

## **SPEAKING NOTES**

**(four-minute speech and one-minute rebuttal)**

### **ADJOURNMENT DEBATE NO. 1**

**Foreign Affairs (CanSino Biologics)**

**OTTAWA, ONTARIO**

**October 2020**

**CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to respond to the comments made earlier by the honourable member for **Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles** regarding **CanSino Biologics**.

Mr. Speaker, the health and safety of Canadians is the government's top priority.

The government is working on every possible front to provide safe, effective vaccines and treatments against COVID-19 as quickly as possible.

The government continues to ensure access to vaccine candidates and therapies, while investing in research and the manufacturing of them here in Canada.

To date, the government has obtained up to 282 million doses of potential vaccines from manufacturers around the world, as well as the option to purchase tens of millions of additional doses.

The government has also invested \$126 million for the construction of a

new vaccine biomanufacturing facility at the NRC's Royalmount site in Montréal.

When this pandemic began, the government acted quickly to ensure access to the most promising vaccine candidates based on the best available science.

The government continues to be guided by science in its decision-making.

Those decisions include the agreement that the NRC signed with CanSino

Biologics Inc., a company that the NRC had a relationship with since 2013.

CanSino is a publicly traded company on the Hong Kong stock exchange. One of its main shareholders is the US pharmaceutical giant Eli Lilly and Co.

In 2013, CanSino and the National Research Council of Canada collaborated on a process for developing vaccines against tuberculosis and Ebola.

And in 2014, CanSino purchased a licence to use one of the NRC's proprietary cell lines, enabling it to develop vaccines against other diseases.

When the NRC agreed to collaborate with CanSino on a COVID-19 vaccine in spring 2020, CanSino's vaccine candidate was, at the time, widely recognized by the scientific community as one of the world's leading candidates.

The agreement would have allowed Canadian researchers at Dalhousie University to conduct Phase 1 and Phase 2 clinical trials to test its safety and effectiveness.

Unfortunately, CanSino's shipment to Canada of its doses of the COVID-19 vaccine candidate was delayed, and that collaboration between the NRC and CanSino has now ended.

I want to make it clear that CanSino received no funding from the Government of Canada for that potential

collaboration and, more importantly, it is not the only vaccine or therapy candidate being considered by the government.

For example, the government provided \$35 million to VIDO-InterVac at the University of Saskatchewan to expedite the development of its vaccine candidate and increase its biomanufacturing capacity.



The NRC is also working with VBI Vaccines to develop a vaccine that targets COVID-19 and other diseases.

In addition, the NRC is reviewing a set of vaccine and therapy proposals recommended by the Vaccine Task Force.

The Government will continue to pursue all promising opportunities in order to ensure a safe supply of potential vaccines and thereby protect the health and safety of Canadians.

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**Rebuttal**

Mr. Speaker, it is important to keep in mind the cost of this pandemic in terms of human lives.

Canada owes it to those who contracted the virus—and to those who have succumbed to it—to consider all viable treatments.

Only by following the best evidence available can Canada reasonably hope to contain and defeat this pandemic.

This is why the government will continue to pursue all appropriate possibilities for potential vaccines.

Canadians deserve nothing less.

As the Prime Minister indicated: “The best way to end this pandemic is with a safe and effective vaccine.”