

Late Show Speaking Notes – COVID-19 Emergency Response

Adjournment Proceedings –Notices of Questions:

Original exchange for background: Hansard, October 1, 2020

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC)

Mr. Speaker, this is another WE scandal in the making, so let us review. First the Prime Minister destroyed our stockpiles of PPE on the eve of a global pandemic, then he sent what little we had left to the Chinese communist regime. Now we learn he is slapping national security designations on government contracts for PPE. National security designations are meant for national defence, not cloaking public health contracts in secrecy. This is just another attempt by the government to avoid accountability. What are the Liberals trying to hide this time?

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.)

Mr. Speaker, once again I need to highlight what I just said, which is that in the interest of full transparency we revealed on our website at the end of July all of our contracts and suppliers. I would like to take issue therefore with the insinuation that we are not acting in the interest of transparency, and I will say that we now have over two billion items of PPE in this country for Canadians, for front-line health care workers, and we will continue to act with vigour and diligence on their behalf.

Late Show Response 4 minutes
(567 words)

Mr. Speaker, I thank the honourable Member from Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman for the question.

The Government continues to focus on keeping all Canadians healthy and safe. I'm sure that all members of this house would agree that there is no more pressing priority.

Since the very beginning of the pandemic, our Government has taken action to contain the spread of COVID-19.

Public Services and Procurement Canada remains focused on acquiring enough supplies to allow us to face every scenario in this pandemic. That includes procuring essential personal protective equipment, treatments, vaccines and tests needed to protect Canadians.

These supplies remain in high demand around the world. Despite the hyper-competitive global market, the Government has managed to acquire billions of units of PPE, including masks, N95 respirators, face shields, hand sanitizer, protective gowns and gloves—with more on the way.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, our government has made it a priority to let Canadians know what we have been doing to protect them. Since this past April, we have taken steps to be as transparent as possible and to keep Canadians up-to-date on our work.

We have made publicly available the progress we are making on procuring key COVID-19 supplies. As orders have arrived, and continue to arrive, Canadians have been able to consult the PSPC website for a regularly updated overview of purchases and deliveries.

In addition, as part of our commitment to transparency and accountability, we are publicly disclosing contracting information to the fullest extent possible while protecting our supply chain. This information, which is available on the contracting information page of the PSPC website, also includes the names of suppliers and the amounts of the contracts.

On top of this, Canadians have been updated on purchases of PPE, as well as new manufacturing contracts with Canadian and international companies, on a regular basis through ministerial press conferences.

Most recently, we have been providing updates on agreements the Government has signed with a number of companies to secure Canada's access to the most promising vaccines being developed around the world.

As we have been reporting to Canadians, we are also moving fast to ensure that Canada has access to the most effective and efficient testing solutions possible as the technology quickly evolves. Along the way, we have been informing Canadians on the companies we have made agreements with, as well as the types and quantities of kits we are procuring.

Mr. Speaker, it is no secret that COVID cases are on the rise in parts of the country. Now more than ever, our procurement efforts must continue with full force.

That is why we continue to aggressively pursue vaccines, PPE, test kits and other supplies. I can assure this House that our procurement teams are working around the clock to move this complex work forward.

These are extraordinary times, and as this Government works to ensure Canadians are supported and safe, we will also continue to keep Canadians informed on what we are doing to keep them safe.

One minute rebuttal
(139 words)

Mr. Speaker, let me reiterate that with COVID cases on the rise across the country, we need to ensure that Canada is prepared for all scenarios.

This pandemic is the most serious public health crisis Canada has ever faced and the Government must continue to meet the challenges it presents head on.

Our goal is to build a stronger and more resilient Canada for everyone, and it starts with keeping Canadians healthy and safe. At the same time, we will always prioritize transparency to Canadians on what the Government is doing.

Through disclosing the quantities of PPE and other supplies, as well as details on our contracts, and by continuing to be transparent and open with regular updates to the public, we will keep Canadians informed on how we are procuring much-needed supplies to keep Canada safe.

Thank you.