



# The Honourable Senator Thanh Hai Ngo NEWSLETTER



WINTER/SPRING 2020

## A MESSAGE FROM SENATOR NGO

I pray that you and your loved ones are staying safe and healthy during this challenging time. I'd like to begin by expressing my deep respect and gratitude to all the front-line workers who so courageously continue to provide essential services to Canadians.

As the world collectively faces the COVID-19 pandemic, I urge all of you to continue to follow the advice of public health authorities so that we can minimize, as much as possible, the spread of the virus.

I am confident that Canadians will continue to show compassion for their neighbours each day with renewed determination. I am hopeful that we will defeat COVID-19 and gain valuable wisdom and insights from this experience.

Sincerely,  
Senator Thanh Hai Ngo



## 2020 JOURNEY TO FREEDOM DAY AND SUMMER INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Due to the COVID-19 outbreak and resulting declarations of emergency across the country, Senator Ngo's summer internship program for 2020 is postponed until further notice.

If circumstances permit, we hope to be able to offer the program at a later time in 2020. Otherwise, it will take place as usual during the summertime, in 2021.

All applicants selected this year will automatically be invited to take part in the next iteration of the internship program.

Journey to Freedom Day  
Commemorations and flag-raising ceremonies have also been cancelled in all cities, including on Parliament Hill, until further notice.



# MOTIONS INTRODUCED BY SENATOR NGO

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## MOTION CALLING ON THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA TO IMPOSE MAGNITSKY SANCTIONS

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Senator Ngo and Senator Housakos introduced a motion on December 10, 2020 and spoke to it on December 12, 2020. The Motion calls “upon the Government of Canada to impose sanctions against Chinese and/or Hong Kong officials, pursuant to the Justice for Victims of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act (Sergei Magnitsky Law), in light of the violation of human rights, of the principles of fundamental justice and of the rule of law in relation to the ongoing protests in Hong Kong and to the systematic persecution of minority Muslims in China.”

To read the speeches, please visit the following link: [https://sencanada.ca/en/content/sen/chamber/431/debates/004db\\_2019-12-12-e](https://sencanada.ca/en/content/sen/chamber/431/debates/004db_2019-12-12-e)

## MOTION ON TIBET

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On February 26, 2020, Senator Ngo reintroduced his motion on Tibet and spoke to it the following day. The Motion urges “the Government of Canada to actively support the genuine autonomy of Tibet and, consequently, to also call for the People’s Republic of China to:

- (a) renew the Sino-Tibetan dialogue in good faith and based on the Middle Way Approach;
  - (b) respect the religious rights of the Tibetan people and stop interference in the process of recognizing a successor or reincarnation of the 14th Dalai Lama;
  - (c) respect the linguistic rights, freedom of movement, thought and conscience of the people in Tibet;
  - (d) free all Tibetan political prisoners, including the youngest political prisoner Gendhun Choekyi Nyima (Panchen Lama), and cease all arbitrary detention of dissidents;
  - (e) grant Canada reciprocal diplomatic access to Tibet without limitations; and
  - (f) protect the Tibetan Plateau that serves as Asia’s water tower, feeding over a billion lives in Asia; and
- That the Senate urge the Government of Canada to raise Tibetan issues at every opportunity with China with a view to taking the additional steps necessary to deescalate tensions and restore peace and stability in Tibet.”

To read the speech, please visit the following link: [https://sencanada.ca/en/content/sen/chamber/431/debates/013db\\_2020-02-27-e](https://sencanada.ca/en/content/sen/chamber/431/debates/013db_2020-02-27-e)



# COVID-19 LEGISLATION DEBATED IN THE SENATE OF CANADA

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On March 25, April 11, May 1 and May 15, Senator Ngo joined a small number of his fellow colleagues in the Senate Chamber to study and pass legislations that respectively provide much-needed financial support to Canadians during the COVID-19 pandemic:

Bill C-13, An Act respecting certain measures in response to COVID-19, to help support the Canadian economy, which includes measures to assist both individuals and businesses through direct transfers, tax deferrals, and measures to ensure businesses continue to have access to credit.

Bill C-14, A second Act respecting certain measures in response to COVID-19, which enacts the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS), a 75% employer wage subsidy, amongst other measures.

Bill C-15, An Act respecting Canada emergency student benefits (coronavirus disease 2019), to help support post-secondary students and recent post-secondary and high school graduates for the loss of job opportunities due to COVID-19.

Bill C-16, An Act to amend the Canadian Dairy Commission Act, to respond to the urgent needs of Canadian farmers and food processors in this challenging time.

On all four occasions, the sitting was conducted in a “Committee of the Whole” format, allowing Senators to ask critical questions to Federal Cabinet Ministers and public health officials on these urgent pieces of legislation.



On April 11, Senators authorized three committees to scrutinize the government’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Standing Senate Committee on National Finance that will study Bills C-13 and C-14, as well as the government’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its economic consequences, the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology that will study the response from the Government regarding the pandemic and, in order to ensure that we are able to draw important lessons from our experience following the outbreak, Senators also created the Special Senate Committee on the Lessons Learned from the COVID-19 Pandemic and Future Preparedness, scheduled to start its studying in October 2020.

# QUESTIONS ASKED BY SENATOR NGO

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**On March 25, Senator Ngo addressed the following questions:**

**To the Minister of Finance, the Hon. Bill Morneau:**

**Question #1:**

**Senator Ngo:** Soon after the COVID-19 outbreak was officially declared a pandemic, the government issued a travel ban and Canadians were urged to take necessary precautions to help contain the spread of the virus. With the conditions changing daily, many Canadians made the necessary and responsible decision to cancel their travel plans. Airlines responded by presenting so-called flex travel options, which offered customers the possibility of deferring travel instead of a refund. As such, many Canadians chose the lesser of the two evils — reschedule the trip or travel at a later date — rather than risking their lives and health.

**Many Canadians during this time need money in their pockets in order to pay bills and buy food and essential supplies. A travel voucher won't do that. What will the government do to make sure that Canadians get a refund, and can the government ensure that Canadians receive a refund from the airlines once they have been bailed out?**

**Mr. Morneau:** Thank you for the question. I'm sure we will face challenges in places that right now we can't expect. One of the challenges most certainly will be around our ability to travel in the near term. There will be a challenge for the airline industries and we will be engaged with them in working to deal with that situation. Obviously, at an individual level, the challenges you're talking about are real.

My focus right now is the urgent need to deliver a benefit to Canadians that will allow them to bridge a time where obviously a huge number of people will be unable to have their normal source of income. That's job one.

Clearly, part of the next step in that job, which is not weeks away but is hours away, is figuring out how we can make sure that businesses have the capacity to be bridged from this into the next step. For small- and medium-sized businesses that is critically urgent. And for some large businesses like the airline businesses where not only are they not getting revenue from bookings; they're actually getting negative revenue because they have to give money back in refunds. So we're working with them. Of course, enabling them to succeed will help us to enable consumers to be dealt with appropriately, and that's what we're working towards right now.

**Question #2:**

**Senator Ngo: In addition to the economic pressure being placed on provinces due to the coronavirus pandemic, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Newfoundland and Labrador are dealing with the collapse of energy prices, the lowest price in about 20 years.**

**Minister, you have been talking about stimulus such as cleanup and abandoning oil wells. What exactly will the government do to help these provinces and our energy industry at this exceptional time, and what form will this support take and how fast will it be delivered?**

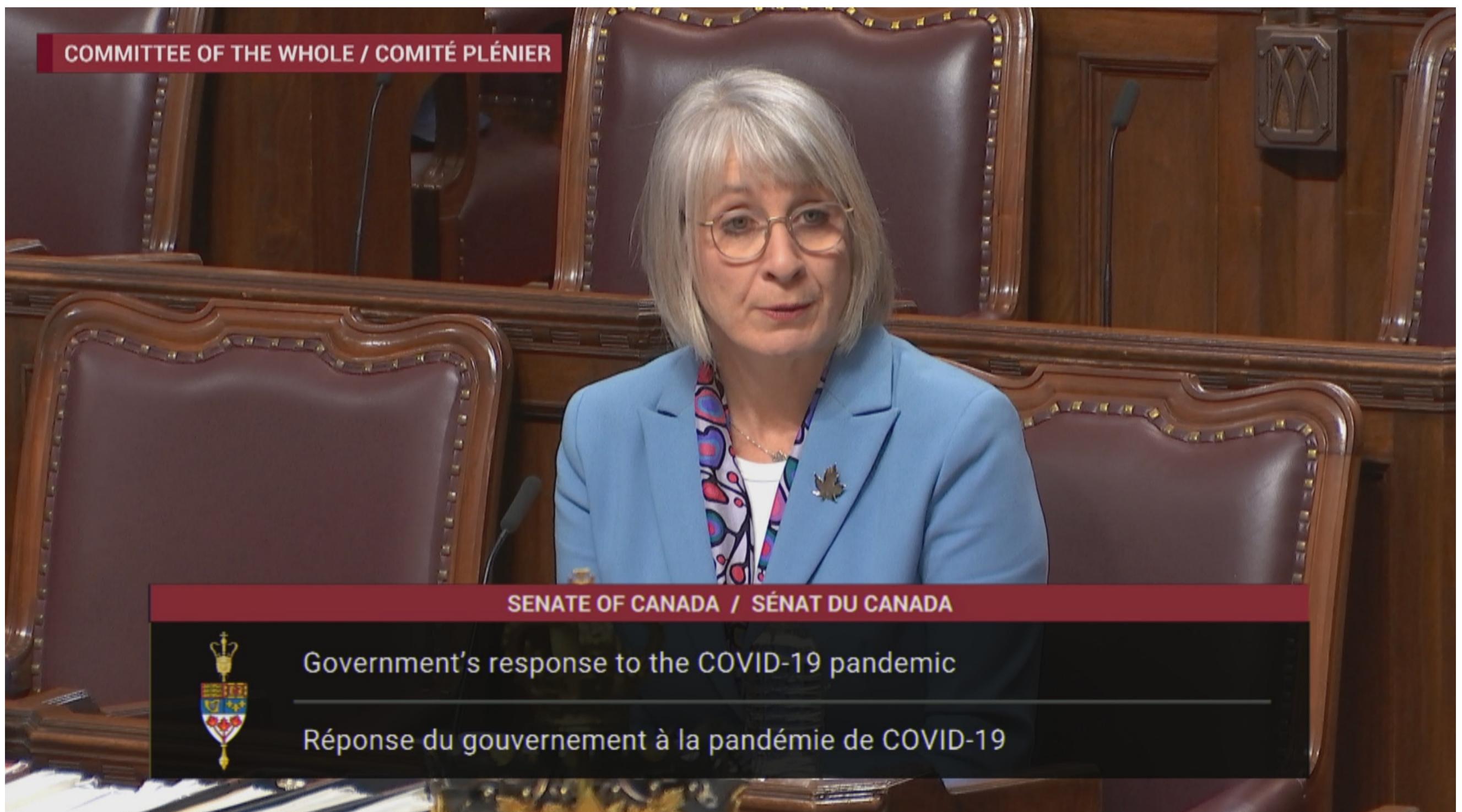
**Mr. Morneau:** Let me first address the issue. Obviously, the energy sector is in a particularly challenging situation. There are really three things facing that sector as opposed to one enormous thing facing every other Canadian sector. They are facing the combination of the situation right now with OPEC, with Russia and Saudi Arabia not agreeing on a stable oil market; they're facing tumultuous equity markets, which are presenting very big challenges for funding of any sort; and they're facing COVID-19. So the issues are real. The stresses and strains for the provinces you mentioned are real.

We've been in daily contact with them to think about how this is impacting the provincial government revenues. We're also in hourly contact with the energy sector to think about how we can bridge the time by providing some sort of appropriate credit opportunities for them. That is work that is going on right now. I don't have the final answer on the exact hour that will be delivered but I'm not talking about weeks.

## QUESTIONS ASKED BY SENATOR NGO

I'm talking about hours, potentially days, that we can ensure that there are credit facilities for especially the small- and medium-sized firms in that sector. Then the larger sector, the 10 largest companies in the oil and gas sector, most of them have existing credit relationships with their banks, in most cases with available credit. But they are under strain, too, so we're also looking at individual issues in that sector.

Those are all important issues. However, as I've said to others today here in this chamber, our primary focus is on people. We're looking at how we can support businesses, and we'll continue to do so.



**To the Minister of Health, the Hon. Patty Hajdu:**

**Senator Ngo: With COVID-19 spreading at an alarming rate, we know this unprecedented situation could last months. As we speak, some parts of Asia are facing a second wave.**

**Dr. Tam said last week that Canada should prepare for another wave. As of today, how many months is the government anticipating this situation to last? Are we prepared to take measures for a second wave?**

**Ms. Hajdu:** Thank you, senator. I think that's the burning question on every Canadian's mind, in fact, every global citizen's mind. How do we get out of the situation that we find ourselves in as a world?

For example Wuhan, the city at the forefront of the outbreak, is now starting to relax some of its measures around isolation and restricting services and is taking slow steps to restart their economy and the everyday lives of its citizens. But it is difficult because we don't know until we know whether there is a vaccine or whether there is a treatment or how the science is developing around immunity. There are interesting things happening with all kinds of testing. Obviously we are using testing right now to determine people's illness, but there is also research happening in the area of serology to determine how many people have been exposed and the level of immunity they might have.

## QUESTIONS ASKED BY SENATOR NGO

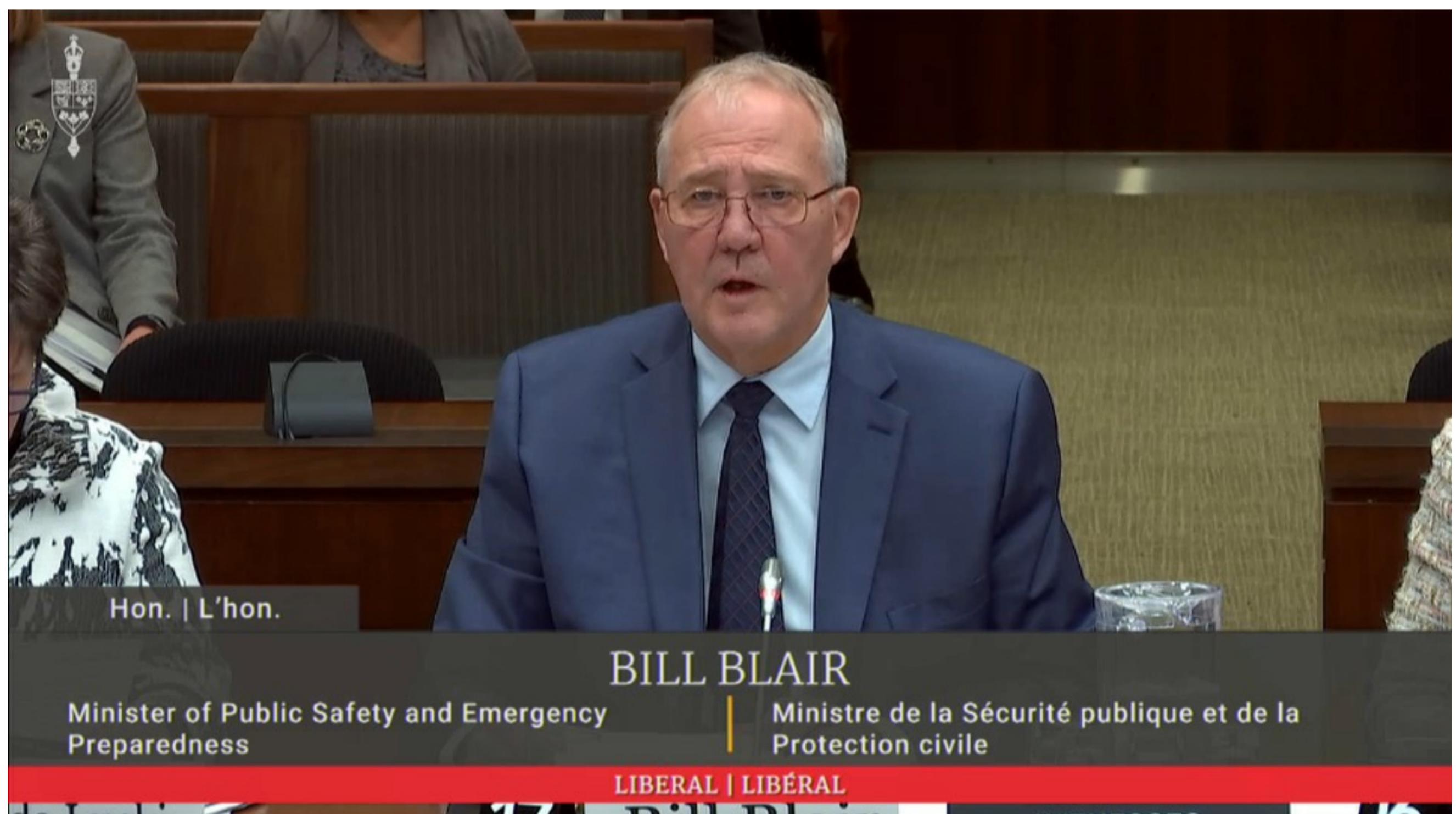
I remind honourable senators that this virus has been with us for three months, and science is hard. Science takes time. Science takes some level of certainty. I want to thank all the researchers and scientists globally who are working flat out, including Canadian scientists who are at the front of this effort for doing their absolute best to help us have some of these answers so we can answer your questions, senator. Right now, we don't have the answer.

I will be presenting later today to cabinet some of our most hopeful scenarios. They are not necessarily what Canadians would like to hear. Dr. Tam has been very clear and so have I. This is not a matter of a couple of weeks. We're talking, as you pointed you, a couple of months. I think the entire world is looking for a solution to help us all get out of this situation much more quickly, but we will need to rely on our scientists and researchers to help us do so safely.

### **Senator Ngo: How about the second wave? Are we prepared for that?**

**Ms. Hajdu:** Senator, right now we are preparing for the first wave. It's hard for me to say we are prepared for a second wave given the enormous effort we are taking to prepare for the first wave that is actually upon us. We will have more information for the second wave. What we can hope for as Canadians and global citizens is that the research and science will actually prove to present an antidote, for example, that can lessen the severity of the illness for those most vulnerable to severe outcomes, including death, and for a vaccine that can provide immunity to citizens.

### **To the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, the Hon. Bill Blair:**



**Senator Ngo: We closed the border to foreign nations as of March 18. On March 9, Israel already closed and imposed a mandatory quarantine for all incoming travelers. It's mandatory; it's not voluntary. Why didn't we take that action sooner rather than later?**

# QUESTIONS ASKED BY SENATOR NGO

**Mr. Blair:** Thank you, senator. I would point out that we actually implemented our first enhanced screening measures at our four international airports on January 22. We began screening all travellers coming from the infected region in Wuhan, China. We expanded that throughout early February. We have been responding to an evolving situation but also following the advice of the World Health Organization and our very capable public health officials here in Canada to implement measures as and when they were required.

***On April 11, Senator Ngo addressed the following questions:***

***To the Minister of Finance, the Hon. Bill Morneau:***

**Question #1:**

**Senator Ngo:** Minister, my question is regarding the Canada Emergency Business Account threshold of \$50,000 to \$1 million. That poses a huge problem for small- and medium-sized businesses that simply will not be able to qualify. I'm thinking of self-employed people, sole proprietors, hair and nail salons, cleaning ladies, other business owners who pay themselves through dividends instead of salary, those who don't have many employees on the payroll and so on.



**Minister, what is the rationale behind this threshold? To your knowledge, how many small businesses will not be able to qualify because of this threshold?**

**Mr. Morneau:** You bring up an important point that I've heard from others as well. We are trying to make sure that the system works in the way it's intended to. The starting point is to make sure we recognize in our system that people have, in many cases, incorporated because that's an appropriate way for them to manage their tax situation. There are many businesses in this country that are merely the incorporation of an individual in order to have a tax situation. That's not what we are intending to support with the \$40,000 loan. We are looking to support small businesses.

# QUESTIONS ASKED BY SENATOR NGO

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For those individuals who are very small businesses or individual proprietors, we think the Canada Emergency Response Benefit is appropriate. It's \$5,000 **[please note it should read \$500]** per week for 16 weeks, so the annualized amount in that case would be someone getting up to \$26,000. I recognize that's a certain level of protection and not the protection that everyone would want, but we're trying to make sure we have enough support.

In terms of numbers, the \$40,000 is something that can go to over 1 million small businesses, so it's a very broad measure we've put in place, in that forgivable part, to help people through their fixed-cost gap during the course of the next few months. We continue to look at the criteria for this loan, for example, to make sure it is appropriately targeted. Like everything in this challenge, it's a dynamic challenge, and we need to make sure we have it right. I don't have anything new to announce in that regard, but it is something we will continue to look at.

## Question #2:

**Senator Ngo: Second, this week the government announced additional changes to the wage subsidy and that hopefully the delay could be reduced from six weeks to three weeks. Sadly, I think six weeks to three weeks is still too long. Many businesses are on the verge of bankruptcy or have closed permanently. Business owners are in a very dark place. More than 1 million employees have been laid off. These businesses and employees need help right now and cannot afford to wait any longer.**

**Why is the government not implementing immediate and necessary measures that will actually put the money in the pockets of the small business owner, such as rebating the GST they have paid in the last year, which is the kind of support needed right now for them to stay afloat and retain their employees while they are waiting to receive the wage subsidy?**

**Mr. Morneau:** First of all, we are trying to get the wage subsidy out as rapidly as possible. We have found the fastest way that we can do it, and I hope it will be shorter than the time period announced. We are working towards that.

Second, we have provided liquidity for businesses. The deferral of the GST payment and the deferral of taxes have provided immediate liquidity. Those are important measures.

The idea of rebating GST, which people have brought up, is just not functional. There are three reasons. First, businesses hold GST in trust. It's not their money. They don't actually own that money, so we can't rebate something that is not theirs.

Second, it's very unequal in terms of how it gets implicated. Because of the way GST works, it's the value add that a business gets, in terms of the GST, which they would have because there are input credits behind it, so it would impact some people in a significant way and others, like farmers, not at all.

Finally, our GST system is different on a province-by-province basis, and the administration of figuring out GST/HST province by province would take so long that it would be a completely ineffective measure. We looked at it. It doesn't work, so we're trying to get money to people as fast as we can and in the most practical ways we can. We think we have found the best way.

**On the same day, the Senator also raised two other questions on behalf of his colleagues, Senators Wells and Martin, as follows:**

## Question #1:

**Senator Ngo: I have two questions. The first question is from Senator Wells in Newfoundland and Labrador. The second question will be from Senator Yonah Martin from British Columbia.**

**Minister, our seniors are being affected the most by the COVID-19 pandemic. My concern is regarding the financial burden COVID-19 is causing seniors in my province of Newfoundland and Labrador and in this country. Our seniors are isolated. They rely more on other people for essential errands, and this requires supplementary financial assistance throughout the duration of the pandemic.**

## QUESTIONS ASKED BY SENATOR NGO

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**Seniors rely on medications more than any other demographic. Drugstores are only allowing limited supplies to be dispensed at any given time. This results in increasing dispensing fees and extra costs that many seniors cannot afford.**

**The question is: How will the government address this important issue when many seniors live on the edge of poverty and extra expenses for one item will mean less money for other essentials?**

**Mr. Morneau:** First, we recognize that seniors in many ways are the most impacted by this crisis because they are most anxious about their health, so supporting the health system is critically important to give confidence to seniors.

Obviously, we don't want seniors to have to pull money out of their RSP at the same pace, and that's why we lowered the amount they need to pull out of RRIFs by 25%. That won't impact many of the seniors that you're talking about, the most impoverished.

The good news is that for the seniors in the most impoverished part of the senior population, they are continuing to get their sources of income, their sources being the Old Age Security system and the Guaranteed Income Supplement, so unlike other Canadians, their sources of income are not diminished. One of the measures we put in place, the GST low income tax credit, actually has an implication for more than 80% of single seniors and more than 40% of seniors in couples. They have all received a significant boost in income even though their sources of income have not gone down. We will need to continue to look at this, but we think we have made some decisions that will impact the senior population positively.

**Senator Ngo: Thank you. The second question is from Senator Yonah Martin in B.C. It's related to the question of Senator Coyle regarding the new start-ups that got their business licences to operate this year and have no record of income in 2019-20. To build their business, they have to use their own personal savings to get started in anticipation that they will generate revenue this year. The government forced the nonessential businesses to shut down, and yet they don't meet the requirements for the new program that you have announced.**

**When will you introduce relief measures specific to start-ups or revise existing programs to include these businesses and families that are barely hanging on through no fault of their own?**

**Mr. Morneau:** First of all, it's important to recognize that these businesses do have access to a number of things. So the thing that you're referencing is the Canada emergency wage subsidy, but employees in those businesses do have access to the Canada Emergency Response Benefit, like anybody else. Second, if the businesses actually have a payroll, they also have access to the Canada Emergency Business Account, a \$40,000 no-interest loan. There are other things available to them, they are just not the specific wage subsidy because of that revenue test. We will, of course, continue to look at various subsets. We've tried to find measures that can hit a large cross-section of Canadian enterprises. We do know there are some organizations that will be in a particular category of challenge that we'll consider. We'll consider that in considering as well the things that are available to them and whether it's appropriate to make sure decisions.

**Senator Ngo: When do you think you will introduce the relief measures for those start-up people?**

**Mr. Morneau:** I didn't say I was introducing anything. There are certainly many people across the country who have concerns. I appreciate those concerns, and we're trying to look at how we can support people appropriately. That includes considerations of equity and fairness as well as the appropriate measures of support.

# QUESTIONS ASKED BY SENATOR NGO

**On May 1, Senator Ngo addressed the following questions:**

**To the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, the Hon. Carla Qualtrough:**



**Question #1:**

**Senator Ngo:** Minister, during his daily press briefing on Monday, the Prime Minister said, and I quote: We're in lockdown . . . There aren't enough jobs right now for Canadians across the country. . . . there aren't enough jobs for students.

However, Quebec and Ontario have asked the federal government to send in the army to help out at nursing homes and long-term care homes, which are grossly understaffed. The agriculture, fish and seafood sectors are also in dire need of workers. Foreign workers are being brought in during this crisis through the Temporary Foreign Workers Program. Canadians who have lost their jobs want to work, and so do students. They could be filling those jobs.

Apart from putting students in touch with local employers, as you mentioned, why doesn't Bill C-15 contain much more concrete, tangible measures that would encourage them to work in those sectors, instead of waiting for foreign workers who have to be quarantined for 14 days when they arrive in Canada?

**Ms. Qualtrough:** Thank you for your many-pronged question. I will begin with foreign workers. Of course, we know that there are some Canadians, particularly students, who are looking for work, but our country will always need foreign workers.

## QUESTIONS ASKED BY SENATOR NGO

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The pandemic has not changed that. Obviously, we can work harder at directing students toward job opportunities, and we must continue those efforts, but that doesn't necessarily have to be set out in the legislation. We have very good student employment programs. I am committed to creating opportunities for students through those programs.

**Senator Ngo: Thank you, minister, for your answer. I'm not very happy with that, but it's okay, I can live with that.**

**My second question to you is this: The government says Canadians who are receiving the CERB and the wage subsidy will have to give back one or the other. If the students are getting the CERB because they are eligible and they are also getting the CESB at the same time, will they have to give back one or the other just like Canadians who are getting the CERB and the wage subsidy and who are required to do so?**

**Ms. Qualtrough:** The short answer to that, senator, is yes. You cannot get both of these benefits at the time. You may be eligible for both. We are putting a limit of 16 weeks' duration total for the amount of benefits that you can tap into, if you will, as either a CERB or a CESB recipient. We have, through CRA, some concrete ways that we can require people who are paid both benefits at the same time, but that would have required them to not be truthful on their attestation. One of the things they are going to have to attest to is that they are not currently receiving the CERB if they apply for the CESB. They would have had to fraudulently attest that they are not in receipt of the CERB. There is a small likelihood that it was by accident, and in that case we will work with the individual to make sure that we find a fair way for them to repay.

**Senator Ngo: Canadians who apply through the CRA are required to reapply in each four-week period, and those who apply through Service Canada have to reapply every two weeks. So students will have to apply to get CESB, they can apply for any four-week period that falls in the months May to August; however, Bill C-15 does not mention if the student needs to reapply in each of the four-week periods. Will there be a requirement for students to reapply?**

**Ms. Qualtrough:** Yes, there would, absolutely. Through Service Canada, if you are a CERB recipient in the EI system, you have the option of applying every two weeks or four weeks. There are situations where Service Canada applicants can only do it for four weeks, but because they were in the EI system, there is a little more flexibility for us to allow them to apply more frequently, but students will be asked to apply every four weeks.

***On the same day, the Senator also raised the following question:***

***To the Hon. Senator Marc Gold, Government Leader in the Senate:***

**Senator Ngo: Honourable senators, my question is for the government leader in the Senate. The CEBA was first announced on March 27. From the beginning, the initial threshold posed huge problems, as many small businesses were falling through the cracks. The issue was raised by small business owners, other parties and the media.**

**I posed a question to Minister Morneau on April 11, the last time he appeared in the chamber. Five days later, after my question, the government changed the threshold requirement. As we all know, a lot of damage can be done to small businesses within a few days, let alone weeks.**

**Even with this new threshold, some businesses still will not be able to qualify. I'm thinking of business owners who pay themselves through dividends, family-run businesses that do not pay themselves a salary but choose to invest in the business, or those who don't have a \$20,000 payroll.**

**Is the government willing to make additional changes to the program, such as scrapping the payroll requirement completely in order to allow these businesses to qualify?**

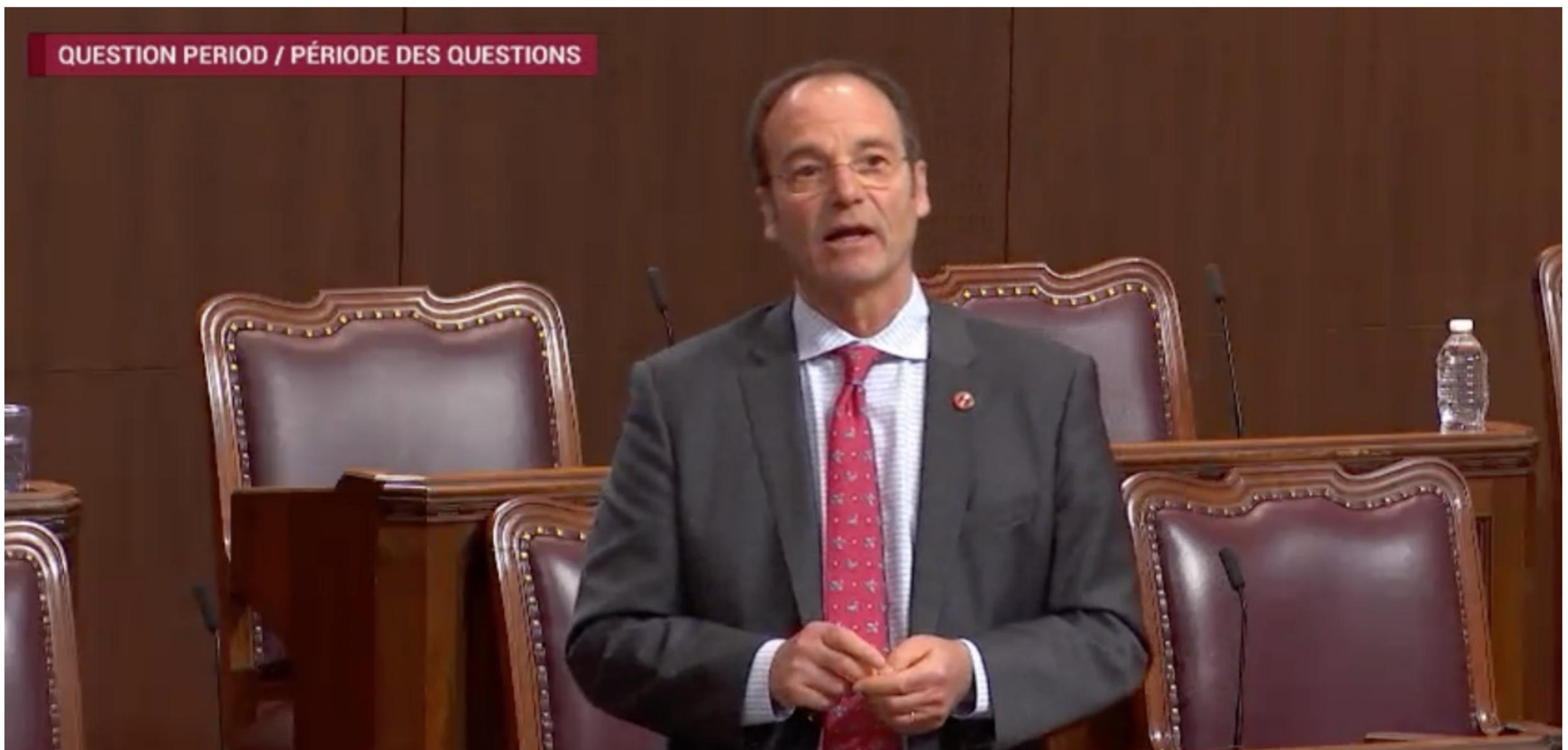
**Senator Gold:** Thank you very much for your question.

## QUESTIONS ASKED BY SENATOR NGO

The government continues to work with stakeholders and to be, as we say in French, à l'écoute, to determine both how the program is working and where it might be adjusted.

The program is, by all accounts, a success. I have been advised that, as of last night, the government has received over 85,000 applications for the wage subsidy, which is quite a significant take-up. I'm advised that the government expects to receive almost 1 million applicants, each of which will be and must be verified manually by auditors.

To repeat, for a program like this — as well as the others that have been introduced — of such magnitude and introduced with such remarkable speed, it is inevitable that not every particularity of every business will necessarily be fully addressed. The government understands this and, I'm advised, continues to work to determine how these programs can best suit the largest number of Canadian businesses and workers that are affected.



**On May 15, Senator Ngo addressed the following questions:**

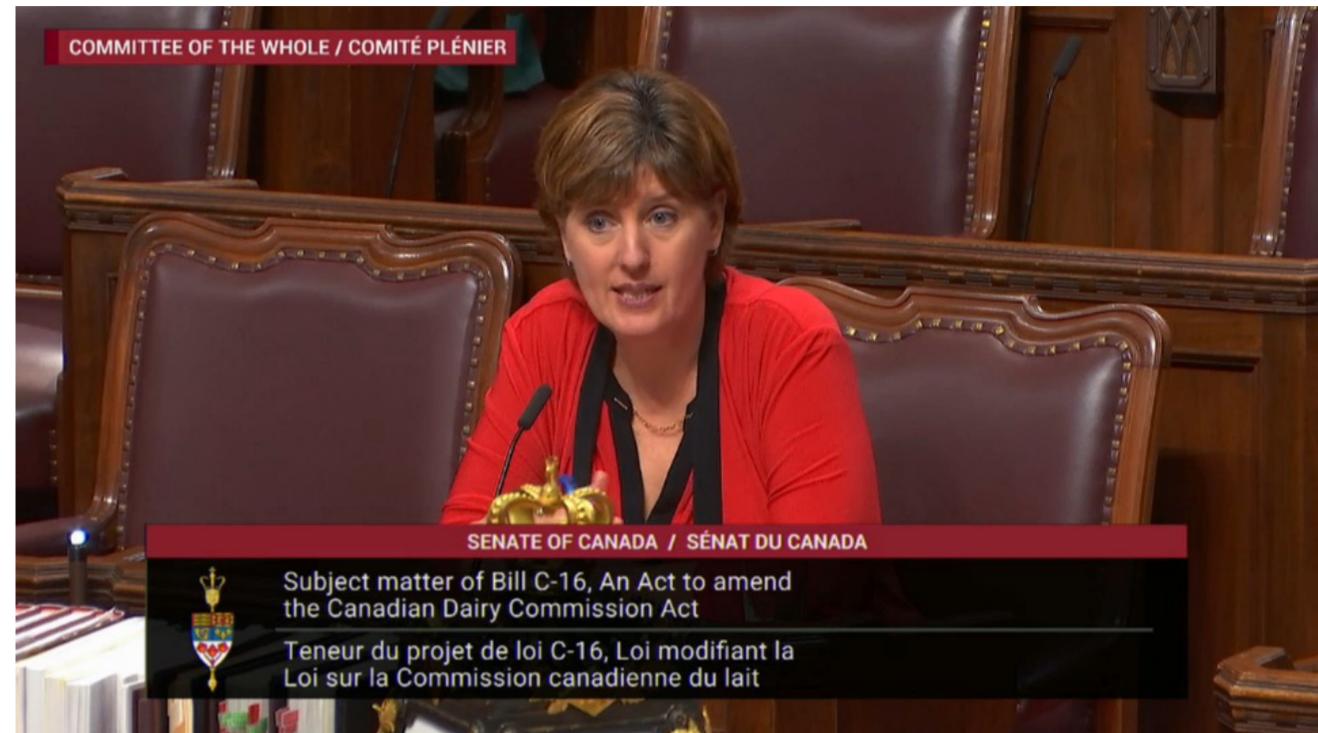
**To the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, the Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau:**

**Senator Ngo:** The new financial measures announced last week by the government for the agriculture and agri-food sectors were received with mixed reaction, and rightfully so. We have learned some of those measures are not even new. More troublesome is the fact that some of them are not even related to COVID-19, as they were already budgeted and/or were a campaign commitment from the government. I'm talking about the re-announcement of \$125 million that was already provided for in the AgriRecovery program, as was the \$5 billion in funding to Farm Credit Canada, which is a campaign commitment.

**Could you explain to our farmers, Canadians, businesses, Canadians working in the agriculture and agri-food sectors who are struggling, why the government is re-announcing measures it already committed to put in place before this pandemic even began?**

**Ms. Bibeau:** Thank you, senator. As I said earlier, in Canada we decided years ago to put in place business risk management so these programs will be ready when our farmers face a difficult situation and a difficult year. This is the way we have decided to do it, and I think it's the right way. Producers and farmers know what they can count on if it ever happens.

# QUESTIONS ASKED BY SENATOR NGO



There are four main programs under the BRM: AgriStability is meant to support farmers when they have a significant loss in revenues; AgrilInvest is meant to build a savings account in a bad year; AgrilInsurance is meant to support farmers when there is a natural disaster; AgriRecovery is meant to support when they have to face exceptional costs. For the last five years or so, the average amount of money that was out to support the producers through AgriRecovery was \$15 million.

We have announced \$125 million, and it's only the beginning under this program. I expect more requests to come from the provinces. I wouldn't agree that it's not new money. It's a significant commitment from the government and we have moved forward first, because normally under AgriStability we wait for provinces to come to us and ask for the program. We are moving forward saying that everywhere across the country, whether the province decides to put its 40% or not, we are moving forward with our 60% contribution. Normally the level of eligible expenses is limited to 70%. We have raised it to 90%.

## Question #2:

**Senator Ngo: Thank you for the answer. I would like to follow up on the question from Senator Dagenais. The government asked the agriculture and agri-food sectors, what would be the financial aid that they actually need to get through this crisis. They say it is \$2.6 billion, and the government announced only \$252 million, which falls very short of what they are asking and what they desperately need. You asked them and then you simply did not follow or listen to what they say?**

**Ms. Bibeau:** I listen to farmers every day. Once again, we cannot turn our back to the business risk management. In an average year, it's \$1.6 billion. I expect it to be much more this year. There is \$2.3 billion already available in the AgrilInvest account. We have increased the financing for pork producers and beef producers by \$100 million last week. We have put \$77.5 million for food processors as well, so we are moving forward in different ways.

Once again, I will encourage our producers to use these programs so we can identify where the gaps are and who are those most in need.