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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, October 28, 2020

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayer

• (1405)

[*English*]

The Speaker: It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of the national anthem led by the hon. member for Peace River—Westlock.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

OXI DAY

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos (Saint-Laurent, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this year, for the first time in over 30 years, Canada's foreign affairs minister paid an official visit to Greece to discuss the conflict in the eastern Mediterranean with Prime Minister Mitsotakis and his Greek counterpart.

Speaking of Greece, today, October 28, Greeks around the world are celebrating Oxi Day, perhaps not all together like other years but virtually and in spirit, to commemorate 80 years since Prime Minister Ioannis Metaxas' response to Benito Mussolini's ultimatum to allow the Axis forces to enter Greece or go to war.

Metaxas bravely responded, "*Alors, c'est la guerre*". The Greeks held the Germans back for six weeks and played a pivotal role in the outcome of World War II. Referring to their role in this war, Winston Churchill said, "Hence we will not say that Greeks fight like heroes, but that heroes fight like Greeks."

[*Member spoke in Greek*]

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ROBERT PETERSON

Mr. Chris Lewis (Essex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, early in 2020, the town of Kingsville lost a leader after a long and courageous battle with cancer, Robert Peterson.

"Bob", to all those who knew and loved him, was a devoted husband to his beautiful wife Audrey and beloved by his many children and grandchildren. Bob served as reeve, deputy reeve and on

council for many years. My friend, duck hunting buddy and political mentor is sorely missed.

My riding of Essex has five fantastic municipalities: Lakeshore, LaSalle, Amherstburg, Essex and Kingsville, where Bob served. My staff and I have received thousands of cries for help. Our municipal politicians and their staff have no doubt had the same. Frontline workers wear many uniforms and yes, sometimes suits.

I ask the House to join me in extending a heartfelt thanks to my local mayors: Santos, Snively, Aldo, Bain and Bondy, their respective councils as well as municipal representatives in ridings across Canada for their determination, resilience and hard work through it all.

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EID MILAD UN NABI

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on October 29, Muslims across Canada will celebrate Eid Milad un Nabi, commemorating the birth, life and the message of Prophet Muhammad. Peace be upon him, where even remotely in the times of a global pandemic, happiness, harmony and love will be exchanged with family, friends and neighbours. More than ever, the divine blessings of Allah will fill homes with hope, joy and optimism in these challenging times.

To all those celebrating in Newton, Surrey and all across Canada who are observing Eid Milad un Nabi, peace be with them.

Allah hafiz.

* * *

[*Translation*]

BEAUPORT—LIMOILLOU

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today I would like to salute the people and organizations of Beauport—Limoilou for their strength, their resilience and their willingness to help one another.

Statements by Members

People in our community donate clothing to organizations and food to outdoor refrigerators like the one at Patro Roc-Amadour. They help their neighbours and volunteer with food security and community support organizations such as OQPAC, AutonHommie Limoilou, Cuisine collective Beauport, Entraide Agapè, La Bouchée généreuse, CAB Aide 23 and Le Pivot. Everyone is doing what they can to help others get through tough times. We also have mental health support organizations, such as Fondation CERVO, Le Cercle Polaire and La Boussole, to name but a few. In all, Beauport—Limoilou has over 100 community support organizations.

Beauport—Limoilou is full of caring individuals and organizations ready to work together to overcome the obstacles life puts in our path. Together, we are stronger.

* * *

● (1410)

WOMEN OF BROSSARD—SAINT-LAMBERT

Mrs. Alexandra Mendès (Brossard—Saint-Lambert, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as Women's History Month in Canada draws to a close, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize, with some emotion, a few of the women who marked Brossard—Saint-Lambert's history.

[English]

The women I would like to honour warrant our gratitude and admiration. Through hard work, conviction and sheer stubbornness, they moved mountains of resistance to change.

In 1965, Olga Melikoff, Murielle Parkes and Valerie Neale were the activist mothers who moved to create bilingual education in a Saint-Lambert elementary school. Thus was born French immersion in Canada.

[Translation]

In 1983, Georgette Lemieux-Lepage became Brossard's first female mayor. A caring and spirited woman, she was the driving force behind the creation of Brossard's library in 1976. In 1989, she spearheaded the movement to have Brossard declared a multicultural city, the first city in Canada to be given that designation.

Unfortunately, I do not have time to talk about all of the women who make Brossard—Saint-Lambert such a progressive riding, but I want all the women in my riding to know how very grateful I am to them.

* * *

NICOLE JACQUES

Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today, I would like to recognize the outstanding work of Nicole Jacques, the executive director of Moisson Beauce.

This regional food bank, which has been spreading joy for over 25 years, collected nearly 12 million kilograms of food with a market value of \$63 million, which was then distributed to some 60 organizations throughout the Chaudière-Appalaches region.

Ms. Jacques is a fighter and she has devoted herself to this organization for 12 years. She was able to very calmly meet the challenge of feeding those affected by the historic flooding in Beauce in

2019, as well as those affected by the current pandemic. She has also helped the food bank to succeed even though three times as many people are coming through its doors as when she first began working there.

I thank Ms. Jacques for all the work she has done to help the people of Beauce who need it most. I thank her for bringing together valued partners and a dedicated team. I wish her all the best in the future.

Happy retirement, Nicole.

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[English]

GREAT LAKES FISHERY COMMISSION

Mr. Vance Badawey (Niagara Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, October marks 65 years since Canada and the United States exchanged formal instruments of ratification for the Convention on the Great Lakes Fishery, creating the Great Lakes Fishery Commission.

This treaty solidified a binational partnership that focused on perpetuating Great Lake science, cross-border relationships and the control of the invasive sea lamprey parasite basin-wide. This partnership has yielded numerous benefits worth billions of dollars and thousands of jobs annually.

In fact, ending divided governance by ensuring that federal, state and provincial agencies and fishery management professionals work toward a collective benefit is one of the treaty's greatest achievements. It turned back a trend established prior to the treaty where an "everyone for themselves" mentality ensured an ecological race to the bottom.

I congratulate the GLFC on 65 years of success. I look forward to working together to further strengthen the Canada-U.S. partnership in the years ahead.

* * *

HALLOWEEN

Mr. James Maloney (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I am sure everybody is aware, today is National Chocolate Day. However, everybody is aware that Saturday is Halloween and normally families would be getting ready for the excitement that Halloween brings.

When our kids are older, they will not remember every Halloween, but they will remember this one. Let us not focus on what we cannot do, but on what we can do. Let us make this a Halloween that kids want to remember for the rest of their lives. We need to use our ghoulish imagination and be creative, but stay home, stay safe, watch a horror movie and have fun.

I want to give a special shout-out to my two nieces currently in Thunder Bay, Keira and Teigan, my niece in Vancouver, Kaitlyn, and a special shout-out to my nephew Brogan, who is turning 13 today. That, in itself, is very scary, let me just say.

Enjoy Halloween everybody, be creative, and happy birthday to my buddy Brogan.

* * *

SUICIDE

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this week when a close friend of mine lost a family member, I experienced the stinging pain of suicide.

Unfortunately, suicide is the second leading cause of death among youth and young adults. Sixty per cent of suicidal youth reported wanting to speak to someone, but not knowing where to turn. This issue has been exacerbated and worsened because of the COVID pandemic.

In these times of heightened fear, stress and loneliness, I would like to encourage everyone in the House and outside to take a moment and reach out to their loved ones. Check in on them. Let them know they are not alone, remind them they are loved and to please go home tonight and give their children a hug.

* * *

● (1415)

SMILING LAND FARM

Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this week I had the pleasure of visiting Smiling Land Farm, which is located on the southern shore here in Avalon. This facility is the brainchild of Larry Puddister's family and will be the first large-scale organic farm in the province.

Four years ago, Larry lost his son to suicide. Since then he has been working to provide mental health resources and to eliminate stigma. He started the Jacob Puddister Memorial Foundation and continues to honour his son's memory through Smiling Land Farm. This facility is truly impressive. It will be home to organic duck egg production, year-round organic greenhouses, billions of organic bees, and so much more. It will be home to a certified horse therapy program for at-risk youth.

The Puddister family, committed to giving others a leg up, has not given up on the people of this province or on our economy.

I would like to congratulate Smiling Land Farm on pushing forward with a vision of food sustainability, healthy living and mental health awareness. I wish Larry and his family success now and well into the future.

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DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN SASKATCHEWAN

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to wish my daughter Kenzie a happy sixth birthday. I am sad to be away from home today, but as we celebrated her birthday this past weekend, I was able to assure her I was needed in Ottawa to fight for a better Canada, one

Statements by Members

where she can grow up in a free and prosperous society. The reality is, I am concerned for her future and that of her sister, as our home province of Saskatchewan currently has the highest number of cases of domestic violence among all the provinces.

While Saskatchewan has recently passed a law that would allow police to disclose information that would help protect potential victims of interpersonal violence, the RCMP is unfortunately not able to comply with Clare's Law as it is bound by a federal privacy law. As such, I am asking the ministers of justice and public safety to amend the Privacy Act and enable the RCMP in Saskatchewan to comply with Clare's Law and ultimately protect our loved ones from potential abuse at the hands of their partners.

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NATIONAL INTERNMENT EDUCATION DAY

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, 2020 marks 100 years since the end of Canada's first national internment operations during the First World War. Canada labelled naturalized Canadians from Ukraine and other regions in Europe as "enemy aliens". The government confiscated their land, property and cash assets. It imprisoned 8,600 people in internment camps for years and used them as forced labourers.

My grandparents, Baba and Gido, were shamefully considered enemy aliens. At the same time, Baba's brother was proudly fighting for Canada in the 44th Battalion. Although they were allowed to keep working their farm, being enemy aliens meant a weekly 20-mile horse ride to report to the closest RCMP station during the Great War, and for another two years after the signing of the armistice.

The internment of Ukrainian and other peoples in Canada was a grave injustice. It is important to educate all Canadians on the entirety of Canada's history, including our darkest moments. Today, on National Internment Education Day, we remember the innocent lives lost and all those who were impacted.

Vichnaya Pam'yat for all who perished.

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COVID-19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my constituent Katlyn Top was about halfway through her maternity leave when COVID-19 hit. When she returned to work as a server in August, her hours were cut. She cannot place her daughter in child care, and she has been denied financial assistance because Katlyn did not have a spot before the pandemic.

Oral Questions

Another constituent, Carrie Cooper, reached out to me about her friend, a recent master's graduate and new mother. She is raising four children and is an advocate for student mothers at King's University College. Carrie's friend, just like Katlyn, is not eligible for all supports, the CERB, the CESB, the recovery benefit and EI.

These women are unable to begin or return to careers because they cannot afford full-time child care. They are like so many parents, who do not know where to turn. Women are used to fighting for rights, fairness, equality and support because of their gender. They have been left out because of specific decisions of the government.

When will the government understand that real progress requires programs, such as universal and affordable child care, that are accessible to everyone?

* * *

[Translation]

YOUTH ADVOCACY GROUP IN MONTREAL

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Forum jeunesse de l'île de Montréal, now part of Concertation Montréal, is celebrating its 20th anniversary. To mark the occasion, I invite everyone to join the celebration on Facebook Live tomorrow, October 29, at 5:00 p.m., on the Forum jeunesse de l'île de Montréal Facebook page. This is a special anniversary for me, because I worked there for six years as a community engagement officer.

In my view, the fact that there are so many young people in the House today is due in large part to the hard work initiated by the FJÎM 20 years ago, by and for young people, with programs like “budding voters”, “take your place” and “take your place in school” on the knowledge developed through youth electoral participation and in decision-making circles such as boards of directors. It is important that young people from all walks of life take an interest in politics, and the FJÎM has risen to the challenge with great success.

I have my place in the House today. I have no doubt that my approach to my political commitment was influenced by my time at the FJÎM and the people I rubbed shoulders with there. I want to say thank you to that organization. More importantly, my message to young people is this: Get involved, your place awaits.

* * *

• (1420)

[English]

PORTAGE—LISGAR

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my riding of Portage—Lisgar is a shining example of how Canadians have stepped up and helped each other during the pandemic.

For example, Winkler business Ironmen Industries adjusted its business to build mobile handwashing stations; Tyler Moran, also of Winkler, manufactured face mask extenders for frontline workers; and RV part manufacturer ICON Technologies switched its production to face shields.

Then there are Altona residents Melanie Schroeder and Brenda Driedger. They have made hundreds of masks, and donated many to truck drivers and health care workers.

In Portage la Prairie, with the help of many volunteers, the Portage la Prairie Community Revitalization Corporation, the Family Resource Centre and the Portage MCC opened up a soup kitchen to help those in need during the pandemic.

The strength of a community is boosted when people come together to help each other, and Portage—Lisgar has always been a strong and giving region. I send my thanks to the residents of Portage—Lisgar. They are true community heroes.

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SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. Sameer Zuberi (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our country just marked Small Business Week, and I would like to recognize the resilience of small and medium-sized businesses in Pierrefonds—Dollard.

There is no question small businesses have been hard hit by the pandemic. Our government has stepped up, though, to provide supports by covering the wages of workers, providing emergency loans and subsidizing rents.

At the local level, to ensure businesses knew about these programs, my team and I developed a small business outreach program. With the help of the West Island of Montreal Chamber of Commerce, we identified over 1,800 businesses in the riding. We then sent dedicated mailers to each of these businesses to explain these programs.

My staff, along with dedicated volunteers such as Alisha and Zakia, also called over 750 small businesses. In each conversation, they sought to help entrepreneurs and employees navigate federal programs. Our message to small businesses is that we are here for them. We are here to help them stay resilient in these challenging times.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the procurement minister told the House that the government did not have a deal for ventilators with their Liberal friend, Frank Baylis, but she forgot to add that Baylis is a partner in the deal. Baylis makes the ventilators. In fact, the ventilators are called the Baylis ventilator.

Will the Prime Minister ask his former MP, Frank Baylis, to change the name of the Baylis ventilator so that his minister was not misleading the House?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, from day one we engaged Canadians across the country to step up in their businesses to contribute to the efforts we all knew we needed to do to deliver, including many former politicians and known partisan supporters. They stepped up across the country, much like all Canadians.

One well-known Conservative businessman named Rick Jamieson stepped up because he is a successful auto parts manufacturer and he wanted to contribute to the efforts we were making to deliver ventilators. He reached out and contracted Baylis Medical because it could deliver the parts that would help him deliver ventilators. The government's agreement is with FTI, Rick Jamieson's company.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it seems it is who you know in the PMO.

[*Translation*]

We know that Baylis's company copied the ventilator model of an Irish company, and yet, Baylis charged \$100 million more than its competitors. It cost them less, but they are charging more. What a great deal for the Liberal family.

Why is there one set of rules for this government's friends and a totally different set of rules for the rest of Canadians?

• (1425)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think that the Leader of the Opposition is not making a very good case because no one in this chamber would attack the very reputable and very Conservative businessman Rick Peterson, or Rick Jamieson. I apologize, I do not even know his name because he is a staunch Conservative, but they should know it.

He was the one who signed a contract with the Government of Canada to deliver ventilators, and he worked with a Liberal who has a very successful company. My, my.

It is a question for Mr. Jamieson: Why did he choose Baylis to do this job for all Canadians?

* * *

JUSTICE

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it was revealed that the Liberal government is influencing the judicial nomination process, which should be free from influence. It is even using the Liberal Party donor list to decide who will become a judge.

Once again, why is there one process for Liberal lawyers and a different process for everyone else?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, we brought in a merit-based process, which works for all Canadians, regardless of political affiliation, in which judges are chosen by an independent committee. This process is based on merit.

We do conduct checks, but that is always after the fact. Judges are chosen and appointed to better reflect our diversity, including

political diversity, but most importantly to provide legal advice that reflects Canada's reality.

[*English*]

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is telling Canadians to trust him, there is no influence, the stories in the paper are false, and he would never interfere in the independence of the justice system. Does this sound familiar? Canadians have seen this movie before. It is called PMO ethics violation two, revenge of SNC-Lavalin. With this Prime Minister, the scandal sequels are as spine-tingling as the original.

Again, why is there one set of rules for Liberal lawyers and one set of rules for everyone else?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is simply not true. We brought in a merit-based appointments system. After having a government under the Conservatives that highly torqued all its judicial nomination processes, we brought in a merit-based process that is better set to reflect the full diversity of this country. Independent judicial advisory committees across the country make recommendations to the judiciary.

We will always look to appoint the very best people to the judiciary. That is what Canadians expect, while they also expect that judiciaries be a reflection of the diversity of this country.

* * *

HEALTH

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when the COVID crisis hit, the government was late with closing the border. It has been late with rapid tests. Now, it seems the government will be late with the delivery of vaccines to Canadians.

Will the Prime Minister tell the House why he signed a contract that guarantees Canada will be at the back of the line when it comes to the vaccine rollout?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Again, Mr. Speaker, that is simply not true. From the very beginning, we acted quickly on countering this pandemic as best as we possibly could. From early January, a public health advisory board was in place talking about the rumours and the concerns of a virus coming out of China. We then had emergency meetings. We then were able to deliver direct help to Canadians within mere weeks after the shutdown, something the Conservatives pointed out was far too quick: Our priorities should have been elsewhere, maybe with big businesses rather than helping families.

On the vaccines, we have continued to move forward to make sure that Canadians have access to vaccines.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, during the indigenous standoff, the Prime Minister made it clear that the government does not send in the army against its own citizens. In 1970, Canada invoked the War Measures Act against civilians in Quebec, resulting in the arrest of 497 people without warrants, without cause, without due process, without explanation, without contact with their families, and ultimately without compensation.

Should the same principle that the Prime Minister has espoused have been applied by Prime Minister Trudeau in Quebec in 1970?

● (1430)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, early one Saturday evening in October 1970, the deputy premier of Quebec was playing catch with his nephew in front of his home in Saint-Lambert. He was kidnapped and murdered by a terrorist cell. Those are the events of the October crisis that we must remember.

There will always be political debate around what happened, but let's not forget that a Quebec politician was kidnapped and killed under horrendous circumstances. We must remember his family and his service.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I ask a question about one thing, and the Prime Minister gives an answer about something else, as expected.

Ottawa endorsed eastern bloc-style raids from the communist era. It subjected innocent people to violent interrogations. Tens of thousands of people were questioned.

Does the Prime Minister, the one standing here now, deny that the RCMP had specifically advised the government not to proceed, saying it was not justified?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, during the events of October 1970, the premier of Quebec and the leader of the opposition, René Lévesque, agreed to ask Ottawa to send in the troops to maintain order in Quebec. The mayor of Montreal asked the federal government to send in the armed forces, which would be overseen by Quebec, to ensure public safety during a democratic crisis, a crisis in the Quebec nation, and that is what we did. We have always wanted to be there to help the provinces, and we will always do just that.

* * *

HEALTH

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Stephen Harper cut health care funding. The current Prime Minister maintained those cuts. As a result, long-term care facilities did not have the resources they needed during the first wave of COVID-19 and lives were lost.

Will the Prime Minister give us his word today that he will make sure they get the money they need to take care of our seniors?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, during the pandemic, we saw that the most vulnerable people,

seniors, were the hardest hit by COVID-19. All parties and all levels of government must work together to keep our seniors safe and secure.

We worked with the Government of Quebec to make sure they got PPE. We even sent in the army and then the Red Cross to help. We will do the same for all the provinces, working hand in hand to protect our seniors.

[English]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, now over 10,000 Canadians have lost their lives to COVID-19. One of those people is Denis Mathieu. His family sold their home so they could afford to put him in a long-term care home. He ended up losing his life on October 16. The long-term care home was owned by the federal government and is for-profit.

My question is very simple. This is not about jurisdiction; this is about responsibility. Will the Prime Minister commit to protecting people in homes owned by his government?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every Canadian deserves to be able to age in dignity, in safety and in good health. That is something we all, regardless of our political affiliations and regardless of the order of governments in which we serve, can agree on.

That is why through this pandemic, as we have seen the terrible tragedies families and individuals have faced, we have been doing as much as we can to be there, and we will continue to. We will continue to work with the provinces. We will continue to ensure that equipment is sent and that support is given. We will ensure that best practices are shared. We will protect our seniors.

* * *

[Translation]

TAXATION

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada has the highest rate of unemployment of all G7 countries. It is higher than that of the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Japan, France and Italy.

One of the reasons for this high unemployment rate is that the government is waging a war on work. According to the finance department's report, a Canadian can lose as much as 80% of every additional dollar earned by working, which penalizes workers. When will the government stop the war on work?

● (1435)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been there for workers and for Canadians since day one of this pandemic.

During the first wave, people needed to stay home, so we delivered the Canada emergency response benefit to ensure that people could stay home to protect their neighbours and our frontline workers. With the Canada wage subsidy, we also supported small businesses, large businesses and those that wanted to get through this pandemic. This is what we continue to do. We will continue to be there for the millions of Canadians and thousands of small businesses that need help.

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the other G7 nations also have COVID, yet we have higher unemployment than in the United States, the U.K., France, Italy, Japan and Germany. One of the reasons we are now learning this is a newly obtained report from Finance Canada showing the high levels of marginal effective tax rates, which is the amount that a person loses on each extra dollar they earn. For example, someone earning just \$30,000 can lose 60¢ on the dollar that they earn. A single mother earning \$55,000 can lose 80¢ on the dollar that she earns.

This is a war on work. We need to get Canadians back into jobs and reward them for their contributions. Will the Prime Minister end the war on work?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not blame any Canadians watching for being slightly puzzled in trying to figure out what the member for Carleton is trying to say. It is actually easier when we look at the context. First of all, he said that he did not believe in big government programs, even in a time of a pandemic. Secondly, there is the Conservatives' issue of disincentives to work, which is why they were so concerned about the Canada emergency response benefit, the CERB, which helped over eight million Canadians. They kept saying it was going to be hard to hire people for our factories.

The issue is that we need to continue to support people. We know that Canadians would much prefer to have a job, but they need to be supported.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, not only do we support the CERB, but we said that people should be allowed to earn more than the \$1,000 cut-off the Prime Minister imposed. He said that if a person earned a dollar more than \$1,000, he would kick them from the CERB to the curb.

We said there should be rewards for work, but now we learn that his war on work predated the pandemic. In 2019, according to his own finance department, single mothers earning just \$55,000 could lose as much as 80¢ on each additional dollar they earned.

Will he once and for all end his war on work?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think we can all agree that this government has done the right things as the member has just said, in being there to support Canadians through this pandemic, but arguments he is making about pre-pandemic are also completely out to lunch. First of all, we are the government that saw a million new jobs created over the course of our first mandate, while at the same time seeing hundreds of thousands of kids and families lifted out of poverty.

Oral Questions

At the same time, we delivered a Canada child benefit that helped single moms and families across the country; initiatives that, unfortunately, the Conservatives voted against.

* * *

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Ms. Lianne Rood (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, big grocery corporations have decided that they need to make more money off the backs of Canadians in the middle of the pandemic. Walmart started it this summer when it announced that it would be charging their suppliers increased fees to pay for store upgrades. That means more expensive food and it also puts Canadian jobs at risk. On CanSino, on Huawei and on Baylis, the Prime Minister took the side of the connected.

Will the Prime Minister at least side with Canadians as Walmart increases the price of its food?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, ensuring good food on Canadians' tables at affordable prices is something that has been a priority for this government from the very beginning, which is why we moved forward on creating a surplus food program and working with food banks across this country, but mostly why we made sure to support frontline workers, our farmers and our agricultural producers to continue to deliver quality food to people's tables.

We will continue to be there to support Canadians as long as it takes, whatever it takes, throughout this pandemic.

• (1440)

Ms. Lianne Rood (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister needs to understand that the last thing that Canadians need during these trying times is an unfair hit on their grocery bills. Walmart is not alone. Sobeys, Metro and others have jumped on this bandwagon. Clearly, we have a competition problem for Canadians. Major grocery stores are lining up to make things more expensive, while other parts of Canada are reporting record problems with food insecurity.

Will the Prime Minister stand up to the big grocery giants and make sure that our Canadian competition laws are being followed?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what we have done from the beginning of this pandemic is to stand up for Canadians. We have been there to support families. We have been there to support agricultural producers and our farmers. We have been there to ensure that northern families get help in terms of the high costs of food. We have been there to support food banks. Unfortunately, across the country, we are seeing more and more people needing to step up during this time of the pandemic.

Oral Questions

We will continue to be there to support Canadians. We will continue to be there to have Canadians' backs every step of the way. That is a commitment we have made to Canadians and we will be there for as long as it takes, whatever it takes.

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COVID-19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Ms. Lianne Rood (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): And friends in the big grocery business.

Mr. Speaker, the mandatory isolation program is about to expire on October 31, which is this Saturday. While the isolation protocols are still in place for seasonal workers, Canadian farmers are already stretched to the max with COVID-19 mitigation, with market losses and loss of sales, and with AgriStability not working as it should.

Canada's food security requires decisive action. Will the Prime Minister at least commit to the bare minimum to extend the mandatory isolation support program now?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will continue to be there for our farmers and our producers. We will continue to support the frontline workers who are putting food on our tables. We are continuing to support all Canadians while we make it through this incredibly difficult time. Canadians need to know that their institutions are there to serve them and we will continue to.

I can highlight that we have made many investments to support directly our farmers and agricultural producers and we will continue to be there for those communities.

* * *

[*Translation*]

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, René Lévesque was not the opposition leader and he never supported the War Measures Act, which he described as a military occupation of Quebec. Prime Minister Trudeau, Premier Bourassa and the mayor of Montreal thought up the lie of an apprehended insurrection devised and led by René Lévesque, Claude Ryan, Guy Rocher and union leaders, no less.

Does this Prime Minister believe that there was an apprehended insurrection in Quebec in 1970?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said, there will always be political debate about this and I already shared my perspective on the October crisis.

On this side of the House, we will continue to take care of Quebecers today and in the weeks to come through the initiatives that we are putting in place to keep our commitments to them. We were there with the CERB a few months ago and we will continue to be there with employment insurance, help for small businesses, help for seniors and help for families.

We know that this pandemic is hard, and, as a federal government, we will continue to be there for Quebecers.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, consideration for others often includes apologies, but this never seems to apply to Quebecers.

The Bloc Québécois condemns violence in all forms. It took pressure from the Bloc Québécois for the Prime Minister to recognize and denounce the attack in France last week and for the Armenian genocide to be recognized. Pointing machine guns at people at night and threatening to kill their loved ones before their very eyes is extremely violent.

Does this not warrant an apology from the federal government's official apology machine?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all Canadians and all political parties in the House condemn the violence we witnessed in France a few weeks ago. We wholeheartedly support the people of France, who were faced with a horrific terrorist attack, the murder of Samuel Paty.

We will always stand united. I thank the Bloc Québécois for moving that motion, but we all would have moved the same motion. It was good of the Bloc to do that. We will continue to stand up to violence and extremism all around the world.

* * *

● (1445)

[*English*]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for months, the Prime Minister has been promising a new tone on China, but nothing has actually changed. For almost two years, Canadians Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor have been in prison in China. In that time, the government has given almost \$350,000 to the Canada-China Business Council, the same group that protested even raising the issue of the two Michaels at its recent dinner. Why does the government's new tone sound like the same old song and dance?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been clear from the very beginning about our principles, our commitment to the rule of law and our deep concern for our detained citizens. We have worked over the past many months to try to bring them home. We will continue to work extremely hard, not just on our own but with allies around the world who have consistently spoken up against China's arbitrary detention of citizens and its coercive diplomacy. We will continue to be loud and clear on the principles of defending human rights and the rule of law. We will continue to work with countries around the world, even as we highlight the excesses and the wrongs on human rights.

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we would think that with the ties that this Prime Minister has to the CCP he would be able to get more action, but that dinner was also paid for with a grant from Canadian taxpayers, thanks to the heritage minister and Destination Canada. We do not know yet how much Canadians paid so that the Canadian business elites could applaud Communist China and wag their finger at their own government, but we know a dollar is too much.

Can the Prime Minister tell this House how much Canadians paid for the latest love-in with Canada's corporate China lobby?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, even as we have consistently stood up strongly in defence of the two Michaels, stood up in defence of the Uighurs, and have been concerned for Canadian citizens and indeed all citizens in Hong Kong, we have continued to look at China as a market for our grain farmers, for our seafood producers, and for so many Canadians who recognize that the second-largest economy in the world represents opportunities for Canadian families and businesses. Walking that careful line of being unequivocal on the defence of human rights and recognizing economic ties with the second-largest economy in the world is what we have been doing.

* * *

[Translation]

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the first contract for the development of a COVID-19 vaccine was signed with CanSino Biologics, a Chinese pharmaceutical giant. The agreement ended in August when China's communist regime prohibited CanSino Biologics from exporting its products to Canada. Canadians currently do not know how much the Government of Canada paid CanSino Biologics.

Could the Prime Minister tell us how much was paid?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our approach for vaccines and personal protective equipment is to try to find all kinds of solutions to ensure we have enough.

We have signed seven different contracts for vaccines from around the world, which we hope to provide to Canadians. No one knows which vaccine will be developed first and which one will be the most effective. That is why we signed multiple contracts. We are working with the global COVAX initiative to ensure that we will have other sources of vaccines for Canada.

We are doing everything we can to keep Canadians safe. If the Conservatives do not want to negotiate to protect Canadians, let them say so.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, all we want is to address the situation.

The government has bet everything on China since the beginning. We have been had by the Chinese communist regime. We got taken for a ride. Radio-Canada is reporting that the contracts signed with other companies are putting us three months behind. As a result, we will get vaccines three months later than other countries.

Oral Questions

The other ministers have been insulting us all along.

Instead of insulting us, can the Prime Minister tell us whether it is true that we will get vaccines three months later than other countries?

● (1450)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a government we have negotiated with vaccine manufacturers around the world.

They are not currently manufacturing vaccines, but they are researching potential ones. We do not know which company will find a vaccine first or which vaccine will be the best.

We have negotiated with a lot of companies. We know that Canadians want Canada to have access to vaccines in a timely fashion. That is precisely what we were able to negotiate.

* * *

[English]

CHILD CARE

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when the folks of Garderie Tunney's Daycare contacted their local Liberal MP for Ottawa Centre to ask for help to keep their doors open, she suggested that they should apply for a rental subsidy. The landlord for this day care centre is the federal government. It almost doubled the rent to \$14,000 per month. Families are losing their day care service in the middle of a pandemic.

How can the Prime Minister justify to parents the loss of their day care services over his increase in rent, and when will he make sure Garderie Tunney's Daycare stays open so parents have a safe place for their kids?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the need for child care is exactly why we moved forward in the throne speech, and are working forward to ensure we are delivering child care with the provinces right across the country. We understand it is not just a social necessity, but an economic necessity as well.

With regard to Garderie Tunney's Daycare, which is a well-loved day care in Ottawa, during the pandemic PSPC has ensured that rent relief is available to all tenants under the Canada emergency rent assistance program. More recently, we have informed the day care that its November rent will be deferred. We will continue to work with it on a path forward.

*Oral Questions***TAXATION**

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, at the Global Forum just a few minutes ago, the finance minister said there is no free lunch during the pandemic. I disagree. Banks have made over \$15 billion in profits so far, billionaires have amassed more than \$37 billion in wealth and web giants like Amazon have made obscene profits and paid little tax. It really sucks that hard-working people who are struggling are going to be forced to pay for the economic recovery.

Will the Prime Minister commit today to imposing a wealth tax on the ultra-rich to pay for the recovery, and will he force the web giants to pay their fair share?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we committed in the throne speech that we would be moving forward and making the web giants pay their fair share. That is something that all Canadians can understand, and we are happy to move forward with that.

On the issue of raising taxes on the wealthiest 1%, that is actually the very first thing we did when we came into office in 2015. We created a new higher tax bracket and forced the wealthiest 1% to pay more. Unfortunately, the NDP voted against it.

We will always look to ensure that we are supporting the middle class, and people working hard to join it, through this pandemic and beyond.

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SENIORS

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the most recent Speech from the Throne, the government committed to acting on critical issues important to seniors. This included increases to the OAS and the CPP, which will positively impact seniors in my riding and, of course, across Canada. I would like to thank the Prime Minister for his leadership, especially his commitment to work with the provinces to establish national guidelines for long-term care homes.

Can the Prime Minister elaborate today on just how we will continue supporting our seniors?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Humber River—Black Creek for her tireless work for her community.

In addition to the Speech from the Throne commitments the member mentioned, we are building at least 7,000 new affordable housing units for seniors under the national housing strategy. To create opportunities for seniors to be more connected, supported and active members of their community, we invested an additional \$100 million over five years in the new horizons for seniors program, which helps community groups provide local programs with support.

We will continue to work hard every day to provide more support for our seniors.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. James Cumming (Edmonton Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Come By Chance refinery has shut down, there are Suncor layoffs, the White Rose oil field is in jeopardy, there are Husky layoffs and it is now being sold. The government has left energy workers out in the cold. News broke yesterday that the steelworkers union is putting more energy into finding a buyer for Come By Chance than the natural resources minister is.

Why is the Prime Minister's biggest energy accomplishment in five years unemployment lines instead of pipelines?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since day one we have taken action to support our oil and gas sector. During the pandemic we invested \$1.7 billion to remediate inactive and abandoned wells, which will protect and create thousands of jobs. We continue to support the sector with the wage subsidy: Almost one in every three workers in mining and oil and gas stayed in their jobs thanks to the subsidy, and the Speech from the Throne announced it will continue until next summer. We are getting our resources to new markets and using revenue to fund clean energy and climate solutions, and the workers will continue to be at the heart of everything we do.

● (1455)

Mr. James Cumming (Edmonton Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, another Alberta company, a frac sand company, was forced to lay off nearly its entire staff. The government is approving \$20 million in loans to a competing company that mines exclusively in the U.S.: a loan with interest that can be paid back in kind. When the government interferes like this, it is directly picking winners and losers, forcing yet another mass layoff in the energy sector.

Does the Prime Minister realize he is allowing a Canadian company to fail, so one with a large interest in the U.S. can succeed?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this pandemic has been difficult on Canadians from coast to coast to coast, but we recognize the extra degree of difficulty that the current oil crisis is having on oil workers in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and indeed in Newfoundland and Labrador. We have been there for them with wage subsidies, with the CERB and with EI supports. We will continue to look for ways, like we did with orphan wells, to continue to support those workers who have been working hard to build and contribute to our country's well-being over the past many years.

We need them, going forward, to have strong jobs, strong families and a strong future, and that is what we are committed to working on with them.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the United Kingdom is our third-largest export market. We share common values, but we will not have a free trade agreement with it as of December 31. Not having one in place will mean higher tariffs. For example, they will be 8% on Canadian lobster and 16% on beef. As of right now, the amounts are zero under CETA.

Where is the Prime Minister's plan to maintain competitive U.K. access for our seafood workers and ranchers, if a transitional agreement is not in place at the end of the year? We are running out of time.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, from the very beginning, we were committed to improving international trade. That is why, under our watch, Canada has signed and ratified major trade deals that give us free trade access to two-thirds of the global economy. We are the only G7 country to have free trade with every other G7 country.

Obviously the U.K.'s decision to withdraw from the European Union has made it more complicated with CETA. I continue to assure people that we are working with the United Kingdom to ensure a seamless transition. We have been working on it for many years, at their rhythm. We will ensure that we are moving forward the right way.

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has us at the back of the line for PPE, at the back of the line for rapid testing and at the back of the line for vaccines. Now we are at risk of being at the back of the line for a new trade deal with our oldest ally.

The new Japan-U.K. trade deal goes farther than the old deal the U.K. had with the EU. Time is running out again.

When is the Prime Minister going to get serious about a trade agreement with the United Kingdom?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for her interest and can reassure her that over the past three or four years, we have been working closely with the U.K. in order to ensure a seamless transition as it exits the European Union. We look to continue the excellent trading relationship that we have with the U.K.

We understand that there are levels of complexity in Brexit, but that is something that we are working with them on as we ensure continued access to Canadian markets for the U.K., and to the U.K. for Canadian markets.

* * *

[*Translation*]

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we all condemn terrorists, but 50 years after Prime Minister Trudeau, this Prime Minister is trying to equate a peaceful political movement to terrorists. That movement was championed by honourable people, people who have become party leaders, a premier, the people who made the artist-inspired Quiet Revolution a reality.

Oral Questions

In 1970, the Canadian army engaged in state-sponsored terrorism at Pierre Elliott Trudeau's command, did it not?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said, I know there are still political debates about what happened 50 years ago.

My goal right now and in the days to come is to make sure that, 50 years from now, my children, my grandchildren and all of the grandchildren in Quebec and Canada will acknowledge that we managed this health and economic crisis well and that what we are doing now will help us for the next 50 years.

• (1500)

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, how can they say they are managing a crisis well now when they cannot recognize past mistakes?

When Quebeckers do not feel they belong in Canada, when Quebeckers feel no connection to Canada, when Quebeckers envision a path for their nation apart from Canada, be it in 1837, 1970, 1980, 1995 or even 1976, Canada responds with fear, with fear campaigns. The Prime Minister has one last chance. History will be watching.

Will he apologize to Quebeckers?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think we need to make one thing clear. Yes, the Bloc Québécois was elected by a lot of Quebeckers to represent Quebec, but the Liberal Party was also elected by a lot of Quebeckers, in more ridings than the Bloc, incidentally, to represent Quebeckers as well. I would not want anyone to casually assume or say that just because the Bloc does not feel like it belongs in Canada, all Quebeckers feel the same way.

Over the years, we have achieved a great deal together. All Canadians from Quebec, British Columbia and across the country have worked together to create this magnificent country that we are so proud of.

* * *

HEALTH

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, in response to a question from my colleague, the minister said that 200,000 rapid tests would be sent to the province of Quebec this week, but we found out today that 30,000 tests are being delivered tomorrow. Tomorrow is Thursday, and 30,000 is not 200,000. That seems a bit late to me. The province needs rapid tests. It is part of the solution for getting Quebec's regions out of the red zone.

Can the Prime Minister tell us when Quebec will get these rapid tests?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are working with companies all over the world and with Canadian companies to deliver much-needed equipment across the country. Health Canada is approving safe tests and equipment as quickly as possible to help Canadians. We have already signed contracts, prior to approval, so these items can be delivered as fast as possible once they are approved. We will continue to do whatever it takes for Quebec, Ontario and the entire country as quickly as possible, so we can get through this pandemic.

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last week, the minister promised 60,000 tests. The province is going to get just 30,000 this week. Yesterday, the minister said it would be 200,000 tests. I am a little confused now. Perhaps she needs to check her numbers. Quebec is well into the second wave. Because of the shortage of rapid tests, restaurants and gyms have had to shut down, and Quebec's economy is suffering.

I repeat my question: Can the Prime Minister tell us exactly how many tests will be made available to Quebec and when?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I understand how much we all want this crisis to be over. We are all working very hard together to deliver the necessary equipment.

I want to tell my colleagues what they should already know, and that is that there is no one-size-fits-all solution for getting through this pandemic. Rapid testing will be extremely useful and important. That is why we are working very hard to ensure that everyone has access to more rapid tests.

Everything we are doing, whether it be testing, contact tracing, the COVID Alert app or individual behaviour, has to work together.

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Quebec is testing an average of 20,000 people a day, so 60,000 tests are only enough for three days. The Prime Minister said on May 21 that we would have rapid tests to deal with the second wave. Well, we are now in the midst of the second wave. This government is being extremely slow in making rapid tests available, just as it was when it came to closing the border and signing contracts for vaccines.

When will Quebec have enough tests to deal with the second wave?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can assure the hon. member that Quebec will get its 200,000 tests this week. We know that testing is part of the solution. We need to continue to work at all levels to deliver all of the equipment and adopt behaviours that will help us get through the second wave of COVID.

* * *

• (1505)

[*English*]

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Mr. Tim Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the interim results of the 2019-20 Community-Based Research Centre's sex now survey shows that one in five sexual minority men have been subjected to sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression change efforts. It is unacceptable that in 2020 some

Canadians are still subjected to hurtful stigmas and stereotypes that translate into harmful practices, such as conversion therapy. Our government recently tabled legislation that will protect LGBTQ2 individuals from these dangerous practices.

Can the Prime Minister tell the House why standing up for LGBTQ2 Canadians is so important?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, conversion therapy is rooted in the harmful premise that one's sexual orientation or gender identity could and even should be changed. Our legislation will criminalize efforts to force someone to change or hide who they are. While Conservatives couch their support for conversion therapy behind misleading arguments, on this side, we will always stand up for the rights of Canadians. We urge all members of all parties to support the bill during this afternoon's vote.

* * *

HEALTH

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government made the decision to shut down Canada's early pandemic warning system. The result of that was, when COVID hit, Canada was relying on information from the Chinese government, which meant that there were wrong decisions made and delayed decisions. The Minister of Health said there would be an internal review done on why the government shut down the early pandemic warning system.

Can the Prime Minister tell us who will be conducting that review?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, allow me to correct the record. There was no reduction in funding or staffing levels in this case since 2015. We have continued to ensure that Canada is able to respond to urgencies and emergencies around the world.

We will continue to base everything we do on science and evidence. As of January 2, Dr. Tam convened a meeting of her counterparts across the country to look into and raise concerns about the news coming out of Wuhan. We have been on this from the very beginning and will continue to be.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister did not hear what his Minister of Health said on Sunday, that in fact the alert system needed to be in effect and she said that there was going to be a review of why it was shut down.

This is very disturbing because we have a pattern where the health minister is making mistakes, making bad decisions, blaming bureaucrats and then somehow blaming the opposition for asking questions. Canadians deserve to know why the early warning system was shut down. If the Prime Minister does not know, he can say “I don’t know” but he needs to answer that question.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we all saw those various reports and, following those reports coming out, we did start an investigation to look into exactly what happened to establish the pattern of facts. What I can confirm is that there was no reduction in funding or employment in these agencies.

We obviously need to understand exactly what happened so that we can be better prepared for future pandemics. There are many lessons to learn through this one, and that is what we are focused on.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, now we are getting somewhere.

The Prime Minister has admitted that they are looking into why the early warning system was shut down, so I will ask again. Canadians really do deserve to know. They have just been told that Christmas could be cancelled. They have been told that they are not going to get rapid testing for a long time. Canadians are being told they are at the back of the line for the vaccine. These are really serious issues.

Again, Canadians deserve to know who is doing the review of the decisions that the Prime Minister and his government have made around the early pandemic warning system.

• (1510)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think it is important that Canadians get accurate information, which is why it is important to highlight first and foremost that we have access to a large suite of vaccine potential candidates, and we will continue to ensure that Canadians get vaccines as they become available. We are not at the back of the line. We are also already deploying rapid testing and have been deploying rapid testing for many months in remote and northern communities where the need was most acute.

We will continue to work with provinces. We will continue to work with health experts to ensure that we have all the strategies necessary to keep Canadians safe.

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SENIORS

Ms. Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, seniors are living longer than ever before, but they are worried about the rising costs of health care and running out of their savings as they get older. In engaging with seniors in my riding of Brampton North, I know how challenging it has been for them to adjust to the rising cost of living. Brampton is home to thousands of seniors who have helped build this great city and our country.

Could the Prime Minister outline a few of the many programs and supports we have available for seniors and what more our government has planned for them?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Brampton North for her important question and, as always, for her tireless advocacy for her community.

We announced additional support of \$2.5 billion for a one-time tax-free payment for seniors eligible for OAS and GIS. Together with the extra GST credit, that is over \$1,500 in tax-free support for a low-income couple. We remain committed to increasing old age security once a senior turns 75 and boosting the Canada pension plan survivor's benefit. We have also moved forward on increases in the new horizons program.

We will continue to stand ready to take additional actions as needed to support seniors.

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are questioning how Mi'kmaq fishers facing violence, threats and having their property destroyed are being served by the RCMP. The Minister of Indigenous Services publicly disagreed with the commissioner's assessment of the police response. Last week, the Assembly of First Nations announced Commissioner Lucki had lost their confidence and called for her resignation.

Indigenous people who are affected by systemic racism deserve leaders who can understand the problem. Could the Prime Minister explain why and how he still has confidence in the RCMP commissioner?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, from the beginning, we have strongly condemned any form of violence, harassment or intimidation toward the Mi'kmaq. The police are responsible for ensuring protection and preventing the escalation of violence, which is why we approved a request from the province for more police resources.

We have acknowledged, as has the commissioner of the RCMP, that throughout its history, the RCMP has not always treated racialized and indigenous people fairly. There is no question that systemic racism exists, and working with the commission, we will bring forward meaningful change to ensure that police treat all people with dignity and respect.

* * *

DON MAZANKOWSKI

The Speaker: Before continuing, I have the unfortunate duty to inform hon. members of the passing of the Right Honourable Don Mazankowski. Following discussions among representatives of all parties in the House, I understand there is agreement to observe a moment of silence in honour of this great Canadian.

I now invite hon. members to rise.

Government Orders[*A moment of silence observed*]

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● (1515)

[*Translation*]**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among all parties, and I believe you would find the consent of the House for the following motion:

That, given the situation in Algeria, where for over a year, millions have been legitimately calling for a rule of law that guarantees individual and collective freedoms, the House:

- (a) condemn ongoing political repression in Algeria; and
- (b) call for the respect of human rights and the release of prisoners of conscience and political prisoners.

The Speaker: This being a hybrid sitting of the House, for the sake of clarity, I will ask for only those who are opposed to the request to express their disagreement. Accordingly, all those opposed to the hon. member moving the motion will please say nay.

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)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS[*Translation*]**CRIMINAL CODE**

The House resumed from October 27 consideration of the motion that Bill C-6, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (conversion therapy), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: It being 3:15 p.m., pursuant to order made on September 23, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-6.

Call in the members.

● (1600)

[*English*]

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

*(Division No. 14)***YEAS**

Members

Aboultouf	Aitchison
Albas	Alghabra
Alleslev	Allison
Amos	Anand
Anandasangaree	Arnold
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bagnell	Bains

Baker	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Barsalou-Duval	Battiste
Beaulieu	Beech
Bendayan	Bennett
Benzen	Bergen
Bergeron	Berthold
Bérubé	Besette
Bibeau	Bittle
Blaikie	Blair
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)	Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Blois	Boudrias
Boulerice	Bragdon
Brassard	Bratina
Brière	Brunelle-Duceppe
Cannings	Carrie
Casey	Chabot
Chagger	Champagne
Champoux	Charbonneau
Chen	Chiu
Chong	Collins
Cooper	Cormier
Cumming	Dabrusin
Dalton	Damoff
Dancho	Davidson
Davies	DeBellefeuille
Deltell	d'Entremont
Desbiens	Desilets
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Diotte	Doherty
Dong	Dowdall
Dreeshen	Drouin
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duval
Dzerowicz	Easter
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Ellis	Epp
Erskine-Smith	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Fergus	Fillmore
Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock)	Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Finnigan	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fortin	Fragiskatos
Fraser	Freeland
Fry	Gallant
Garneau	Garrison
Gaudreau	Gazan
Généreux	Gerretsen
Gill	Godin
Gould	Gourde
Gray	Green
Guilbeault	Hajdu
Hallan	Harder
Hardie	Harris
Hoback	Holland
Housefather	Hughes
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Jaczek
Jeneroux	Johns
Joly	Jones
Jordan	Jowhari
Julian	Kelloway
Kelly	Kent
Khalid	Khera
Kitchen	Koutrakis
Kram	Kusie
Kusmierczyk	Kwan
Lake	Lalonde
Lambropoulos	Lametti
Lamoureux	Larouche
Lattanzio	Lauzon

Lawrence
 Lebouthillier
 Lehoux
 Lewis (Essex)
 Lightbound
 Long
 Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
 MacAulay (Cardigan)
 MacKenzie
 Maguire
 Manly
 Martinez Ferrada
 Mathysen
 May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
 McCauley (Edmonton West)
 McDonald
 McKay
 McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
 McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
 McPherson
 Mendès
 Michaud
 Monsef
 Morantz
 Morrissey
 Nater
 Normandin
 Oliphant
 O'Toole
 Pauzé
 Petitpas Taylor
 Poilievre
 Qualtrough
 Rayes
 Reid
 Richards
 Rodriguez
 Romanado
 Ruff
 Sahota (Brampton North)
 Sajjan
 Sangha
 Saroya
 Scarpaleggia
 Schmale
 Serré
 Shanahan
 Shields
 Shipley
 Sidhu (Brampton South)
 Simard
 Singh
 Soroka
 Stanton
 Ste-Marie
 Sweet
 Tassi
 Therrien
 Trudel
 Uppal
 van Koeverden
 Vandal
 Vaughan
 Vignola
 Vis
 Waugh
 Weiler
 Wilson-Raybould
 Young
 Zahid
 Zuberi — 305

LeBlanc
 Lefebvre
 Lemire
 Liepert
 Lobb
 Longfield
 Lukiwski
 MacGregor
 MacKinnon (Gatineau)
 Maloney
 Martel
 Masse
 May (Cambridge)
 Mazier
 McCrimmon
 McGuinty
 McKenna
 McLean
 McLeod (Northwest Territories)
 Melillo
 Mendicino
 Miller
 Moore
 Morrison
 Motz
 Ng
 O'Connell
 O'Regan
 Paul-Hus
 Perron
 Plamondon
 Powlowski
 Ratansi
 Regan
 Rempel Garner
 Robillard
 Rogers
 Rood
 Sahota (Calgary Skyview)
 Saini
 Samson
 Sarai
 Savard-Tremblay
 Schiefke
 Schulte
 Sgro
 Sheehan
 Shin
 Sidhu (Brampton East)
 Sikand
 Simms
 Sorbara
 Spengemann
 Steinley
 Stubbs
 Tabbara
 Thériault
 Trudeau
 Turnbull
 Van Bynen
 Van Popta
 Vandenbeld
 Vecchio
 Virani
 Wagantall
 Webber
 Wilkinson
 Yip
 Yurdiga
 Zann

Routine Proceedings

NAYS

Members

Falk (Provencher)	Kmiec
Kurek	Patzer
Sloan	Viersen
Zimmer — 7	

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

[*Translation*]

Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

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

The Speaker: The member for London—Fanshawe on a point of order.

[*English*]

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. During the last vote, we heard a lot of qualifiers and they need to be yes or no. I would like a ruling on whether that is allowed and can continue. Clearly, members are not allowed to make speeches or anything else, other than to say yes or no. It needs to be made clear in the House and I would like a ruling on that.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for her intervention. She is correct. Since the beginning, we have asked members to pronounce themselves in favour or against, not to debate it, give a long diatribe or any kind of speech on it, merely vote in favour or against. I hope that in the next vote, hon. members stand by those rules.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*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 treaty entitled “Amendments to Annexes II, VIII and IX of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal”, adopted at Geneva on May 10, 2019.

* * *

PETITIONS

HUMAN RIGHTS

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

The first one is from Canadians across the country who are concerned about the treatment of Uighurs in China. The petitioners are concerned that Uighurs are being put into internment camps or concentration camps. The petitioners are looking for the Government of Canada to recognize this as a genocide and to use the Magnitsky act in order to put sanctions on the actors involved in that.

Routine Proceedings

● (1605)

SEX SELECTION

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition that I am presenting today is on gender selection. The Canadians who have signed this petition are concerned that this practice is happening right here in Canada. They are calling for this House to pass legislation condemning that.

PHYSICIAN-ASSISTED DYING

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the next petition I have today is in defence of conscience rights. The people who have presented this petition are concerned about the protection of conscience rights of physicians and health care institutions. The petitioners recognize that the Charter of Rights and Freedoms protects the freedom of conscience and the freedom of religion, and they also note that the Canadian Medical Association is in agreement with that as well.

PALLIATIVE CARE

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the next petition I have to present is from hundreds of Canadians from across Canada. They have signed this petition to create a national strategy on palliative care, which would ensure that all Canadians have access to high-quality palliative care, particularly at a time when we are expanding the legalization of euthanasia.

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the last petition I have to present today is from Canadians across the country who are concerned about forced organ harvesting that happens in other places around the world. The petitioners are asking for this place to pass bills that have been presented in previous parliaments, particularly Bill C-350, that would prevent Canadians from going abroad to purchase harvested organs.

ETHIOPIA

Mr. Kerry Diotte (Edmonton Griesbach, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to present this petition, brought forth from members of the Canadian Oromo community in Edmonton and people concerned with the current events in Ethiopia.

SEX SELECTION

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am presenting two petitions today on behalf of Canadians calling upon the House of Commons to pass a Criminal Code prohibition of sex-selective abortion. The petitioners' rationale is that sex-selective abortion is legal in Canada as there are no legal restrictions on abortion here. Sex-selective abortion is antithetical to our commitment as Canadians to equality between men and women. A poll shows that 84% of Canadians believe it should be illegal to have an abortion if the family does not want the child to be a certain sex.

The World Health Organization, United Nations Women and United Nations Children's Fund have identified equal sex ratios at birth as a growing problem in the world, and Canada's own health care professionals have recognized that sex-selective abortion is a growing problem in Canada.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Scott Aitchison (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition calling on the House of Commons to formally recognize that Uighurs in China have been and are being subjected to genocide. The petitioners are calling to use the Justice for Victims of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act, the Sergei Magnitsky Law, and sanction those who are responsible for these heinous crimes being committed against the Uighur people.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to present a petition in the House. It is petition no. 10865859. The petitioners refer to the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, to the urgency of moving to avoid exceeding 1.5° Celsius, pointing out that the disadvantaged peoples of the world, the most marginal and the poorest, are the ones who suffer the most. The petitioners ask the Government of Canada to direct our official development assistance in the area of climate change toward mitigation and adaptation and particularly to pay attention to the impact on women around the world and direct funding toward gender-related programs.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to present a petition today, petition no. 10836641.

This petition is from young people across my riding of South Okanagan—West Kootenay and the neighbouring riding of Kootenay—Columbia. They are extremely concerned about the accelerating impacts of climate change, and wonder whether they will be able to thrive in an uncertain future. The petitioners point out that Canada's climate targets are completely insufficient in keeping global warming below two degrees.

The petitioners are calling for meaningful legislated climate targets, an effective carbon tax and redirecting fossil fuel subsidies into jobs and training for renewable energy systems, energy efficiency and low-carbon transportation.

JUSTICE

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table petition no. 2426.

This petition calls upon the Minister of Justice to amend the definition of section 752 of the Canadian Criminal Code that deals with serious personal injury offence to include wording that identifies sexual interference when considering dangerous offender designations.

● (1610)

HEALTH

Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to present e-petition no. 2729.

This was brought forward by people who suffer from environmental sensitivities, which affect approximately 3% of Canadians.

The petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to create an international classification of disease designation code in Canada for environmental sensitivities so that those affected may have access to medical care. They want to include environmental sensitivities as a disability that must be accommodated on all relevant documents and forms in governmental departments and organizations that administer social assistance, housing, medical, and other public services, and to ensure all indoor public spaces are declared fragrance-free.

* * *

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 ask that all questions be allowed to stand at this time.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed from October 27 consideration of the motion that Bill C-7, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (medical assistance in dying), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: Before continuing, I wish to inform the House that because of the deferred recorded division, Government Orders will be extended by 43 minutes.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Brampton Centre.

Mr. Ramesh Sangha (Brampton Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government acknowledges that medical assistance in dying is a complex and deeply personal issue. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the hon. Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada for his extremely hard work with respect to the bill. Our government has respected the court's decision and has made more than the necessary changes in the legislation.

The conversation around death can be an extremely difficult one in our society. We understand and acknowledge the deep feelings and emotions that arise when a loved one is suffering intolerably from an illness, disease or disability. To discuss a fundamentally moral issue such as this one, the need to consult with people was a necessary decision. Over 300,000 Canadians from all over this great nation and from different cultures, races, creeds and backgrounds were directly involved in the January 2020 public consultation process. Not only were these consultations vital, it was a strong call to Parliament as to how important this issue was for Canadians.

Initially, the minister, along with several other distinguished members, held round table discussions across Canada with over 125 experts and stakeholders. Furthermore, we have asked for a special extension to allow for a fruitful and powerful parliamentary

Government Orders

debate on this topic. The debates that we as parliamentarians have had on medical assistance in dying since 2015 have been filled with emotion and passion, as a debate should be in the House. I am very pleased today to be part of this very important debate.

One of the great challenges of being a parliamentarian is not only having to reflect on our own moral considerations and carefully examining legislation such as the one before us today, but also to make decisions that fundamentally address Canadians and the changing moral landscape.

Today, I speak in support of the bill. I believe strongly in an individual's right to die with dignity and respect. The issue of moral integrity and an individual's right to autonomy must be protected at all costs. As many of my hon. parliamentary colleagues have noted in the debate, currently many Canadians are suffering intolerably. The tragedy is that death is the only way to ease such suffering in a number of these cases.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and quote the wise words of critical care and palliative staff physician James Downar, at the Toronto General Hospital, who stated:

I think it's important to recognize that there are types of suffering that we do not have the ability to treat. There are dying patients who have a very low quality of life from their perspective, and sometimes only death would end their suffering.

● (1615)

In the bill, we also acknowledge the concerns about an increased risk where medical assistance in dying is provided to persons who are not dying in the short term. That is why we have proposed additional safeguards to ensure that sufficient time and expertise are devoted to exploring requests for persons whose natural death is not foreseeable.

As I mentioned earlier, medical assistance in dying is an extremely difficult topic. However, in consultation with our experts, the Canadian community and, more specifically, those individuals who are suffering from intolerable conditions, diseases and disabilities, the right to die with dignity and respect, as outlined in Bill C-7, must be protected at all costs.

I look forward to engaging with hon. members further on this very important topic.

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would note that the government House leader was not in his seat. I was relying on him to maintain the comments and questions today.

I really appreciate the member's intervention. Is the member not concerned about conscience rights for individuals and organizations that provide end-of-life care?

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Mr. Ramesh Sangha: Mr. Speaker, our law acknowledges the conscience right of health care providers and the role they may play in providing medical assistance in dying. The amendment proposed in Bill C-7 has many changes to this effect. Our government will remain committed to working with the provinces and territories to support access to medical assistance in dying, while respecting the personal conviction of health care providers.

• (1620)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

I have a simple question. Bill C-7 is very important, and all of the questions it raises are very delicate. However, right now, there are people who are expecting us and the federal government to pass legislation.

Does my colleague not agree that we could have used the five weeks during which the government prorogued the House to pass this bill and respond to the wishes of those who are waiting on the federal government so that they can take the next steps?

[*English*]

Mr. Ramesh Sangha: Mr. Speaker, I acknowledge what the member has said. This legislation is very urgent. Medical assistance in dying is a very complex and deeply personal issue, as the member has already stated. The sad reality is that death is the only way for many people who are suffering. We have tried our best by way of consultation all over Canada. People from different cultures, races and backgrounds were directly involved in the January 2020 public consultation process. The minister along with several other distinguished members held round table discussions across the country with 125 experts and stakeholders.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to see the member for Brampton Centre standing and speaking on this. I wonder if he would agree with me, though, that there is a task that we have left undone here. The original legislation required a review of the broader issues around medical assistance in dying and this review has yet to start.

I put a motion on the Order Paper suggesting that committee be established without delay. Would the member support setting up such a broad review?

Mr. Ramesh Sangha: Mr. Speaker, the issue at hand today is very delicate. Everybody knows that. This needs to be discussed at length. For everyone listening to this debate, those who are in Parliament deliberating this issue are taking deep steps to resolve all the issues so we can bring back legislation, and in front of the public.

Mr. Gagan Sikand (Mississauga—Streetsville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate this opportunity to outline the proposed amendments to the federal legislation on assisted dying. This bill responds to the Superior Court of Québec's ruling last year in Truchon by removing the requirement that a person's natural death be reasonably foreseeable in order to be eligible for medical assistance in dying. The proposed amendments were developed with the goal of supporting autonomy and choice for those Canadians with non-terminal conditions who are suffering intolerably, while addressing

the potential risks of expanded eligibility for medically assisted death.

Our government consulted widely on this issue. We examined the evidence submitted before the court. We looked at domestic and international research. We compared our experience to other assisted dying regimes from around the world. We consulted with constituents, including 300,000 individuals who took part in our online public consultation, and we asked health care professionals about their practical experience with MAID over the past few years.

The bill reflects some important changes based on what we heard. In light of the need to respect the autonomy of Canadians seeking MAID, while providing protections for vulnerable people, the bill proposes the application of a two-track system of safeguards. While the bill no longer uses a reasonably foreseeable natural death as a basis for determining eligibility, it does use it as a basis for determining whether to apply a more rigorous set of safeguards. If a person's death is reasonably foreseeable, a set of safeguards akin to the existing regime would apply. However, some of the original safeguards have been eased in light of the feedback we received.

For example, there was overwhelming support for changing the witness requirement from two witnesses to one. Providers consistently reported that finding two independent witnesses posed a barrier to those seeking MAID, especially for anyone living in a care home with a limited social network. The sole purpose of the witness is to confirm that a person seeking MAID has signed the request themselves. To be clear, the witness has no role in confirming whether the request was made voluntarily, nor does the witness have any role in assessing whether the person's condition makes them eligible for MAID. Rather, it is the MAID provider who undertakes the eligibility assessment and ensures that the person requesting MAID is making the request freely and not in response to external pressures.

The proposed bill responds to these concerns and eases this requirement to one witness. It also allows for a witness to be someone who is paid to provide personal support or health care services. Anyone who is in a position to benefit in any way from the person's death, as a beneficiary to a will or in any other material way, would not qualify as an independent witness.

Health care providers and the families of people who receive MAID also told us that the mandatory 10-day wait period often results in prolonged suffering for individuals who had already put careful and extensive thought into their decision. As a result, the proposed bill would remove this requirement.

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I would like to address how the bill would protect Canadians, while satisfying the requirement from the Truchon ruling to eliminate the reasonable foreseeability of natural death clause. On this issue, we received feedback from practitioners and stakeholders who expressed concerns that people who are suffering but not at the end of life could make decisions about MAID that are not fully informed with respect to all available treatments and supports.

On this very sensitive subject, I consulted with my own constituents in Mississauga—Streetsville. I found one of the strongest proponents of these MAID reforms in Mr. Paul Irwin, who suffers from Parkinson's disease. Although this horrible affliction is slowly robbing Mr. Irwin of his neurological functions, I can assure the House that his mind remains razor sharp. Mr. Irwin has explored all available treatments and supports, and he has consulted a wide range of medical professionals. There is no doubt in Mr. Irwin's mind that he would like to control when and how he passes as a recipient of MAID. It is not a decision that individuals in Mr. Irwin's circumstances take lightly or without having weighed all alternatives. I applaud Mr. Irwin's courage.

In order to afford individuals like Mr. Irwin the dignity they deserve, we have added safeguards in lieu of foreseeable natural death that would apply only to requests where a person's death is not reasonably foreseeable. These strengthened safeguards are designed to support informed decision-making and the consistent application of good medical practice. For example, the bill proposes a 90-day minimum assessment period to offer an exploration of all relevant aspects of the person's situation.

• (1625)

We heard very clearly through the consultation process that Canadians are concerned about implementing a requirement for specialist consultations in assessments of MAID. We know that in some parts of the country, such as rural and remote communities, a consultation with a specialist can be harder to arrange. We do not want to create unnecessary barriers. This is why the bill proposes that, for people whose death is not reasonably foreseeable, one of the assessments will be done by a provider with expertise in the person's medical condition but not necessarily a specialist. We recognize that many health care providers have special training and certifications that qualify them to assess a person's particular medical circumstances, even if they are not specialists.

The bill also proposes that the practitioners and the patient would need to agree that reasonable options to relieve the patient's suffering had been seriously considered. This safeguard respects an individual's autonomy, while at the same time underscoring the importance of a fully informed, decision-making process.

In addition, following the Truchon decision, some have expressed concerns that individuals suffering solely from a mental illness could receive MAID. For example, many clinicians argue that the trajectory of mental illness is harder to predict than that of physical diseases, rendering it impossible to determine when or if a mental illness can be considered irremediable as required by MAID legislation. Another concern is the challenge of conducting capacity assessments, given that the symptoms of mental illnesses can affect a person's ability to understand and appreciate the nature and consequences of treatment decisions.

In light of these important concerns, the wording of the bill would preclude individuals suffering solely from a mental illness from accessing MAID. The decision to include this wording reflects the complexity of this problem and the need to fully consider the potential consequences of permitting MAID for individuals with a mental illness to make sure that vulnerable persons are not put at risk. We anticipate that this issue will be further explored as part of the parliamentary review.

I would now like to turn my attention to the waiver of final consent.

The current law includes a procedural safeguard that requires the practitioner to ensure that the person gives their express consent immediately before providing MAID. This is often referred to as "final consent" and is significant for health care providers as it provides a final confirmation of the person's desire to proceed with MAID. This safeguard also prohibits MAID for individuals who have lost the capacity to provide final consent, regardless of how definitive they were about their intention when they had capacity, made the request and were deemed eligible.

Unfortunately, the requirement for final consent had the unintended consequence of encouraging some individuals to receive MAID earlier than they would have liked out of fear of losing capacity to consent prior to their preferred date. This was the situation faced by Audrey Parker. Ms. Parker was very clear about her desire to share one last Christmas with her family, but felt compelled to receive MAID almost two months earlier than anticipated in order to ensure that she was still capable of providing final consent for the procedure.

In a similar example that is a bit closer to home, my friend and legislative assistant recently lost his father. A MAID recipient, Wah-Lit "Edward" Lui passed away peacefully at home on September 23, 2020. Once doctors had diagnosed Edward with a rare complication of terminal cancer, he had little choice but to immediately initiate the MAID process, which had long been his expressed desire, for fear of losing the ability to final consent over the next few days. Thus, Andrew and his family had a mere 24 hours to say their final goodbyes.

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Under the proposed amendments, individuals who have been found eligible to receive MAID and whose death is reasonably foreseeable, but who may be at risk of losing decision-making capacity, could waive the requirement to provide final consent before the procedure. For families like the Parkers and the Luis all across Canada, allowing MAID to proceed in the absence of the ability to provide final consent is simply the right thing to do.

As a further safeguard, in order to waive this requirement, an individual would need to have been assessed and approved for MAID, and be at or very close to the end of life. As proposed in the bill, the individual would provide written consent for the practitioner to administer MAID on a specified date.

• (1630)

In conclusion, the proposed amendments in the bill take into account the lessons we have learned through consultations and respond to the immediate task of following up on the Truchon decision. With this revised legislative package, our government has gone a very long way to respect and support the autonomy of Canadians who wish to consider a medically assisted death, while taking seriously our responsibility to protect vulnerable people.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for my colleague in regard to respecting the conscience rights of physicians across our nation. I understand this is provincial jurisdiction, yet the government does tend to express its views when it sees value in that and it has committed to a national palliative care strategy.

For physicians, does he not see the need to allow them to have the right to make the determination of whether they want to participate either directly or indirectly in MAID?

• (1635)

Mr. Gagan Sikand: Mr. Speaker, physicians do have the ability to opt out. I believe that in a country like Canada, which is among the best in the world, it is imperative we provide individuals with the best health care Canadians deserve. I do not think we can provide that in good conscience without providing a system like MAID. I would even go as far as to say it is a moral imperative that Canadians have this kind of health care available to them.

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the member about same-day death, which the bill would allow for. There was a definite waiting period, which could have been waived in special circumstances, but now the bill would allow for same-day death.

I am wondering if the member is okay with the fact that in most cases it would allow for somebody to request being euthanized and have it happen on the same day.

Mr. Gagan Sikand: Mr. Speaker, depending on the track provided, there have been safeguards put in place so that the proper assessment can be done. Based on our consultations and experts' advice, I do not think a same-day assessment would be adequate, but again, I leave that to those individuals best suited to provide that advice. I leave it with the medical practitioners to make that assessment.

Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member across the way mentioned rural Canada

and access to doctors, and that certain doctors would review the 90-day circumstances for preconsent. What happens if someone cannot get access to that kind of doctor to prescribe on a particular disease on preconsent?

Is there any kind of leeway or language in the bill about that?

Mr. Gagan Sikand: Mr. Speaker, that is certainly something that could also be brought up during the parliamentary review. What I was really referring to for individuals who live in remote areas was the number of witnesses required before their consent, which would be reduced to one, because of perhaps a smaller social circle or just not having as many individuals there. What you brought up could certainly be reviewed, and it should be.

The Speaker: I want to remind hon. members to speak through the Chair and not directly to each other.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Peace River—Westlock.

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Mr. Speaker, is the hon. member not concerned about the two classes of Canadians we could be building with this bill? Those who do not have an underlying condition and are suffering from mental illness are then eligible for all the suicide prevention tools of this country, but those with an underlying illness are not.

Is he not concerned this bill would be creating two classes of citizens?

Mr. Gagan Sikand: Mr. Speaker, I do not think this bill would create two classes of citizens. It would create two streams to make MAID available to them, as it should, because the circumstances are very different. I do not think it would create two classes of citizens, but would rightly create two different streams to make MAID available.

Mr. Chris Lewis (Essex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-7, which proposes to remove safeguards contained in the existing Criminal Code provisions for medical assistance in dying, as well as to expand eligibility. This is a grave matter and one that should not be treated lightly. Its impacts will be significant, especially for vulnerable Canadians. It is important that we get this right.

Before I get into the substantive issues contained in this bill, I would like to add my voice to those of the people who previously urged the Minister of Justice to appeal the Quebec Superior Court's ruling to the Supreme Court. One month after the Quebec Superior Court decision, 72 organizations that help Canadians with disabilities wrote to the minister, calling on him to appeal the decision. Less than a week later, 300 physicians signed a similar letter and since then, many others have voiced their concerns as well.

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Referring it to the Supreme Court would have been the more prudent course of action, as it would have provided Parliament with a framework within which it could legislate. Alas, those many voices, as well as those of my Conservative colleagues in the House, went unheeded.

Further, when Parliament passed Bill C-14 in 2016, the legislation required a parliamentary review of its provisions to commence at the start of the fifth year following royal assent. That review, which was also to include a study of the state of palliative care in Canada, could have taken place this past summer but, instead, the government opted to shut down Parliament. That was time squandered.

There was much wisdom in including a mandatory review when Bill C-14 was adopted. Now, instead of giving this matter the thorough attention benefiting its gravity, parliamentarians are being asked to rush legislation through to meet the judicial deadline of December 18, unless, of course, a third extension is sought and granted. We call that putting the cart before the horse. It is therefore vital, in the short time we have to review these changes to the MAID clauses in the Criminal Code, that we hear from as many Canadians as possible from all walks of life, and especially those likely to be most impacted by any expansion of the current laws.

There are two changes to the existing law that are most troubling. The first is the repeal of the provision that requires that a person's natural death be reasonably foreseeable and its replacement with the words "grievous" and "irremediable". The other is the elimination of the clause requiring a 10-day waiting period between when MAID is requested and when it can be administered. These changes need careful study. What will the unintended consequences be?

Moving forward, the priority of the Conservative Party is ensuring this type of legislation includes safeguards for the most vulnerable in our society, as well as for the conscience rights of physicians and all other health care professionals. One concern in that regard is ensuring adequate safeguards to protect those who may not have the ability to consent. Many of those involved in the care and advocacy for citizens with disabilities are sounding the alarm. We would be well advised to heed them.

I would like to quote from the letter from 72 advocacy groups written to the Minister of Justice just last fall. They were among those who urged the minister to appeal the Quebec Superior Court's decision in Truchon and Gladu. These are their words:

When the original medical assistance in dying legislation was debated in Parliament, there was a clear understanding that MAiD must have limits; that individual rights must be balanced with protections not only for our most vulnerable citizens, but for our society as well. One of the most important foundations of our Canadian identity is that we are a caring, compassionate country. We...place a high premium on being inclusive and tolerant while working hard toward the accommodation and integration of minority members of our communities. And yet, if the Quebec decision is allowed to stand [or as it stands now codified in the law], we will be in serious danger of losing this fundamental element of our Canadian identity. Our neighbours and our loved ones living with disabilities already continually experience the devaluation of their lives. They are frequently told—often bluntly—that they would be "better off dead."

● (1640)

The letter makes the point that the unintended consequences would be to "...erode provincial health responsibilities for expert clinical care and social support of citizens who are fragile."

It is crucial that adequate safeguards are included in Bill C-7, and that will be one of my highest priorities. Another concern worth repeating is removal of the end-of-life criterion. As the Council of Canadians with Disabilities stated in its October 2000 letter to the Minister of Justice, "Without the equalizing effect of the end-of-life criterion, which guarantees that the common thread between all persons who access an assisted death in Canada is that they are all dying," with the proposed changes, "...persons with disabilities will be able to gain access ultimately because they have a disability."

A worse stereotype could not be institutionalized in law: that disability-related suffering, largely caused by a lack of support and equality, justifies the termination of a person's life.

I now want to take some time to address the need for palliative care in Canada and the importance of such end-of-life care. As mentioned previously, a study of palliative care was to be included in a mandated parliamentary review. This should have happened before Parliament took action to expand the current Criminal Code provisions. Again, I would like to turn to the experts on this: the doctors and other health care professionals who provide end-of-life care and face these life-and-death decisions every day.

The Canadian Society of Palliative Care Physicians strongly advocates for the prioritization of adequate investment in, and enhancement of, palliative care services. Without access to high quality palliative care, some patients who are suffering may feel that MAID is their only option because their suffering has been inadequately addressed, or they perceive that their families or social supports must carry an excessive burden. Data regarding availability, access, quality and types of special palliative care, for example, are essential not only for those requesting or receiving MAID, but in general in order to better inform areas for improvement. Palliative care should remain distinct from MAID to ensure clarity, and to avoid risk of confusion and the potential for people to refuse palliative care services because they may confuse them with MAID.

During my consultations on Bill C-7, the doctors I have spoken with have stressed that palliative care is more than providing access to morphine, and that the public needs to be educated on this. As well, concern was expressed that elder abuse and financial motives, such as inheritance, could contribute to an abuse of MAID. Another concern is the temptation to save health care dollars with MAID. It is easy to conclude that MAID is more cost effective than continuing care. This raises ethical questions about its potential overuse, particularly as the previous safeguards are being lifted.

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These are all serious concerns. I look forward to hearing what the doctors and health professionals on the front lines recommend as we move forward. I would also like to make a brief comment about the need for conscience protection for physicians. Doctors are concerned that they will be forced to administer MAID. I have been advised that the Ontario College of Physicians has created a policy that doctors have to arrange a referral. Some doctors have confided to me that they are considering leaving their profession over this. Suffice to say that physicians should have their freedom of conscience protected, and that this fundamental freedom needs to be codified in law as has been done in Australia.

In closing, I urge the House to take our responsibility to review this legislation seriously and to do as thorough a job as possible, keeping uppermost in mind those most affected by the decisions that we make. As those 300 physicians said in their letter to the Minister of Justice, “For all patients who seek an assisted death, we must ask first if they have had access to adequate and funded social and living supports, as well as exemplary health care and symptom management, in order to assure that they are not seeking an assisted death.” I think we can and must do better.

• (1645)

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, in good part, I disagree with the member's assessment that we need to appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada or that somehow a lot of the discussion around the bill has not occurred. We have been discussing this virtually since the 2015 federal election. It has had all sorts of committees' direct and indirect input. Even this year, over 300,000 people participated through providing input. There has been an enormous amount of consultation. A lot of that never ended after we first passed the legislation.

What we see before us are some changes that we learned from, whether it was a court order or from what Canadians have been saying for the last while.

Does the member not agree that it is time, at the very least, to allow it to go to committee where we can get additional feedback on some of the specifics that have been raised here in second reading?

• (1650)

Mr. Chris Lewis: Mr. Speaker, I guess I would say two things.

First, if the government had not prorogued Parliament, we would have had a whole summer to have more of these discussions.

Second, much more discussion needs to happen. I will tell colleagues exactly why.

This past Friday, I spoke to two doctors via Zoom. They are the ones who specifically told me four points: They are considering leaving the profession. We cannot afford to lose any more physicians. They were taught to save lives, not to take them away. What a powerful statement. The doctors told me that 800 physicians have signed a new letter denouncing them from being forced to refer a patient to another doctor to get MAID, and that more would sign that letter, but they were afraid that the hospitals would blackball them and they were in fear of losing hospital privileges.

Much more discussion has to happen over this and it will definitely be going to committee. I look forward to it.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

He mentioned the December 18 deadline and seemed worried that we are moving too fast with this bill, but in my opinion, the government has already asked the courts for enough extensions.

Does my colleague agree that the reasonably foreseeable death criterion was too restrictive and that we have to stop postponing the dignity of seniors and seriously ill individuals? Does he agree that we need to send this bill to committee quickly so that it can be studied and passed in response to the Quebec Superior Court's decision?

[*English*]

Mr. Chris Lewis: Mr. Speaker, definitely more discussion needs to happen at committee. There is no doubt. I will continue going back to our parents, doctors and clergy as more discussion has to happen around them as well. I am really concerned about them being victimized. For them to not be able to speak with their conscience and to be forced to not discuss life and death is a real issue.

As I mentioned before, doctors do not lie. Doctors told me on Friday about the shortcomings in this bill, and that is why I am looking forward to getting Bill C-7 to committee, fixing it and amending it as required.

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Essex. You had mentioned palliative care. I wanted to ask you this, especially at a time when families are separated due to COVID-19 and people are feeling isolated. We see palliative care as an important part of the health care service, and it is not readily available to everyone.

I am wondering if you could maybe expand on that.

The Speaker: The hon. member for Essex, in 25 seconds or less.

I just want to remind the hon. members that even though we are close and it is very intimate, to please place your questions through the Chair. Thank you.

The hon. member for Essex.

Mr. Chris Lewis: Mr. Speaker, palliative care is very near and dear to my heart. Caregivers did a wonderful job when my *mémé* had brain cancer and kept her incredibly comfortable. The discussion within our family was not about how to end her life; it was about how to make it more comfortable and last a little longer, so palliative care is vital.

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: 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 Kelowna—Lake Country, Indigenous Affairs; the hon. member for Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, Health.

• (1655)

[*English*]

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, before getting into the details of the proposed legislation in front of us, I first want to make sure that in the House we avoid a common misunderstanding that seems to come up whenever people strongly disagree with assisted suicide or related issues. Quite often, someone in favour of allowing assisted suicide or removing safeguards will express compassion and empathy for those who are suffering. In saying this, I am not questioning their feelings or their sincerity; nobody wants to suffer or watch their loved ones go through terrible pain. What I am saying here, for everyone's benefit, is that those who are opposed to it or who want to support safeguards have a deep sense of compassion and empathy for those who are suffering. In other words, our human feelings of compassion by themselves do not automatically lead to one position or another.

Along with my wife, I have watched four grandparents pass away, and at present we have another one who is living in palliative care. Each time I have witnessed and cared for family members as they go through difficult health problems, I am reminded of the importance of always affirming a dying person's dignity while they live out the last part of their life.

For the past year, we have had widespread awareness of and concern for how the spread of COVID-19 could devastate seniors and others who are more vulnerable because of medical conditions. For the most part, these are the same people who are at risk and would be even more so under this new law. Along with everything else we could learn from 2020, I hope we can improve our medical practices and strengthen safeguards for the most vulnerable in every area, including this one.

As we continue to debate Bill C-7, it is important for all of us to take a moment to carefully consider its wider impact and unintended consequences. If passed, the new law will significantly expand the number of Canadians who will be eligible for assisted suicide. Whether we agree with these changes or not, it is clear that they are major and fundamental.

It was only a few years ago that Parliament passed Bill C-14, which created the legal framework for what it called “medical assistance in dying”. Previously, the Criminal Code had considered it a serious crime to either kill a patient or participate in a patient's suicide. While amending the section on culpable homicide and defining eligibility, it presented MAID as the narrow exception.

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At the time, the former justice minister, with the same sense of transparency for which she later fell out of favour with the Liberal government, publicly stated, “We recognize that medical assistance in dying will in many respects fundamentally change our medical culture and our society.” It was true for what happened back then, and now we are adding some more major changes before the last ones were ever properly reviewed. There was supposed to be an official review of the MAID system, but that has not happened.

Without having a thorough and careful review, we are supposed to proceed with Bill C-7 anyway. So far, in the current session, we have started debating this bill for part of only four days. I hope there will be much more time than this for considering this bill at every stage, especially when it is studied by the justice committee. There is so much that should be said, and the amount of time we all have to work with is too limited.

I share the deep concern of many Canadians who recognize that this bill undermines our country's commitment to upholding and protecting the equal value of each human life. More particularly, there needs to be even more attention given to how assisted suicide, especially in the way this bill handles it, affects the lives and social well-being of people with disabilities.

Over the past year, the idea of systemic discrimination has come to the forefront of our public discourse in Canada, in the U.S. and around the world. To help us better reflect on how it can relate to this discussion, we can look to the work of Dr. Laverne Jacobs. Dr. Jacobs is a law professor at the University of Windsor. She has approached the issue with her legal expertise and speaks from her experience as a Black woman living with disabilities in Canada.

As part of a longer presentation about MAID back in January, she compared and related the experiences of minority communities. She said, “What's particularly troubling about any system or any structure of systemic discrimination is that once ideas that are harmful to a minority group have been legislated into law, it is very difficult to convince the general public that they are not stigma-inducing or ultimately discriminatory. So in both cases, in both the case of racial inequality in the U.S. and the case of MAID here in Canada, we're dealing with the stigmatization of a historically disadvantaged group.”

In an article on the subject of MAID, Dr. Jacobs wrote:

More explicitly, while the MAID law indeed requires consent, these irreversible choices about ending a life are made in a complex social, cultural and health-care context, where lack of access to adequate care, lack of social support and overall ableist stigma have an impact on the choices people with disabilities may have.

In the same article, she also said:

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There are also concerns, fuelled by developments in the few countries that provide access to MAID outside the end-of-life context, that being elderly and fragile is increasingly accepted as a reason for a physician-assisted death and that this may create subtle pressure.

● (1700)

This is a small sample of her work, and Parliament would do well to take a closer look at the rest of her comments.

Loss, especially one of this nature, directs and shapes people's actions and attitudes. We cannot say that people with disabilities and other vulnerable populations have not told us this and explained how this bill will inevitably hurt them. Many other advocates and members of the disability community have been speaking out with similar fears, but they were not heard when they called for the government to appeal the Quebec Superior Court ruling. They have also been ignored when it comes to the problems in Bill C-7.

Bill C-7 has to do with life and death, which are ultimate realities. It is reasonable to expect that altering the way our institutions and culture approach the most consequential matters will have wide-ranging effects across all of society. It is hard, if not impossible, to imagine where we will end up if we follow this path.

In my remaining time, I want to highlight some of these problems.

Most notably, Bill C-7 removes the reasonably foreseeable natural death criterion, which is very concerning to me. I am concerned that removing it will normalize suicide over time. Without appealing the decision, the government is going beyond what the Quebec Superior Court ruled.

As one example, the government wants to allow for advance directives. As I have said before, there has been no thorough review of MAID as it currently operates. I am also not aware of any specific study about the risks and problems associated with a process for advance directives. That should happen well before we ever consider enacting it.

Advance requests raise difficult questions. For example, I have to wonder: Could someone consent in advance to be killed once they reach a state they fear but have never experienced, like living with advanced dementia? Further, once someone has signed an advance request and lost the capacity to consent to medical treatment, at what point exactly would their life be terminated? More alarming to me is this: If a non-capable person seems to resist a lethal injection, can the physician still proceed with the injection if the physician believes that the resistance is not due to any understanding on the patients' part that the injection will kill them? Bill C-7 states that apparent resistance means a doctor must not proceed but clarifies that involuntary responses to contact is not resistance. This raises another question. How does a doctor determine if the response to contact is involuntary?

Given that advance requests raise serious ethical issues, oversight challenges and safety risks, legalizing advance directives in the way that Bill C-7 would is irresponsible. This is the position we are left with when we are not trying to create effective accountability mechanisms and when we have insufficient data.

I am also troubled that Bill C-7 would remove the 10-day waiting period. Frankly, I find this disturbing. The 10-day waiting peri-

od in Bill C-14 already had a built-in exemption for those whose death or loss of capacity to consent was imminent, and as such, I cannot understand why the removal of this waiting period is necessary or prudent. On the contrary, I find it negligent.

It is well established that the desire to die is often transient. Suffering individuals have ups and downs throughout the day, throughout the week and throughout the year. No one should be able to make a death or life decision when at their most vulnerable point. The 10-day waiting period effectively allows a patient to reconsider their decision and take the time to speak with loved ones. This is critical.

Finally, I want to add that I believe the bill should add a provision that prohibits medical practitioners from discussing MAID unless the patient explicitly asks. We must not underestimate the power of pressure and suggestion, no matter how subtle, especially when it is combined with social stigma, as I mentioned before.

Journalist Ben Mattlin, who suffers from spinal muscular atrophy, wrote this in the *New York Times*:

I've lived so close to death for so long that I know how thin and porous the border between coercion and free choice is, how easy it is for someone to inadvertently influence you to feel devalued and hopeless—to pressure you ever so slightly but decidedly into being “reasonable,” to unburdening others, to “letting go.”

Perhaps, as advocates contend, you can't understand why anyone would push for assisted-suicide legislation until you've seen a loved one suffer. But you also can't truly conceive of the many subtle forces—invariably well meaning, kindhearted, even gentle, yet as persuasive as a tsunami—that emerge when your physical autonomy is hopelessly compromised.

Despite Mattlin's significant physical disability, he is a father, husband, author and journalist. He has a successful life and knows what he wants. He is less vulnerable than others who might be more easily persuaded that MAID is their best option. In this way, voluntary MAID is the start of a slippery slope that leads to involuntary MAID.

● (1705)

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, all lives are of equal importance. I listened to the member across the way, and I think he is ruling out what, I believe, a vast majority of Canadians want.

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I recall the debates we had in 2016 when, in essence, we were talking about this issue in a tangible way for the first time on the floor of the House of Commons. Through that debate, we ultimately saw good legislation, but I believe everyone back then realized there would be a necessity for change.

There have been ongoing discussions. All sorts of consultations have taken place at a multitude of levels. I think we have something before us today that will make the legislation better overall, and the member will be afforded an opportunity to hear and provide more feedback.

Does the member have any specific amendments he would like to see in the legislation before us today?

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Mr. Speaker, while we are debating this, one thing we need to remember is that people want to see stronger mental health and palliative care supports. It is incumbent upon us to take those requests seriously. Ultimately, if we were to more seriously address mental health, social issues and palliative care, fewer people would feel this is their last resort.

As far as specific amendments go, we need to look at the provisions, such as the 10-day wait, which need to stay in the legislation.

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I appreciated the hon. member bringing up the nuances, and I particularly appreciated his calling out the potentials for ableism in the agency of patients.

One of the challenges created by the current medical assistance in dying legislation is a requirement for final consent at the time the assistance is rendered. This forces those who have already been assessed and approved for medical assistance in dying to make a cruel choice. When faced with a possible loss of competence that would make them unable to give consent, they are forced to either go earlier, or risk not being able to receive the assistance they need to avoid living with intolerable suffering.

Audrey Parker campaigned to make Canadians aware of this, and Bill C-7 would fix this by creating a waiver of final consent. Does the hon. Conservative member support Audrey's amendment to help those facing the end of life avoid this cruel choice?

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Mr. Speaker, I will reiterate that, ultimately, the review period was more or less was skipped, which has prevented everybody from having the opportunity to hear more and learn more about the different issues and perspectives people like Audrey have with the bill. The more we can learn before we are forced into legislating this, the better.

Unfortunately, whether it was through prorogation or other means, we have been asked to skip these very important aspects, such as consultations and review processes, which are so vitally important when we are dealing with issues such as medical assistance in dying.

Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am the son of two elderly Canadians. My dad is 86 and my mom is 76. I am very concerned about our seniors' access to health care and that they will be put in a position where they have to make a decision between care and maybe ending their lives as a result of this pressure. This concerns me deeply, as it concerns many Canadians across the country.

Would this proposed legislation adequately protect those individuals in Canada?

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Mr. Speaker, the way I see it, no, I do not think it does. It is opening the door for those subtle suggestions that, quite honestly, for a person in a tough state, might be seen as a lot of overt pressure. They may be willing to take on advice like that, even though they maybe do not want to, because of the pressure on them. I think it is important that we consider those protections in this piece of legislation.

Again, we need to ensure that we are focusing on high-quality palliative care going forward.

• (1710)

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I am speaking in opposition to Bill C-7, an act to amend the Criminal Code regarding medical assistance in dying. I am also rising to raise the alarm and call on the government to put an immediate halt to medical assistance in dying in Canada's prisons until a full investigation can take place and legislative amendments can be made.

I believe, as a Conservative, my role is to be someone who stands athwart history yelling “stop” at a time when no one else is inclined to do so. History has shown us the consequences of people not speaking up in opposition to issues that may even have seemed overwhelmingly popular at the time.

Today is one such case, where years from now we may look back at these debates and wonder how we could push forward with such radical legislation and changes to our societal values. That is why I am speaking out today, despite the consensus, which appears to reign in this House, that medical assistance in dying on demand is the way to go.

Dr. Ivan Zinger, the head of the Office of the Correctional Investigator of Canada, released a deeply disturbing report this past June. I presume the government has had access to this report for months, but it was just tabled yesterday in the House of Commons. The correctional investigator raises some serious allegations, citing three cases of prisoners undergoing medical assistance in dying that raise, as the report states, “fundamental questions around consent, choice and dignity.” His office also found serious omissions, inaccuracies and misapplications of the law and the policies surrounding medical assistance in dying.

In one case, a prisoner who was terminally ill and serving a non-violent two-year sentence was denied parole and any opportunity to serve out his remaining days in the community. The inmate wished to explore the possibility of a compassionate parole, but after being denied the opportunity to do so, he sought an assisted death. Before receiving his assisted death, the prisoner repeatedly sought an opportunity to seek out an alternative to MAID in prison. He was repeatedly denied the opportunity to do so. Therefore, he was left with what he felt was no choice but to seek out medical assistance in dying. He was later granted that.

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This raises important questions on whether the government is adequately supporting Canadians, including Canadian prisoners, who are facing difficult end-of-life decisions, especially decisions where the power imbalance is so huge.

In another case, a prisoner, a dangerous offender with a terminal illness who was suicidal and suffering from mental illness, also received an assisted death. When prisoners are in a hopeless situation and disempowered, it is no surprise they would seek an assisted death.

In response to these cases, Dr. Zinger points out, “the decision to extend [medical assistance in dying] to federally sentenced individuals was made without adequate deliberation by the legislature.” He is talking about us. He also claims there is no oversight mechanism in the Canadian correctional services to ensure accountability or transparency for medical assistance in dying deaths in correctional institutions.

Given that the above cases were restricted to those with terminal illnesses who qualified under the previous requirement of death being reasonably foreseeable, I find it very concerning the government would be removing this requirement without first acknowledging and investigating the serious concerns and allegations of the corrections investigator.

The corrections investigator is actually calling for an absolute moratorium on all medical assistance in dying procedures in Canada's correctional institutions. Until such a time as we can craft legislation that protects the lives of vulnerable prisoners, who are clearly making a choice in a situation of severe duress, we should clearly consider holding off, or at least placing a moratorium, on medical assistance in dying in Canada's prisons.

This brings me to my next concern with this legislation, which is the need to protect the lives of vulnerable people like the disabled, the elderly and the mentally ill. When this legislation was originally considered a few years ago, Canadians were assured by the government that the legislation would protect the vulnerable. Restrictions that were put in were meant to protect people from being unduly coerced into making a decision to seek MAID. They also exist to encourage people to seek out alternatives before seeking an assisted death.

Everyone can sympathize with somebody nearing the end of their life who is in intolerable pain and seeking out an assisted death, but what Canadians did not expect four years ago was that today the government would be expanding this legislation to allow those who are not terminally ill or near death to qualify.

● (1715)

This raises important concerns for disabled people and those with mental illnesses. Many of them are not close to death and will now be eligible to seek an assisted death. The government has washed its hands of responsibility for restrictions and has left it up to individuals to make this choice for themselves. Choice has been enshrined as the overriding principle of medical assistance in dying legislation, while little or no concern is being given to the factors that can go into those choices.

Similar to the cases that I cited in our prisons, many elderly, disabled or mentally ill Canadians have been isolated for many months from loved ones in Canada's troubled long-term care centres. I wonder how many decisions to access MAID would not have otherwise been made had the situation in long-term care been addressed or how many decisions to access MAID would have been made if Canada had an effective system of palliative care centres for people to live out the remaining days of their life in comfort and peace.

We know from the government's own annual reporting that there is a significant number, and even one is too many, of Canadians, who did not have access to palliative care, who received an assisted death. No Canadian should be forced to choose an assisted death without the opportunity to access palliative care.

The government's annual reporting also revealed that in 2019 alone, 87 Canadians with disabilities received medical assistance in dying but were denied access to critical disability support services. That is simply unacceptable. Canadians with disabilities deserve better.

I am concerned that every time we remove a protection on medical assistance in dying, we are blurring the lines between an assisted death that is acceptable and constitutional and an assisted death that is not. I do not believe, for many in the House, that there is a single assisted death case that would be unacceptable. I challenge members to tell me what they think is unacceptable.

The consensus among most parties in the House, and most members, seems to be that we need to affirm individual choices. I think we can all recognize that no choice is made in a vacuum. Choices are made with a variety of factors, such as people's socio-economic status, the quality of their life, their relations with family and friends, their mental state and their physical state, and the list goes on. Simply boiling down this argument to a matter of individual choice ignores the very real factors that can go into making someone make the decision to seek out medical assistance in dying.

For example, do people feel they are a burden on their family or society? Do they feel there is no alternative to the pain they are feeling? Are there monetary reasons at play? A recent article in MoneySense magazine was advising readers on how to maximize their pension and life insurance benefits if they chose to undergo medical assistance in dying. Where we have come in our public discourse in four short years is shocking to me.

Given that I have outlined a number of factors in determining what factors could be behind someone's decision to seek out MAID, I would ask this. What provisions is the government putting in place to ensure that people's lives are being affirmed and that they are receiving the support they deserve? The fact is that I believe the government is ignoring the very important role that social workers can play in these decisions. By limiting the decision for medical assistance in dying between a doctor and a patient, the government is ignoring the fact that doctors are not always equipped to recognize situations where socio-economic factors or other factors could be at play in the decision. When the government takes away the requirement for two witnesses, it also creates a huge power imbalance, where essentially only one person, the doctor and the patient, is making the decision. There is very little accountability.

Finally, I want to raise the concerns of Dr. Leonie Herx, who is a chair at Queen's University and one of 750 doctors from across Canada who have urged the government to stop this legislation. In her words:

(MAiD) was intended to be a last resort when all other measures had failed and someone had irremediable suffering close to the end of life. (Bill C-7) makes death on demand available to anyone who wants it. It's a radical shift for medicine.

I call on the government to heed the concerns of the 750 doctors as well as the report from the corrections investigator and immediately move to place new restrictions and protections on medical assistance in dying to ensure that vulnerable people are protected. We have a responsibility. Every Canadian life matters. We cannot get this wrong.

• (1720)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member referenced dying on demand. I know a couple of Conservative members of Parliament have used that sort of terminology. That undervalues the immense contributions, at a very difficult time in a person's life, of the people around them. I am talking about medical doctors, social workers, most importantly, family members and others. The infrastructure is there. There is no doubt, as some people have talked about, including myself, that we need to look at palliative and hospice care and other ways to ensure a quality of life when the end approaches.

When members talk about dying on demand through this legislation, they do a disservice to those who are there in those very precious moments at the end of a person's life. I wonder if the member could provide his thoughts about the advisers, in particular, health care professionals and social workers. I have had that experience on two occasions, for both my father and grandmother. I valued and appreciated the feedback that I got from health care professionals back then.

Mr. Dane Lloyd: Mr. Speaker, these are not necessarily just the words of Conservative members in the House. These are the words of Dr. Leonie Herx and 750 doctors who have raised the alarm with the government. This is a term they are using. The fact is that the government is removing restrictions on the number of witnesses that need to be involved. In some cases, people who have a reasonably foreseeable death can request assistance in dying and receive it on the same day.

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When we get rid of these reflection periods, it seems that the goal of this policy is to ensure that as many people can access an assisted death as possible. We need to look at this from the other perspective and ask how many people we can divert away from an assisted death through better palliative care, better pain management and better mental health supports. That is what we should be looking at, not trying to speed up and increase the number of people accessing medical assistance in dying.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. I appreciate the approach he took in talking about the situation in correctional institutions.

Then again, I heard him refer to this bill as radical. Personally, when I think of this bill, I think of compassion. I cannot help but think of Nicole Gladu and Jean Truchon, who honourably fought for their cause before the courts.

Would my colleague agree that, as legislators, we need to do everything we can to ensure that other people suffering from degenerative, incurable diseases are not forced to go to court to challenge the terms and conditions of medical assistance in dying?

[*English*]

Mr. Dane Lloyd: Mr. Speaker, I apologize to the member for not answering in French, but I am working on it.

We are all here because we care about vulnerable people and people who are sick and suffering, but it is important that we do not all buy into this consensus. When we all get on the train and buy into the same consensus, we lose the opportunity to raise very important points. That is what I and a number of my colleagues are trying to do. We are trying to point out the flaws in this legislation, which I would say is radical because just five or six short years ago, we did not have legalized assisted dying in Canada and here we are today, already passing the second piece of legislation.

Nobody could have imagined six years ago that we would be allowing people without a terminal illness to receive an assisted death. That is what we are debating today, that basically anyone who has a grievous or irremediable condition, even if it is not terminal, should be allowed to receive assistance in dying, and I do think that is quite radical.

• (1725)

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise and speak in this House on Bill C-7, an act to amend the Criminal Code, medical assistance in dying.

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Each and every time that I speak in this House, I am reminded that the opportunity has been entrusted to me by the citizens of North Okanagan—Shuswap, first in 2015, and again in 2019. It is roughly five years now since I arrived in this place for the first time and I still remember the anticipation I experienced as I approached my work as a member of Parliament. I still carry great appreciation for the opportunity to serve the people of North Okanagan—Shuswap and, indeed, all Canadians.

Each and every member of this House has been entrusted by their constituents to represent all constituents, and this is a responsibility that I hope all members keep as a guiding principle as we undertake our work. I do not think anyone could be fully prepared for what the role of being an MP entails and the unexpected situations that arise, but I will say that I came here with an open mind, eager to listen and committed to doing my very best to represent the constituents of North Okanagan—Shuswap.

Shortly after the 2015 federal election, Bill C-14 on medical assistance in dying was introduced to the 42nd Parliament. In fairly short order, Bill C-14 was debated and passed. As members will recall, Bill C-14 was passed in response to the Supreme Court decision that ruled that adults with grievous and irremediable medical conditions are entitled to physician-assisted suicide, as it was termed at the time.

Over the time that was allotted for debate and committee study of the original Bill C-14 legislation, I took the opportunity to hear from constituents and took what I heard at that time to form my position on the legislation at hand. Since then, I have continued to listen to constituents on all sides of this debate in an effort to ensure that I am aware of their many differing viewpoints. I have heard from many who believe in the sanctity of all human life and believe the time of life and death is to be decided by a greater power than any of us possess. I have also heard from others with various incurable health conditions who want the ability to choose an appropriate time so that they are able to pass with dignity, and the ability to choose when to say a final goodbye.

While listening to and pondering the various personal beliefs and scenarios shared by constituents, I have also reflected on my own personal experience and how fortunate many of us are that we have not had to make the very difficult, personal decision that many Canadians face every day.

I would like to share what weighed heavily on my mind during the debate and considerations, back in 2016, and remains with me today as we revisit this topic in the legislature. My mother had developed dementia over a period of years before her passing. At first, we did not recognize the symptoms or maybe we did not want to actually acknowledge that they were there, but as time went on Mom became more forgetful. At first it was just that she would end up with multiple jugs of milk in the fridge because each time she went to the grocery store she simply remembered that she needed milk and not the fact that she had just bought some the day before.

As time progressed, her memory got worse and eventually she moved into a full-care home where she was safe and cared for. Initially it was only her short-term memory that faded away and she could still remember many things from earlier in her life and about her family, but that gradually changed. One thing we did notice in

the last few months of her life was that she no longer used the telephone. It would ring but she was not able to put the pieces together to pick it up and talk to whoever was calling. The phone had been a big part of her life as she would always call all of her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren on our birthdays, but for a number of months she was no longer able to remember phone numbers, what the telephone was for, or how to start a conversation.

● (1730)

At the time of what turned out to be her last Christmas, we made plans to have her home for Christmas dinner and we all looked forward to the day. Then on Christmas morning, we got a call from the care home. They said she had come down with the flu and would not be able to go out. We managed to get through Christmas Day but were concerned the illness was more than she could take in her frail condition.

The next day we were surprised when the care home called and said my mom was doing much better that day and asked if we wanted to come for a visit. We headed out, knowing that mom might not be looking or feeling her best because she had been ill.

We walked into the room that day and were totally taken aback. She was sitting up, fully articulate and waiting for us. We were shocked when she started conversations like someone had turned back the clock two years on her dementia. She told us how she felt bad she had not been able to go out and do any Christmas shopping for the grandchildren and many other things she had not been able to communicate for months.

When we returned home later that day, our answering machine was full of messages from my five siblings all wondering what was going on with mom. She had picked up the phone and called each of them from the numbers in her head and had extensive conversations with each of them.

We were all in shock from this remarkable recovery of her memory and the restoration of her mental function from what had been considered incurable. Unfortunately, the recovery was temporary and only lasted about 24 hours, but nonetheless it was a complete reversal of her dementia for that period of time. To this day, no one has been able to explain how or why this happened. We wondered, at the time, and still wonder today if there may be a cure just around the corner.

This is only one scenario, and in the time since medical assistance in dying became legal, I have heard from constituents and observed cases where family members have been quite open about their aging parent or terminally ill family member. They have been open about how, at some point, the parent or family member is no longer the person they once were and no longer wants to carry on. I have heard how they want to be able to make the choice and should not be denied that choice.

In considering the legislation before us today, we must consider all of the people and lives that will be affected by our decision. It is a very difficult task when we are not able to hear all of the different scenarios, learn the details about symptoms and reasons for personal choices.

That is why I urge all members to consider what safeguards should be in place and if safeguards are not in the current text of the bill, can it be amended so that our decision respects the needs and rights of our constituents and Canadians.

I will continue to open my mind and listen to what I hear from my constituents. I expect I might hear cases like mine where we were fortunate that when mom passed peacefully in her sleep a few months later, we did not have to make those difficult decisions. There are cases where a cure might be found soon for someone who is incurable today. There are cases where there is no hope for recovery and someone wants to ensure dignity is retained.

There are many other personal situations out there and as legislators, we must remember that. We have a duty to consider more than just our own personal opinions or those of the people close to us. We must be considerate of those who will be tasked with carrying out what we legislate. We must guard against any loophole or opportunity for this legislation to be exploited or abused, because we are literally legislating on matters of life and death here. Let us consider all of that in our deliberations.

• (1735)

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 appreciate the member sharing his personal story about his mom. It is quite compelling to hear personal stories or to hear from individuals on all points on the spectrum as to why there is such a desperate need for the legislation and why it is very important we be so careful as we enter into this area, putting the checks and balances in place.

I had the opportunity to listen to all sides, as the member recommends we do, and put aside our personal thoughts, feelings, and maybe even situations, to get a fair assessment of the bigger picture. We have before us legislation that will move us forward. I suspect it will go to committee. Does the member have some very specific amendments he would like to see made to the legislation or is he more content to see it go to committee?

Mr. Mel Arnold: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member is willing to listen to all of the personal scenarios that are out there. We certainly cannot hear them all. As he mentioned, there may be amendments moving forward. I do not think this is the correct place to get into exactly what specific amendments should be there. I would expect there would be amendments being moved if this bill gets to committee, and hopefully what comes out of that committee will be a bill that is respectful of the wishes of every Canadian.

[Translation]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his very poignant remarks.

Government Orders

I agree with him that we need to take the time to study the bill carefully. The Bloc Québécois was actually relieved that the bill excludes individuals suffering solely from a mental illness from eligibility for medical assistance in dying, since that aspect requires further reflection, study and consultation. We hope this will be completed at the Standing Committee on Health as soon as the motion moved by my colleague from Montcalm is adopted.

I would like to hear more from my colleague on that aspect.

[English]

Mr. Mel Arnold: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments regarding the mental health portion being left out of this bill. Certainly, mental health has become a much more talked about issue over recent years. That is a good thing. The mental health aspect, especially now during the COVID situation with people suffering from isolation more than any other time I have ever known and probably any of us have ever known, of medical assistance in dying certainly needs further discussion and may be addressed in further legislation in years to come.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I also want to thank the member for North Okanagan—Shuswap for his moving commentary on this bill. I want to reflect on what the member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands said, which is that all members of Parliament have sincerely held beliefs on the issues before us in this bill. What I would urge here is for us to make the distinction between the need for the larger review of medical assistance in dying, which was provided for in the original legislation, and that review unfortunately has not started, and what is actually in Bill C-7. While the member for North Okanagan—Shuswap was not really as guilty as some of his colleagues have been of doing this, I think there are some people who by using “death on demand” and “same-day dying” are distorting what is actually in Bill C-7. I think it behooves all of us, in order to have a respectful debate, that we talk about what is actually there. The bill still requires that someone be suffering from an incurable illness, intolerable suffering and irreversible decline, so I would urge all members, including this member, to keep in mind what is actually in the bill.

• (1740)

Mr. Mel Arnold: Mr. Speaker, I certainly agree with the member that the review of the original Bill C-14, medical assistance in dying, needs to take place so there is a proper review of what has been happening since 2016 when it passed. As we move forward with this bill, we certainly need to be cautious and review it, because what we are dealing with here as legislators is the life and death of other people.

The Deputy Speaker: That is all the time that we have for questions and comments.

Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

Private Members' Business

Mr. Garnett Genuis: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I am just a bit confused about the process here. Are we proceeding with the question now or is there somebody else who is up to speak?

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan. There was no time left in the five minutes for questions and comments. I then went to resuming debate and no person rose. Nor did I see any hands raised on the Zoom participants. Therefore, I proceeded to the question on the bill.

Does the member wish to make a speech on the matter?

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Sorry, Mr. Speaker, I do not. I was trying to get a bit of clarification on the process.

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the member for that. That is perfectly fine to do if members are unsure. It is good to check in and we are happy to get it clarified.

The question is on the motion.

As members will know, if a member present wishes to request a recorded division or request that the motion be adopted on division, I invite the member to rise in his or her place and that would signify a recorded division.

And one or more members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Accordingly, pursuant to order made on September 23, the division stands deferred until Thursday, October 29, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I suspect if you were to canvass the House, you might find unanimous consent to call it 6:13 p.m. at this time in order to facilitate private members' hour beginning.

The Deputy Speaker: Are there any objections to the House seeing the clock at 6:13 p.m.?

Seeing none, the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

• (1745)

Mr. Damien Kurek: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, just as clarification, I was attempting to connect prior to the question being read. I am making the assumption from the last few moments, because I was not connected before that point, that the debate is now collapsed.

The Deputy Speaker: That is in fact correct. No other member stood and so the question was put and a recorded division requested and deferred until tomorrow after the time for Oral Questions.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[Translation]

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL FISCAL ARRANGEMENTS ACT

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ) moved that Bill C-224, An Act to amend An Act to authorize the making of certain fiscal payments to provinces, and to authorize the entry into tax collection agreements with provinces, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I must say I am proud to rise in the House today to introduce the bill on a single tax return administered by Quebec. I see this bill as a test for the federal Parliament. Is Ottawa capable of giving Quebec some freedom? Is Ottawa capable of being open to Quebec? Is Ottawa capable of offering Quebec reasonable accommodation? These are the questions this bill asks the House.

As this Parliament has recognized, Quebec is a nation with its own language, culture, values and way of doing things. The problem with the Quebec-Ottawa relationship is that every time Quebec asks Ottawa to accommodate its way of doing things, Ottawa gets irritated, leading to a lengthy tug-of-war. Ottawa generally wins, because otherwise it drags on even longer, since Ottawa is mad.

This Parliament's vision is that of the English Canadian nation. Its government is the one in Ottawa. Its philosophy is to have unilateral policies across the country. When Quebec asks to opt out of a program with compensation, it shatters the English Canadian dream, and that irritates Ottawa because, as a nation, Quebec wants to be able to create and administer its own policies and programs in its own way. The government of my nation is the one that sits in the National Assembly in Quebec City.

Here are some examples from the past and present to illustrate my point.

When we think about this tug-of-war, we think about things like infrastructure, social housing, health care funding with federal standards, the fiscal imbalance, the aerospace industry, the manufacturing industry in international treaties, and the petro-currency. We think about artificial intelligence and our agriculture, particularly supply management. We think about the forestry industry, our forestry regime, language, and the defence of the French language, particularly the application of Bill 101 to federally regulated businesses. We think about Quebec's pharmaceutical industry, Ottawa's philosophy of giving everything to oil, and our rail industry, which was abandoned in favour of Siemens and jobs in California. We think about funding for Muskrat Falls and our exclusion from ship-building contracts and from the last three trade agreements, which were signed at the expense of critical sectors of Quebec's economy. We think about Ottawa's complacency toward web giants and the use of tax havens. We think about all of the problems with the CRTC, the Internet and cell networks, and the culture and media file.

Frankly, we are not masters in our own house here.

Since the 1980s, we have had the unilateral repatriation of the Constitution, which took place without Quebec and against its will. After that, we had Meech and Charlottetown, which were again a tug-of-war. We can go back even further in time, from the conquest to the occupation of Quebec by the Canadian army in peacetime, to Confederation, the Act of Union, and the merger of Upper Canada and Lower Canada, with its representational bias towards Upper Canada. The Quebec nation, which was called "Canadian" and then "French Canadian" at a given point, was systematically subjected to the will of the English Canadian nation at the expense of sovereignty.

Those were a few examples of the Quebec-Ottawa relationship drama. I will repeat that, in general, Ottawa refuses to let Quebec make or tailor its own policies in its own way. The result is that Ottawa rejects the sovereignty of the Quebec people within the federation. With the Clarity Act, Ottawa outright rejected sovereignty for the people of Quebec. That is a denial of the right of a people to its sovereignty and self-determination in 2020. Welcome to Canada.

This is the context for the bill on a single tax return, to be administered by Quebec. We are not talking about a revolution. It is a simple accommodation that will make life easier for the people and businesses of Quebec. Quite simply, filing one return rather than two eliminates the duplication of effort.

This bill has been universally acclaimed in Quebec and received unanimous support at the Quebec National Assembly. It was backed by all parties: Coalition Avenir Québec, the Liberal Party, the Parti Québécois and Québec solidaire. Premier François Legault at the Quebec National Assembly then made an official request to the current Prime Minister here in the House.

• (1750)

The polls show the same thing. An overwhelming majority of Quebecers support this bill. All of corporate Quebec Inc. supports it, including chambers of commerce, the Conseil du patronat du Québec, independent business owners and the Quebec CPA Order, just to name a few. The same is true on the union side. The Syndicat de la fonction publique du Québec has been calling for this for many years, with the support of the Centrale des syndicats du Québec. That is a big deal. The bill is good for Quebecers.

The Research Institute on Self-Determination of Peoples and National Independence has conducted studies on the subject and concluded that having one tax return instead of two would save \$425 million a year. Individuals would save \$39 million, businesses would save \$99 million, and \$287 million would be saved by eliminating bureaucratic duplication. We are not saying that federal public servants do not do as good a job as Quebec public servants, but they are doing the same thing twice. Our taxes are paying for the same thing to be done twice. Come on.

One extremely important part of this bill as introduced and worded is that it would enable Quebec to crack down on tax havens on its own, rather than be limited by what Ottawa is doing, which is, to all appearances, nothing. This is a pretty simple bill. There is nothing revolutionary about it. It respects the Quebec nation and saves everyone time and money.

When we suggested this idea to the Liberals, they said, why not just let Ottawa handle it? Here was more evidence of the English Canadian nation's desire to unilaterally impose its way of doing things and reject any kind of accommodation for Quebec. Quite simply, taxation is not even a federal jurisdiction; it is Quebec's responsibility. However, the point here is efficiency.

After years of negotiation, Quebec managed to come to an agreement with Ottawa regarding the collection of sales tax from businesses. That was about 30 years ago. Before that, Ottawa collected its GST, and Quebec collected its QST. For the past 30 years, Revenu Québec has been collecting the GST and the QST at the same time. It makes for a lot less paperwork for businesses and

Private Members' Business

generates significant savings. The advantage is that Revenu Québec is present in every region of Quebec, and the system works well. It is a success, and nobody has any complaints.

The preposterous idea presented to us, that is, to have Ottawa collect income tax and have Quebec collect sales tax, makes no sense at all. That would do absolutely nothing to resolve the issue of administrative duplication. If we want to be efficient, everything should be collected by the same body, namely Revenu Québec. Corporate taxes, as well as their employees' taxes, should all be administered in one place. Otherwise, Quebec City and Ottawa would have to communicate to determine who took what amount. This means more duplication, when the whole point is to get away from such duplication.

The idea of a single tax return administered by Quebec is not a new one. For example, 16 years ago, in 2004, Quebec's Liberal finance minister, Yves Séguin, said, "There is no reason to maintain two competing tax collection systems." That was from a Liberal finance minister in Quebec, who was a federalist. He also said, "The real, most well-established tax administration in Quebec is Revenu Québec." The logic is impeccable.

As I was saying earlier, on January 17, 2019, the Premier of Quebec, François Legault, acted on the unanimous resolution of the Quebec National Assembly and, for the first time ever, made a formal request from the Government of Quebec to Ottawa. This bill is an opportunity to finally say yes to Quebec. This is a momentous occasion.

I would like to digress for a moment to reassure Canada Revenue Agency employees who work in Quebec. We drafted the bill in such a way as to ensure that all jobs in Quebec would be protected. That is the spirit of the bill, and that is what we want. I went to Jonquière to meet with CRA employees. I have been in contact with employees in Shawinigan. That is really our intention.

• (1755)

Quebec does not have its fair share of federal public servants in Quebec. The Bloc Québécois will continue to call for fairness in this regard.

Clearly, the bill seeks to prevent useless duplication. Why pay two people who do the same job instead of paying just one? We propose to reassign jobs and keep positions in the region.

I would also like to remind members that a single tax return will not lead to the Canada Revenue Agency disappearing from Quebec. For example, the 1,300 CRA employees in Shawinigan do not process tax returns. They are responsible for various administrative tasks related to the department's operations. There is nothing preventing the employees from continuing to do the same work.

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Even when Revenu Québec becomes responsible for processing tax returns and collecting taxes, the federal government will continue to maintain the registry of the seven million Quebec taxpayers and their tax information. The agency will have to assign more employees to deal with Revenu Québec so as to ensure that the amounts transferred correspond to the taxes collected for every taxpayer. The agency will continue to pay Quebec taxpayers the tax credits to which they are entitled, such as the child tax benefit or the electric vehicle purchase credit. This is the kind of work that can be done from the Jonquière centre.

To be clear, the idea is to avoid duplication. There are so many needs in the public service, and it is so concentrated in Ottawa, that there is room to protect every job. Jobs are important in the regions.

We anticipate that Revenu Québec will hire more people to administer the new tax return, but also, and this is interesting, that it will create a new international tax unit, an area of jurisdiction that is largely missing in Quebec right now and that would help it fight tax havens. That is an extremely important component.

We will see a significantly closer relationship between Revenu Québec and the federal government for sending the taxation data and taxes collected to Ottawa.

As I was saying, the federal administration is highly concentrated. For example, Ottawa has 50% more federal public servants than the entire province of Quebec, and that includes the public servants in Gatineau. It makes no sense for it to be concentrated like that. It is not surprising that the federal programs are so ill suited to regional realities. These programs are disconnected from the rest of the world.

To summarize, we are debating a simple bill. There are two tax returns, and we want to have just one. This will make things easier for people and businesses. It will save us \$425 million a year because individuals, businesses and governments will not have to do everything twice.

This bill has unanimous support in Quebec and in the Quebec National Assembly. This bill will allow Quebec to combat the use of tax havens more effectively. This bill will protect CRA employees. We drafted it in such a way as to make sure that happens. The question is whether the Canadian government will once again vote against my nation's legitimate desire. Let the debate begin.

• (1800)

[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.): Mr. Speaker, although I am someone who has a love for the province of Manitoba, which I have stated in the chamber before, many of my ancestors come from the province of Quebec. It is really somewhat sad that I have lost the language that my father and grandmothers on both sides spoke.

However, I can tell my colleagues that one of the benefits of having a stronger national government is that we recognize the importance of the province of Quebec being a francophone entity, much

like we promote the French language in other jurisdictions. I am very proud of St. Boniface, for example.

It seems to me that what the Bloc is really striving for is to try to come up with ways in which they can minimize the importance of the national government. A good example of that is what we see today with—

The Deputy Speaker: I am going to have to interrupt. We only have five minutes and I know that other members are going to want to get in on this as well.

The hon. member for Joliette.

[Translation]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his heartfelt comments.

In my opinion, that is a perfect example of what I was talking about in my speech. My colleague is asking me whether we are weakening the national government. The national government of what nation? We are talking about my nation, the Quebec nation, the nation that speaks French. Its government is in Quebec City and that government wants a single tax return.

The federal government is supposed to oversee the various nations, whether it be the first nations—which are very poorly represented here because there are very few members from indigenous communities—the Quebec nation, the Acadian nation or the English Canadian nation. The role of the federal government is to oversee all of them, but it is the English Canadian nation that is represented.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I applaud the bill that was introduced by my colleague from Joliette. It is a great initiative.

However, in order for us to be able to move this bill forward in the House, we need to be able to speak the truth. There is one thing that worries me. On one hand, my colleague is talking about saving \$425 million. On the other hand, he is talking about protecting jobs. I think it will be difficult to do both of those things.

The issue here is cutting down on paperwork for Quebecers so that they only have to fill out one income tax return. The issue is not saving money.

How can the member claim that this bill will save \$425 million while protecting jobs?

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

His concern is absolutely legitimate. I would like to offer some reassurance. Eliminating duplication saves money. That is clear and inarguable. It is possible to walk and chew gum at the same time, however. What we are saying is that the federal administration does not have enough staff and is too heavily concentrated.

We want to see the same number of jobs maintained in Shawinigan and Jonquière. Some of these employees will no longer handle federal tax returns because we want a single tax return, but they can do other things. They can work in other CRA branches or elsewhere. Just think of the Phoenix pay system, which I believe has a shortage—

Private Members' Business

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his passionate speech. That was a pretty impressive list he reeled off.

Thanks to the NDP's vision in recognizing Quebec and its autonomy, ours was the first national party to support the principle of a single tax return. We made that official at our 2018 convention.

However, we have concerns about maintaining jobs in the regions. My colleague mentioned the unions, but his opinion is not unanimous. The Quebec chapter of the Public Service Alliance of Canada, which is part of the FTQ, has serious concerns. We have been talking to those workers for several years now, and the idea of reassignment seems more like magical thinking than a real action plan.

What does my colleague think of that?

• (1805)

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his comments.

We went out and met with workers, and obviously, that is a concern. However, there is unanimous support in Quebec City for one thing: avoiding duplication. We made sure that the bill was drafted in such a way as to do everything we can to maintain jobs.

Right now, we are debating the principle of the bill. I will fight tooth and nail in committee to ensure that these jobs are maintained, since we need them in the regions.

When I talked to people on the ground, they said it was okay. It was representatives from PSAC, regional representatives, who had the greatest concerns. We need to keep talking, but I suspect that their interests were less—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for La Pointe-de-l'Île.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on his presentation.

Speaking personally, what surprises me a bit, and will likely continue to surprise me, is when someone uses the argument that this is going to cost us jobs. Right now, we are doing the same thing twice with the federal and provincial tax returns. It seems obvious to me that we would be able to avoid duplication. It would be pretty easy to get the employees to do something useful, rather than having to do the same thing twice.

In my view, to say this will cost us jobs illustrates the government's ill will. It is as if the government is saying that any savings will not be reinvested in Quebec.

What are my colleague's thoughts on that?

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Mr. Speaker, my colleague from La Pointe-de-l'Île just perfectly summed up a key part of the bill.

One aspect that was not calculated in the IRAI study is the fight against tax evasion. By collecting income taxes, Quebec would have access to international information. It could finally start to fight the illegal or immoral use of tax havens, which Ottawa is not doing. This would bring in money, in addition to the \$425 million.

It would be interesting to see how much more money we could recover.

In my opinion, this is a progressive bill that has unanimous support in Quebec.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Orléans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take part in today's debate on Bill C-224, a private member's bill.

This bill was introduced by my colleague, the hon. member for Joliette, after the National Assembly of Quebec unanimously adopted a motion on May 15, 2018, calling on the federal government to allow the province of Quebec to administer a single tax return.

The purpose of the bill is to authorize the Minister of Finance to enter into an agreement with the government of a province so that it can collect the federal personal and corporation income taxes on behalf of the Government of Canada.

At first glance, the bill's intent is appealing. Not only is the idea of a single tax return appealing to those who have to file two returns, but a single tax return could also be more efficient for governments to administer and more cost-effective for taxpayers.

That is why we have tax collection agreements, or TCAs, between the federal government and the provincial and territorial governments. Under these agreements, the federal government collects and manages income taxes for all provinces and territories, with the exception of Quebec's personal and corporate taxes and Alberta's corporate taxes. Only affected taxpayers in these two provinces have to deal with two tax administrators.

As I mentioned, these taxpayers would find the idea of dealing with a single tax administrator appealing. The question is how we can deliver this in a way that results in a single administrator and administrative efficiencies like those provided by existing TCAs.

Canadians expect their government to administer programs in a fair, efficient and cost-effective manner. To that end, Bill C-224 deserves to be carefully considered.

One consideration is the fact that Bill C-224 would likely result in higher total costs for Canadian taxpayers. Existing TCAs produce cost savings for taxpayers because transferring the administration of several provinces and territories to a single tax administrator, namely the federal government, creates economies of scale and reduces the administrative cost to each taxpayer.

Going in the wrong direction, as proposed in Bill C-224, would have the opposite effect. The structure of tax administration costs is mainly dominated by investments in fixed costs for technology infrastructure. Having Quebec administer the federal income tax would not help reduce those fixed costs in the province, because they would still have to be covered by both the Canada Revenue Agency and Revenu Québec.

Private Members' Business

As the Premier of Quebec clearly indicated, his government would seek to be reimbursed for the cost of administering the federal income tax. However, at this point, it is difficult to estimate the overall cost impact on the federal government, because it would depend on the scope of the tax programs transferred to the provincial government and the outcome of negotiations on various issues.

Bill C-224 would also make tax administration less consistent across the country, which would reduce the CRA's ability to respond quickly and effectively to major logistical challenges at the national level, such as rolling out the emergency measures needed to support Canadians during a crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic.

The bill would also be detrimental to Canada Revenue Agency employees who work in and outside Quebec. In Quebec, the 14 provincial CRA offices employ from 4,800 to 5,500 people, depending on the time of year, for example during the busy tax season, and about 60% of these employees are women. Changing their employment status, which would be inevitable with Bill C-224, would have consequences for them personally and for their communities.

Furthermore, this bill would require mitigation measures for employment taxes, and those costs could be quite high.

● (1810)

Bill C-224 could also impact Canada's ability to fulfill its obligations under existing international tax agreements and conventions that identify the Minister of National Revenue as Canada's competent authority. Our international partners may not be willing to modify those agreements or mesh their operations with two or more distinct tax authorities.

Canada has over 100 such tax agreements, and renegotiating them could take years and require considerable resources. In addition, if Canada no longer had access to provincial citizens' tax information, that would hinder its ability to fight international tax fraud, which is an important priority for our government and for Canadians.

The bill could also open the door to similar action on the part of other provinces, which might be quite interested in the proposed model if the federal government had to cover the provincial costs of administering federal taxes. That would result in similar challenges on a larger scale and increase the administrative cost per taxpayer.

In conclusion, Canadians expect us to take into account all these important considerations. Our government is open to improving tax administration in Quebec to ensure the best possible results for Canadians in terms of fairness, efficiency and value for taxpayers and governments, including those of Quebec.

We will continue to work with Revenu Québec, with which we have collaborated for a long time, to find ways to simplify tax returns and reduce the compliance burden on Quebec taxpayers. This will ensure a better harmonization of our respective tax administrations and will make it easier to complete Quebec taxpayers' tax returns. We are always willing to improve the situation.

● (1815)

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my turn to rise and speak to Bill C-224.

I would like to start with a summary of what we are trying to achieve for Quebecers in the House today. The goal is simple.

Quebeckers have to send in two tax returns. Both businesses and individuals have to submit one tax return for Quebec and another for Ottawa. The only people happy about that are the accountants, because they are the only ones making money off the situation.

Before hearing my colleague's speech, I was planning to fully support Bill C-224. However, some of my colleague's remarks were a letdown. He seems to see "Ottawa" and "Liberals" as synonymous. He says that Ottawa does this and that, Ottawa is centralist, Ottawa is this or that, but, actually, that is how the Liberals are.

Mr. Harper's government recognized the Quebec nation. We gave Quebec a UNESCO seat. We are willing to recognize provincial jurisdiction. We are willing to give Quebec the means to do more within the existing system, but the Liberals, which my colleague conflates with Ottawa, patently are not.

I think it is important to make the distinction for me to be able to support Bill C-224. I do not want to appear argumentative or nit-picky, and I do not want to pick fight. We must not do that today. We are working for Quebeckers, to simplify their lives and reduce paperwork.

A few moments ago, the Liberals said that the Canada Revenue Agency could not have responded to citizens as it did during the pandemic if it were not administering Quebec's tax returns. That struck me.

Two weeks ago, the Canada Revenue Agency sent a letter to some of our constituents, telling them that they may have been the victims of fraud and they needed to call a certain number. However, when people call that CRA number, there is no answer. The CRA advises citizens that they may have been a victim of fraud, asks them to call to reassure them, but then does not answer. If that is their only argument for not having a single tax return in Quebec, they will need to work on that.

My colleague's bill is simple and has two major elements. First, it seeks to amend current legislation in order to authorize Quebec to provide Quebeckers the possibility of filing a single tax return. Second, and this is very important, it calls for negotiations to begin between the two levels of government so that we can achieve that goal. It is simple.

We just need to negotiate. If the Liberals are not happy after the negotiations, we will stop there. However, why not go further? Why not just start the negotiations with this bill? That is how I see this bill. It is a first step that would allow the Government of Quebec and the federal government to work together to achieve the goal of having a single tax return for Quebecers.

I am in favour of it. Many Quebecers are in favour of it. The Conservatives have long been in favour of it. This is not the first time that the House has debated a single tax return for Quebecers.

The Conservative Party's position is very clear, and especially so since the first meeting of our national caucus in Saint-Hyacinthe in May 2018. All Quebec members of the caucus voted in favour of creating a single tax return. On May 15, 2018, the National Assembly of Quebec voted unanimously in favour of a single tax return for Quebecers. In August 2018, when we held our national convention in Halifax, all Canadian Conservatives said that Quebec should be allowed to have a single tax return. There was near unanimity, with 90% of party members—almost 3,000—agreeing that we initiate negotiations between the federal government and the Quebec government to create a single tax return.

• (1820)

This led my colleague and the member for Richmond—Arthabaska, whom I hold in high regard, to table a motion in the House on February 5, 2019, which is somewhat similar to what we have before us today. The motion was as follows:

That, given:

- (a) the House has great respect for provincial jurisdiction and trust in provincial institutions;
- (b) the people of Quebec are burdened with completing and submitting two tax returns, one federal and one provincial;
- (c) the House believes in cutting red tape and reducing unnecessary paperwork to improve the everyday lives of families; therefore,

That was the ultimate goal. I will continue:

the House call on the government to work with the Government of Quebec to implement a single tax return in Quebec, as adopted unanimously in the motion of the National Assembly of Quebec on May 15, 2018.

We lost the vote on that motion, but it is interesting to see how MPs voted, especially Quebec MPs: 19 MPs voted for the motion and 45 voted against it. The 19 were Conservative MPs from Quebec and Bloc Québécois MPs. The NDP voted against the motion even though it had said in its much-touted Sherbrooke declaration that it would give Quebecers a single tax return.

Once a new leader was elected, it was over. There was no more talk of a single tax return for Quebecers, and the NDP moved on to other things. That is where it ended. Today, the NDP representative hesitated once again, saying that it was because of jobs and all that. It was in the Sherbrooke declaration though. It was clear that the NDP wanted a single tax return.

However, what worries me are the Liberal MPs from Quebec. Why did they vote against the motion and why are they once again, from what I can tell, planning to vote against my colleague's Bill C-224 for a single tax return for Quebec? Do they not want to cut red tape? Do they not want to make Quebecers' lives easier? What is the problem?

Private Members' Business

The bill is very simple. We are getting the discussion going. I think this is something that needs to be done. We need an opportunity to discuss. I find it hard to believe that in 2020, two governments cannot find a way to consolidate everything into one document. I think that is very easy to do, and Quebec is asking we do so. This negotiation needs to happen. Quebec is big enough and mature enough to do it.

Ironically, I was a bit surprised to see the results of the vote. The only members from other provinces who voted in support of our motion for a single tax return in Quebec were from Alberta and Saskatchewan. I thank my colleagues who voted in favour. That was very kind. The votes from the NDP and the Liberals defeated the motion to create a single tax return in Quebec.

Business representatives in Quebec and Quebecers all agree on this, and that was made clear on our tour. We want to make things easier for Quebecers.

Today, I think the two levels of government are able to agree. The GST collection issue proved that it is possible to have administrative agreements between the two levels of government to make it work. There is no need to worry that Quebec will not send the money to Ottawa. The GST money has always made it to Ottawa. All it takes is an administrative agreement.

When we talk about international treaties, everything depends on the type of agreement that is made with Quebec. We are not trying to give Ottawa's taxation power to Quebec. We just want to allow Quebec to tell Ottawa that it has sent the document to Quebecers on its behalf and that it is forwarding what they said, along with a cheque. That is what we mean by a single tax return for Quebecers. It is as simple as that.

I hope that this time, the people across the way and the NDP will abide by the Sherbrooke declaration for once, because this bill states that it will preserve jobs. They told us that if we had agreed to amend the motion to say that jobs would be protected, they would have voted in favour of it. Now it is in Bill C-224. They have no choice.

• (1825)

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for that clarification at the end of his speech. At the time, in 2019, the NDP voted against the motion because the Conservatives had rejected the amendment proposed by our former NDP colleague from Sherbrooke, aimed at including some very clear language about maintaining and guaranteeing jobs. I think that is an important thing to mention. I will talk more about jobs later.

Private Members' Business

I would like to provide some background on the tax system within the federal system. Apart from 1917-18, when taxes went to support the war effort, taxation was historically under provincial jurisdiction. The federal government took control in 1942. It was supposed to be a temporary measure to fund another war effort. Twice, world wars led to the central government and the provinces switching roles on taxation and collecting income tax, including individual income tax.

What happened next will of course come as no surprise. After the Second World War, Ottawa did not hand taxation back over to the provinces. It held on to it until a deal was reached between St-Laurent and Duplessis, in 1955. They agreed that Quebec could collect taxes from its own citizens and ensure that Quebec taxpayers did not pay more taxes than other Canadians. At the time, there was a negotiation, and a balance was struck.

After that, many people started asking for a single tax return, because Quebecers are being penalized to some degree. They are the only taxpayers in the federation who have to fill out two tax returns when all of this could be simplified. I will come back to the real effect of this simplification at the end of my speech.

Recognizing this demand, the NDP passed a resolution at our 2018 national convention here in Ottawa. Similar to our Conservative friends, this motion was supported by a majority, who were in favour of a single tax return for Quebecers, administered by the Government of Quebec. It is important to note that it would be administered by the Government of Quebec.

Yes, we adopted the Sherbrooke declaration, which recognized that Quebec is a nation, that things are done differently in Quebec because of its history, language and culture, that Quebec is capable of doing things differently, and that what is offered to Quebec is not necessarily offered to the other provinces. That is important.

According to the NDP, the concept of asymmetrical federalism is based on the recognition of Quebec as a nation. It is unique and special. That is also why the Sherbrooke declaration contains the principle of opting out of new federal programs with full compensation, which is important to Quebec. The ability to opt out with full compensation is something that is offered to Quebec alone, not to all the provinces.

For example, if a new universal public pharmacare program is introduced, Quebec would be able to opt out with full compensation. It could keep its hybrid regime, even though I think it needs improvement. The NDP was the first pan-Canadian party to endorse the idea of a single tax return. I think that is an important aspect of the work that was begun by Jack Layton and continued first by Thomas Mulcair and then by the current NDP leader, the member for Burnaby South.

For those who are interested, the resolution that was adopted included two "resolved" statements, and the second is just as important. It states that the transfer, this jurisdiction that would be given exclusively to the Government of Quebec, must not be done on the backs of workers and employees in the public service. That is when we initiated a consultation, reached out and had a dialogue with the people represented by the Quebec chapter of the Public Service Alliance of Canada. They had concerns. During our meetings, they

told us that they were worried about possible job losses in Mauricie and in Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean. They also did not know how these reassignments and transfers would be made without job losses. That spoke volumes to us.

● (1830)

The NDP is a party that was basically originally established by co-operatives, agricultural co-operatives and the labour movement. Our primary concern is still workers, their families and their communities. We do not want to make any commitments or decisions that would compromise their working or living conditions, their careers, or their future in their workplaces.

We have left no stone unturned. We looked at the options and what other duties could be assigned. Earlier, I heard the suggestion, which was also the first thing that came to mind for us, that there is so much work to be done to fight tax evasion and tax havens that these employees could be assigned to do that work and sent to conduct international investigations.

However, it is much more complicated than that. The employees handling people's tax returns do not have the training to quickly turn into investigators and conduct in-depth investigations into major international tax cheats. If it were possible, or if I were to find a magic wand tomorrow morning, I would be happy to reassure these people and tell them not to worry because everything will be all right. That is not reality. This is one of our concerns.

Do we agree with the principle of the bill? Of course we do. It is in keeping with Quebec's autonomy, the recognition of Quebec as a nation, and asymmetrical federalism.

However, do we have the guarantees we need with regard to protecting jobs in the region? All that is still an open question. We have doubts and concerns in that regard. I think it would be a good idea to call witnesses and examine this issue in committee so that we can get to the truth of the matter about whether this would be possible. Of course, as a party of labour, socialism and social democracy, we have concerns about the jobs of people in the regions. We care a lot about that, and we would not want to take any action that would hurt those people.

We have often heard the superficially valid argument that filling out one tax return is bad enough, but that it is twice as bad for Quebecers, who have to fill out two, and that it is unfair to boot. It is more onerous and takes a lot of time. No one likes that.

However, that argument is becoming less and less relevant. It was true back when everyone would go to a credit union in February or March to grab a tax return kit from the pile by the widow next to the teller, bring it home, look through the guide, turn the pages and fill in the numbers using their T-4 and RL-1 slips. This is much less common now.

The idea of not filling out two tax returns sounds nice and appealing because everyone wants to make things easier. However, the latest figures I have seen on this subject show that these days 91% of Quebec taxpayers file their tax returns online. It is no longer the case that people head to a credit union to pick up the forms and sit down, surrounded by papers, to fill in each box.

Now, people buy software, which usually lasts a few years, and they only have to fill in the numbers once. They can then send an email to the Canada Revenue Agency and another to Revenu Québec. This means that the vast majority of people are already filling out just one tax return.

Mr. Speaker, I am not sure if you have ever sat in front of one of these software programs. You do not have to click twice. You fill in the boxes once, and the software automatically fills in the rest. The argument I just made loses value over time. There may be just 9% or 10% of the population left who actually fill out two tax returns. That is the reality, and I think we have to tell it like it is.

Do we want to run the risk of losing hundreds of jobs in Quebec's regions, in Mauricie or in Jonquière? I have not seen any evidence about reassignments. I have talked about this several times with people on the ground, and it is not clear. Are we going to run this risk for something that will not have any real impact on the public or on the well-being of Quebec's taxpayers?

• (1835)

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, when the Constitution was created in 1867, fiscal responsibilities were assigned to each government. Oddly enough, the provinces and Quebec got income tax. One might reasonably think that the Fathers of Confederation were good to Quebec and the other provinces, but no, because income tax did not exist at the time. Neither the provinces nor the federal government collected income tax. That was given to the provinces and they were told to figure it out. The first province to start working on that was British Columbia. It started taxing income, and that worked.

When the First World War broke out, the federal government decided it was time it took charge of that, because it was working. The provinces argued that it was written in the Constitution that it was a provincial and Quebec jurisdiction. It is also written in the Constitution that the federal government can take public money, regardless of how it is taxed. It was written at the bottom of one page, so the government decided to use it.

The First World War ended, the provinces asked that that responsibility be returned to them and they were told "no". The Second World War arrived. The government said that it would finance the war effort with taxes. After that, we had the difficult coexistence of the provincial and Quebec governments and the federal government, which did not want to give up this responsibility. The provinces and Quebec found the idea to be appealing. The coexistence led to agreements being signed with all provinces except Quebec and Ontario. Then Ontario gave in and Quebec was the only province to stand its ground and say that it would retain control over this money.

In 1953, Maurice Duplessis launched the Tremblay Commission. He said that he would look at the issue and see what came of it. The

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Tremblay Commission submitted its report in 1956. It found that having the province retain control of taxes was such a good idea that Quebec established and retained control of Quebec income taxes. It was a victory for Quebec. The other provinces were quite disappointed that they did not do the same thing. Quebeckers were rather wily and it served them well.

There are currently two tax returns and two tax systems. People started to question why there was not a single tax collector even if there were two tax systems. We all realized that that was not a crazy idea. We knew that there would be a battle between the Government of Quebec and the Government of Canada. We wondered who would be the one tax collector, if there was one. Quebeckers had the answer.

On May 15, 2018, a motion was tabled in the Quebec National Assembly. I know, because I was the one who tabled it. I am the poor guy who tabled it. At the time, there was a Liberal government facing me. No one would call Philippe Couillard a modern-day patriot. I was sure that his government would buckle and refuse to support us. However, I could see it in his eyes that Carlos Leitão was on board. They said yes. It passed unanimously in the Quebec National Assembly. We then did a survey, and 65% of Quebeckers said that Quebec should collect the taxes, while 22% said that that responsibility should fall to Canada.

We are listening to the majority of Quebeckers who are saying that Quebec should be the one collecting taxes. We know that started with the GST and the QST and it worked. It was great. The federal government did not really talk about collecting GST in Quebec. It wants nothing to do with it. Quebec does a great job of that. It is more efficient than the federal government.

When it comes to economies of scale, my colleague from Orléans is off the mark. It has been proven that the QST is more effective when it is collected with the GST, regardless of what my colleague said.

Why have a single income tax return? My colleague from Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie was saying that we no longer have to use papyrus, quills and ink to fill out our tax return. That is obvious.

Were he more curious, he would know that there is in fact a literature review. Economists such as François Vaillancourt did thorough research to find out how much more time it took to fill out two tax returns. Mr. Vaillancourt conducted studies. It is not complicated. It is 10% more work for individuals and 15% more work for businesses. That is all in the report by IRAI, the Research Institute on Self-Determination of Peoples and National Independence, which, last year, conducted the only empirical study on the benefits of filling in a single tax return. It is worth reading. It points to savings of \$39 million for individuals who have someone else fill out their tax forms. Those who fill out their own spend 10% less time.

• (1840)

For businesses, this will reduce their costs by 15%, or \$99 million.

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Let's now talk about duplication. There are people in Quebec City and Ottawa who do the same thing, which is perfectly normal because that is how it is done. Now, someone in Ottawa is tapped on the shoulder and told to stop because there is already a guy in Quebec City doing that job. This will save \$287 million. Everyone should read the IRAI report, which is comprehensive, explicit and scientific and explains it all. A single tax return will result in \$425 million in savings.

We have heard that if this responsibility is handed over to Quebec City, other countries that have signed tax collection agreements with Ottawa will say they do not want to do business with Quebec. Come on. Those countries sign agreements with the federal government in order to obtain tax information that will help them combat tax evasion. The United States will not turn around and say it wants nothing to do with the Quebec government, because it will not want to have a tax haven just north of the border. It will seek to share that information, which I applaud, and all of those agreements will be confirmed in that manner, one after the other. That will not be a problem.

The Minister of National Revenue said that the Canada Revenue Agency employs 5,300 people in Quebec to handle tax returns. In order to collect and manage the federal government's taxes, Quebec will need 2,332 new employees. This is not rocket science, and it does not take an honorary degree to understand that compared with the 5,300 federal employees, 2,332 will be needed to do roughly the same work, but on behalf of the Government of Quebec.

What about the remaining 2,000 or 3,000 jobs? Canada's public service is aging and losing 3% to 4% of its employees every year through attrition as people retire. This public service claims to have a shortage of workers. I assume the remaining CRA workers will find jobs elsewhere in the public service.

Let us talk about tax evasion. Obviously, analyzing tax evasion by major corporations is not a simple task. It almost needs to be done by tax experts. However, there are many different types of tax evasion and jobs that can be done in this area. Furthermore, this work pays for itself. In fact, the best investment that the government can make is to assign an employee to combatting tax evasion. This employee will bring in much more money than the government spends on their salary. Once again, it does not take an honorary degree to understand this.

The member for Orléans said that tax administration would be less consistent across Canada and that that would be terrible. Well, we do not want that anyway. We are a nation separate from the Canadian nation, and we do not want to be consistent. Our needs, our language, our culture and our economy are all different. We do not want to be consistent with all of the Canadian provinces. That is not our goal. I would tell the member for Orléans that there is no point forcing us to be consistent, because that will not work for us. We do not want to be consistent. That is not hard to understand.

The federal government's next argument is that it will not have the information it needs and that it will not be able to operate without this information. However, Revenu Québec collects much more information than the Canada Revenue Agency. Quebec has more programs, not because it is better, but because it is different and therefore needs more information. Furthermore, Revenu Québec

records are used to calculate child support, so if the information had to go to Ottawa, there would be no more child support.

It is not hard to tell the federal government that we will give it all the information we have, and we have more than it has, so it can continue to work the way it wants. It is win-win.

If having one entity collect taxes on behalf of two tax systems can save \$425 million, imagine if we had just one tax system. If that were the case, the savings would not be in the millions of dollars, it would be in the billions. However, for that to happen, we would have to achieve independence.

• (1845)

The Deputy Speaker: The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired, and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[*English*]

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to stand during Adjournment Proceedings to discuss an important local project in my community, the Okanagan Rail Trail. The rail trail is a 50-kilometre biking and walking path, which spans from Kelowna, past Wood Lake, Kalamalka Lake and north to just before Vernon.

The reason it is called the rail trail is that its path follows a discontinued CN Rail line that operated in the Okanagan Valley from 1925 to 2013. Local governments, with help from the Province of B.C., purchased the old CN Rail line with the goal of turning it into a recreational trail. This is a model of co-operation between the City of Kelowna, District of Lake Country, Okanagan Indian Band and Regional District of the North Okanagan. They worked collaboratively together as the Okanagan Rail Trail committee and in partnership with the passionate volunteer group, Friends of Okanagan Rail Trail. They are a common voice for governance for trail management and development.

Over a two-year period, volunteers, individuals, business groups and community champions worked to passionately fundraise the over \$7.8 million needed to develop the trail. This ranged from grants and events to online fundraising campaigns and even lemonade stands. Over 5,000 individual donors contributed to this community legacy. The City of Kelowna paved their section of the path.

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Chief Byron Louis of the Okanagan Indian Band says, “The Okanagan Rail Trail was originally part of a larger interconnected network of trails utilized by our people to access all parts of Northern Syilx Territory to undertake essential sustenance, societal and spiritual activities.” Currently, a portion of the trail midway through is incomplete and cannot be worked on due to federal government delays in administering an addition to reserve to the Okanagan Indian Band.

To bypass the incomplete section, individuals must divert onto a narrow high-speed roadway. It is dangerous for pedestrians, cyclists and drivers. This is an issue of priority in my community dating back to 2016, and I have heard from many constituents. During the time of the pandemic, people were outdoors and recreating more and it was a shame that another summer went by where the trail was not fully utilized.

It is also a key route for commuters who want to get some exercise and reduce their carbon footprint. Grant Stevens, a vice-president at KF Aerospace, a major employer near the trail, wrote that they have a lot of employees that would like to bike to work if there was a safe alternative to the highway.

I had written the minister, as have many of my constituents, about this issue. As a result of the silence from the minister, this is one of the first issues I raised in the House of Commons when Parliament returned after prorogation in September. When I asked Minister Miller the question, he stated he would sit down with me at a later date to provide me with a briefing and discuss. A week after this question, and still not hearing from the minister as promised, I sent another note to his office asking if we could schedule a meeting to discuss the issue. The minister finally got back to me, and while he did not touch on a briefing or a meeting to discuss, he did state the following in writing: “the Addition to Reserve process is nearing its final stage”.

Could the minister provide a clear timeline on when exactly this addition to reserve will be completed?

• (1850)

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 thank my colleague for her interest in the completion of the Okanagan Rail Trail initiative.

We all know that during the COVID-19 pandemic, with more people looking for ways to stay healthy while maintaining physical distancing, the completion of this trail could become an important link to provide more outdoor activity space for residents and visitors in the Okanagan.

Indigenous Services Canada is working with the Okanagan Indian Band and the Canadian National Railway Company to have the former railway line that cuts through Duck Lake Indian Reserve No. 7 added to the reserve in accordance with the government’s addition to reserve policy.

I understand the addition to reserve process is nearing its final stage, as the Okanagan Indian Band is currently working to complete the outstanding requirements and is negotiating replacement interests with local municipalities and companies that use the utility

corridor that runs along the former rail line. Once the requirements have been met, the submission will be sent to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations for approval. Once approved, it will be up to the Okanagan Indian Band to determine what it will do with the land.

This addition to the reserve is on the national priority list. The department is working hard with the Okanagan Indian Band and the Canadian National Railway Company to have the former railway line returned to Duck Lake Indian Reserve No. 7 through the federal government’s addition to reserve process. However, there is no definite timeline as to when the addition to the reserve will be completed. We need to do it correctly, and we are doing it in partnership.

Additions to the reserve are complex, but the Government of Canada has made significant progress. Since November 2015, we have created 316 additions to reserve, adding more than 227,353 acres of land to reserves. We have made this process easier through the Addition of Lands to Reserves and Reserve Creation Act, which was passed in 2018. Also since 2015, we have been advancing interest-based discussions in ensuring that the co-development is at the core of all negotiations.

In September 2019, we co-developed the recognition and reconciliation of rights policy for treaty negotiations in British Columbia with First Nations Summit and the British Columbia government. We will continue working with first nations to redesign the comprehensive land claims and inherent rights policies. Work is already under way in collaboration with the Assembly of First Nations on this issue.

Resolving historical grievances and adding lands to reserves helps to advance reconciliation, fulfill legal obligations, improve treaty relationships and foster economic opportunities.

I appreciate what the member has shared with the House. These trails are important to all our communities and we need to follow a process in reconciliation. It is only a question of time before it happens. I can appreciate the sensitivity. I had the opportunity to visit Kelowna, which is a beautiful area of our country, and hopefully at some point we will see a trail.

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Mr. Speaker, this dates back now to pre-2016. The trail was decommissioned in 2013. I was really involved at the time. I was on municipal city council, from 2014 to 2018, when this decision was made by the local municipal governments. This is going back a number of years now. Of course, I am in continuous conversation with the stakeholders.

I appreciate the statement this evening but it is still very vague. I know that all stakeholders and my constituents are looking for a more concrete timeline. Could the member please provide more details as to what the timeline might look like?

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• (1855)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, based on my experience at this point in time, discussions have been ongoing. We want to be respectful of the process. I do not know if it would be advisable to give some sort of timeline because that then becomes a deadline.

I would like, as I am sure all members would, to move forward on issues of reconciliation in a respectful way and to look at ways to ensure we accomplish things, such as this trail, that are in the best interests of all communities and stakeholders. I am optimistic that it will not be that long, hopefully, before something comes out of this.

HEALTH

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join the Parliament of Canada from beautiful Mission, British Columbia, today.

Last week the Prime Minister was unwilling or unable to answer whether he had consulted with Dr. Theresa Tam, Canada's chief public health officer, before threatening Canadians with an election during a pandemic simply because he did not want to reveal what must be some very damning WE Charity scandal documents.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Liberals' failures have cost Canadians greatly. These failures include: one, telling Canadians there was no person-to-person spread of COVID-19; two, telling Canadians that border control measures and masks did not work; three, sending critical supplies of PPE to China when we had a shortage; four, abdicating pandemic responsibilities to the provinces; five, failing to ensure Canadians have access to rapid and at-home tests; six, shutting down the federal pandemic early warning system just months before COVID-19; seven, falling behind our allies in approving rapid tests and securing future COVID-19 vaccines; and, eight, the Prime Minister threatening elections with a blatantly incorrect understanding of what a confidence motion is and without having consulted Canada's chief public health officer.

Canadians deserve a government that will have their backs, a government that will develop our local medical equipment production chain without the worry of Liberal insiders getting rich off taxpayer dollars. All Canadians waiting for ventilators to arrive, all Canadians depending on rapid testing so they can get back to work and all Canadians having lost a loved one to the virus deserve answers. The PMO staffers trying to throw Canada into an election, using a confidence motion for matters that are not actually matters of confidence to lay the blame on opposition parties, should also want these answers for the safety of Canadians.

This week's opposition motion instructs the health committee to study Canada's COVID-19 response, including rapid and at-home testing approvals and procurement, vaccine development and distribution protocols, a review of federal public health guidelines and the data used to inform government decisions, a review of long-term care facility COVID-19 protocols, the availability of PPE in Canada, a review of Canada's emerging PPE stockpile, the impact of using WHO advice to delay closing borders and delay recommending masks, and the reasoning behind and the impact of closing Canada's public health early warning system.

Despite the Liberals' unfortunate opposition to it, this motion passed and now provides the government a chance to work with us to improve its approach and to act with transparency. Canadians deserve a government that learns from its mistakes and successes so we can prepare better for the future. However, unfortunately, the Liberals only seem interested in threatening an election and shutting down studies on the pandemic response.

Canadians do not want an election. With the number of cases continuing to rise, no access to rapid testing and concerns about the number of hospital beds, it is shameful that the Prime Minister had not consulted Dr. Tam about the implications of an election during a pandemic.

Could the member opposite answer the basic question that the Prime Minister was not able to answer last week? Has the government consulted with Dr. Tam about holding an election during the second wave of COVID-19?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it was interesting listening to my friend across the way go into a wide spectrum of different issues with respect to the coronavirus. I would love to have seen the member and some of his Conservative caucus make that more of a priority within their opposition ranks, in recognizing that this is an issue of great concern for Canadians and appreciating many of the different actions that have been taken by the Government of Canada. Contrary to what the member said, by working with different provinces, non-profit agencies and so much more, we put ourselves into a great position going into the second wave.

Having said that, the member is really concerned about Elections Canada and what has actually taken place. Let me remind the member: I have a great deal of faith in Elections Canada, and I am not alone. Elections Canada has officials from other countries from around the world approach it to talk about a wide variety of issues because of Elections Canada's history as an independent organization that has done a first-class job, ensuring that Canada has, I would argue, the best democratic system in ensuring that people have the ability to vote.

While Elections Canada officials went before PROC, it was no surprise to members of the House to hear that there has been communication with Dr. Tam and with Elections Canada, as there should be. After all, we recognize the importance of that independence.

Elections Canada has a mandate. I have never heard from Elections Manitoba or from organizers of the elections in British Columbia or in the other two provinces that have had elections during the pandemic that we cannot have one here in Canada. I have never heard Elections Canada officials say that. In fact, I suspect that if the member looked at what was said at the PROC meeting, maybe he would feel more confident, as the rest of Canadians are, in terms of what this independent agency is capable of doing.

The Government of Canada has no interest in calling an election. We want to see an opposition that wants to work collaboratively with the government and other stakeholders to fight the COVID-19 virus. The pandemic is our focus. Our concern is that the opposition seems to want to cause issues that will take away from that priority, as opposed to worrying, as the Conservatives are, whether Elections Canada is able to do what other election agencies at the provincial level have done. Have faith, as I and the government have, in Elections Canada's ability to do its job whenever it is called upon.

I would have the member who posed this question reflect on other aspects of his discussion. He spent only a small portion of his time on Elections Canada, but spent more of his time in dealing with other aspects of the coronavirus. I am happy with that.

My suggestion for the member is to have faith in Elections Canada's ability. If an election happens, I believe that Elections Canada has the capabilities and has demonstrated it. The officials provided assurances at PROC. Let us focus our attention on fighting the coronavirus.

• (1900)

Mr. Brad Vis: Mr. Speaker, I am so pleased to see my friend from Winnipeg North in the chamber tonight. He is a strong advocate for Filipino Canadians.

Adjournment Proceedings

I would like to thank him for his answer, and I will say I agree with him about Elections Canada. I agree that Elections Canada is an excellent organization that does a world-class job in administering our elections. That is why I was seeking those assurances from our Prime Minister in the House of Commons to get the answers to the questions that Canadians legitimately have about going into a federal election during a pandemic. Therefore, I would like to thank the member for his intervention tonight and ask him an additional question with my remaining time.

What does the member for Winnipeg North think we can do better, as Canadians, to improve relationships with the Government of the Philippines?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I know the member has a very keen interest in the Philippines, as I do. I believe there are opportunities, and I hope to get back to him relatively soon. We are getting a new ambassador, who will hopefully get his credentials recognized.

If we take a look at the special relationship between Canada and the Philippines, I think it is important that we go far beyond immigration and look at other opportunities to foster a healthier, stronger relationship. I know that the member agrees with me. It is nice that, as members from different political entities, we see the value of a strong, healthy Canada and Philippines. We will work together, I am sure, to do what we can to foster a healthier, better relationship between two great countries.

• (1905)

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: The motion that the House do now adjourn is deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:05 p.m.)

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