the greatest investment ever in skilled workers and training. David Dodge, the former governor of the Bank of Canada, stated clearly that this was probably the most important thing we could do to support Canadians.

Health care needs universal pharmacare. We have talked about it and we will deliver it. We are moving it forward and we are going to begin negotiation with the provinces. There are a lot of them ready to go and they will be quick to the door to accept that challenge. This will show all Canadians, including the Conservatives, that it is doable.

We have also seen the gap in long-term care. That is why we are bringing forward national standards, which is crucial to ensure that seniors from one coast to the other will have the same services in health care.

The opposition leader gave a very good speech. For a while, I thought he was describing the Liberal philosophy, but he never talked about climate change. It is real and he will have to add that to his next speech.

I also want to talk about what we will do for climate change. We will legislate net-zero emissions by 2050. We will exceed our 2030 targets. We will invest in green retrofits for businesses and clean energy funds. We have the Atlantic loop.

• (1735)

I am very proud of a business in my riding, which is a leader in open mapping. It received \$361,000 to retrieve and dispose—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would ask members to look for the little signs that I give them when their time is running out, and to stop speaking when I give the signal that it has run out. I am sure the hon. member will be able to add more from his speech during the questions and comments.

The hon. member for Barrie—Innisfil.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am looking for a sincere answer to this question.

The Address

I know during the throne speech the word “veteran” was not mentioned once, and on the heels of the throne speech, the Parliamentary Budget Officer came out and said that the caseload within Veterans Affairs for adjudication and claims is approaching 50,000. A couple of years ago, all parties supported an NDP motion that would call on any money that was left on the table in Veterans Affairs to be used to work on that backlog of claims.

What plan, based on the throne speech or any other plan, is there to reduce the backlog within the system and get those veterans and their families the claims they deserve?

Mr. Darrell Samson: Madam Speaker, my colleague is well aware of the report that Veterans Affairs submitted in June, and he is aware also that we are investing nearly \$200 million to hire hundreds of new staff members to focus exactly on that backlog, which is essential. I am proud to be on this side of the House because our government has invested \$10 billion over the last five years to help support veterans and their families.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Madam Speaker, I have a very simple question for my colleague.

I realize he is very proud of everything that has been done in recent months. I understand, because I too was pleased in the first few weeks when a lot of changes were being made to mitigate the impact at the beginning of the crisis.

Just between us, I would like to ask him a question. We have been debating the throne speech for three of the allotted six days, but it seems to me like the umpteenth time we have asked about health transfers. Most of the provinces, territories and opposition members agree that, yes, increased transfers are needed.

What advice can you give us to ensure that the desired changes are made before the sixth and final day of debate?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I cannot give the member any advice, except to address her questions and comments to the Chair and not to individual members.

Mr. Darrell Samson: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her important question.

I have good news. Cheques totalling \$19 billion have been sent to the provinces to help them deal with difficult situations during the pandemic, which is extremely important. In addition to these investments, we plan to develop standards for seniors' residences, which is also very important. We will continue to invest as long as we need to. That is what we promised to do, that is what we have done and that is what we will continue to do.

[*English*]

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, I was very happy to hear my hon. colleague mention pharmacare. I have been hearing Liberals talk about pharmacare for coming up on 30 years. Since 1997, they have promised Canadians they would bring in pharmacare.

He mentioned in his speech that he is looking forward to negotiating with the provinces, but the question that all Canadians have is this: Negotiate what?

To this day, neither the Prime Minister nor the health minister, nor any person on that side of the House, has ever identified the form of pharmacare they want to negotiate. The NDP has been calling for public pharmacare and the reason is that the Hoskins committee report, the health committee and every task force over the last 30 years have recommended that we must deliver pharmacare through our public system.

Will my colleague stand in the House and say that what the government will negotiate with the provinces is folding pharmacare in to and delivering it through Canada's public medicare system, not a U.S.-style private patchwork system?

• (1740)

Mr. Darrell Samson: Madam Speaker, I would have been shocked if the member had not asked me that question. It is a very important one.

It is a question that we are working on throughout our government and with the provinces. A public, universal pharmacare system is what we want. We need to move that forward. We will work with provinces. Some are ready to move forward now.

The Conservatives are hollering back and forth over there, but they are against universal pharmacare. Let us put that on the record.

We will work with the provinces to make sure we deliver pharmacare for all Canadians. My understanding is that it will be public pharmacare.

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Chicoutimi—Le Fjord.

I am most pleased to speak on the throne speech. I do believe this throne speech, and the legislation and policy that will flow out of it, will put Canada on the right track going forward.

We are in a pandemic that seems to be gaining ground again. This is the time for leadership. The Prime Minister has shown leadership day after day. Contrary to what the Leader of the Opposition said, the Prime Minister and his government were in communication with all members of the House, and having meetings at night in conference calls with the bureaucracy. Everybody put in ideas, but the government showed that it was willing, under the leadership of the Prime Minister, to make changes that would improve policies for individuals, businesses, organizations, provinces and territories, day in and day out since the pandemic began.

The Prime Minister developed the programs. He worked with the provinces, and the provinces have congratulated the Prime Minister, time and again, on his willingness to work with them during this pandemic.

He has certainly shown leadership in terms of working with all Canadians. I heard the Leader of the Opposition say that he only wanted to work with some. No. The Prime Minister has worked with all Canadians, with all organizations and with all provinces. The Prime Minister is showing he is the leader that is needed in this time for this country to move forward. This is the direct opposite of what the Leader of the Opposition had to say.

This throne speech sets out a blueprint for where we need to go in the future. There really is no shortage of ideas. The purpose of a throne speech is to lay out the blueprint in the House of Commons and to have other ideas and criticisms come forward, certainly. I believe that, in the way that Parliament is structured, other ideas can come forward to improve on the blueprint that the government has laid out, although it is a very good blueprint.

The finance committee, in fact, heard hundreds of suggestions from Canadian organizations and individuals between April 3 and the end of June. I want to qualify that. This was a criticism that I do not believe was valid. I want to qualify that a key point made by witnesses before the finance committee is that, while future spending is essential, it must be done in a fiscally responsible way, and the Minister of Finance should certainly, at the earliest opportunity, lay out an economic growth plan. That is what witnesses were saying. I agree with that approach, and I think that would show Canadians how we are going to get there in terms of meeting the needs of the pandemic but also meeting the needs of the economy going forward.

Witnesses before the finance committee, and in my own riding and across Canada, spoke very favourably about several programs that will be continued as a result of the throne speech and the legislation flowing out of it.

The Canada emergency wage subsidy offered a 75% subsidy for businesses, and it will be extended right through to next summer. Although it is a wonderful program, I would note that it needs some tweaks. Many new businesses, start-ups, or expanding businesses that are buying out other businesses and therefore have different business account numbers with the CRA, do not qualify for the program. We have to fix that problem. Those businesses are important to our economy. They are the backbone of our economy, and we need them.

The second major program announced in the throne speech is the Canada emergency response benefit. It was very important to ensure that families had the funds to put food on the table, and had some security for their families, after jobs were lost as a result of COVID-19.

• (1745)

That program is rightly being rolled into an improved EI program, and is absolutely necessary, going forward. That is a commitment made by the Government of Canada in the throne speech. In fact, legislation has already been put in this House through Bill C-2 and Bill C-4 that ensures that the benefits of CERB will remain as we work to restart our economy.

For those in the tourism industry who were only able to find limited work this summer, the reduced hours, as announced, that will be required to gain EI is extremely important. The throne speech

The Address

mentions it and legislation passed through here once on the Canada recovery benefit to support workers who are self-employed or not eligible for EI, the Canada recovery sickness benefit for workers who must self-isolate due to COVID-19, and the Canada recovery caregiving benefit for Canadians who must take care of a child and are unable to work. That is extremely important for people, moving forward, to help them out.

Another area we heard a lot of positive feedback and comments on is CEBA, the Canada emergency business account. The throne speech states:

This fall, in addition to extending the wage subsidy, the Government will take further steps to bridge vulnerable businesses to the other side of the pandemic by:

Expanding the Canada Emergency Business Account to help businesses with fixed costs;

Improving the Business Credit Availability Program;

And introducing further support for industries that have been the hardest hit, including travel and tourism, hospitality, and cultural industries like the performing arts.

It is important we do that, and we welcome that program, but I want to also put a slight caveat on CEBA. A number of us from all parties have been saying that the Canada emergency business account must allow personal accounts to qualify, not just business accounts. When I was farming I did not have a business account with a bank; I had a personal account and I was running about a \$2-million operation. I can give an example of an individual in my riding. This construction guy with a \$900,000 operation puts out three T4s and can show income tax going back years, but he does not qualify for CEBA. That is wrong. It should not just be through the bank business account. We had to fix that so that the people with a personal bank account qualify as well.

As an aside, there was the regional relief and recovery fund, established through the regional development agencies, that is basically the same as CEBA but is in the rural areas for businesses that may not qualify through the banks system. That program has run out of money. I am asking the Minister of Finance and the government as a whole to put some more funds into that RRRF so that people who actually deal with those agencies can qualify. That needs to happen.

I understand time is running down for my remarks, but I want to say I am looking forward to the work of the Government of Canada in accelerating the universal broadband funding. This is critical. We have seen through the pandemic that it needs to be done.

I am encouraged by what the throne speech said about the Atlantic loop in terms of energy between Atlantic Canada and Quebec, and how that may flow throughout the system.

The Address

We really used Canadian resources to help Canadians and build Canadian industries. I am really pleased on the environmental side that the throne speech outlines a number of opportunities for retrofitting homes and businesses, and more.

We have learned through this pandemic that we have to supply ourselves locally, and we need to move forward on that as well.

• (1750)

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, the biggest issue facing my community right now has to be the opioid crisis, hands down. The chief medical officer for the Cowichan Valley told me that we had two epidemics going on right now: COVID-19 and the opioids crisis.

Unfortunately when I looked through the content of the throne speech, and this opinion shared by the Canadian Drug Policy Coalition, there was only a single reference to the opioids crisis. It is really unconscionable, given the public health crisis we are facing, especially in communities like mine, that only a passing reference was made.

The government needs to redouble its efforts to fight this crisis to ensure we are not losing hundreds of people to overdose deaths each year and to ensure that communities like mine are not going to continue being ravaged by it into the future. We have lost far too many people. I would like to hear the member's comments on that.

Hon. Wayne Easter: Madam Speaker, there is mention of the opioid crisis in the throne speech, but the throne speech basically outlines a road map. I agree 100% with the member and with the concerns he has raised. My seatmate throughout many past parliamentary sessions was also from Vancouver. I have heard from her constantly about it.

It is a crisis. We must work with the provinces and the health agencies and put some money toward this, so we can start to put this crisis behind us.

I was originally involved with drug injection sites, so I know there are all kinds of things we have to do on the ground to deal with this, and we must do it.

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to rise and take part in this debate with such an experienced colleague from Prince Edward Island. I was able to see him in action back in 2008 when I worked on Parliament Hill. It is nice to be here with him on the floor of the House. Hopefully I will learn a little from his experience.

Going to the throne speech, one of the biggest issues we hear about in Saskatchewan and the western provinces has to do with getting the oil and gas sector back to work. I will read one line and ask the member if he agrees. "support manufacturing, natural-resource and energy sectors as they work to transform to meet a net-zero future, creating good-paying and long-lasting jobs."

Does the member believe in this Ottawa-knows-best approach that people who work in the oil and gas industries in western Canada do not know how to do their jobs, that what they are doing now is wrong, that the way people put food on the table for their family is not right and that they need to come forward with a new Ottawa-knows-best approach, because the men and women work-

ing hard in the energy sector are not good enough for the Liberal government?

• (1755)

Hon. Wayne Easter: Madam Speaker, after those compliments by the member opposite, I really hate to say it, but strenuously disagree with him.

The fact is that there is not an Ottawa-knows-best approach. We have heard consistently from the oil and gas sector. This government has shown that it is behind the oil industry by being onside with Keystone, being onside with Trans Mountain and in fact spending money to get those resources to market.

We have consistently said that we want to work with the oil and gas industry on innovation. That industry is going to be needed for years and we are there to support those workers. Many COVID programs have supported workers who needed it during these times.

[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, I must agree that the government's approach often boils down to, "We know what to do, we will tell you how to do it, and we will give you money only on certain conditions".

Since the throne speech, I keep hearing the government say that it wants to work together, that it does not want to bicker. We agree that we should work together, but the government needs to at least respect jurisdictions.

Quebec and the provinces are asking the federal government to restore health transfers and expedite transfer payments for high-speed Internet.

That would be a good way of working together and recognizing that Quebec and the provinces are in charge of these particular sectors. Perhaps that would speed up the process and make it possible to come together in a real wartime effort where everyone collaborates and progress is made.

I would like to hear what my colleague across the way has to say about that.

[English]

Hon. Wayne Easter: Madam Speaker, the federal government has shown time and time again that it is there to assist the provinces. About \$19 billion was transferred to the provinces through the safe restart program.

One of the concerns I have with the Bloc Québécois relates to taxpayers. Canadian taxpayers cannot be an ATM machine for the Province of Quebec. There have to be national programs under national guidelines. About \$11 billion under equalization went to the Province of Quebec. There is also \$19 billion under the restart program and \$2 billion for education. Program after program—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sorry, but there is not enough time for more discussion by the member. I am sure that other members will be able to participate as we move forward in the debate.

The Address

The hon. member for Chicoutimi—Le Fjord.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking my colleagues and especially my leader, the leader of the official opposition and member for Durham, for appointing me as the political lieutenant for Quebec. I will fulfill that role with great pleasure and passion as I stand up for Quebecers' interests in the House.

The Prime Minister prorogued Parliament on August 18. He shut down parliamentary operations at a time when Canadians were counting on us, their MPs, to help them. On August 18, the government abandoned Canadians. Our fellow citizens needed leaders to support them and lead them toward an economic recovery, but the government was thinking only of itself and its Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics woes. The truth is that the Liberal government abandoned Canadians purely out of self-interest because it wanted to shut down Parliament's work on the WE scandal.

Meanwhile, uncertainty continued to dominate the country. A recent study showed that my region, Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean, was Quebec's hardest-hit region economically. The region's GDP plummeted by 6.2%, and 18,000 jobs were lost. People in my region are pinning their hopes on the GNL Québec project. Public hearings on its environmental impact started last week.

Health is top of mind for everyone in Chicoutimi—Le Fjord. People are worried. They want to know if the provinces have the resources to overcome this crisis. They want the federal government to redistribute money to the provinces, because the provinces are the ones that should be making decisions about health care. They are worried about delays in the response. They also want to know why Ottawa withheld funds while its own spending spiralled out of control. Why would the government care about Canadians' health and well-being when it is busy trying to save its own skin from another ethics scandal?

In its defence, the Liberal government claimed that it wanted to review its priorities in order to set a new direction for government. That is not at all what happened. Its new direction simply rehashes all the old Liberal policies that it has not implemented since 2015. Aside from all the smoke and mirrors, what did the Prime Minister do during the 30 days of prorogation? That is my biggest question. Clearly, he did not listen to the provinces' recommendations. All the provinces want the same thing Canadians want, which is increased federal funding for health care to the provinces, with no strings attached.

How can he hope to have a strong country if the provinces do not have the tools they need to reach their full potential? On top of this failure to listen, the Liberal government wants to interfere in provincial jurisdictions by getting involved in long-term health care. Resentment quickly spread throughout the Confederation. It only took a few minutes for the Premier of Quebec to denounce the federal Liberal government's unwarranted interference.

I understand why Quebecers are unhappy. Dairy producers and processors are still waiting to be compensated. The Davie shipyard is still not the third partner in the national shipbuilding strategy.

Our aerospace industry's status as a world leader is in jeopardy. There is nothing to reassure our forestry, steel and aluminum workers, who were asked to slow production and freeze wages. Strategic infrastructure, such as our ports and airports, is not being developed. Fortunately, the Conservative Party, under the leadership of the hon. member for Durham, is offering an alternative to defend the rights of the provinces. The autonomy of our provinces is essential to keeping our Confederation running smoothly, and that is the approach our party is offering to this great Confederation.

The Liberal government is blaming the pandemic for everything that has gone wrong lately. As we would say back home, COVID-19 is taking all the flak. This attitude is irresponsible. The government's chronic debt was not caused by COVID-19, nor were its constitutional feuds with the provinces or our economy's lack of productivity. A crisis like this one should unite us and get the opposition parties working together, but the Liberal government only wants to sow division. It imposes its political agenda without any consultation.

● (1800)

The government is simply using COVID-19 as a pretext to sneak in policies that will diminish the provinces' powers and, most importantly, restrict Canadians' economic freedoms.

Urgent action was needed in the spring, but the throne speech was a chance for the government to address the deeper societal problems, to better target our social safety net by helping Canadians who are struggling, instead of imposing one-size-fits-all solutions. I want to point out that a social safety net does not come free, and we will certainly not build a sustainable, autonomous system by paying for it with a credit card.

If we fully developed our natural resources, we would have the money to build a substantial social safety net. If our policies made aluminum, steel and wood the foundation of a national environmental strategy, the planet would be better off and we would have good-quality, sustainable jobs. If we worked together to improve things instead of sowing division and stunting our growth, Canada would again be a leading proponent of large-scale projects. If our tax policies incentivized people to work, we would not need this grab-bag of programs. If the government worked together with the provinces, we would not have as many constitutional clashes.

Contrary to what was said in the speech, the government's approach does not seem to have changed. Only Ottawa is all-knowing, knows best and is the best. Canada needs a leader. It is the leader's responsibility to oversee the members of his team and to engage them in the pursuit of common goals. When things go poorly, the leader accepts responsibility. He does not criticize the provinces. He does not say that he did enough. He does not criticize his public service. When things go well, a leader praises the members of his team and does not take the credit.

The Address

We repeat that the government must work with everyone to ensure the well-being of Canadians and that it must not divide us with a throne speech intended to buy votes. Attacking provincial jurisdictions divides our country. Recklessly spending money that does not belong to us divides generations.

It is very clear today that this government does not care about the provinces. However, the Prime Minister should know that the strength of our confederation lies in the strength of our provinces. If he is unable to listen to them and act as a leader and a head of state, he should ask himself whether he is in the right job.

• (1805)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I totally disagree with what member is putting on the record. We have clearly demonstrated, with the exception of the Conservative Party here in Canada, that there has been a very strong team Canada approach combatting COVID-19. I would ask the member if he has even looked at the safe restart agreement.

I do not want to use this as prop, and so I will put it down, but I had in my hand a letter from the Premier of Manitoba saying all sorts of positive things about how the federal government is working with the province to help out. I am from Manitoba. I suspect that the member would find things of a similar nature throughout the country, and not only with provinces but with municipalities.

Does the member really believe the Conservative spin that Ottawa is all alone and no other government is working with Ottawa? That is silly.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Richard Martel: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague opposite.

The government prorogued Parliament for six weeks. During that time, we could have been discussing the new measures, the CERB and the economic recovery. We even asked to work on a Sunday because we noticed that errors were made with the old measures and we wanted to implement the best measures possible. We do not want those mistakes to be repeated, like with the Canada emergency commercial rent assistance program or how the CERB came ahead of the Canada emergency wage subsidy. We noticed that people with cancer were falling through the cracks in the system after their 15 weeks of EI benefits were up.

To be a leader, one has to be able to co-operate with the opposition. Right now, that does not seem to be happening. That is why the government wanted to limit debate to only 4.5 hours rather than 14 hours.

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Chicoutimi—Le Fjord for his speech. I also listened to what he had to say earlier today, during question period, when he talked about funding for health care.

That funding is a long-standing problem. I am a sovereignist. I make no apologies for that. In 2013, when a Conservative government was in power, I clearly remember that the PBO published a

report indicating that if nothing was done the provinces would continue to run deficits year after year, while the federal government would be swimming in surpluses.

The time has come to walk the talk, as they say. As the Quebec lieutenant of the Conservative Party, my colleague is supposed to be Quebec's voice in his party. Is he prepared to support the funding threshold of 35% and the annual increase of 6% that the Quebec government is calling for? If he is serious and prepared to speak boldly, he will commit to that.

• (1810)

Mr. Richard Martel: Madam Speaker, to us, increasing health transfers to the provinces is extremely important. However, we cannot commit to a given percentage.

The Conservative Party may be in power soon. We have to show that we are responsible. As far as the budget is concerned, we have nothing, we know nothing, and we do not know where we are headed. The Bloc Québécois can rhyme off a bunch of numbers, but we know full well that they will never have to bring down a budget.

[*English*]

Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP): Madam Speaker, my question is simple. During the six months of the pandemic, 20 of the richest people in this country increased their wealth by \$37 billion. Two of those people own most of the grocery stores in this country: Galen Weston and Jim Pattison. They earned \$1.6 billion and \$1.7 billion respectively during that six months. When they cut off the two-dollar-an-hour wage increase to their workers, their stocks and shares increased.

I wonder if the hon. member would support a wealth tax for people who are earning money like this when their workers are struggling during this pandemic.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Richard Martel: Madam Speaker, it is a shame that Parliament was prorogued for six weeks. The government did not allow us to sit during the pandemic even though Parliament has never been shut down in times of crisis. This prevented us from working in committee and debating things that might have been extremely important for the government in the coming days.

[*English*]

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of International Trade Diversification, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to share my time with the member for Brampton South.

Remarkably, it has been more than a year since I have spoken in this chamber. Circumstances and life have intervened. It was an exciting night for me on October 19, 2019, when the people of Winnipeg South Centre sent me back to the House of Commons. I want to thank them for that.

The Address

The next day was less happy. I was diagnosed with a blood cancer, multiple myeloma, and my kidneys were pretty well shot. Here we are, less than a year later, and I am feeling strong. I am grateful and ready to work, along with so many others with their own experiences. I want to thank the nurses, doctors and support staff of CancerCare Manitoba and the dialysis unit at the Health Sciences Centre in Winnipeg. They are now a part of my community, for their nurturing and wonderful care.

How the world has changed since then. No one has been immune to the impacts of COVID-19. It affects who we see, how we see them and how we live our lives.

The throne speech documents our response to this unprecedented health and economic challenge, with investments of billions of dollars to cushion the impact of the pandemic for people, businesses, institutions and communities. We understood that speed could mean imperfection, and adjustments have been made, and continue to be, as we learn and adapt to the evolving landscape of this pandemic.

[*Translation*]

The pandemic has shown that when all levels of government work together, we get the best results. Canadians do not want their leaders to bicker, name-call and disparage others. Democracies by nature encourage disagreement. That is what makes our system strong. However, we become vulnerable when our debates become acrimonious.

• (1815)

[*English*]

The pandemic has shown that when governments at all levels work together, better results happen. It is worth remembering that there have been 18 meetings between first ministers since the start of the pandemic.

Canadians do not want their leaders to bicker. They do not want them to name-call and they do not want them to denigrate, today more than ever. Democracies, by their nature, encourage dissent and that is what makes our system strong, but it weakens when the debate turns nasty, as we have seen recently in other places.

Among government's big jobs is to determine the pace of change. Whatever we do, it is not enough for some and it is too much for others. Trying to satisfy everyone will satisfy no one. What we do know is that social policy and economic prosperity are partners in nation building. Without child care, creating jobs and generating economic growth, we are slowed. If our citizens are unwell, unable to work or denied education or training, our communities cannot reach their full potential.

The pandemic is the most important health and economic crisis in Canada's modern history, but we will come out of these turbulent times well positioned to write the next chapter of the Canadian economy and the country's history.

The Prime Minister, who has led the Canadian effort with empathy, with sensitivity, with intelligence and grace, has asked me to be his special representative to the Prairies. I am a prairie guy, born and raised, through and through. This is the part of our country that shaped my values and an appreciation for staying close to the ground.

Winston Churchill was in Winnipeg on January 22, 1901, nearly 120 years ago. It was the day Queen Victoria died. Churchill happened to be in Winnipeg giving a lecture to earn a few dollars as a newly elected member of the British Parliament, recently returned from covering the Boer War as a journalist. Churchill looked out the window of his hotel room, gazed toward the west, and said that someday this land would feed the world.

How could Churchill have known that not only are we feeding the world with the crops he had in mind, but we are producing what the world needs and what the world wants today: energy, agriculture, plant and animal protein, artificial intelligence, community building and repairing relationships with indigenous peoples?

In many ways, the Prairies are leading not only in Canada but globally. This leadership will only be more important as nations look for stable partners producing what they need; what all of us need. This is the platform already built by those who came before and enhanced richly by today's talented scientists and academics, by the work ethic of producers all across the regions of the Prairies and indeed right across the country. We are poised to come out of the pandemic to accelerate trade to create more wealth, enabling us to distribute that wealth fairly, inclusively and justly.

As minister of natural resources and as minister of international trade diversification, I had the honour of representing Canada worldwide. In my experience, unfailingly, we are seen by the rest of the world as a leading nation, and a stable democracy financed by an abundance of resources, natural and human. We are humbled by size, challenged by geography and motivated by values that bind. We will get through this pandemic, and when we do, the Prairie provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba will help lead the way.

Alberta's entrepreneurial spirit, ingenuity and the wealth generated by its natural resources will take us to the next generation of energy development in Canada. Already we see this happening, making the adjustments necessary to navigate a changing energy landscape worldwide. They will be on the leading edge of transformation, using the resources we have now to help ease the transition to the new energy reality.

Saskatchewan is blessed with fertile soil, passionate producers, traders, entrepreneurs and community builders on the leading edge of research and discovery. Saskatchewan is a trading province, more diversified in its trade than any other.

The Address

In my own province of Manitoba, celebrating its 150th year, swift-flowing rivers produce our electricity. Great cultural achievements have made Winnipeg a city attracting the finest creative talent. We have welcomed immigrants from every corner of the globe who have enriched our communities and our economy. We continue the essential work of reconciliation enthusiastically, supported by Manitobans. As our Prime Minister said to the United Nations General Assembly, “For First Nations, Metis Nation and Inuit peoples in Canada, those early colonial relationships were not about strength through diversity, or a celebration of our differences”.

Today, children are observing Orange Shirt Day, witnessing and honouring the healing journey of survivors of the residential school system, our national shame. We should never forget what indigenous peoples have taught us. Without their teaching and protection, many of our earliest immigrants to the Red River Valley would not have survived. Indigenous peoples' respect for land, water and air is a sacred trust. What riches this region enjoys and what an opportunity for all Canadians to move forward with all the potential that is the Prairie west. It is a rich diversity, and we can say we know it, but it is a formidable challenge to weave it together to be a national fabric out of all of this material. This has been the national project from before Canada became a nation.

I am proud to be a part of this team, and when I say “this team”, I do not mean just my colleagues on this side of the House, I mean all parliamentarians who share our aspirations for a strong and prosperous Canada. There will be a brighter day ahead, and we will face the challenges together.

• (1820)

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Madam Speaker, it has been a real pleasure for me to see and listen carefully to my colleague from Winnipeg, because I have a lot of respect for him. I am very pleased to see him in good shape, and I hope to see him here in Ottawa soon. It is also fun to hear a former cabinet minister speaking positively about natural resources in Canada. I hope the Prime Minister will be inspired by his colleague from Winnipeg.

My colleague spoke about Churchill, and speaking of Churchill, we saw a tweet this week from the hon. Andrew Leslie, a former general in the Canadian army and former whip for the Liberal party. He wrote, “I wonder what the great Prime Ministers (PMs) of the past might think. During the entirety of the Second World War, neither the British (Churchill) nor the Canadian (M-King) PMs ever sought to limit debate, especially on matters involving financial appropriations”.

Does the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre agree with his former colleague, who asked why we shut down Parliament to have a debate about spending money?

Hon. Jim Carr: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the kind words from my friend, and I do mean my friend. I congratulate him on his new responsibilities.

There will be ample time to debate the Speech from the Throne and ample time to debate legislation. As I said in my remarks, for many people there is too much time, and for other people there is not enough time. There needs to be a balance between what time is available and the competing pressures on that time. I know that my

hon. friend is so efficient with language that he will use whatever time there is to his best advantage.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, I too would like to welcome back the member for Winnipeg South Centre. He is looking so well, and I honour his strength.

COVID has devastated the tourism business in my riding, from Butchart Gardens on the eastern boundary to small, family-owned sport fishing and tourism businesses in the west, including Wilsons Transportation, which provides key charter bus services, as well as seven golf courses, and dozens of hotels and restaurants. Together, they represent several thousand jobs in my riding.

My question is this: Given the heavy dependence on U.S. tourism in my riding, the fact that businesses have lost their spring, summer and fall seasons, and that the member for Winnipeg South Centre is an influential member of his caucus, will he join me in pressing the government for a tourism-specific recovery strategy? Otherwise, we risk permanently losing important parts of our tourism infrastructure.

• (1825)

Hon. Jim Carr: Madam Speaker, the short answer is yes.

There is a reference in the throne speech to tourism, and we all know just how hard hit that sector has been. We have seen it in our personal lives, and in our families and communities. The tourism sector includes airlines, airports, hotels, restaurants and cultural industries.

The entire Canadian economy has been so badly hurt by the pandemic, and we know that some industries have been hit harder than others. The member is right that tourism is among them, and yes, I will add my voice.

Mr. William Amos (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry (Science), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Winnipeg South Centre, who is such a great Canadian. He inspires us every single time we hear him speak here in the House. I know so many members felt very emotional hearing him speak in such a way.

I would invite our colleague to comment on how western Canada has made such significant contributions to the national effort as we tackle COVID. I am thinking, in particular, of work that is being done at the University of Saskatchewan, with VIDO-InterVac, and other academic institutions, such as the University of Alberta. I wonder if he could comment on those contributions.

Hon. Jim Carr: Madam Speaker, there is also the microbiology lab in Winnipeg.

The research being done in prairie universities is cutting-edge in so many areas, not only in the Canadian economy, but also in the international trading world. Examples include value-added agriculture and protein clusters in Saskatchewan. There is so much wonderful work being done, and it will position us well as we come out of the pandemic.

I am grateful for the acknowledgement from my friend of the good work that is being done on the prairies. I wish I had more time to say more.

The Address

Ms. Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.): Madam Speaker, first of all, I am so happy to see my friend and colleague from Winnipeg South Centre speaking on behalf of his constituents today. For sure, we want to hear the musical instrument that he plays so well.

It is an honour to address the House on behalf of residents of Brampton South to speak in support of the throne speech, which introduced our government's vision for the future of Canada. The throne speech acknowledged the difficult time our country has faced as a result of the worst health crisis of our generation, as well as the measures our government has taken to support Canadians throughout the pandemic. It also laid out the plan for our recovery.

Over the past six months, we have seen Canadians come together to help each other. We are united now more than ever as we face new challenges from COVID-19. People from across my riding have shared inspiring stories about acts of kindness and generosity, stories about young volunteers delivering groceries for seniors, non-profit organizations stepping up with donations and essential businesses serving the community.

When the pandemic started, our government moved quickly to support Canadian families and businesses. In fact, in Ontario, 97% of all direct financial support came from the federal government. The Canada emergency response benefit supported approximately nine million Canadians to help them pay their bills and support their families during these difficult times.

Canadians required a strong response, and our Liberal government has been there to provide direct support to the Canadians who needed it most. Over 9,500 seniors in my riding received a one-time GST payment. Thousands of workers were supported by the Canada emergency response benefit. Many businesses were supported through the wage subsidy, the Canada business account and more, while community organizations also received much-needed funding.

For example, Lady Ballers Camp is a not-for-profit charitable organization that provides girl-centred programs to encourage physical, emotional and educational development. Our government supported this organization through the Canada summer jobs program and the emergency community support fund. This support allowed Lady Ballers to continue operating, and our community is better because of that.

I had the pleasure of meeting with some other amazing organizations in my riding that are doing vital work throughout the pandemic, organizations like the Boys and Girls Club, Cancer Warrior Canada, United Achievers' Club, Canadian Association of Retired Persons, Lockwood Seniors Club, Brampton Senior Citizens' Council and many others. They have been stepping up to support our community. To all organizations supporting Bramptonians during these difficult times, I say thanks from the bottom of my heart.

This spring, my team and I worked tirelessly to reunite families of Brampton South who were stuck abroad. A constituent of mine was stuck in Morocco, and my office worked closely with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Immigration, Public Safety Canada and Global Affairs Canada to make sure they had a flight home. This story is one of thousands from my riding and across the country

from people who were thankful for our government's largest repatriation effort in Canadian history.

Health care workers have been on the front lines of this war since the very beginning. I had the chance to speak with many nurses, doctors and hospital staff at Peel Memorial Centre in my riding, as well as with experts such as Dr. Lawrence Loh and Dr. Naveed Mohammad. They are doing great work. Their dedication makes them real-life heroes. I thank health care workers across the country for their incredible efforts. I was honoured to thank health care workers in many socially distanced care parades, like the one at Amica Peel Village seniors' home.

On the topic of long-term care homes, it is an absolute tragedy what happened to seniors during the first wave of this pandemic. Eighty per cent of all COVID-related deaths in Canada occurred in long-term care homes during the first wave. The CAF report done in May on five long-term care homes in Ontario was deeply troubling for me and many in my riding.

● (1830)

One of the five homes mentioned in the report was in my riding of Brampton South. Since the Canadian Forces report, I have worked with a number of my colleagues in advocating for real change for our seniors. I would like to take a moment to recognize my colleagues: the member for Scarborough—Rouge Park, Etobicoke Centre, Pickering—Uxbridge, Humber River—Black Creek, Mount Royal, Ottawa—Vanier and others for their tireless advocacy. I was beyond thrilled to see our government make commitments to set new national standards for long-term care and to amend the Criminal Code to penalize those who neglect seniors under their care. This would ensure that Canadian seniors get the best care possible, which they deserve.

The throne speech has a good plan for workers and for businesses in Brampton South and across Canada. It extends the Canada emergency wage subsidy program through the next summer and expands the Canada emergency business account to help with fixed costs, which provides business owners with a clear path for getting through this challenging time. As we build back better from COVID-19, the federal government will launch a campaign to create over one million jobs to restore employment to previous levels. This will be done through investing in housing, transit and green infrastructure projects. I am looking forward to this much-needed campaign to get people back to work and invest in communities like mine.

The Address

We have also moved forward with a new way of care and a \$240 million investment, made in May, to develop, expand and launch virtual care and mental health tools to support Canadians. These measures will ensure that Canadians with chronic health conditions, such as diabetes, get the quality of care they deserve. During consultations with my residents, members of the CARP seniors organization and many others, I heard clearly the necessity for national pharmacare. I was pleased to see the reaffirmation of this national program.

Members of my Youth Council, a local organization and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health told me about the importance of investing in mental health. That is why this government is going to expand on the first ever mental health promotion innovation fund, which provides national funding to support the delivery of community-based programs for mental health. Our government recognizes that infrastructure investment creates good jobs and builds healthy communities. Bramptonians know that we need strong investments in our city and I have been working hard to ensure we get our fair share, whether it be \$35 million in safe restart funding to support the City of Brampton; the largest investment in housing by the federal government the Peel Region has ever seen, which will create over 2,200 affordable units and shelters; or more transit funding, like we saw this summer where the federal government invested approximately \$45 million to upgrade Brampton's transit system. This government knows now is not the time for austerity. It is the time to invest in our communities and in Canadians.

Some of the people hardest hit by COVID-19 are women, especially low-income women. I am proud that the government has listened to the needs of women and is taking bold action to support them as they establish affordable, inclusive and high-quality child care. Creating a Canada-wide early learning and child care system will relieve the burden on women and families.

Recently I visited a local child care facility in my riding, Lullaboo Nursery, to see how it was adapting during COVID-19. I was thrilled to see that support is coming for this essential service. Let me be clear: There can be no recovery without recovery for women.

Finally, I would like to discuss the fight for racial equality for all Canadians. The throne speech addresses these concerns and will take steps to address online hate by introducing legislation to address systemic inequalities and by bringing reforms to the RCMP. Brampton South is a beautiful community that everyone should feel safe to call home. One's religion, who they love or the colour of their skin should not matter.

This is a vital moment to shape Canada's future for the better. Our Liberal government's Speech from the Throne lays out bold action on the environment, the economy and equality. We are focusing on protecting Canadians from COVID-19, and helping them get through the pandemic by supporting Canadians and businesses for as long as it lasts and building back better to create a stronger, more resilient Canada.

• (1835)

We are making commitments to extend key supports to help Canadian workers, families and small businesses through COVID-19. I am asking all members of Parliament to support the

bill so that Canadians continue to receive the help they need in this most difficult time.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, one thing that I think is top of mind for many Canadians is action on climate change and bringing our emissions down. For the last five years in this place, I have been talking about the need to really ramp up the rate at which we are retrofitting our buildings in Canada, not just residential homes but commercial buildings, large buildings. The Liberal government has been kicking this down the road and over to the provinces. In the last budget in the last session of Parliament, they were trying to move it off onto the municipalities.

I am wondering if the member can comment on what the federal government plans to do in terms of bold action on retrofits for our buildings, which could significantly bring down our emissions.

Ms. Sonia Sidhu: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his passion on the environment.

Our government recognizes that we need to keep strengthening the middle class and building back better during this difficult time to help Canadians. I reiterate our support for workers in the green energy sector. Hundreds of millions of dollars have been put in place to support them with the wage subsidy. I agree with my hon. colleague that support has been given over the last couple of months, \$1 billion to clean up abandoned oil wells, but there is more we need to do. Through infrastructure investments, creating green jobs and building healthy communities, we are also helping Canadians, and we are committed to doing that.

• (1840)

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member for Brampton South mentioned how great the throne speech was for women, but what I find in my riding is that the way the government designed many of its programs for small businesses is not doing a great job at all for women who are small business owners. For example, the CEBA loan has not been approved for women-owned businesses that use personal banking accounts, even though the Liberal government announced about three months ago that this change was going to happen. CECRA, the commercial rent assistance, also impacts people who perhaps do not feel comfortable negotiating with their landlords for a break in their rent.

The Address

I am wondering if the member can comment on her government's lack of response for women-owned businesses in the throne speech.

Ms. Sonia Sidhu: Madam Speaker, at the status of women committee, we heard that women, through COVID-19, especially low-income women, have been hit hard. Establishing affordable, inclusive, high-quality child care is also a great help for women.

As for helping businesses, we know small businesses are also struggling at this time. Over 300,000 unique applications were approved through an emergency-based subsidy. Through this, women also get support. I definitely agree with my hon. colleague that there is much more we need to do and we are committed to doing more for women. Affordable, inclusive, high-quality child care is also helping women to thrive in society.

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Minister of Diversity and Inclusion and Youth, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I really appreciated the member's diversity of understanding, because the throne speech covered so much. There were four pillars. One area that she spoke about was systemic racism. We know that exists within Canada and she has provided opportunities for me to visit with her constituents.

I would like to hear some of the member's comments as to what she is hearing from her constituents. How do we ensure that we build back better and be consciously inclusive? We have heard some comments about the environment and women, so even when it comes to intersectionality, I would love to hear her comments.

Ms. Sonia Sidhu: Madam Speaker, I agree with my hon. colleague. We want to live in an inclusive country, where everyone has each other's back. These moments shape Canada's future. This speech shaped Canada's future for the better. The Liberal government Speech from the Throne laid out bold action.

Also, on systemic racism and online hate, we are committed to do more. We are taking a bold step to address those issues.

I agree with the hon. member opposite. I thank her for raising this concern. We are committed to doing more. We definitely will do more on this matter.

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Madam Speaker, first of all, I will be splitting my time on this speech with the member for Kildonan—St. Paul.

If I had to choose a heading for this year's Speech from the Throne, I would choose the Prime Minister's byline, "not the time for austerity".

I like it for so many reasons, particularly in relation to what is happening in our world. I like to get to the root of things, so I went to the source and found the applicable definition of "austerity" as it relates to the economy. It is this: enforced or extreme economy especially on a national scale.

Given what our nation is facing, I could not agree more with that course of action. Canadians need to be sure that the government will address the real problem that is facing this country immediately, and that is a worldwide pandemic that is costing millions of lives around the world.

For all of us who serve Canadians at this unique time in history, it is our duty to ensure that we do our utmost to provide the envi-

ronment that minimizes the toll the virus takes on the lives of Canadians.

First, the instruments of government are there for us to mitigate the adverse health outcomes, and we must use all of these resources and fund them to the level required to address the Canadian health system's response to this pandemic.

Second, we need to mitigate any long-term damage that would occur as Canadians feel the effects of the shutdown of parts of our economy necessitated by a response to the virus. Parts of Canada's economy have responded well after the initial shutdown. Sadly, parts of our economy will take years to recover to the same level they were at prior to March of this year. It is our job to ensure that we remove the structural impediments to the survival of these industries, so that the cost of insolvency and restart are minimized, because that affects us all.

In addition, the people in those industries, those who have trained to excel in their chosen field, need to have clarity as to how we emerge from this pandemic even though the when is still not clear. Forgoing a life of effort and investment, both personal and financial, is not the chosen outcome. Addressing these two objectives austere would be the wrong approach.

Then I look at the government's response to the pandemic and the economic turmoil our country has experienced thus far this year: government programs that have expended twice as much as was lost in income, hastily designed response programs that throw Canadian taxpayers' money at the wall to see what sticks, several failed responses that have missed the target for helping those we need to help, and covering up incompetence on program execution and design with the taxpayers' wallet, resulting in the highest unemployment rate in the G7 group of advanced countries and the most spending per capita in this group of Canada's peers.

Call it what we want, eventually results matter, and the report card on the government's performance is dismal. We all recognize that mistakes have been made in our response to the pandemic and its economic outcomes, and we accept that mistakes happen when governments need to move very quickly to address an urgent situation. However, it is incumbent upon us to take what we have learned thus far and not continue with the same mistakes going forward.

That is not austerity; that is common sense. I do not know why the government confuses the two.

The Address

Let me move to how the Speech from the Throne fails. This was deemed so necessary that a make-believe Parliament, barely sitting, had to prorogue in the middle of the summer.

Failure one is its misleading Canadians on fiscal sustainability. Here are the incoherent statements on financial stability contained in the Speech from the Throne. The first quote is “With interest rates so low, central banks can only do so much to help.” The second is “This Government will preserve Canada’s fiscal advantage and continue to be guided by values of sustainability and prudence.” The third is “Government can do so while also locking in the low cost of borrowing for decades to come.”

Considering that this country's central bank, the Bank of Canada, has increased its balance sheet almost fivefold in the past six months to over \$500 billion, keeping interest rates low only works because the only buyer of our country's bonds is the Crown corporation we own. Our debt is being mispriced and Canadians are bearing not just that balance sheet but also that excessive risk.

● (1845)

What happens when this independent central bank says that it will no longer buy the debt being issued by the Government of Canada? By the way, it is something it was not doing at scale until this year. Is the Government of Canada now subject to the whims of the Governor of the Bank of Canada? An independent central bank has suddenly become a very powerful central bank.

Then there is this statement in the Speech from the Throne: “maintaining a commitment to fiscal sustainability and economic growth as the foundation of a strong and vibrant society.” We have been spending beyond our means for every year of the government's mandate, and now we have been unprepared for an unusual event. The government's latest response is to abandon anything resembling a fiscal anchor and replace the finance minister. At least someone got fired for all this financial nonsense. As much as I agree that someone had to be accountable for the fiscal mess the government has created for this country, I sense strongly that the person pulling the trigger in that action is the real problem.

Failure number two is that “build back better” is an overreach at this critical time in our nation's history. First of all, recycling American gimmickry is political sloganeering that should require royalty payment to the producers. This statement is beyond trite. Canada has always built upon our strengths, and our Canadian resource industries lead the world in environmental standards. This overreach, costed by many to be in the hundreds of billions of dollars, provides no accountability for a tangible environmental outcome, and its scale is only being considered because of the pandemic, that is, why let a good crisis go to waste? It talks of millions of jobs and echoes the same nonsense put forth in the green energy strategy of the late Ontario Liberal government. It is no surprise that the plan has the same architects. Who are the main beneficiaries of an industry that will pay half the Canadian corporate tax rate? Once again, accountability, please.

Where in Ontario are the hundreds of thousands of jobs, these new clean-energy jobs that were promised as part of the increase in power costs in Ontario that has done its fair part to move jobs out of Canada? This part of the throne speech needs to be called out for what it is: a job selection and subsidization mechanism. The gov-

ernment is saying that it likes transferring taxpayer funds from productive parts of Canada's economy to parts of the economy that have more influence with the government. It is insider influence at its worst, and the government has shown it is a master practitioner. The government's friends win; Canadian taxpayers lose. What is left out is the Canadian resource industry.

Let me again quote from the Speech from the Throne. “Canada cannot reach net zero without the know-how of the energy sector...including people in places like British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Newfoundland and Labrador.” Are these far-flung places? The writer of this part of the Speech from the Throne should be sent to the hinterlands to find that we are all Canadians with the same desires to build a great country while contributing to our businesses, our families and our communities.

I will quote the speech a final time. “The Government will: Support manufacturing, natural resource, and energy sectors as they work to transform to meet a net zero future, creating good-paying and long-lasting jobs”.

If there is one consistently oxymoronic thought pattern I hear in Ottawa from members of the government, it is this notion that we have to retrain our country's best scientists, engineers and technicians, all while saying we need to follow the science. Our industries are adjusting to a low-carbon world. The government is the only inconsistent factor in getting to a viable outcome, and I caution the government on its actions in this regard. Tempers are rising. People do not believe the Liberals are acting with integrity or common sense. The government has no representation in two of Canada's most productive provinces.

Be careful what you are doing to this country. I can tell you very clearly there is more strain—

● (1850)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I remind the hon. member to address his comments to the Chair and not to the individual member or to the government.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Fleetwood—Port Kells.

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Madam Speaker, for a second I almost thought the hon. member might have to be re-educated like the finance critic for the Conservative Party, because I hear compassion and hear about getting things done from the Conservative leader, but now I hear true austerity.

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[English]

VETERANS AFFAIRS

We hear that national unity seems to be wrapped up in the energy sector, and we can understand the angst being felt in Alberta. However, the new Conservative leader has spent time in Quebec saying that he will honour Quebec's view that no new pipeline should go through there. It sounds like the Conservative Party is going through a transformation, but it has one foot on the boat and one foot on the dock and I think they are going to end up in the water.

• (1855)

Mr. Greg McLean: Madam Speaker, as members know, I arrived in Ottawa after the last election, so I have been here almost a year. I have been through much of the re-education that is part of the Liberal government's strategy to show us how Canada really runs. However, I represent a great riding and I arrived here with an education. I have life experiences, and I do not think I need to be re-educated on what happens in the economy across Canada, especially in some of the resource-producing regions.

I appreciate that the member on the opposite side would like to re-educate me on how I should be thinking about jobs in Canada and the Canadian economy. I suppose he and I can have that debate as long as we want.

[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Calgary Centre for his very thoughtful and well-documented speech.

Whenever the Conservative Party gets a new leader, the wooing of Quebec begins. It is usually a brief dalliance, but we will make the most of it before the passion fades.

There are some issues on which the Bloc Québécois will never see eye to eye with the Conservative Party. One of them is oil, which is not worth talking about because we are against it. However, there are glimmers of hope on several fronts, including what they have said about jobs and diversity.

I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on the aerospace industry, a sector that provides Quebec workers with 43,000 excellent jobs. Montreal's aerospace sector ranks third in the world, but it did not feature prominently in the throne speech or the government's plans, so I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on this subject, with is particularly important to Quebeckers.

Mr. Greg McLean: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Quebec.

I agree with him about the aerospace sector, which is vital not only to Quebec's economic activity but also to Canada's, I believe. This sector is important to the whole country. I do not know if it was mentioned in the throne speech, but I know it is important to my colleague and his fellow Quebeckers.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am very happy to be here to speak on behalf of the veterans who have served our country so well.

Last week, on September 25, I asked a question of the government about the 40,000 veterans who continued to be on a wait-list for their disability pensions. The response from the government was very much the same, which was to look at how much it had done and not to look at the fact that over 40,000 veterans in the country had been waiting for months and in some cases close to two years for their benefits.

I also want to take this opportunity to remind Canadians that in 2018, the member for Courtenay—Alberni moved a motion that was supported unanimously by every party in the House. That motion simply stated that any money left over at the end of the fiscal year would be reinvested into Veterans Affairs. Last year alone, \$103 million were left on the table, money that was not reinvested in Veterans Affairs.

This year, the PBO came out with a report. I want to first take this opportunity to thank the Parliamentary Budget Officer for taking this on. It was a report I had requested. I really wanted to understand what was happening to the veterans who were on the wait-list. We heard about the 300 new temporary workers. This is an important part of this conversation. When we see a wait-list this big, I do not think we should see temporary workers. People should be employed full time, working and staying with Veterans Affairs. We heard that 40,000 folks, who had served our country, were on the wait-list and that they would have to wait another two and a half years before the list was even addressed.

The report said that if we wanted to see all of these veterans get the benefits they well deserved, the government needed to hire a further 392 full-time people to work at Veterans Affairs. This is very important. It lets us know how big the need is, that even with the 300 they have hired temporarily, they need to hire another 392 just to get all of those veterans the services and supports they well deserve and have been waiting for.

The other part of this reality is that a lot of veterans across the country are in desperation because of the lack of supports they are getting. They have applied for the CERB. They are very concerned they will get in trouble for that. I have asked the veterans minister to address this issue to ensure that veterans who are waiting for a disability pension do not get in trouble in any way for desperately asking the government to stand up and help them.

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I want to let everybody across Canada know that the Parliamentary Budget Officer also confirmed that an investment of \$128 million between now and 2025 would get rid of that backlog within one year and then maintain that level of service. Therefore, veterans who are now going through the process will not be part of a big backlog and having to wait a significant amount of time. Last year alone, \$103 million were unspent in Veterans Affairs and that money did not get reinvested. Think what it could have done. The government needs to account for that.

• (1900)

Mr. Darrell Samson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, veterans' issues are of the utmost importance to our government. Like other departments, Veterans Affairs was quick to adapt to the pandemic to ensure that veterans and their families would keep receiving the services and benefits they count on.

[*Translation*]

For months, the minister actively consulted Veterans Affairs representatives through the ministerial advisory panel. He also spoke to many veterans about how they and their families were managing during the pandemic and the support that the department could provide. Since the beginning of this crisis, Veterans Affairs Canada has made many changes to ensure that veterans can access the support they need.

[*English*]

Coverage has been extended to include telehealth and virtual health services, which has allowed veterans to gain or maintain access to mental health treatments, physiotherapy, occupational therapy and other treatments, while respecting social distancing measures. The need for renewed prescriptions required to obtain health care services was temporarily waived and the cost of personal protective equipment needed to receive treatment can now be reimbursed.

[*Translation*]

Throughout the pandemic, our message to veterans did not change, and indeed it was the same as before: We are there for those who did so much for Canada.

[*English*]

In fact, we have now delivered over half a billion dollars in benefits directly to veterans since the pandemic began.

[*Translation*]

This includes continuing our efforts to reduce delays and manage the volume of applications for disability benefits. In June, we presented a strategy to reduce wait times for veterans. This strategy includes transforming how teams are organized, making better use of technology and streamlining the process by eliminating certain steps.

[*English*]

I am very proud that we recently invested nearly \$200 million in additional funding to speed up and support the disability decision-making process. The PBO's report shows that the new hires made

as part of this investment will have a significant impact on reducing the backlog, but it does not take into account the many steps that Veterans Affairs has taken to make this process even faster and more efficient. These steps include streamlining the decision-making process on benefits and programs so that less complex cases can now take less time. Claims for disability benefits are also now being triaged so that the department can expedite applications for those of higher risk. Of course, there is the hiring of hundreds of new employees, including case workers and other workers, directly to support veterans to process disability applications and to administer pension-for-life benefits, which came into effect on April 1.

• (1905)

[*Translation*]

I want to point out that Bill C-4 provides \$20 million for these organizations that support veterans.

[*English*]

As a result, during this pandemic, Canadian Forces and RCMP veterans and their families continue to receive the assistance they need while VAC continues to take the steps needed to reduce the wait time.

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Madam Speaker, for the member to say in the House that veterans are the most important relationship that the government has, well, add them to the list.

The reality is that the Parliamentary Budget Office was very clear. With the work that the government has done, veterans will still be waiting two and a half years for just this 40,000 to be addressed, and not the other people who are climbing on board and doing their applications. I still do not understand why the government did not follow the motion that the Liberals unanimously supported in the House to take the money that was left and reinvest it, and there was no answer on CERB. What about veterans for CERB?

We have to stand up for Canadians. We have to stand up for the people who stood up for us, and that is what veterans did. I will not stop until this is addressed.

Mr. Darrell Samson: Madam Speaker, the Government of Canada is grateful for its veterans and their service in defending peace, freedom and the values that we, as a country, hold dear. We express this gratitude not simply with our words but also in our actions, which is why this government is making sure that veterans know what benefits are available to them and are receiving them as quickly as possible. It is why this government is making sure that veterans have access to everything they need to live a healthy post-career life. It is why this government is making sure that the concerns of our veterans are heard and addressed.

We will never stop working to improve the lives of veterans and their families.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am rising today to speak about the horrific crimes facing Uighur Muslims in China. More and more Canadians, and certainly parliamentarians, are becoming aware of the situation. We have clear evidence of Uighur Muslims in China being sent to concentration camps. One expert told the Subcommittee on International Human Rights that it is the largest mass detention of a minority community since the Holocaust.

This is a high-tech-enabled, systematic effort to destroy Uighur culture, Uighur faith and, indeed, Uighur people. We have seen evidence brought before the subcommittee and other fora, that what is happening includes a systemic effort to prevent births within the Uighur community through forced abortions, forced sterilization and forced insertion of IUDs. These horrific, unspeakable crimes that the Subcommittee on International Human Rights heard about are becoming more and more known around the world.

Canada has to act. Canada has a responsibility as a party to the international convention on the prevention of genocide, but also simply by virtue of the fact that we are all human beings. We have a responsibility to respond when we hear this information about these horrors being inflicted on Uighur Muslims in China.

I asked our foreign affairs minister many times about this issue. I have asked him to name the crime and to commit to action, to recognize Canada's obligations under the genocide convention, to recognize a genocide when it is taking place and even to recognize the responsibility to protect in cases where there is credible evidence, even short of certainty. When there is credible evidence the genocide is taking place, Canada's obligations under that convention, in terms of a responsibility to protect vulnerable populations, are invoked. This is clear in terms of our international commitments.

However, Canada's foreign affairs minister has always stopped short in terms of the response on these issues. He has told us that he is deeply disturbed, that he feels deeply in response to these events. He noted in response to my last question a declaration that he had co-signed, where he notes that he has consulted with various UN officials about if there might be opportunities to do more. He knows full well that his failure to recognize and respond in terms of a responsibility to protect and take real concrete action is missing.

We will continue to call on the government out of a sense of our international obligations, but also out of a sense of basic human decency in recognizing the commitments we made after the Second World War, saying never again. We should make good on our commitments to ensure never again will we see a people face this kind of mass extermination effort that is going on right now in East Turkestan targeting Uighurs.

Our government needs to recognize the crime taking place. I asked the minister if he would use the word "genocide" or would he use the words "crimes against humanity", and we have not heard that recognition.

We need the government to be willing to use Magnitsky sanctions and impose real consequences through targeted sanctions against individuals involved in these vile atrocities. I know the government is capable of using the Magnitsky Act. They have used it

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in the case of Belarus, but they have yet to use it in the current case of what is happening to Uighur Muslims in China.

To the minister or whoever is answering on his behalf, will the Magnitsky sanctions be used? The minister said a few months ago that it was on the table. It has been months and the atrocities are continuing. Will he use Magnitsky sanctions? We need to see reforms to our supply chains to ensure that we are not importing products made through Uighur slave labour. Will he take these concrete steps? Feelings are not enough. We need action in keeping with our international obligations.

• (1910)

Mr. Darrell Samson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the promotion and protection of human rights is an integral part of Canada's foreign policy and the Government of Canada is engaged with China.

[*Translation*]

The Chinese authorities' widespread violation of the rights of the Uighurs in the Xinjiang Uighur autonomous region, under the pretext of fighting terrorism, is very worrisome.

The government is concerned about mass arbitrary detentions, generalized repressive surveillance, torture and mistreatment, reports of forced labour and forced sterilization, and the mass arbitrary separation of children from their parents.

[*English*]

These actions are contrary to China's own constitution and are in violation of its own international human rights obligations and are inconsistent with the United Nations global counter-terrorism strategy.

[*Translation*]

Canada has voiced its concerns on numerous occasions, publicly and privately, in multilateral forums as well as in bilateral dialogues with Chinese authorities.

[*English*]

We have made several statements at the UN. For example, in June 2020, Canada joined a statement with more than 20 countries raising concerns over the situation of Uighurs and other minorities in Xinjiang. We jointly called for unfettered access to Xinjiang for independent observers, including the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. We made a similar call in a statement co-signed by over 20 countries at the UN General Assembly in October 2019. We continue working with other countries to raise this issue internationally at every opportunity.

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[*Translation*]

Canada continues to raise this matter with Chinese authorities at every level.

[*English*]

Canada tailors its responses to the specifics of each unique situation. We are judicious in our approach regarding when we choose to deploy sanctions or draw on other courses of action in our diplomatic tool kit.

[*Translation*]

I want to assure my colleagues that the promotion and protection of human rights are core priorities of Canada's foreign policy.

The Government of Canada will continue to raise its concerns regarding the human rights situation in Xinjiang and all of China, and will continue to call on China to live up to its international obligations.

[*English*]

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, in the government's response to this file, I vacillate between anger and disappointment. I do not blame the parliamentary secretary. He is the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence. This is not even his file. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Foreign Affairs are not here and they have sent a parliamentary secretary whose file is not—

• (1915)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would remind the hon. member not to indicate who is or is not in the House.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, I am not indicating whether someone is in the House, but the responses are being read by a parliamentary secretary who does not have this file. I do not

blame him for not being able to answer the specific questions, but I wish the government would give responses from the people responsible and explain why Magnitsky sanctions are good enough for Belarus, but not for the situation in China, where we have these horrific crimes, genocide, crimes against humanity. We do not even have the people responsible answering the questions.

If he is able, could the parliamentary secretary try to provide us with some greater clarity? Why can we not hold people responsible for deportations to concentration camps and systemic forced sterilization? Why can we not hold those people responsible?

Mr. Darrell Samson: Madam Speaker, the government continues to be alarmed by widespread human rights violations on Uighurs by Chinese authorities in Xinjiang.

[*Translation*]

The actions by the Chinese government are contrary to its own constitution, in violation of international human rights obligations and inconsistent with the United Nations' Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

[*English*]

The government has raised its concerns on numerous occasions publicly and privately in multilateral forums and bilaterally.

[*Translation*]

Please be assured that the promotion and protection of human rights are an integral part of our engagement with China. Canada will continue to raise this matter with Chinese authorities at every level.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The motion that the House do now adjourn is deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:16 p.m.)

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