

DRAFT

Speaking Points

On

XX Reading Debate

Bill C-4:

**An Act relating to certain measures
in response to COVID-19**

Procurement

**House of Commons
September xx, 2020**

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Opening

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise and address the House on a key component of this critical piece of legislation. An element that will likely have an impact on all Canadians as this country faces its most challenging health and economic crisis.

Rest assured, this Government continues to do everything in its power to meet the challenges of this pandemic.

As elected members of this House, we must do everything we can to protect Canadians. It is our greatest responsibility, and this is no time for austerity.

Indeed, this is a momentous time in our history that calls for swift action. It is our duty to help the most vulnerable Canadians, especially those who are struggling to make ends meet, and to ensure that this Government can continue to responsibly address the pandemic into the months ahead. Canadians expect no less.

At its core, Bill C-4 is intended to give income support to workers who have been negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. It is also intended to provide the Government with sufficient funds to tackle this pandemic and protect the health and safety of Canadians.

By keeping in place funding measures that will safeguard our health and promote our economic recovery, this Government is doing everything in its power to make sure that, together, Canadians will get through this pandemic.

As we fight this pandemic head on, this Government's top priority is to protect Canadians from COVID-19 and save lives and support them in their time of need.

Make no mistake, this aim has been driving the procurement efforts of Public Services and Procurement Canada.

In collaboration with Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada, PSPC has been working day and night on our Government efforts to combat COVID 19.

One focus of PSPC's work that must continue is the procurement of an effective and safe vaccine.

Vaccines

It is the fervent wish, not just of Canadians, but of people across the globe whose lives have been blighted by this pandemic that we find a safe and effective vaccine against COVID-19.

Our Government is making sure that when a vaccine is ready, Canada will be ready.

On behalf of the Public Health Agency of Canada, and following advice from the COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force, our Government has already entered into a number of agreements in recent weeks giving Canada access to the most promising vaccines being developed around the world.

Securing multiple supply sources will provide assured access to safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines when they become available.

Here I really must emphasise that any vaccine will only be offered to Canadians when it has been proven safe and effective, and has received regulatory approval from Health Canada.

Mr. Speaker, the Government has already secured access to six vaccine candidates and our procurement teams are working around the clock to aggressively pursue additional agreements.

As we wait for the vaccines, we are procuring supplies required to get the vaccines out to Canadians. This government has made further investments in our capacity for vaccine distribution including syringes, vials and swabs so we can support safe and effective immunization.

The financial provisions in this Bill will ensure that we will be ready to procure new technologies, new tests, new vaccines and new therapeutics as they are developed and approved.

By its very nature a pandemic is of course global. Vaccinating Canadians alone will not suppress the virus in the long term or end this pandemic.

A global pandemic has no respect for international boundaries. We know that in order to come out the other side, it will take a truly global effort.

That is why the Government of Canada committed \$220 million dollars to the Gavi COVAX Facility, giving Canada access to up to 15 million additional vaccine doses. An additional \$220 million will be channeled through the COVAX Advance Market Commitment to purchase doses for low- and middle-income countries.

Supporting other countries in their fight against COVID-19 is an investment in bringing this pandemic to an end as quickly as possible, for all of us.

However, Mr. Speaker, we know a vaccine may be some way off and that we must continue to manage the risks of COVID-19.

Procurement of PPE and Medical Supplies

We must continue to procure vital supplies for frontline healthcare workers and Canadians providing other essential services.

In the beginning, as the pandemic spread, we knew that much needed personal protective equipment was in high demand around the world.

Funds that were allocated in March through the *Public Health Event of National Concern Payments Act* have been helping support our Government's response.

Since then, our Government has acquired billions of units of PPE, including non-surgical masks, N95 respirators, face shields, hand sanitizer, protective gowns and gloves.

Mr. Speaker we reached out to multiple suppliers overseas to purchase existing supplies and secure future shipments. And many innovative Canadian companies have stepped up to produce the most vital PPE here at home—giving an economic boost to regions across Canada.

I can say with confidence that Canada is now in a much stronger and more stable position in terms of PPE and supplies.

Mr. Speaker, we know that with renewed efforts to keep community transmission at a minimum, testing for the virus and tracing where it may have spread is more important than ever.

The Government is moving fast to ensure that Canada has access to the most effective and efficient testing solutions possible as the technology quickly evolves.

We will continue procuring components needed for administering COVID tests, such as testing kits, swabs and reagents. We are also procuring rapid-test solutions to help meet the increase in demand to test Canadians and reduce wait times.

Now more than ever, these efforts must continue with full force.

Mr. Speaker, as we continue to see the rise in reported infections and we ask Canadians to redouble their efforts slow the spread of COVID-19, members of this House must be willing to play their part and support this Bill.

Bill C-4 will allow us to sustain PSPC's procurement so that Canada remains ready to deal with any scenario that may develop.

Receiver General

Mr. Speaker, also housed within PSPC is the office of the Receiver General for Canada.

I want to thank each and every public servant working in that office for overseeing the Canada Emergency Benefit payments to individuals and the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy to businesses.

Closing

Mr. Speaker, key provisions in Bill C-4 will ensure we can continue this vital work in the months ahead.

Through this Bill, we are asking the House to allocate funding through to the end of the calendar year. But we know that this crisis will still be with us in the New Year.

Mr. Speaker, I must say again how critical it is that we make these investments right now, for the future health and safety of every Canadian.

To get through this pandemic we must all work together, every order of government, every community, each and every Canadian.

Once again I encourage my colleagues in this House to do their part and help to pass this important Bill.

Thank you.