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Chair: Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal





## Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration

Wednesday, June 12, 2024

• (1805)

[*English*]

**The Chair (Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.)):** I call this meeting to order.

We are meeting in public now.

Before I go to Madam Zahid, I have a special announcement to make.

Mr. Steven Barrett yesterday completed 20 years of service. I want committee members to join me and congratulate Mr. Barrett for 20 years of service.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

**The Chair:** Madam Zahid, please go ahead.

**Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.):** Thank you, Chair.

I would like to move my motion, which was put on notice on Wednesday, May 8, 2024:

As the Home Child Care Pilot and Home Support Worker Pilot Programs will expire on June 17, 2024, and the caregiver community is very concerned about what will follow the expiry of these programs, that the committee shall prioritize the caregiver study adopted December 12, 2023, scheduling and completing this study as its next order of business.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Chair, I raise a point of order.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** There is a point of order by Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** We are indeed talking about the letter on Afghanistan, right?

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Because we have now moved into public, this is a new meeting, so I have a list of speakers.

They are Madam Zahid and then Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe, Mr. McLean, Mr. Chiang, Mr. Redekopp, Mr. Ali and Madam Kwan.

Madam Zahid has the floor.

**Mrs. Salma Zahid:** I would really like to get the study started on the caregivers. As we all know, in Canada we have one-million strong Canadians of Filipino origin, who have called Canada their home. These two pilot projects were launched in 2019 and are com-

ing to an end on June 17, although the minister has announced another two pilot projects. It is really very important that we do this study, listen to the witnesses and make sure we provide the government with important recommendations for these two programs.

Today is a very special day for Canadians of Filipino origin—June 12. I was just part of the Filipino flag-raising, where Canadians of Filipino origin from coast to coast to coast were here as we raised the flag.

Canadians of Filipino origin have made important contributions to this country. Today, we celebrated the 126th anniversary of the Philippines, as well as 75 years of the diplomatic relationships between Canada and the Philippines.

This month, June, is also Filipino Heritage Month. I brought forward motion 155, which declared June as Filipino Heritage Month, and I know it is really very important for all members here in this committee, because that motion 155 received unanimous consent on October 30, 2018. Since then we have been celebrating June as Filipino Heritage Month.

Filipinos have made important contributions in making these two programs part of their program. Many parents can go out to work, because they have caregivers to look after their young kids. We can leave our parents at home and go to work without worrying about them, because we have caregivers there to look after our elderly parents and grandparents.

This is based on all that the caregivers have contributed to our economy, which has allowed many Canadians to contribute to the economy by being able to go out to work, just because they have caregivers taking care of their young kids or elderly parents and grandparents. I think it is very important that we have a permanent program for both of these streams—the caregivers who take care of our young kids as well as the caregivers who take care of our elderly parents and grandparents.

We have been delaying a program for a very long time. When we announced the two pilot projects back in 2019, because of this changeover there have been lots of caregivers who have lost status. I hope my colleagues will agree with me, because I know that for Canadians of Filipino origin, the caregiver community is really very important.

I have been travelling from coast to coast to coast to listen to the Filipino community. MP Redekopp and I have been to Saskatoon. Saskatchewan is home to a very vibrant Filipino community. We were together at one of the festivals in August 2022. We heard from many people there about how important these programs are and how important they are for the Filipino community. It's a one-million strong community.

I really request this of all members. I think many people are listening to us and seeing us right now. On this very special day today, June 12, the day of independence of the Philippines, I think there would not be a better day to decide on doing this important study.

I have represented the Scarborough Centre riding since 2015. I represent a very vibrant Filipino community. Close to 18,000 Filipinos have called Scarborough Centre their home.

• (1810)

The stories I hear at my constituency office, at times, make me feel so bad. I hear from caregivers about how they had to leave their loved ones, their young kids and spouses back home, to come here to look after our kids, parents and grandparents. I hear from many caregivers who lost status and are not able to work. So many caregivers are vulnerable at the hands of their employers. I am thankful to our minister for these two pilot projects, which were announced back in 2019, that allowed them to bring their immediate family members along with them and not have to leave them. Imagine, if we put ourselves in their shoes, having to leave our loved ones, our children, back home, and come to Canada to look after someone else's loved ones—children, parents and grandparents—how would we feel without our families? I think family reunification is really very important.

There are a lot of aspects as to why we need to do this study. We need to listen to the witnesses from the caregiver community so that we can make some important recommendations to the government and so that we can land on some permanent programs. I know Minister Miller announced new enhanced caregiver pilot programs, building on the success of the home child care provider and home support worker pilots. The new pilots will allow caregivers to continue to come to Canada as we work towards making the caregiver pilot program permanent. As well, these new pilot programs will provide caregivers with permanent residency upon their arrival in Canada, allowing them to have a clear and straightforward path to permanent status. Not only that, but this will make it easier for caregivers to find proper work with reliable employers.

In addition, after hearing from stakeholders, advocacy groups and caregivers themselves, we are lowering the language requirements—the Canadian language benchmark—from CLB 5 to CLB 4 because many caregivers were not able to get their permanent residency because they were not able to meet the language requirement. We heard a lot, in the last many years, about the issue of the language requirement, so I am glad that, through these pilot programs, candidates interested in working in Canada's home care sector will be eligible to apply if they meet the criteria like the new language requirements, the equivalent of a Canadian high school diploma, recent and relevant work experience, and an offer for a full-time home job.

Caregivers play a critical role in supporting Canadian families. As such, we owe it to them to ensure our programs reflect their invaluable contributions. These measures provide a more stable and secure pathway for caregivers from abroad as they arrive in Canada. It's really very important to note that there have been new developments to this study, but it is also important that we examine it. We need to listen to the caregivers and their testimonies in order to make recommendations so that the government can bring some permanent programs. The uncertainty of pilot programs causes anxiety among so many caregivers. Since 2019, when we announced these two programs, as they were pilots, I have heard at my constituency office, as well as from many other communities across Canada, “What will happen once these programs expire?” I think the caregiver community is looking forward to our hearing them and making sure we have some permanent programs so that there is stability. Once they know these are permanent programs and they are able to serve here as caregivers in a better situation, they won't have on their mind, “What will happen when these programs expire, as they are just pilot projects?”

• (1815)

I represent a very vibrant Filipino community and its members have contributed in all sectors of the Canadian economy. I have amazing restaurants like FV Foods, where people come from across the GTA to enjoy the Filipino culture and cuisine. I also have many other restaurants and small businesses.

In all walks of life, Canadians of Filipino origin are contributing, and it is important that our support is there for the caregiver sector. Imagine how many Canadians would not be able to work if we did not have caregivers looking after their young kids.

My request is that we really look into it and, as the motion of MP Ali is already here, we prioritize this because it's important that we show the Filipino community and we show the caregivers that we care about them. We are not taking them for granted. Based on these recommendations and the importance of having these, it's very important that this is scheduled ASAP. Schedule these meetings and start listening to the caregivers. I can tell you that all these stories I have heard in my constituency office and across Canada need to be heard by all committee members.

I'm glad that the minister has announced these programs, but based on the need, it's very important that we have a long-term plan and a long-term program for the caregiver community. There cannot be a better month than June to start this study ASAP. My request is that we start that study.

**The Chair:** Are you finished speaking, Madam Zahid?

I don't want to get into trouble.

Mr. McLean, I have to make sure—

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** I want to raise a point of order while my colleague takes a moment to determine what she wanted to say.

I just want to have my dear colleague note that, since this motion is very important to her, maybe we should move on to a vote right away. Otherwise, we will run out of time, and the people she wants to defend may get the impression they've been used for filibustering and partisanship. I know how important this motion is to her. If she continues speaking, we will unfortunately run out of time and be unable to move on to the vote on her motion.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe, that's not a point of order.

I will give the floor back to Madam Zahid.

Madam Zahid, please continue.

**Mrs. Salma Zahid:** According to the minister, “As we work to implement a permanent caregivers program, these two pilots will help not only improve support for caregivers, but also provide families with the quality care they deserve.”

The government says that eligible caregivers will be able to work for organizations that provide temporary or part-time care for individuals, such as those receiving care while recovering from injury or illness.

We all saw that “in Toronto on Monday afternoon, [the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship] said the pilots could launch as soon as this fall. These updated programs replace two other pilot programs that the minister said brought thousands of caregivers to Canada, but which are slated to wrap up” on June 17, 2024.

The minister said, “While these pilots have attracted many qualified individuals and their families in Canada and helped provide in-home care, the need for caregivers continues”.

This indicates that “the government has been talking to caregivers and stakeholders to look at ways of improving the support these programs provide for newcomers.”

Minister Miller “said that with Canada's aging demographics, there is an increasing need for caregivers to support people.”

In my riding, I have seven long-term care units and the majority of the people who are PSWs or caregivers taking care of those elderly people in long-term care are Filipinos. Their contributions are really great. We saw during the pandemic all the issues we faced in long-term care. Canadians were really worried about their parents and grandparents who were living in long-term care. Who was taking care of them when we had issues? It was the caregivers, with many of them coming from the Filipino community. We really owe them a lot.

As Minister Miller also recognized while announcing these pilot projects, we have an aging population in Canada. He said, “This is something that is an increasing reality, not a decreasing one.”

“He noted many of the caregivers who come to Canada to take this work on are women, some of whom are being separated from their own families when moving abroad to take care of others.”

I have heard stories that make all of us cry. We hear from the caregivers that they have not been able to see their young kids for four or five years. These stories are there and it is really important that we give priority to that.

I know this motion, which my colleague and good friend, MP Ali, moved and was adopted by this committee on December 12, 2023, has been delayed for all of this session because other things have been coming up. I know we have done important work in the committee, but it is really very important that we do not delay this study for a very long time.

The five-year pilot projects that were first launched in 2019 and were aimed at bringing foreign caregivers into the country to care for children, seniors and people with disabilities are being replaced, are expiring on June 17. “The new pilots, which the government says are a move toward establishing a permanent caregiver program in Canada, address some long-held concerns that critics of the country's approach to foreign caregivers have spent years highlighting.”

Amanda Aziz, an immigration and refugee lawyer with the Migrant Workers Centre in Vancouver, said, “People have been working for decades on the demand to ensure that migrant workers arrive with permanent resident status to Canada”.

This is, for the most part, because caregivers and care workers are faced with such abuse and exploitation in the context of their employment.

In Canada, we have tried different caregiver programs. At times we have seen that it should be associated with a particular employer, not open. We saw how much abuse the caregivers had to face when their work permits were tied to their employers.

● (1820)

We have been trying different programs for years and have not been able to land on a permanent program in the last many years for our caregiver community. I think that's not fair for the caregivers who are putting so much into that profession. They give their lives to that profession, which is either keeping them away from their loved ones or is the cause of the abuse they face. I think it's really very important that we give them some sort of certainty so that their anxiety level goes down. That's why I really want us to do this study.

When I go back in the summer to my constituents and start hearing those stories again, what am I going to tell them? Will I tell them that, for this whole session, we were not able to schedule meetings on an important issue, especially in this month of June, which has been recognized unanimously to highlight the contributions of Canadians of Filipino origin here in Canada?

I know that Marc Miller, Minister of Immigration, has also announced other highly anticipated changes to language and education requirements to qualify for the new pilots that are set to launch sometime between this fall and early 2025.

Where applicants previously needed to demonstrate a language proficiency of level 5 in either English or French, that requirement has now been dropped to level 4.

Education requirements have also been lowered: caregivers previously needed to have the equivalent of at least one year of post-secondary education or a foreign educational credential equivalent.

Under the incoming pilots, the equivalent of a Canadian high school diploma will suffice, along with “recent and relevant” work experience.

An offer for a full-time home care job is also required in these two programs.

Through the streams, caregivers will also be able to work for organizations that offer part-time care for people who are recovering from injury or illness and those who are not fully independent.

My colleague MP Kwan—we have been on this committee since 2015—“told the Star the changes—which she said she has pushed Ottawa to adopt—will also stop caregivers from being separated from their families by opening up more ways for them to bring relatives to Canada.”

She also said, “I’ve been advocating for this for over 30 years now, and so today’s announcement that they will finally respect and honour caregivers and value their work...is extremely welcome.”

I think it is really very important, based on all I have said and on all the Filipino community has contributed to the economy of this country, especially in the caregiver sector and especially recognizing that June is Filipino Heritage Month, that my motion be taken into consideration and that we start this important study.

Thank you, Chair.

• (1825)

**The Chair:** Are you done?

**Mrs. Salma Zahid:** Yes.

**The Chair:** We will go to Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** Mr. Chair, I move the adjournment of the debate, and I will continue to exercise my right to speak after we vote on that.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** There is a motion to adjourn the debate.

I will ask the clerk to take the vote.

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.):** I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Madam Kayabaga, go ahead on your point of order.

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** He’s moving a motion to adjourn debate, and then he’s putting himself on the speakers list. We all have our hands up right now. He can’t do that. If he’s using his slot to—

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** Yes, you’re right.

[*English*]

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** His speaker spot is gone. There are many of us who have our hands up.

**The Chair:** I can clear it up. As soon as he brings in a motion to adjourn the debate, then his spot is gone. Then I have to move on to the next person.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 6; nays 5)

**The Chair:** The debate is adjourned and the floor is with Mr. McLean.

**Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and I appreciate having the floor here. Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Just a minute. I have to do some housekeeping.

**Mr. Greg McLean:** There’s time left here, Mr. Chair, so let me make a motion here quickly.

• (1830)

**The Chair:** It’s 6.30. Is there a unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting?

**Mr. Greg McLean:** No.

**Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC):** No.

**The Chair:** Then I suspend the meeting. You have the floor next time.

[*The meeting was suspended at 6:30 p.m., Wednesday, June 12*]

[*The meeting resumed at 11:02 a.m., Monday, June 17*]

**The Chair:** Good morning.

I call the meeting to order. We are meeting in public.

Welcome to the continuation of meeting number 106 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration.

From our agenda, we dealt with the mandatory provident fund and delays for Hong Kongers last week. The next point to discuss is the draft letter regarding the government’s response to the final report of the Special Committee on Afghanistan.

At the end of the meeting, as I said earlier, there will be Punjabi food, and all the staff, support staff and honourable members are welcome to join us.

To avoid audio feedback, before we begin, I would like to ask all members and other in-person participants to consult the cards on the table for guidelines to prevent audio feedback incidents.

Please take note of the following preventive measures in place to protect the health and safety of all participants, including the interpreters.

Only use a black, approved earpiece. Keep your earpiece away from all microphones at all times. When you are not using your earpiece, please place it face down on the sticker placed on the table for this purpose. Thank you for your co-operation.

Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format.

I would like to make a few comments for the benefit of the members.

Please wait until I recognize you by name before speaking.

For members in the room in person, please raise your hand if you wish to speak. For members on Zoom, please use the "raise hand" function. The clerk and I will manage the speaking order as best we can, and we appreciate your understanding in this regard. As a reminder, all comments should be addressed through the chair.

To go back to the Afghanistan letter and press release, the discussion regarding the draft letter was previously done in camera. I ask all members to be careful about disclosing information that we have decided on or discussed in camera.

We need to confirm all paragraphs of the letter before we can look at the press release.

Last week, we suspended the meeting. We had a list of speakers. Before I give that list of speakers, I'd like to welcome Madam Brière and Madam Dhillon to the committee.

The following members were on the speakers list. We have Mr. McLean—he had the floor—then Mr. Chiang, Mr. Redekopp, Mr. Ali, Madam Kwan, Madam Kayabaga and Mr. El-Khoury.

Mr. McLean, please go ahead.

**Mr. Greg McLean:** Thank you.

The purpose of the meeting today, of course, is to look at the letter on Afghanistan that this committee has had for quite some time. It's my pleasure to introduce this motion today. I'll read it out loud, Mr. Chair:

That regarding the draft letter concerning the government's response to the Final Report of the Special Committee on Afghanistan as sent to committee members on May 21, 2024, the paragraphs numbered 19, 20 and 23 be deemed adopted without amendment; that the letter and news release be then deemed adopted; that the chair be then instructed to transmit the letter to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship on the second business day following the adoption of this motion; that the chair then issue the news release on behalf of the committee immediately upon transmitting the letter to the minister; that the letter and the news release be then posted to the committee's website; and that the study be then deemed concluded.

I'll explain why this is very important and why we need to get this moving as quickly as possible.

I've been on this committee since September, and we've been looking at this. I looked at how many meetings we've dedicated to this letter on Afghanistan, which has been shortened to a small letter only, and we've had 18 meetings, and that's being conservative as far as the amount of time we've devoted to it. It is a short letter, but let me read to you very quickly what—

**The Chair:** Mr. El-Khoury is rising on a point of order.

**Mr. Fayçal El-Khoury (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.):** Is it possible for our colleague to read the motion in French also, please?

**Mr. Greg McLean:** Absolutely, although I didn't think that was necessary. I'm happy to do it if you'd like—

**The Chair:** Mr. McLean, it's your call.

**Mr. Greg McLean:** I think there is enough that I have to talk about here that maybe it'll be repetitive. If Mr. El-Khoury didn't understand it through translation....

Is that the issue, Mr. El-Khoury?

**Mr. Fayçal El-Khoury:** We have a member who also speaks French, and English not as well as French, who is Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe. I don't know if Alexis would like the motion to be read in French or not. I leave it up to him.

[Translation]

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** If I may, Mr. Chair, I'd like to say we received the motion in both official languages, so all is well.

[English]

**The Chair:** Okay. That's good.

Mr. McLean, please go ahead.

[Translation]

**Mr. Greg McLean:** Yes, give me a moment. I will read the motion in French as well, at my colleague's insistence:

That—

[English]

**Mr. Fayçal El-Khoury:** It's good to practise your French.

**The Chair:** Honourable members, I said earlier—and we had a meeting of the Liaison Committee last week—it is very important that only one person speak because we need to take into consideration the health of our interpreters and other people who are participating here.

Please raise your hand if you wish to speak and I will acknowledge you.

Mr. McLean, please go ahead.

**Mr. Greg McLean:** Thank you.

I'll start again so there's no confusion.

[Translation]

That regarding the draft letter concerning the government's response to the Final Report of the Special Committee on Afghanistan as sent to committee members on May 21, 2024, the paragraphs numbered 19, 20, and 23 be deemed adopted without amendment; that the letter and news release be then deemed adopted; that the Chair be then instructed to transmit the letter to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship on the second business day following the adoption of this motion; that the Chair then issue the news release on behalf of the committee immediately upon transmitting the letter to the Minister; that the letter and the news release be then posted to the committee's website; and that the study be then deemed concluded.

[English]

I hope that's well understood.

I want to proceed now with the rationale behind it, Mr. Chair.

We've spoken about the number of meetings we've had and the amount of time this committee has spent on this simple letter the whole time I've been on this committee—since September 2023.

**The Chair:** Mr. McLean, anything that we talked about in camera cannot be talked about in public. I just want to remind all members.

**Mr. Greg McLean:** I agree. Thank you very much. I'll be very careful about what was said in camera. I recognize the rules in Parliament don't allow me to state in public what was stated in camera in the 18 meetings we had on this, when there seems to be a filibuster on getting this letter actually approved and put in front of the Canadian public. I will be very careful, and if you find me drifting into areas where I may be offside, Mr. Chair, I'd appreciate it if you'd correct me rather than have me go to jail...or any other offence that may incur. I'm onside here with my colleagues, in particular because it is important we do the work of Parliament very effectively and by the rules, but I do want this report to get out.

This report started before I was on this committee. I need people to understand that this is a long time overdue. However, getting familiar with this is the role of parliamentarians, and I have become very familiar with this report and what we need to do.

The paragraph that seems to offend is paragraph 23. Paragraph 23 reads:

The Committee also recommends that the Government requests the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to investigate if charges should be laid against George Young, the Chief of Staff to then Defence Minister Harjit S. Sajjan, for his role in providing a blank template of a Government of Canada document to circumvent established protocols to ensure the safety and security of personnel and process, and for his role in the facilitation of the production of fraudulent Government of Canada documents. This abuse of process could have led to the deaths of Canadian Armed Forces personnel, or the ability for non-state actors to profit from a behind the scenes two-stream process for accessing Canadian travel documents.

This is the offending paragraph that people don't want as part of this report, and I fail to see why. We talk about transparency of government; we talk about many things in this committee. This government says many things that it doesn't seem to want to deliver upon.

Let's go back to the history of what's happened here. There was a federal election in 2021, a federal election that the Prime Minister chose to call during a very precarious time in international affairs in the world. A country that we had supported in the rebuilding processes and in the liberation process.... We had committed, as we say, blood and silver to making sure that there was a democracy that was trying to emerge in Afghanistan. All of that fell apart in the summer of 2021. Many other things were going on in the summer of 2021, as well. At that point in time, the Prime Minister decided that it was time to call an election—an unnecessary, very expensive election—in Canada that led to many consequences across this country. The main consequence was our inability to respond to the international crisis that was happening in Afghanistan.

I recall, Mr. Chair—and I'm sure many of my colleagues around the table recall—the time we spent going door to door and actually getting those people who had relatives in Afghanistan who had helped Canadian forces in Afghanistan—

**The Chair:** There's a point of order.

Mr. Redekopp.

**Mr. Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC):** Thank you.

I believe this meeting is in public. Is that correct?

**The Chair:** That's correct.

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** I believe what's being broadcast at the moment says, "in camera", and I'm wondering if we could just quickly check that to see if—

**The Chair:** No, it's public. In the beginning, I said that we are meeting in public.

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** We were looking at the video feed coming from here.

**The Chair:** It should be in public, as far as the clerk tells me.

Okay, I'm going to suspend for a few minutes to make sure that everything is in order.

• (1115) \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

• (1115)

**The Chair:** We are all good to go.

Mr. McLean has the floor.

**Mr. Greg McLean:** Thank you.

Before I continue, Mr. Chair, I don't want to start all over again, so can I confirm that my remarks as far as introducing the motion are public and publicly available?

**The Chair:** Yes. That is my understanding. I have checked with the technical staff, and that is exactly what they have told me.

**Mr. Greg McLean:** Thank you.

I'll go back to where I was as far as the election was concerned. It was an unnecessary and expensive election from 2020-21 that interrupted our role in serving the people of Afghanistan, particularly the people trying to get to Canada from Afghanistan who had been allies of Canada in the process of attempting to bring more democracy and a functional government to Afghanistan, which failed in the summer of 2021...our inability to respond.

The issue with that is that Canada is a supposedly viable political entity that is respected less and less around the world, so our democracy, as seen as a rules-based order, is falling apart. This motion addresses that by holding people accountable for what was an effort to circumvent the rule of law and having some people have access to documents that allowed for the immigration of certain people from Afghanistan, who weren't authorized by the government and weren't permitted to come to Canada, but had behind-the-scenes access to documents that allowed them to come.

That was facilitated through the then-minister of national defence's office. The then-minister of defence has disavowed any association with the individual who proved to be responsible for that, who was his chief of staff.



I'm happy to have the support of the other opposition parties in this motion. I'm particularly happy to have the support of Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe, who's very concerned, as we are, about the effects this has on international accountability around the world, and of Ms. Jenny Kwan, from the NDP. I will quote her support and her concerns about this from a previous meeting, when she said, "I don't believe that chiefs of staff act on their own without the authorization of their political master."

**The Chair:** Excuse me, Mr. McLean. We cannot quote anything from the meeting that was held in camera. Please continue.

**Mr. Greg McLean:** I believe this is a public meeting. I'm quoting from meeting number 59 of this committee.

I'll double-check. I thought somebody double-checked whether that was a public meeting.

**The Chair:** Because the public meeting is the.... Okay. That's fine. As long as you're fine. I just want to protect you.

**Mr. Greg McLean:** No. I don't want to be offside here. Can the clerk check whether meeting number 59 was a public meeting, or if I'm quoting something that shouldn't be quoted?

**The Chair:** Give me just one second. It was public.

Thank you.

**Mr. Greg McLean:** Let me reiterate the support of my colleague from the NDP here.

I don't believe that chiefs of staff act on their own without the authorization of their political master.

If you have correspondence to indicate that ministers were aware and knew this was all going on at the same time, that would be a pertinent piece of documentation we need to have—

I appreciate the support of my NDP colleague in this motion as well. It is well noted. In moving this forward, we have to make sure that we hold this government accountable. That's the role of all opposition parties: to make sure that all of this nonsense that goes on...that this government is actually very much held to account for that.

People talk about His Majesty's loyal opposition. This is what we do. We hold the government to account, and those people holding the government to account include the backbenchers of every party, not just the Conservative Party of Canada but also the New Democratic Party, the Bloc Québécois, and even, if you will—and I'm looking across the table here—the backbenchers in the Liberal Party of Canada. Malfeasance at the government level—that's Governor in Council—should be held to account in Parliament by all members of Parliament.

I'm happy that we're moving forward with this today, Mr. Chair, but I do want to talk about responsible government and what this means because there is, in the end, responsible government and ministerial accountability on the table here. That ministerial accountability can't just rest with the chief of staff. I appreciate that the chief of staff is the one who will have to be investigated by the RCMP if the RCMP determines that that person, Mr. George Young, chief of staff to then-defence minister Harjit S. Sajjan, was breaking the law in providing template documents for people to enter Canada from Afghanistan. That is something that we don't do in this committee. Our job here is to refer that to the people who will

determine if charges should be laid, and those people, of course, are the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

I don't understand why this has been filibustered this long when it's something that should proceed as a function of normalcy in a democracy governed by the rule of law, with an arm's-length police body. This is something that we need to refer to them, and I'm pushing on how we can do that. I would ask this question to my colleagues on the other side of the table: If not this accountability, then what? This is clearly an infringement of the law. I'm not going to say whether this person is guilty or not. I am going to say something outside the process, the viable process that should have happened in a Canadian system of laws, was moved around here. Somebody worked around the system and provided some template documents so that some people were in line ahead of other people to get from a very troubled zone in the world into Canada, and that's not the way this country operates. We're a country with the rule of law.

The trouble I have with this is that 18 meetings, a basic filibuster on getting a letter out.... It's that whole concept of where there's smoke, there's fire. Is there a reason that my colleagues on the Liberal side of the table are moving heaven and earth to not have this paragraph in this letter to refer this to the RCMP to determine if charges should be laid against Mr. George Young, chief of staff to the Honourable Harjit Sajjan, the then minister of defence? It is something that perplexes all of us because it doesn't seem like—if I can say this—a hill to die on.

Mr. Chair, we need to move forward with this, but again, accountability.... I'll reference this whole accountability framework because this government came into power with the concept of accountability and transparency at the forefront. However, like many things I've seen with this government.... I know I've only been here since 2019—my colleagues will recall—but the Prime Minister came in 2015, and he was talking about raising the bar on openness and transparency in government. I suggest that exactly the opposite has happened, that this government is no longer transparent. It is opaque. It does not want to take accountability for any of its actions. It continues to put words on the table that it does not fulfill.

We have to move past this and actually get back to a plan where we have a government that functions the way it talks. Words on paper are one thing, but actually delivering against those words on paper is the role of the executive part of government. That is not being done right now.

The transparency act was introduced by the Prime Minister. The objectives were to achieve:

ending the secret nature of the House of Commons' Board of Internal Economy and entrenching in law that all government information must be made both "open by default" and available in formats that are relevant and functional...We want a government that is more open after a thorough review and modernization of the entire Access to Information system; the elimination of all fees beyond the...\$5 Access to Information request fee, which should be refunded in the event of delay; and for the Information Commissioner's mandate to be strengthened by giving her the power to enforce information laws.

That was the intent of the current Prime Minister when he came into power in 2015. I suggest that nine years later, that intent is a joke. That has not been fulfilled at all.

Again, those are words on paper that this government is not abiding by. In finance we used to say that you're not eating your own cooking. Get back here, actually put these words down on paper, and recognize what they mean, even when it means asking the RCMP to investigate a chief of staff, the number one confidant of a minister in the government. That is incredibly important here.

Well, one of the things we're worried about here, and one of the reasons we think it may have been filibustered, as hard as it has been here, is the rush for people to get out of Afghanistan. People were in absolute misery. Their lives were on the line. That is something where you will do whatever you have to do at that point in time to get yourself and your family safe. Sometimes in those horrible situations, there are people in the mix who profit from the misery of other people. If somebody in this government has helped some third party profit from the misery that was being visited upon Afghans at that point in time, then that's something the RCMP need to root out. They need to make sure that this "pay to play" that seems to happen so often with this government didn't get manifested in the evacuation of Afghani nationals who helped Canadians when we were over there and trying to instill a new form of government, a democracy for all Afghans.

Canada is not a banana republic. We need a rule of law. We've had a rule of law. It is drifting down in the world, at this point in time. Nobody sees the rule of law in Canada being enforced anymore. This is one small example. Get this person examined by the appropriate authorities for doing something that he should never have done. Breaking the law does not go with impunity just because you're connected to the governing Liberal Party of Canada. You have to ensure that everybody has the same accountability, at the end of the day, and not just people who aren't your friends. Your friends have to meet the same bar of accountability here, going forward.

I can reference all kinds of instances, Mr. Chair. The SNC-Lavalin affair, of course, was the most pronounced where rules were broken. Cabinet ministers were effectively dismissed over what happened over a series of incidents. Jody Wilson-Raybould is no longer a cabinet minister with this government. She actually tried to speak truth to power and make sure there was some accountability for a mercantilist Prime Minister who was trying to make sure that a company where he had some connections didn't face the full consequences of the rule of law.

Again, part of what we're trying to enforce here is the rule of law applying to everybody and every entity. That's not happening at all with this government. Mr. George Young has to be held accountable for his actions here.

I would be remiss in not making sure we talk about how it's who you know in this government that gets you paid. I can tell you how many studies...and I was looking at another one last week. One of the government's friends is writing a report that is a nonsense report, but millions of dollars are being spent putting words on paper. The Auditor General herself brought forth the issues around the number of contracts of hundreds of millions of dollars that are go-

ing to McKinsey without any accountability for what's happening with those reports, at the end of the day.

Money is flying off the table. The government's friends are getting rich in the process, and Canadians are being ill served. Canadians are being taxed more in so many ways. The most egregious example, of course, is the raising of the tax that was introduced last week by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance.

Even the Conservative side of this House—and I'm certain the New Democratic Party and the Bloc Québécois as well—is dismayed at how our international reputation is in tatters because of the way the world views this mercantilist government. This is no way to run a country, and we need to move past it and make sure we start governing effectively.

McKinsey is one example. We have other examples. These are a lot of rich people getting richer with this government's actions. We govern for the people of Canada, and we need to know that. The people of Canada elect us to come here and to make sure government is held to account so that this money doesn't slip off the table the way we've seen happen here.

I will talk about the greenwashing, of course. We can go through all kinds of that. However, there are all kinds of people around the world who are benefiting from this government's actions, actions for which they are unaccountable and that are leading us nowhere.

I'll go into the other two apparently offending parts of this committee report that don't seem to be seeing the light of day just yet. I'm hoping we get some consensus around the table that these are all the applicable paragraphs. Number 19 says:

During its study, the Committee was informed that IRCC, GAC, and DND had each conducted internal investigations and reviews regarding the issuance of "inauthentic" facilitation letters to third parties. In October 2022, IRCC concluded that the letters at issue "did not come officially from the Government of Canada." The department was unable to determine the exact number of "inauthentic" letters that were circulated, and referred the matter to law enforcement in February, 2023. Former IRCC deputy minister, Christiane Fox, denied having found any evidence that Senator McPhedran had sent any documentation to IRCC staff regarding her actions. In March 2023, GAC conducted an internal investigation on the matter. In November 2023, DND informed the Committee that, through its own internal review, the department had concluded that none of its officials or those of the CAF were involved in the production or transmission of facilitation letters and that no staff were aware of third-party distribution.

There's nothing wrong with that paragraph, and yet it has not passed this committee yet.

Paragraph 20 says,

The Committee remains unclear as to how relevant officials and ministers were not made aware of Senator Marilou McPhedran's actions during the evacuation, and did not respond to them, especially since she was in direct contact with the DND chief of staff at the time. [The chief of staff in question was Mr. George Young.] As such, the Committee recommends that all notes, records, and reports from the investigation into fake facilitation letters be provided to the Committee upon conclusion of these investigations. The Committee hopes that such disclosure will shed light on any integrity issues within government evacuation processes, and that any issues identified will be resolved in the event of future humanitarian crises.

There's nothing wrong with that paragraph, again, Mr. Chair.

I read out the parts there, but I do want to get the timeline here so that people are aware of what we're talking about. The Special Committee on Afghanistan started its report shortly after the disaster that happened with this country and the people who were our friends in Afghanistan who were not assured that they could be evacuated in an orderly fashion from Afghanistan.

That committee started hearings on December 13, 2021. The new government came into being in October of 2021. That committee reported on Wednesday, June 8, 2022, and the response from the government was on October 6, 2022. These are normal timelines in terms of the way committees respond and report. Then the IRCC committee, this committee, started looking at this in February of 2023.

Here we are, over a year later. As I said, there have 18 meetings of filibustering on what should be a pretty routine, transparent process to move this along. We've heard from 26 witnesses. We need to make sure that we continue to get this letter in front of the appropriate authorities so that people are held to account. It's about accountability. It's about transparency.

I've said a lot here today, Mr. Chair. I hope my colleagues around the table will support this motion, get this letter completed today and move it toward action items that will hold somebody to account.

Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

I have Mr. Chiang and then Mr. Maguire.

Mr. Chiang, please go ahead.

**Mr. Paul Chiang (Markham—Unionville, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Good morning to everyone here in the room. I hope you all had a good weekend.

I want to thank Mr. McLean for his words on his motion.

Like you, I have been here since September. With regard to the 2021 election, I personally think it was a good thing, because I got elected in 2021. It gave me the opportunity to be here, to sit across from all of you, to be your colleague and to be able to do the work of the government.

It was also a good year for me because it was the year I retired from the police department. The important word is "retired". I was never kicked out. I never quit. I went through everything and I retired after serving for 28 years. It was a marriage of service for 28 years.

I learned a lot in the 28 years I was there. One of the things I learned is that the police are an independent agency. They function on their own. They're accountable to themselves and they're accountable to the police services board that governs them. They're not accountable to the government of the day or to the mayor. In the U.S., where the system is different, the mayor of the city dictates what the police service does.

However, in Canada, and especially in Ontario.... I cannot speak for other provinces in Canada, because policing is a provincial mat-

ter. Of course, the attorney general is the person in the province who's in charge of the police department, but each police service has a police services board that is made up of civilian, provincial and city-appointed personnel that governs what the police service does. It's not the mayor or the councillors in the city; it's the police services board, and it is important for us to know that fact.

The reason it's so important is that we, as a government, cannot tell the RCMP what to do. As a government, we cannot tell the OPP what to do. As a government, we cannot tell York Regional Police or Toronto police what to do, because they're independent.

The reason I'm bringing that up, and why it's so important that members across from me know this, is that because of those rules, we are not a banana republic country. Because we have independence, we are not a banana republic. Our head of state cannot dictate to the police service what to do, how to do it, how to investigate and who to investigate. It is crucial that we understand those things.

I'm not sure what backgrounds or what professions the honourable members across have come from, or whether they from the legal profession or some other profession that may not have had any dealings with the police department. Hopefully, none of them have been arrested before or had any dealings with the police service.

I had the misfortune last night of having an accident while driving to Ottawa. The misfortune for me—it was a minor misfortune—was hitting a deer on Highway 7. Unfortunately for the deer, it did not survive, but I was fortunate. I just have some aches and pains, but I'm here, and the reason I'm here is the important work we are doing here. That important work is why I want to be here to serve alongside you all.

The challenge for me last night was that I could not tell the police what to do. They still have to do their job. They came; they investigated and they gave me a police report.

I'm here. I'm lucky to be alive. I'm 64 years old and I've been driving for the last 46 years of my life in Canada. This was not my first accident. Hopefully it's my last accident. I don't want to have an accident.

It was my first time hitting a deer in my life. I never hit anything else except for a car, and thank God for that. I'm fortunate because my staff wanted me to bring something to Ottawa for this last week of Parliament, something that was important for them. I could not carry it on my motorcycle. Usually I come to Ottawa on a motorcycle. If I had been on a motorcycle last night, I might not be here with you this morning.

I'm so grateful that I'm here with you this morning. I was driving an SUV that sustained quite a lot of damage, but I'm here.

I haven't told my wife yet. You here are the first to know what happened last night. If I tell my wife, she's going to be upset at me because I was driving her car. That's the challenge for me, but I will tell her in my own way.

**An hon. member:** Transparency, Paul.

**Mr. Paul Chiang:** Transparency is very important, yes.

**The Chair:** Could we have one person at a time, please.

**Mr. Paul Chiang:** I want to go back to the part where we are not a banana republic. I want to make sure that the people out there understand that we are not a banana republic. We will not go under that banana republic label, because we are a country with a rule of law. We are a country that respects the law. We are a country that understands what law is all about.

Why do people come to Canada from all across the globe? They want to come to Canada because we are a democracy. We follow the law and we respect each other's freedom, rights, religion and sexual orientation. We respect what food you eat, where you live and who you hang out with.

I choose to hang out with my colleagues across the aisle here. I'm so happy to be able to hang out with all of you. Nobody made me do this. I worked hard to be here.

I'm so happy that I'm able to see all of you here today, because if it weren't for my quick thinking and a little police motor vehicle manoeuvre, I might not have been here with you this morning because of the accident I had last night. If you want proof, I do have a police report to show that I was in an accident and that the car was damaged quite extensively.

Anyway, going back to democracy, we are living in a democracy, and I firmly believe that we should leave the police to do the job they are paid to do or they are entrusted to do or they are sworn to do. They are sworn to secrecy. They are sworn to confidentiality. They are sworn to fulfilling their duties as police officers. It's the highest honour.

Being a member of Parliament is such an honour for me. I get to be in a place where only 338 members get elected to be. Some 128,000 residents live in my riding of Markham—Unionville. It was good enough for them to think that I deserve to be here, that I should be here, because I represent them.

One of the reasons I am representing them here is that out of the 128,000 people in my riding, 66% are of Chinese descent. That's the largest Chinese population in any riding right across Canada. For me it's important to reflect the community that I live in and I represent.

Apart from speaking four dialects of Chinese—Mandarin, Cantonese, the dialect of Hubei and Hakka—I also speak Urdu, Punjabi, Hindi and a little bit of English. It helps me to communicate and meet with my residents and to help them in the best way I possibly can, to advocate on their behalf and make sure they understand that I will take their voice to Ottawa, because for me, together we achieve—

**The Chair:** There is a point of order.

Mr. Kmiec.

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** Mr. Chair, this is just on the issue that the debate is supposed to be germane to the discussion.

I appreciate and I'm very happy to see that my friend is here from Toronto all safe and in one piece—minus his wife's SUV. I'm sure she will pay him back for doing that. Maybe she'll take his motorcycle out.

That said, I don't believe this debate is germane to the Afghanistan letter that we're trying to complete and the three paragraphs that my colleague read in.

I also suggest that at the next meeting of this committee, we have deer too.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Chiang, the floor is with you. Please continue.

**Mr. Paul Chiang:** Thank you, Mr. Kmiec, and thank you, Mr. Chair.

I am coming to my discussion on the motion that Mr. McLean has brought up. The reason I want to speak about the banana republic and I want to speak about being here in Parliament is to bring about honouring Canada's legacy in Afghanistan. We responded as a government to the humanitarian crisis. We helped people reach safety.

I was fortunate to be able to be at Pearson International Airport to welcome the last flight that came in from Afghanistan and to see the faces of the people and the family members who were on the ground waiting. I met with many of them. I spoke with many of them. There were families there who had waited seven years to reunite with their brother, their mother and the extended family they brought along with them. To see the relief, to see the happiness in their faces—it was priceless. Just like the Mastercard slogan, it was priceless.

“On August 15, 2021, the government and security forces of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan collapsed. Panic took hold in the streets of the last territory that had been under its control”. The panic was so extensive that the capital of Kabul was under siege at that time. Returning to power via military force was the Taliban, a group whose repressive rule had horrified the world in the late nineties and who had harboured the al Qaeda terrorists who carried out the attacks of September 11, 2001.

I remember that day very well. I distinctly remember September 11, 2001. I was standing at the corner of Trench Street and Major MacKenzie Drive in the city of Richmond Hill, directing traffic right outside of Mackenzie health science centre, the hospital there. My colleague Darryl Rice and I were standing there directing traffic that day when the plane hit. People who were driving by asked us if we'd heard about it. We were flabbergasted at such a horrible turn of events happening in New York City.

The republic's collapse unleashed shockwaves within Afghanistan and around the world. It signified the abrupt end of a nearly 20-year effort, which had seen hundreds of thousands of international coalition troops serve—with thousands fallen or wounded—as well as billions of dollars spent on security force training, reconstruction and development. As the situation on the ground unravelled, a multinational air bridge was formed. Many were rescued amid volatile and dangerous conditions. However, when the final evacuation flight departed Kabul at the end of August 2021—

[Translation]

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** I raise a point of order, Mr. Chair.

[English]

**The Chair:** We have a point of order from Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe.

[Translation]

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Just because we are talking about Afghanistan does not mean we are within the scope of the motion we are looking at today. The motion is on the letter that was written—

[English]

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

[Translation]

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** Excuse me, but I have not finished my point of order. It won't take long.

[English]

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** I have a point of order.

[Translation]

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** Right now, this meeting is being held in public. Filibustering is going on, even though everyone knows what the outcome of the vote will be. It's not classy. If people are watching—

[English]

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** Chair, I am calling for a point of order on his comments.

[Translation]

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** —it looks bad.

Excuse me, but I am speaking.

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** Yes, but I am raising a point of order because—

[English]

**The Chair:** Madam Kayabaga, honourable members, please, just one person at a time. If there's another point of order I will entertain that, but Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe has the floor.

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** I call a point of order on what Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe is commenting on.

**The Chair:** Let Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe finish, and then I'll acknowledge you on a point of order.

Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe, go ahead, please.

[Translation]

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

What I want to say is that we are off-topic. Just because we are talking about what happened in Afghanistan does not mean we are dealing with the subject before us today, meaning the letter on Afghanistan. People are watching us and I am sure they do not agree with the way taxpayer money is being spent right now, since everyone knows what the outcome of the vote will be. I suggest my colleagues get down to business and move on to the vote.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Madam Kayabaga, go ahead on a point of order.

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** I call a point of order on what my colleague Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe is commenting on as well as what was said earlier. I think my colleague Paul Chiang has the floor right now. He's making comments. He's allowed to expand his comments to reach the point that he's trying to make. We've never stopped any of our colleagues from making comments. [Pursuant to an order made by the committee on June 17, 2024, a portion of this statement has been deleted. See Minutes of Proceedings]

[Translation]

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** I raise a point of order, Mr. Chair.

Ms. Kayabaga just talked about something that happened while in camera. She does not have the right to do so. There are still limits here.

[English]

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** I'm sorry. Mr. Chair, I'm just going to finish my point of order. Our colleagues have the right to expand—

**The Chair:** Madam Kayabaga, hold on just one second.

To all honourable members, if you can raise your hand, I will acknowledge you.

Madam Kayabaga, I think we are getting into a debate, so I'm going to move on.

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** I just want to finish my point, Mr. Chair. I called a point of order to say that our colleagues have the right to expand upon and make comments on the point that they're trying to make. This is a very serious motion that's here before us today. Our colleague Mr. Chiang has the right to make comments, and I have all the time to listen to what he has to say.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Madam Kwan, do you have a point of order as well?

**Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP):** Yes, this is on a point of order, Mr. Chair.

Do I have the floor now?

**The Chair:** Yes, please.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** I'm afraid that the last comment Ms. Kayabaga made was in violation of confidential information at an in camera meeting. As such, I seek your advice on the process to follow, based on that.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

I suspend the meeting to talk to the clerk for a few seconds here.

• (1155)

(Pause)

• (1205)

**The Chair:** I call the meeting back to order.

Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe, do you want to say something before I say something?

[Translation]

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** Yes, Mr. Chair.

Something unfortunate just happened, but I don't think my colleague, Ms. Kayabaga, did it in bad faith. It may have just been a mistake on her part. Nevertheless, it's a violation of privilege. I could table a motion referring the matter to the House. However, I don't want our parliamentary session to end on that note, nor do I want to embarrass my colleague.

That said, I have a request for you, Mr. Chair. Since a matter that should have remained confidential was disclosed, I ask the committee to decide unanimously in favour of withdrawing it from the official record. I also request editing of the meeting's video to remove the part where we heard information that should have remained confidential. Finally, I would like my colleague to apologize, of course. If those three conditions are met, I could move on, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe.

As always, I appreciate what you are doing.

As the chair, my job is to make sure that everything is done according to the rules.

Madam Kayabaga, please go ahead.

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to say that I want to apologize. I did not mean to say anything that is out of bounds. My intention was to allow my colleague to make the comments that he was making, so I do want to take that back. I believe that we've given a wide latitude of topics for debate—

**The Chair:** Madam Kayabaga, please keep it concise, because I don't want further trouble for you.

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** I'm trying to be really concise but I want my colleague to understand that I was not trying to go out of bounds.

Sometimes we forget the meetings that we have in camera and the ones that we don't have in camera. My intention was not to go out of bounds and to offend my colleague, and I do apologize for that. I just want to make sure that we can continue to give the same wide latitude that we're giving to others to make comments and not to interrupt our colleagues as they're making comments.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** I could not be any nicer than that, Mr. Chair.

I did not want an explanation. The fact that confidential information was revealed in public constitutes a breach of privilege. I certainly can bring this before the House, and my colleague could be reprimanded. What I'm asking for is an apology, not an explanation of the context. A breach of privilege occurred, and I am asking for an apology. I also want the committee's unanimous consent to remove the comment from the official record. Finally, I want the video changed accordingly.

I will give Ms. Kayabaga one last chance to officially apologize. That is exactly what I want. I do not want her to give me an explanation of the context. If I do not get a satisfactory apology, I will have to go further, unfortunately.

That is what I am asking for, Mr. Chair. I think I'm playing very fair right now.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe.

You are very fair. In fact, you are a gentleman, and I do commend that.

Madam Kayabaga, would you please respond if you apologize and take the comment back? Then I'll go to the general consent from the committee.

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** Yes, Mr. Chair.

As I said earlier, I do apologize to my colleague as his privilege was breached. I do take it back. I'll leave the rest of the actions to the rest of the committee as I cannot make that decision on behalf of the committee.

**The Chair:** Thank you kindly. I appreciate that.

Is there unanimous consent from committee to do that, to take the comment back?

Mr. Kmiec.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** Mr. Chair, I would like to understand something.

Is there a precedent for this? In the past, has a parliamentary committee ever unanimously decided to change what appeared in the official record of a public meeting and change the video? I just want to understand what might be the effects of Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe's request. Have other committees already done that?

[*English*]

**The Chair:** I cannot say that, but I certainly would love to see it, because in the way he has acted we all know that he has shown the highest standards someone can show towards their colleagues.

Madam Kayabaga has apologized and has accepted to take it out of the blues of the committee. It's up to the members now. If you can give unanimous consent, I will make sure that the clerk does the necessary work that has to be done.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** Mr. Chair, I see the clerk frantically typing on his keyboard to find examples of precedents. We may have to ask procedural clerks if this was done in other committees.

For my part, of course, I will give my consent, because it is a breach of privilege. Ms. Kayabaga admitted she breached Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe's privilege by revealing what was said in camera. So, I agree.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Is there unanimous consent among the committee—

Go ahead, Madam Kwan.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Right off the top, when I raised the point of order and noted that there had been a violation, I texted Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe and inquired about his point of view and indicated that I would defer to him with respect to how he wished to proceed seeing as it was his privilege that had been violated.

From that perspective, I will support what Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe wishes.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Madam Kwan.

I see there is unanimous consent to go with Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe's suggestion.

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** That is carried. Thank you very much, Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe. I do appreciate it.

Thank you, Madam Kayabaga, for being a professional member of the committee and doing what needed to be done to calm things down and to carry on with the agenda.

Mr. Chiang, the floor is yours.

Before Mr. Chiang starts speaking, I again request, members, that you be careful not to talk about anything that we talked about in camera because doing so will put us into a very difficult situation, and I don't think any of us wants to see one of our colleagues get into this situation.

With that, I also want to thank committee members for their unanimous consent on this issue. I appreciate that. That makes my life as the chair much easier as well and I do enjoy, in fact, working with both sides of the aisle here.

Mr. Chiang, please go ahead.

**Mr. Paul Chiang:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to all of our members for correcting what happened earlier.

...left behind were people who had tried—with the coalition's encouragement—to advance security, freedom, opportunity and dignity in their country. Within Afghanistan, there is now a tableau of vulnerability; millions of people trying to avoid hunger, destitution, or retaliation.

Afghanistan is not only one of the many crises in distant parts of the world; Canada has a legacy there. Consequently, the Taliban's takeover has deep emotional significance for Canadians, as well as implications for Canadian public policy. At the peak of Canada's mission in Afghanistan, "approximately 2,950 Canadian soldiers and over 120 civilian personnel were deployed to Afghanistan." Cumulatively, more than 40,000 members of the Canadian Armed Forces...served in Afghanistan between December 2001 and March 2014, as part of the operations—at different times and with different mandates—in Kabul and Kandahar. Taken together, the counterterrorism, stabilization, combat, support, and training missions undertaken by Canada were its largest military deployment since the Second World War, with 158 members of the CAF and one Canadian diplomat losing their lives in service [to Canada]. Furthermore, Canada has provided \$3.8 billion in international assistance to Afghanistan since 2001.

Over almost 20 years of international partnership with Afghanistan, many Afghans experienced improved access to healthcare and education. They were also able to participate in efforts—however flawed and incomplete—to build a democracy that was connected to the world. It is these gains that are now at risk.

To learn lessons from what transpired and to determine how Canada can help Afghan people who worked alongside the thousands of Canadian Armed Forces, diplomatic and development personnel who served in the country, the House of Commons created a Special Committee on Afghanistan (the Special Committee). It was mandated,

...to conduct hearings to examine and review the events related to the fall of Afghanistan to the Taliban, including, but not limited to, the government's contingency planning for that event and the subsequent efforts to evacuate, or otherwise authorize entry to Canada of, Canadian citizens, and interpreters, contractors and other Afghans who had assisted the Canadian Armed Forces or other Canadian organizations, and that the special committee conduct its work with the primary objective of assessing the humanitarian assistance to be put in place by Canada to assist the Afghan people [...].

The Special Committee was instructed to present a final report within six months of its creation on 8 December 2021.

To accomplish this task, the Special Committee has received testimony and briefs from a range of individuals and organizations, including those that are trying to meet humanitarian needs in Afghanistan. It has heard moving stories and appeals from people with family and colleagues who have been unable to leave Afghanistan or are in precarious situations in neighbouring countries, and those who are trying to help them. The Special Committee was also briefed on the government's response by Global Affairs Canada, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, and the Department of National Defence and Canadian Armed Forces.

The report that follows is structured in two parts. The first is retrospective, examining the August 2021 evacuation from Kabul and the events that led up to it, including the assessments and decisions that were made. The second part is forward-looking. It details the humanitarian situation inside Afghanistan, and the efforts to bring Afghan nationals who are at risk to safety, as well as the impediments that are being encountered. The dedicated focus on this one country, at a time of great instability in the world, reflects the obligations that stem from Canada's years of military, development and diplomatic involvement in Afghanistan and the enormity of needs and vulnerabilities that exist.

Part I: Looking Back.

The Fall of Afghanistan to the Taliban

On 14 April 2021, President Joe Biden announced that the United States (U.S.) would begin the final withdrawal of its forces from Afghanistan on 1 May 2021, in keeping with the 29 February 2020 agreement his country—under the administration of President Donald Trump—had reached with the Taliban in Doha, Qatar. The rationale for intervening in Afghanistan in October 2001 had been "to ensure Afghanistan would not be used as a base from which to attack [the U.S.] homeland again," an objective that President Biden said had been "accomplished." The United States could not, he remarked, "continue the cycle of extending or expanding our military presence in Afghanistan, hoping to create ideal conditions for the withdrawal, and expecting a different result." Following consultations within his administration and with allies and partners, President Biden concluded that it was "time to end America's longest war."

After declaring that "there is no military solution to the challenges Afghanistan faces," the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Allies announced on the same day that they too would begin the withdrawal of Resolute Support Mission forces—

**The Chair:** Mr. Chiang, can I interrupt you for one second?

Madam Kayabaga, you have your hand up. It's not a point of order, is it?

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** No, Mr. Chair. If it was a point of order, I would call one. I just want to get on the speaking list.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Chiang, go ahead.

**Mr. Paul Chiang:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It continues:

—by 1 May 2021. The NATO withdrawal was to be completed "within a few months."

Even though the involvement of foreign troops was coming to an end, the hope was that an intra-Afghan peace process would result in a settlement. The Taliban had committed, through the Doha Agreement, to start such negotiations, which had been intended to see discussion of a ceasefire, as well as a political roadmap for the country. Nevertheless, negotiations between representatives of the Afghan republic and the Taliban—which commenced in September 2020—did not result in meaningful progress.

In May 2021, the Taliban intensified its military offensive against the Afghan government and began to increase the territory under its control. By mid-July 2021, the Taliban reportedly “controlled about half the districts in Afghanistan, at least six international border crossings with their revenue-generating customs posts, and long stretches of highways throughout the country.”

The first provincial capital to fall to the Taliban, on 6 August 2021, was Zaranj in Nimroz province, on Afghanistan’s western border with Iran. The next day, the Taliban captured its first capital in northern Afghanistan, the capital of Jowzjan province. By 12–13 August 2021, the country’s second- and third-largest cities—Kandahar and Herat—fell under Taliban control, along with Lashkar Gah in Helmand province. Then, with the capture of Mazar-e Sharif, the Taliban completed their takeover of northern Afghanistan. On 15 August 2021, Afghanistan’s President, Ashraf Ghani, fled by helicopter to Uzbekistan, before relocating to the United Arab Emirates. Taliban forces entered Kabul, assuming control of government buildings and the presidential palace. In all, therefore, the Taliban captured 33 of 34 provincial capitals within 10 days.

President Biden maintained the 31 August 2021 deadline for ending the U.S. military mission in Afghanistan, which he had announced on 8 July 2021, saying that he was not prepared to extend “a forever exit.” The decision to end the military airlift operation by that deadline, the president indicated, reflected a “unanimous recommendation” of his civilian and military advisors. On 26 August 2021, a member of the Islamic State-Khorasan (ISIS-K), a terrorist group that competes with the Taliban for power and influence in Afghanistan, had detonated a suicide vest at one of the entrances to the Hamid Karzai International Airport (the Kabul airport), killing 13 U.S. troops and an estimated 150 Afghan civilians. It was understood that the Taliban’s tacit cooperation with coalition forces around the security perimeter of the airport would end on 1 September 2021. In all, during the 18-day period of the multinational “air bridge” it facilitated and defended, the United States flew 387 military sorties and enabled 391 non-U.S. military sorties to evacuate 124,334 people.

#### Canada’s Non-Combatant Evacuation Operation

When the need for an evacuation became clear, Canada was in a different position than some of its allies because there had been no Canadian military mission in Afghanistan since 2014. Canada did not, therefore, have military assets on the ground. The CAF was approved to support the evacuation on 30 July 2021. In essence, this complex mission involved, in the words of General Wayne D. Eyre, Chief of the Defence Staff, projecting combat power “from Canada into a contested environment on the other side of the world where we had not had a military presence for seven years.” Canada was able to do so because of its strategic airlift and communication capabilities, as well as its network of partners and allies and embedded staff around the world. The people the CAF were tasked with evacuating included Canadians and Canadian-entitled persons, as well as interpreters who had worked with the Canadian Armed Forces and Afghans who had worked for the Canadian embassy over the years. Military and civilian chartered flights began on 4 August 2021 but were subsequently disrupted when Kabul fell to the Taliban.

On 15 August 2021, the Government of Canada announced the decision to “temporarily suspend” Canada’s diplomatic operations in Kabul. The rapidly evolving situation was posing “serious challenges” to Canada’s ability to ensure the safety and security of its diplomatic mission. Canadians still in Afghanistan were instructed to “leave immediately while commercial flights [were] available.”

CAF flights resumed from the Kabul airport on 19 August 2021 as part of the U.S.-led “air bridge,” with the last flight departing on 26 August 2021. Canada and other allies needed to repatriate their personnel and aircraft first so that the United States could complete its own withdrawal and, finally, cease defending the airport. The Honourable Anita Anand, Minister of National Defence, told the Special Committee that Canadian personnel “stayed as long as possible at great personal risk.” The conditions in Kabul were described by the CAF as having been “tenuous, chaotic and desperate.” In all, Canada transported and facilitated the transport of approximately 3,700 evacuees. Those evacuees “include Canadian citizens and permanent residents, their family members, citizens of allied countries, persons with a lasting connection to Canada and [Afghan] nationals at risk accepted for resettlement in Canada or by [Canada’s] allies.”

The Government of Canada’s travel advisory for Afghanistan now indicates that travelling throughout Afghanistan “is extremely dangerous, including in Kabul.” There are, according to the advisory, “checkpoints on all roads and throughout cities.” What is more, “[s]ome borders are closed or may close without notice. Border crossing is risky.”

#### Contingency Planning and Signs of Collapse

The Special Committee received conflicting information regarding whether the fall of Kabul—and thus, Afghanistan—to the Taliban was a culmination of a political and security situation that was clearly unravelling, or a surprise.

Reid Sirrs, former Ambassador of Canada to Afghanistan, told the Special Committee that the “complete collapse of the Afghan forces and the Taliban’s rapid takeover of Afghanistan came as a surprise to everyone.” Jennifer Loten, Director General of International Crime and Terrorism at Global Affairs Canada (GAC), similarly conveyed that the speed at which the U.S. departure from Afghanistan converted into the Taliban’s control of the country surprised the world. She said: “I don’t think any of us would have predicted an August [2021] fall of Kabul.”

Owing to Canada’s limited presence on the ground in Afghanistan, Canada relied on allies for “a lot” of its intelligence, according to the Chief of the Defence Staff, General Eyre. There was a deterioration in the country, he said, from the announcement of the U.S. withdrawal. In the words of General Eyre, as of 1 April 2021, “our intelligence assessed that the Afghan government was facing a likely defeat, and as time progressed, the timeline for that defeat reduced as well.” In subsequent remarks, General Eyre expanded on the nature of the expected defeat, namely that, “should western forces withdraw, the Taliban would likely decisively defeat the [Afghan National Defense and Security Forces], capture most major urban areas and re-establish Taliban control over most of Afghanistan.” By 8 July 2021, the CAF assessed that a “maximum” of six months remained before that eventuality. At the same time, General Eyre stressed that intelligence assessments reflect probabilities and not absolute certainties.

The Special Committee was given a general sense of how the government’s contingency planning evolved. The Honourable Harjit Sajjan, speaking about his former role as Minister of National Defence (2015–2021), indicated that Global Affairs Canada had submitted a request for assistance from the CAF to ensure the security of embassy personnel in Afghanistan. That request, which was necessary for any troops to be deployed, was “authorized in early April [2021].” The CAF’s strategic advisory team was in place as of 24 April 2021 with instructions to provide warning and advice—

**The Chair:** Mr. Chiang, I’m sorry. I have to interrupt. I think there are bells ringing. If there is no unanimous consent to adjourn, then I have to suspend the meeting.

Is there consent to continue through the bells?

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** Mr. Chair, it’s a no on our side. We’re happy to come back after. I think we have resources, so we’d like to continue this, because obviously the Liberals are filibustering this, and we’d like to give them the opportunity to keep talking about this motion they don’t like.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Let me check with the clerk on when the resources will end.

I’ve checked, and we have resources until 1:30. Basically, once the vote is announced, then I have to give 10 minutes for members to come back. I can do that. It will be probably only a few minutes.



With that, the first thing is that there might be unanimous consent to continue.

No? There's no unanimous consent to continue this meeting?

Right now, there is no unanimity to continue the meeting, so I'm going to suspend the meeting. We have resources until 1:30.

• (1235) \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

• (1325)

**The Chair:** I call this meeting back to order.

The food has arrived. Before we break for lunch, I'll give the floor to Mr. Chiang, because he had the floor.

Carry on, please, until 1:30.

**Mr. Paul Chiang:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to my colleagues here for understanding where I'm coming from. It's important for us to understand, when we talk about a banana republic.... Like I said earlier, I'm not sure what backgrounds they had in their prior lives before becoming members here.

The police services are independent. I want to re-emphasize that part. They are not beholden to the government, nor do they listen to what the government has to say.

I'll carry on. The report continues:

In reply to another question about timing, Minister Sajjan remarked that Canada's "evacuation started as soon as we felt the situation was deteriorating." Ambassador Sirrs provided further details about the government's contingency planning and the core assessments that were informing decision-making at the time. He said:

Up until a few days before the decision to temporarily suspend embassy operations, Canada and the international community were expecting difficult times in August and September, but not a complete takeover of the capital. In fact, we expected the Afghan military to defend the city until the onset of winter, allowing time for negotiations to continue.

With this in mind, we were considering options to maintain a skeletal—

**The Chair:** Mr. Chiang, I'm sorry to interrupt you. The resources are available until 1:30. It is 1:30.

The meeting is suspended. Thank you.

*[The meeting was suspended at 1:30 p.m., Monday, June 17]*

*[The meeting resumed at 3:37 p.m., Monday, September 16]*

• (231935)

**The Chair:** Good afternoon.

I call this meeting to order. We are meeting in public.

I would love to welcome the honourable members. I hope everyone had a good time with their constituents and their families. I'm looking forward to a great session moving forward.

Two of the members here are subbing today. I would love to welcome Mr. Marc Dalton from beautiful British Columbia and my dear friend Heather McPherson from my old hometown in Alberta.

Welcome to the continuation of meeting number 106 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immi-

gration to discuss the draft letter regarding the government's response to the final report of the Special Committee on Afghanistan.

On avoiding audio feedback, this will be the last time I will be saying this. Before we begin, I would ask all in-person participants to read the guidelines written on the updated cards on the table. These measures are in place to help prevent audio feedback incidents and to protect the health and safety of all participants, including the hard-working interpreters.

Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format. I would like to remind participants of the following points.

Please wait until I recognize you by name before speaking. All comments should be addressed through the chair. Members, please raise your hand if you wish to speak, whether participating in person or via Zoom. The clerk and I will manage the speaking order as well as we can. Thank you all for your co-operation.

I have to suspend the meeting for a few minutes for technical reasons.

• (1540) \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

• (1545)

**The Chair:** I call the meeting back to order.

We'll go back to the Afghanistan letter and press release. As you all know, the discussion regarding the draft letter was previously done in camera. I would ask all members to be careful about disclosing information that has been decided or discussed in camera.

We are discussing the motion of Mr. McLean. Does the committee want me to read the motion?

The motion is the following:

That regarding the draft letter concerning the government's response to the Final Report of the Special Committee on Afghanistan as sent to committee members on May 21, 2024, the paragraphs numbered 19, 20 and 23 be deemed adopted without amendment; that the letter and news release be then deemed adopted; that the chair be then instructed to transmit the letter to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship on the second business day following the adoption of this motion; that the chair then issue the news release on behalf of the committee immediately upon transmitting the letter to the minister; that the letter and the news release be then posted to the committee's website; and that the study be then deemed concluded.

At the time of the suspension on Monday, June 17, Mr. Chiang had the floor. The following were on the list to debate the motion after Mr. Chiang: MP El-Khoury and MP Kayabaga.

Mr. Chiang, I know that you had a good rest and that you are prepared to have a shorter speech today.

The floor is yours, Mr. Chiang. Go ahead, please.

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** I have a point of order.

**The Chair:** Mr. Redekopp has a point of order.

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Welcome back.

I have written down a different order of speaking on this. I'm confused why this is, because I had Mr. Chiang, me and then, I believe, Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe, Ms. Kwan, Ms. Kayabaga, Mr. El-Khoury and Mr. Kmiec. That's the list I had.

**The Chair:** I'm sorry. Let me handle this.

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** Isn't that it? I think I was even in the chair for a part of this.

**The Chair:** That was the discussion before the motion. We would have Mr. McLean, Mr. Chiang, Mr. Redekopp, Mr. Ali, Ms. Kwan, Ms. Kayabaga, Mr. El-Khoury, and Mr. Kmiec.

This is different. This is what the clerk is telling me.

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** What was that for?

**The Chair:** Mr. Clerk, do you want to handle this?

**The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Rémi Bourgault):** I have the list from the last meeting. This is the list of people who wanted to speak on the motion. We had Mr. Chiang, and two were dashed, so then we had Mr. El-Khoury and Ms. Kayabaga.

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** Are we not on the motion?

**The Clerk:** Not from the list I have here. I think there were two names.

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** Let me rephrase. Are we not dealing with the motion right now?

**The Chair:** Yes, we are.

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** Would we not follow that list on the other side?

**The Clerk:** No, because this is the list for the motion. It indicates the people who wanted to intervene on the discussion of the letter before the motion was put on the floor.

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** Okay.

**The Chair:** Are you happy?

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** I'm happy.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Redekopp.

With this, we'll go to Mr. Chiang, please.

Mr. Chiang, go ahead, please.

**Mr. Paul Chiang:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and welcome back.

Thank you to all members who are here. I hope you all had a good summer.

Personally, it was a fantastic summer for me. I'm happy to be back to work for the citizens of Markham—Unionville, who elected me to be here to do the good work of government.

On saying that, I want to get back to the Afghan letter, which we stopped on June 17 when I last spoke about it. Last time when I was speaking on it, I was speaking about the following letter:

Ambassador Sirrs provided further details about the government's contingency planning and the core assessments that were informing decision-making at the time. He said:

"Up until a few days before the decision to temporarily suspend embassy operations, Canada and the international community were expecting difficult times in August and September, but not a complete takeover of the capital. In fact, we expected the Afghan military to defend the city until the onset of winter, allowing time for negotiations to continue.

"With this in mind, we were considering options to maintain a skeletal presence throughout the fall so we could continue essential programming as well as support possible evacuation efforts. With the support of a special advisory team from the Canadian Armed Forces we were able to continually update our concepts of operation for maintaining a presence in the country to a temporary suspension of operations and implementation of a non-combatant evacuation operation. This team was also instrumental in securing space in the air bridge that became an essential bridge for getting so many people out of the capital."

Commenting on the extent and pace of evacuation efforts that Canada had carried out prior to the collapse of the Afghan republic, Ambassador Sirrs indicated that planning for a special immigration measures policy "went back into March [2021]." He also commented that the republic's authorities had "started barring people who did not have passports or the Afghan *tazkiras*—national identity cards—on the planes." Those constraints reflected a larger political context, according to Ambassador Sirrs, wherein the president of the Afghan republic "did not want Afghans leaving because he felt that there would be a brain drain, and we retorted that we needed to have part of the brain come with us so that they could come back and build the country later on." Minister Anand echoed this point, noting that the "former Afghan government was concerned that a mass exodus of people would signal a lack of confidence among its citizens."

Looking back on these events, testimony and information provided by other witnesses suggested that signs may have been missed and time to evacuate people, when more options were available, may have been lost.

The United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) was asked about the contingency planning it was doing for Afghanistan and the region, which was completed in December 2020 and shared with governments—including the Government of Canada—in early 2021. The document noted that the situation in Afghanistan, "including a complex peace process and the withdrawal of international forces and a volatile security environment has given rise to an unpredictable trajectory." The UNHCR was preparing for two possible scenarios. The first was increased internal displacement caused by escalating conflict, political instability, and a stalled peace process. The second scenario was heightened conflict and a breakdown of the peace process, which would saturate the absorption capacity of communities, "resulting in exponential internal displacement and outflows of Afghans seeking international protection in neighbouring countries."

● (231950)

When asked whether action should have been taken earlier, Stephen Peddle—who retired from the Canadian Armed Forces as a senior intelligence officer with the rank of major—replied:

"The moment that President Donald Trump announced to the world that America was leaving Afghanistan, I think anyone who was in Afghanistan knew the writing was on the wall as to what was going to happen. The question was when, and then President Biden gave a date.

"There were lots of opportunities long before July or August 2021 to bring all the Afghans who helped us, who we had records of, over to Canada. There is no excuse whatsoever for us to have waited until August 2021, when we knew that Afghanistan was folding. There's no excuse whatsoever for waiting [so] long."

Wazhma Frogh, founder of the Women & Peace Studies Organization—Afghanistan, told the Special Committee that the collapse of the Afghan republic and the fall of Kabul to the Taliban "didn't just happen overnight." In her view, the 2020 agreement between the United States and the Taliban, and not 15 August 2021, was "the start of Afghanistan's political surrender." With the Doha agreement, she said, legitimacy was given to the Taliban, while representatives from the Afghan republic were not included as signatories. That was, she said, "when things started getting much worse in local communities."

Major-General (retired) David Fraser referenced a letter that he and others sent in early July 2021 "to the implicated ministers asking them to create a pipeline to evacuate vulnerable Afghans." In his view, "[i]f three retired generals without access to intelligence saw this coming in July, there could have been a lot more people evacuated out of Afghanistan before Kandahar fell and before Kabul fell."

That was not the only letter that was sent or appeal that was made. Wendy Long, Director of Afghan-Canadian Interpreters, had started writing letters in November 2018 to Canada's then Minister of Immigration, Ahmed Hussen. She told the Special Committee:

“As the Doha peace talks progressed, the pleas for an immigration process mounted and concerns started coming in from veterans worried about those left behind. Some veterans had spent thousands of dollars in attempts to get interpreters here, without results, adding to their mental anguish.”

After compiling files on Afghans who had been part of the Canadian mission, Wendy Long's organization and 15 other international advocacy groups sent an open letter to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on 1 June 2021, as well as to then Minister of Immigration Marco Mendicino, then Minister of Foreign Affairs Marc Garneau, then Minister of National Defence Harjit Sajjan, and other NATO leaders. The letter warned that time was “running out to protect NATO's local Afghan allies.” Furthermore, the signatories suggested that....

● (231955)

In addition to the people who had played a direct role supporting military and diplomatic missions, there was also growing concern for people who were associated with the larger project of building democracy and advancing women's rights in Afghanistan. These concerns were reflected in a letter that was written to Minister Mendicino on behalf of the Afghan Women's Organization Refugee & Immigrant Services. Asma Faizi, the organization's president, explained that they had been approached “by women parliamentarians and activists from inside Afghanistan” concerning “the dire situation they were in.” Dated 26 July 2021, the letter urged the Canadian government to “take immediate action to protect Afghan women and girls” since the situation had taken “a dark turn with the withdrawal of US and NATO military forces.” Furthermore, the letter communicated the organization's understanding that the Taliban had “reoccupied more than half of Afghanistan and the gains that have been made in the past 20 years, particularly by women, are now at dire risk.”

Next is “Evacuating Canada's Afghan Allies and the Process Involved”:

During a meeting in June 2021 with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), Wendy Long's organization,

“stressed that we needed a fast and effective means to get people assessed initially and then more completely processed in either Canada or elsewhere. We stressed that there was no time or money for passports if people didn't already have them, and we recommended a refugee-type approach. Most applicants had no access to laptops or printers, and any process would have had to be cell-phone-based, since any other method would expose the applicant to identity theft, fraud or death.

Mr. Chair, I move to adjourn debate.

● (232000)

**The Chair:** The motion on the floor to adjourn the debate is non-debatable.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** I request a recorded vote, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you. I'll ask the clerk to take the vote.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 9; nays 2)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

I have a speaking list with Mr. Chiang, Madame Kayabaga and Mr. Kmiec.

Mr. Chiang, the floor is yours.

**Mr. Paul Chiang:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to introduce a motion at this time.

**Mr. Greg McLean:** I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

Which list are you speaking about? Mr. Chiang just gave up the floor, so somebody has to follow.

**The Chair:** I see hands up.

There is Mr. Chiang, Ms. Kayabaga and Mr. Kmiec.

**Mr. Greg McLean:** I thought the clerk told us at the beginning of the meeting that there was a list following this motion—a list of people who were on the speaking list.

Am I incorrect?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** I raise a point of order, Mr. Chair.

I suggest we start off on the right foot. We have fantastic interpreters who need to do their work safely. If everyone is talking when the microphones are not really off or not really on, it makes it very hard for them to do their work. It is thanks to these fabulous interpreters that we can do our own work.

I ask that we show respect for the people who are working with us.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe.

One person at a time....

Mr. McLean, you have the floor.

**Mr. Greg McLean:** I think I've made my point. Is there a speaking list that superseded after the adjournment?

● (232005)

**The Chair:** No.

**Mr. Greg McLean:** I thought there was a speaking list.

**The Chair:** No, this is a new list, and these three honourable members are on the list: Mr. Chiang, Ms. Kayabaga and Mr. Kmiec.

Is there anyone else? They can raise their hand, and I'll put them on the list.

Go ahead, Mr. Chiang.

**Mr. Paul Chiang:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, members across, for your participation.

I would like to take this time to read a notice of motion:

Given that:

The former Conservative Government under Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, Jason Kenney, amended the Citizenship Act to impose the first generation limit.

The Ontario Superior Court of Justice found this legislative amendment unconstitutional as it violates Charter rights, specifically on the grounds of mobility and equality rights.

The Leader of the Opposition stated that he would use the notwithstanding clause if given the chance.

The first generation limit is another example of the Conservative Party stripping away rights of Canadians.

The Immigration Committee has extensively studied the topic of Lost Canadians.

The Member of Parliament for Calgary Forest Lawn, who is the sponsor for the Senate Public Bill S-245 as well as the former Conservative Immigration Critic, recommended the introduction of a Private Members bill or a Government Bill to address the remaining cohort of Lost Canadians;

That the Chair report to the House of Commons that, notwithstanding any standing order or usual practice of the House, Bill C-71, An Act to amend the Citizenship Act, be deemed read a second time and referred to this committee.

I move the motion, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Is there any discussion?

We have Ms. Kayabaga, Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe, Mr. Kmiec, Mr. McLean and Mr. Redekopp.

Ms. Kayabaga, you have the floor.

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** Thank you, Chair.

I would also take the opportunity to welcome my colleagues back to Parliament. As I said to some of them, I'm very excited to be here and to do the great work our constituents have sent us to do.

In terms of the motion my colleague eloquently moved, I just want to stress the importance of it. I want to talk about the importance of Canadian citizenship. It provides all Canadians with a deep sense of belonging in the diverse and democratic country that we get to call home.

I want to point out that in 2009, and I think earlier in the House, when we were debating this motion, one of my colleagues talked about why she ran. I want to circle back on that, because that is one of the reasons I turned to politics, as an avenue for advocating for my community members and the many people who do not get the opportunity to be here, to take part in legislative activities and to make sure their voices are heard.

In 2009, there was a legislative amendment made by the Harper Conservatives creating the Citizenship Act that currently restricts citizenship by descent for the first generation born abroad. There were many Citizenship Act changes made that prevented many Canadians from acting as Canadians and they fell into a system of second-class citizens. Many of us were revolted by the idea. If I can speak for myself and other colleagues who have expressed the same sentiment, we ran because we did not want to see the Conservatives continue to make double classes of citizenship in Canada.

Not only does this leave out those who have a genuine connection to Canada, who are born from Canadian parents, but it also has unacceptable consequences for Canadians whose children were born outside the country. We introduced this legislation to remove the first-generation limit and extend Canadian citizenship to the lost Canadians.

Talking about who has the right to identify as a Canadian actually goes against our charter rights. Therefore, I'm pleased to see my amazing colleague move this motion and for us to debate it and talk about why it's important to restore the status of lost Canadians, to eliminate the first-generation limit and to remove this second class

of citizens. Left to the Conservatives, many Canadians would find themselves in a second-class citizenship sector. That's why we were elected and that's why we're here: to advocate on behalf of many Canadians who don't have the opportunity to speak for themselves. We've worked quite extensively with a lot of community members who are impacted by this legislation, which was passed by Harper's Conservatives, and actually the leader of the Conservatives right now, Pierre Poilievre. We've worked to make sure we can restore the sense of citizenship, the sense of belonging and the diversity to our democratic country.

I'm very happy to see this motion moving forward. I'm very happy to hear many colleagues from the different parties. Whether it's the Bloc Québécois, the NDP or the Green Party, they've all been advocating for making sure that Canadians remain Canadians, Canadians are Canadians, without having to have a tier level of who's considered a good Canadian or not a good Canadian. I'm happy to continue to hear the thoughts of all of my colleagues.

I just want to point out this was moved by the Harper government in 2009, with the current leader as a member who adopted this legislation. I think it's important we highlight that point because, if left to him, he would want to continue to create second-class citizens. Unfortunately for him, he's going to continue to create more politicians like me, who are going to fight to the end to make sure that Canadians' rights, their charter rights, are protected.

Thank you, Chair.

• (232010)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Ms. Kayabaga.

We have Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe and then Mr. Kmiec afterwards.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

You know just how much Bill C-71, formerly Bill S-245, means to me. Indeed, if we grant citizenship to a greater number of Canadians, when Quebec becomes a country someday, it will be easier for them to obtain Quebecois citizenship. That was one thing I wanted to tell you today.

That said, I want to raise two points, and someone may be able to answer my question. I think this motion was tabled some time ago. Today, we have hours of House debate on Bill C-71.

First, if there is a vote in the House, what happens to this motion?

Second, I'd like to know if it's possible to table a friendly amendment to Mr. Chiang's motion. I propose the following:

That the motion be amended by adding after the words "to this committee" the following: "after the committee has completed its report on closed permits".

Cast your mind back to the conversations we had at the end of the last session, when we agreed on the analysts' new draft on work permits before resuming this session. We received the draft last week. I congratulate the analysts, by the way. We had the opportunity to get the draft from the analysts. We worked on it. I think we have a duty to wrap up this study at committee, because it is a very important study for a lot of people. We spent a lot of time working on it. I care about it, and I think that's also the case for several other people.

Therefore, we must complete the study on closed permits. I have no objection to granting priority to certain matters at committee, but I think we absolutely have to finish the work on closed permits. We don't know when an election might be called. No one knows for sure. I would like us to grant priority to the report as part of the study on closed permits. That's what I wanted to say.

Can someone answer my first question? If the House votes on Bill C-71, what do we do with this motion?

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe. To answer your first question, this was brought forward on Monday, June 17, 2024. That's the date you asked me for.

The second thing is that, because the committee determines its own business, the motion is in order and it's here. It's up to committee members to study this motion, because we cannot control what's happening in Parliament. We can only control what's happening here in committee.

Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe.

[Translation]

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** Pardon me.

Does Mr. Chiang accept my friendly amendment? As I was saying at the end of the—

• (232015)

[English]

**The Chair:** Would you read that, please?

[Translation]

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** Yes, I can reread it.

We will send the text of the amendment to the clerk in both official languages.

At the end of the motion, after “deemed read a second time and referred to this committee”, I suggest adding “after the committee has completed”.

[English]

**The Chair:** You can send it to—

[Translation]

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** Could we suspend the sitting for a few minutes, while I send the text of the amendment? It will be easier that way. Thank you.

[English]

**The Chair:** Sure. We'll do that.

The meeting is briefly suspended.

• (1615)

(Pause)

• (1630)

**The Chair:** I call the meeting back to order.

We have a motion as amended by Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe.

Mr. Chiang, are you okay with his friendly amendment?

**Mr. Paul Chiang:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Yes, I am good with that. The only thing I was asking about was the closed work permit wording, to make sure that it's acceptable. Then we can go from there.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Basically, you're telling me that where it says at the end “closed permits”, it should read as “closed work permits”.

Okay, so we have....

I'm sorry. Go ahead, Mr. Redekopp.

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** Thank you.

I don't disagree with this, but if I look at the report that was sent to us by the analysts on this subject, the subject line is “closed work permits and temporary foreign workers”. I think that's the wording we're looking for. That would sync with the actual report we're looking at.

**The Chair:** Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe, are you okay with that?

[Translation]

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** Yes, it was done fairly quickly. I agree with using the exact terms from the draft we received.

[English]

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** I would ask for a recorded division on that, Chair. It's a subamendment, so we have to do it by the process of a recorded division to add the correct wording.

**The Chair:** Okay.

Mr. Redekopp, you have the floor on the subamendment. Could you read your subamendment, please?

• (232035)

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** I have one other question before I do that. I think we discussed this. It says “his” report. We're going with “its” report. Is that right?

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** Okay.

My subamendment is to replace the words “closed permits” with “closed work permits and temporary foreign workers”.

**The Chair:** Okay.

The motion as subamended by Mr. Redekopp is on the floor.

Mr. Kmiec, you were the next one on the list.

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** I'm sorry, Chair. I believe I was speaking on the main motion. I was just asking for a recorded division when the time comes.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Is there any discussion on the subamendment?

Ms. Kwan, please go ahead.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I apologize. I came a little late to the committee. I was upstairs in the main chamber debating Bill C-71, precisely related to this very motion. I guess there's the element of the subamendment we're talking about.

Very interestingly, Mr. Chair, at the end of my speech, I actually moved this motion: "That notwithstanding any standing order, special order or usual practice of the House, Bill C-71, an act to amend the Citizenship Act, be deemed read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration."

That is a unanimous consent motion. It would require all members of the House to be in support of it. Interestingly, it was the Conservatives who said no to my motion. Here we are, at this motion—

**Mr. Greg McLean:** I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

You'll rule on whether that's appropriate or not.

With unanimous consent, it does not reveal who is not providing unanimous consent in the House of Commons. It is just anonymous. I'm not sure who wasn't giving unanimous consent. I'm not sure Ms. Kwan was sure about who was not giving unanimous consent.

**The Chair:** Madam Kwan, the floor is yours.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I'm absolutely sure who it was, because I was sitting right in the chamber watching all of this. There was one member who actually said no and who subsequently got up to ask a question. All of that, by the way, including my speech, is on the public record.

To the point here with respect to this particular motion, I have to say that it should be no surprise to folks around this table, because it was the Conservatives who filibustered Bill S-245 for 30 hours—

**Mr. Greg McLean:** I have a point of order again, Mr. Chair.

Unanimous consent requires Parliament's approval. That means the unanimous consent of Parliament. It's Parliament that didn't give unanimous consent. It doesn't matter who in Parliament didn't give consent. It's Parliament.

If the Speaker recognized one person saying that they didn't give unanimous consent, that is the equivalent of several people saying it. Several people may have said it. I apologize if Ms. Kwan is picking on the one member she saw say it, but that person speaks for all of Parliament, to uphold the rules of Parliament.

**An hon. member:** Oh, oh!

**The Chair:** Let's have one person at a time, please.

Thank you, Mr. McLean.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** Yes, I know what—

**The Chair:** Madam, let's get to work.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** No kidding.

I know the Conservatives, of course, are trying to say that, no, they're not standing in the way, but their record speaks for itself. As we saw with Bill S-245, the Conservatives filibustered that bill for 30 hours, and then even after it got through committee here and was reported to the House with amendments, the Conservatives and the member for Calgary Forest Lawn refused to bring the bill up for third reading eight times and moved it back in the order of precedence eight times.

I'm not surprised by where we're at with respect to that. With respect to this particular motion, this is something that I've been trying to motivate for a very long time. The motivation behind all of that is to say the law needs to be corrected. The unconstitutional elements of, in particular, the "second generation born abroad" provisions and allowing them to have access to citizenship conferred on them from their parents needs to be rectified, as has been indicated by the Ontario Superior Court. It is not only the morally right thing to do. It is the legally right thing to do and is required by law.

The subamendment and the closed work permit study, a study my good colleague MP Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe brought before this committee and to which I made an amendment, is to really address the findings of the UN special rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery and for Canada to properly address that issue. I would be happy to work expeditiously to see that work finished so we can get on to other business, including, of course, Bill C-71 at committee stage, and other items as well, including the Afghan letter, regarding which a grave injustice has taken place with respect to the Afghan situation. I was surprised that the Conservatives would actually agree to adjourn the debate on having that letter and the motion contained in that letter voted on at this committee.

• (232040)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Kwan.

Is anyone else on the list? There are no speakers. We can take a vote on the motion as subamended by Mr. Redekopp.

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** It's just on the subamendment.

**The Chair:** It's just the subamendment—not the motion. A recorded division has been called. I will ask the clerk to take a vote on the subamendment proposed by Mr. Redekopp.

(Subamendment agreed to: yeas 11; nays 0 [See *Minutes of Proceedings*])

**The Chair:** Now we are back to the amendment as subamended.

Mr. Kmiec, go ahead.

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** Chair, after hearing the partisan attacks on the Conservative position on Bill C-71, I'm going to move the following motion. It's the first day, so let's start with what we all expect this session is going to become.

This is my amendment after the title—

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** I raise a point of order, Mr. Chair.

My understanding is that we are currently debating Mr. Chiang's motion—

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** Actually, it is on another subamendment.

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** Ah, I see. Thank you.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Mr. Kmiec, you have the floor.

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** After this title, this is the amendment I am proposing: “, and after a carbon tax election is held so that Canadians and Québécois can vote out this tired, out-of-time NDP-Liberal coalition government”.

**The Chair:** Okay, so we have—

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** I'm happy to speak to it too.

**The Chair:** Go ahead on a point of order, Ms. Kayabaga.

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** Is this in order because we still had a motion?

**The Chair:** Yes. Any subamendment can be brought forward.

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** As a motion...?

**The Chair:** It's up to the committee.

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** This is completely different from the current motion. Is this in good standing?

**The Chair:** It can be.... Members have every right to bring in a subamendment. It's up to the committee—

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** Chair, with all due respect, this is not a subamendment. It's a completely different motion from what we're discussing right now. I'm still on a point of order, so I'd like an answer.

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** I have a point of order.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

I will give the floor to Mr. Kmiec.

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** I'm sorry, Chair. I was going to say that I hadn't given up my time and that it sounded like debate, because this is totally in order. My motion is basically doing a time delay, which is the previous amendment, the one we're debating right now, and now, we're on a subamendment.

The amendment that Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe proposed is basically affecting the timing of the main motion, so what I'm doing is affecting the timing of what would happen when this is reported out of this committee and back to the House, which would only take effect after a carbon tax election is held.

Frankly, what I heard at doors across the country.... I went to the greater Toronto region, Vancouver, Burnaby, North Vancouver,

Seymour, to all those places and places outside of Toronto, like Hespeler, and that's what I heard at the doors. At least half the doors, people wanted to talk about the carbon tax and the impact it's having on their bottom lines every single month.

What this subamendment is simply doing is basically establishing when the main motion takes effect. I think it would be perfectly reasonable for Canadians to have a say and to have a say, now, in the way they want it.

You can see it in the polls, Chair. I'm sure you follow them like all of the political class does. We all do it. We all check the polls, whether we go on 338Canada or whether we go on any other websites like Abacus or Leger. We're checking what the polls are, usually in our ridings. I'm sure that in Surrey the polls are affected as well. We're all checking the polls all the time because we're always wondering what Canadians are thinking.

Right now, they're thinking they would like a carbon tax election. What they want is for their pocketbooks, at the end of the month, to have more money in them. They want to have a lighter load and want the carbon tax not to be imposed on everything they purchase when they go to the grocery store or when they go to the pumps to buy gasoline or diesel. Whenever they're going—

• (232045)

**Mr. Fayçal El-Khoury:** I'm sorry. I have a point of order. I would like to ask the clerk if it is legal to move a motion when we are debating a motion. Can you illustrate that for us, please?

**The Chair:** Mr. El-Khoury, this is a subamendment to the motion. This is not a new motion.

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** I have a point of order, Mr. Chair. I would like to challenge that. Maybe the clerk can help us.

This is a new motion. It is completely different from what we are talking about. It's moved as a subamendment, but it doesn't match the current motion. It's irrelevant to the main motion.

If I could read just a bit of the rules, maybe you can help me with this, Clerk. It says here that it “deals with a matter foreign to the main motion, exceeds its scope, or introduces a new proposition which should properly be the subject of a separate substantive motion with notice”. I don't think this motion that has been moved is relevant to the current motion we're talking about, and it's taking us completely to a different route.

Therefore, I would like to challenge you, Chair, on that. It's not appropriate.

**The Chair:** You would like to challenge the....

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** I have a point of order.

**The Chair:** There is a point of order before I deal with challenge.

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** I'm sorry. There is no challenge, Chair. There is no challenge because you allowed me to commence debate, which means you accepted the ruling. You accepted my subamendment to the main motion, which is basically establishing when the main report with this amendment would take effect. That's all I'm doing here. I'm proposing a different condition on the main amendment.

You accepted it and allowed me to start debate, which means that you can't challenge it after the fact. The moment to challenge it should be the moment that it's proposed. That is in the green book.

**The Chair:** Hold on one second.

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** Before you accepted it, Chair, I did make a comment and you moved on from the comment that I made.

**The Chair:** Just hold on. I'm going to suspend the meeting for a few seconds and come back.

• (1645) \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

• (1650)

**The Chair:** I call the meeting back to order.

My ruling that the subamendment is in order stands.

Madam Kayabaga.

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** Thank you, Chair.

Can we get the wording of this new motion circulated in both languages, please?

Thanks.

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** Should we suspend again and distribute it?

**The Chair:** Okay, we're suspended.

• (1650) \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

• (1700)

**The Chair:** I bring this meeting to order. Hopefully members received the subamendment.

The floor is with Mr. Kmiec.

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** Thank you, Chair. You looked very downcast when you said I still had the floor.

To continue the point that I was making before we suspended to have the wording of the motion sent to all members of the committee in both official languages, I think it's time. This timing on a condition on the main motion would offer up the opportunity to send this to the House at the appropriate moment.

We've seen over the summer that costs have gone up for a lot of people. I think that what I heard at the doors, very clearly, both in my riding and also outside my riding when I was door knocking, was that people are just tired of this government and they want to vote it out. They want to have an opportunity to have their say, and I don't see why we should continue to block them from doing that. As the leader of the official opposition has said, the moment that we can, we will move a motion of non-confidence in the government.

You'll note I didn't put that into this as a subamendment, but that would have been quite the motion to send back to the House of Commons to consider. Very simply, you have many premiers now calling for the end of the carbon tax, including a premier whose party was one of the first in Canada to introduce it, Premier David Eby of British Columbia.

I went through British Columbia for about two weeks, backpacking with my kids through southern British Columbia. Yes, costs are really high. That was a complaint I heard again. Many people were just complaining offhand while they were sitting in different restaurants, while they were just walking on the street looking at prices. Now even the Premier of British Columbia is calling for an end to the carbon tax, saying that if there wasn't a backstop in the federal legislation, they would do away with it. The reason he's doing that—it's very obvious—is that there is a provincial election coming to British Columbia and it's so unpopular that he has no chance of being re-elected at this point.

We also, I think, saw a most unusual political situation in British Columbia, where an entire political party collapsed. It used to be called the B.C. Liberals. They did a rebrand. It didn't quite work out, and now they have one force that is behind a carbon tax election as well. That's the wording that they're using as well because, again, the majority of Canadians want to see the abolishment of the carbon tax because it costs a lot of money.

Back home in Alberta, you're talking about thousands of dollars out of everyone's pockets, regardless of the income quartile that they are in, whether they're in the bottom 20% or the top 20%. Everybody is paying more than they used to, and the carbon tax is set to increase April 1. I think by sending this—

• (232105)

**The Chair:** There's a point of order from Arielle Kayabaga.

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** Thank you, Chair. I'm listening intently to make sure that there is no relevancy going on here, but we're not talking about carbon tax. We were originally talking about lost Canadians, and now we're on the carbon tax. I'm so confused. How is this relevant to the current motion?

**The Chair:** This is relevant to the subamendment that Mr. Kmiec brought in.

Mr. Kmiec, the floor is yours.

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** It's not relevant to the subject matter at hand.

**The Chair:** Mr. Kmiec, the floor is yours.



**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** I'm happy to read back the motion. There was the main motion, there was an amendment, and there's my subamendment. My subamendment follows after the addition of the closed work permit study being completed. I added the words, "and after a carbon tax election is held so that Canadians and Québécois can vote out this tired, out-of-time NDP-Liberal coalition government". It's very simple. It's germane. I'm speaking to my subamendment about what I heard at the doors and what people want us to do as parliamentarians, which is to submit ourselves to the greatest bit of accountability our democracy has, which is to let Canadians have a say and let them vote us out if they don't think we're doing, individually, a good enough job in our local ridings. Then it's based on both your political leadership, it's based on your political party, but it's also based on the quality of the representation that you do.

What I heard at the doors in my riding of Calgary Shepard repeatedly was that costs are too high, the carbon tax is imposing too much of a burden on everyday Canadians. I think by offering this subamendment to the amendment to the main motion, we're just time-limiting when this would go back to the House and the impact it would have on Bill C-71 and the other bits of legislation.

I think it's time, and I hope that the Liberals will see the wisdom in this and submit themselves to accountability and let the Canadian public decide.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Kmiec.

We have Mr. Redekopp, then Mr. McLean and then Mr. Dalton.

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm happy to speak to this subamendment.

So that we're clear, we have this motion regarding Bill C-71, and we have already subamended it once. We are looking to subamend it again, and as my colleague pointed out, it essentially puts a condition on what the motion says.

It is also very important, based on what I heard this summer as I spoke with constituents not only in Saskatoon but in other parts of the country, and I can tell you that the carbon tax is very much disliked in Saskatoon. I hear this constantly from people. The interesting part is that people have figured out that the carbon tax is actually the main driver of inflation in the costs of items in the city of Saskatoon.

• (232110)

**The Chair:** We have another point of order from Ms. Kayabaga.

Ms. Kayabaga, please go ahead.

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** Thank you, Chair.

I appreciate that my colleague started on the right path by talking about Bill C-71 and the lost Canadians, which are what we're talking about right now, but then he went back to the carbon tax. Again, I fail to see the relevancy here to the main motion and the main matter we're talking about right now.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Kayabaga.

Mr. Redekopp, please continue.

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** Okay. I understand it's sometimes difficult. I'll read the motion again so that it's very clear.

There's a part in the motion about what we do about Bill C-71, and then there's this part, which would say, "and after a carbon tax election is held so that Canadians and Québécois can vote out this tired, out-of-time NDP-Liberal coalition government". That is the subamendment.

The point of the subamendment is to place a timing issue on this motion. It is to recognize the fact that as I speak to people, as I was saying, I hear that they are concerned about the carbon tax and the effect it is having on their costs.

What I find very interesting is that people are connecting the carbon tax to all of their expenses. They're not just connecting it to the price of gasoline or the price of diesel fuel. They're not even connecting it to just the price of natural gas to heat their houses or heating oil to heat their homes. People understand how it affects truckers, for example, and truckers pay a lot of money for their carbon tax—

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** Mr. Chair, on a point of order, again, I go back to the point that Mr. Kmiec made that Bill C-71 is not important to them. We get that. They don't want it to come to committee, but we want to talk about—

**The Chair:** This is debate. I'm going to carry on with Mr. Redekopp.

Mr. Redekopp, please go ahead.

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** Okay. Thank you.

What I was saying is that people have gone beyond connecting the carbon tax to increased fuel costs and increased home heating costs. They have also recognized that, beyond those two things, which are significant, it has also affected truckers, for example, who have to pay significant amounts of carbon tax, which is then built into every single thing we buy as Canadians.

Everything we buy that comes on a truck, which is pretty much everything we purchase, is affected by the carbon tax. Therefore, the price is passed on to consumers, because what else can you do when you're taxed by the government? At the end of the day, we all know there's only one taxpayer, so all of those increased taxes end up flowing back to that taxpayer.

People have also figured out—and I get this repeated back to me as well—that the carbon tax has impacted the cost of food in a big way. I've heard examples from farmers. I have one right near Saskatoon whom I spoke to, who spends \$20,000 a month on the carbon tax. I've heard other stories from other ridings of farmers who spend in excess of \$100,000 a month.

Once again, where do those costs go? They get passed on to the consumer, and then magically, the cost of food is much more. These are the kinds of things I've been hearing in Saskatoon.

Interestingly, I had the opportunity to travel to the Toronto region in the summer. As I spoke to voters there—no surprise—I heard the same thing. I heard the same thing in Toronto. In fact, I heard the same thing in Scarborough. I was in Scarborough, and people there were all complaining to me about the cost of living and the cost of food, and they also clearly understood the connection between those increased costs and the carbon tax.

That is why, on this motion here today, it's important that we tie this motion to the potential of a carbon tax election, because even in a place like Scarborough, I heard the same thing. I heard that people are tired. Again, the wording in this motion is “tired, out-of-time NDP-Liberal coalition government”.

You might just say, “Well, those are Conservative talking points”. These are words I heard from constituents—from people. People tell me this, so it's not—

**Mrs. Salma Zahid:** I have a point of order, Chair. It is really irrelevant to relate it to Scarborough. We are talking about lost Canadians. What I have been hearing from many constituents for many years is that rights are being taken away from those kids—

**The Chair:** This is debate. Let's carry on.

**Mrs. Salma Zahid:** —who were born outside of Canada. It has been a very big issue in our riding of Scarborough Centre. I've been hearing from lots of constituents, and I think we need to move quickly on that.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mrs. Zahid.

I have the floor, so I will give the floor to Mr. Redekopp.

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** It's interesting. Scarborough is very much affected by carbon tax, and many of your constituents—

**Mrs. Salma Zahid:** I have a point of order, Chair. How can we have a binding motion for the next Parliament and say it's for after the election? We cannot give any instructions to the committee coming in after the election.

How can we add that in a motion, asking for the next Parliament to do that, because anything after the election will not—

• (232115)

**The Chair:** Honourable members, please let the Conservatives talk. If you want to have a debate, you can raise your hand, and I will put you on the speaking list. Right now I have on the speaking list Mr. Redekopp, Mr. McLean and Mr. Dalton, and I have no one else on the speaking list.

I'll put Ms. Kayabaga on the speaking list, but, until then, unless there is an appropriate point of order, please do not debate this motion out of sequence.

**Mrs. Salma Zahid:** I need to be added to the list.

**The Chair:** I will add you to it. I will read the list again. We have Mr. Redekopp, who has the floor, then Mr. McLean, Mr. Dalton, Madam Kayabaga and Madam Zahid.

Does anyone else want to be on the speaking list? If there's no one, then please, Mr. Redekopp, carry on.

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** Thank you.

Going back to Scarborough, I spoke to people in Scarborough. I know the member opposite is from Scarborough, so I know she's heard the same thing, because I didn't have to probe very hard to get this comment from people, and the people, not just in Saskatoon, not just in the GTA generally, but specifically in Scarborough, in Scarborough Centre, were talking about this very issue. I feel—

**Mrs. Salma Zahid:** I have a point of order.

**The Chair:** Madam Zahid—

**Mrs. Salma Zahid:** We cannot go into lots of concerns we are hearing. There are a thousand concerns. I have been to Saskatoon, and I have heard from caregivers about having a new program for caregivers to make sure that they are heard.

**The Chair:** Cut the mike, please. The mike should be with me right now. Thank you.

I'm sorry about this, honourable members. I know this is the first day after the break. We are all energized, but please—

**Mr. Shafqat Ali (Brampton Centre, Lib.):** I have a point of order.

**The Chair:** I will give you the point of order, but let me finish.

Honestly, you know that I try to do a very fair, equitable job, so please let me do that and continue to do that. If there is a genuine point of order, I always welcome that, but, please, no debate until you have your turn to speak.

Is there anyone else on a point of order? There's no point of order.

Then, Mr. Redekopp, you have the floor. Please go ahead.

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** Clearly Scarborough is a touchy issue, but the reality is that the carbon tax has impacted Canadians right across the country, which includes Scarborough. As I said, when I was in Scarborough, I was hearing all the time—

**Mrs. Salma Zahid:** On a point of order, Chair, I hear from Scarborough constituents a lot. I had a barbecue where there were over 4,000 people, and we have been having conversations at the doors, at events, Taste of Lawrence, Canada Day—

**The Chair:** Madam Zahid, please, I have your name on the list. When your turn comes, you can speak about this. I humbly request that you follow the directions from the chair. I would really appreciate that, and I don't want any more interruption unless, you know, Mr. Redekopp is really going off on a tangent, which I don't see yet.

Mr. Redekopp, please go ahead.

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** Again, we're on the subject of carbon tax. We know that the carbon tax, what we have here.... I'll read it again, because this is a subamendment that we have to this motion, and the subamendment adds these words, "and after a carbon tax election is held so that Canadians and Québécois can vote out this tired, out-of-time NDP-Liberal coalition government". That is the subamendment that we're speaking to.

You know, I was just talking about Scarborough and how people even in Scarborough, much to the surprise of the member for Scarborough, complain about the carbon tax and the way that it's impacting the costs of the food they are eating and the things that they're purchasing and about the struggling and the suffering that people are feeling when they don't have the money in their bank accounts at the end of the month to pay the bills that they need to pay. One of the reasons is that the cost of food and other things has been impacted by the carbon tax.

**Mrs. Salma Zahid:** On a point of order, Chair, this is about relevance to this committee. We are not in the environment committee. We are in the citizenship and immigration committee, and it's important to discuss immigration cases and immigration issues in this committee. We have a committee where they can look into the carbon tax, but we are right now in CIMM committee. It's important that we talk about the issues that are relevant to CIMM committee.

• (232120)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mrs. Zahid.

I have ruled the subamendment is in order, and Mr. Redekopp is speaking on that subamendment. He's not speaking out of order.

Mr. Redekopp, please carry on.

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** What Canadians have told me.... Why I keep coming back to the carbon tax and why we think it's relevant to add into this motion is the opportunity to have an election based on the carbon tax. That is what people are telling me. I believe that's what Canadians want the opportunity to do.

My colleague mentioned a very interesting thing. He mentioned, first of all, that many of the provinces—I think it might be all of them now—are opposed to the carbon tax, including, specifically and most interestingly, British Columbia.

I just want to highlight that point because British Columbia was really the birthplace of the carbon tax. It's where it first started and where it was first implemented. It's so interesting how right now—

**The Chair:** On a point of order, Ms. Kayabaga, please go ahead.

I have almost seven minutes to finish this committee.

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** I go back to the point that this subamendment is out of order because it seeks to direct a future committee to report on something that the House, and you, cannot bind in a future Parliament. This makes no sense.

We're sitting here discussing Bill C-71 and you're entertaining a motion to direct a future Parliament. That is something that you, yourself, cannot do as chair, Mr. Chair, respectfully.

**The Chair:** Madam Kayabaga—

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** How do we continue this debate?

**The Chair:** Madam Kayabaga, the committee is in control of its own things. We do not direct Parliament what to do at this point in time.

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** A future Parliament—

**The Chair:** If some of the members do not support what is in the subamendment, they can vote it down when the debate collapses.

Right now, I have six minutes.

Mr. Redekopp, the floor is still with you, unless you want to bring....

The only way it can end is an adjournment from Mr. Redekopp.

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** I have more to say.

**The Chair:** Continue.

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** I know this seems like a very touchy issue to the members across from me, but I just want to remind them that it wasn't that long ago, back in June, when there were members on their side.... Mr. Chiang particularly was telling us great stories. I recall an interesting story about a car accident. I'm still a little confused as to how he didn't inform his wife about that in a timely manner. I'm still confused about how he didn't get into trouble for that.

I think I might need some marital advice from you because it seems like you cracked the code there somehow.

Anyway, my point is that when all of that was going on—and it went on and on—we didn't disrupt Mr. Chiang. We let him speak and tell his story.

**An hon. member:** We were worried about him.

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** Yes, we actually were concerned, but we gave him that courtesy.

I was speaking about British Columbia, the carbon tax and how interesting it is to me that the birthplace of the carbon tax in Canada actually has now said that it would rather do something different. It has recognized that the carbon tax is actually a problem. It's a little ironic because, as we all know, there's an election happening in British Columbia. It's ironic that the NDP no less would suggest that the carbon tax is a bad thing.

It proves a couple of things. It proves that the carbon tax is in fact a very bad tax. It costs everybody a lot of money. It makes life very expensive. It makes everything unaffordable, and it actually doesn't help the environment.

I think we can learn also from this that people actually can learn and evolve in their thinking. I'm encouraged, I guess, that even an NDP premier and an NDP government can actually see the light and understand that maybe there are other ways to accomplish things. Sometimes you get your head so buried in one particular issue that you forget about that. That's what the carbon tax has become for the NDP. It has become a huge liability and I just find that interesting.

That's why in many places across Canada—I think every province now—and pretty much anywhere you go to speak, you will find many people who are very much struggling with the carbon tax and very interested in having a say and in having a chance to speak to it through an election to tell the Government of Canada what they think about a carbon tax.

I'm pretty confident that I know the answer to that question, but the only way to know for sure is to have a carbon tax election. That's why we have this subamendment that we would add to this motion that would say to report this to the House, "and after a carbon tax election is held so that Canadians and Québécois can vote out this tired, out-of-time NDP-Liberal coalition government".

As I said, this is what I'm hearing from people. This is what people want to see.

With that, I will end my time and we can move on to the next speaker on the list.

Thank you.

• (232125)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. McLean, go ahead, please. You have about three minutes right now before either we suspend the meeting or—

**Mr. Greg McLean:** That won't be enough time to say what I have to say about this. I support this subamendment to the motion that's on the table here.

I think that anybody who hasn't paid attention to the fact that Canadians want an election on the carbon tax at this point in time has clearly not paid attention to their constituents all summer long. Having been out there at numerous fairs, I can guarantee you that it is no longer at all about the issues. It's "Can you please get rid of these people who are making life more expensive, primarily through the carbon tax?"

I challenge my Liberal colleagues across the table, as well as my NDP colleagues. Are you actually so tone-deaf that you don't want to put this in front of Canadians and you want to continue to keep your feet in the sand and pretend that this is not the major issue facing Canadians today or that they don't actually want to have a say in how they're paying these taxes?

We've had the Parliamentary Budget Officer here giving clear indications that the government has been misleading Canadians for a long time now about how much this tax is actually costing them, and that's where a political price is going to be paid.

That's one of the reasons Canadians are fed up. If you told Canadians, "This is what this tax is costing you. This is how much inflation it is costing you. This is what it's doing to your buying power

in terms of groceries and everything else you can buy that's supplied in society, because everything has a carbon footprint", then they would accept that as being honest and being forward-looking as far as what they can do to help the environment goes. However, they have been completely misled, and now Canadians across the country are well aware of that. They know they've been misled about the cost of this carbon tax. They see it in the price of everything, in the inflation that's gone up and in the mounting deficits that this government is running. They definitely want their say on that, and in a democracy their say happens in an election.

I know people are pounding the pavement in Calgary Centre, saying, "Please do something to stop this government from moving forward any further on this." The tone-deafness of this government is beyond the pale, and I think the subamendment to the motion, Mr. Chair, exemplifies that very clearly. Let's get to an election on this issue, because you cannot continue to divide Canadians around other issues when this has been the major issue facing them, their pocketbooks, their families, their jobs, their lifestyles, their homes and their food for so long now.

Can we please move forward and actually get this subamendment passed so that we can deal with this in a proper way by having an election for all Canadians?

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. McLean.

I have one more minute. I'm going to give the floor to Mr. Dalton.

**Mr. Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC):** Thank you very much, Chair.

As a member for British Columbia, which you are also, I can't express in a sufficient way the pain that British Columbians are feeling economically. They're feeling it from all sides. They're feeling it with the housing costs. They're feeling it with taxation, but the carbon tax really just highlights it. It's like the tip of the spear.

• (232130)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** I raise a point of order, Mr. Chair.

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** Those were truly excellent statements about a file that really matters to me, even though it does not apply to Quebec. In any case, it is 5:30 p.m.

[*English*]

**Mr. Greg McLean:** I give consent to allow Mr. Dalton to finish.

**The Chair:** Mr. Dalton, I'm going to suspend the meeting unless you want to bring a motion to adjourn the meeting, because the floor is with you.

**Mr. Marc Dalton:** Yes, we would like to adjourn the meeting.

**The Chair:** There is a motion to adjourn the meeting.

I will ask the clerk to take the vote.

(Motion negated: nays 6; yeas 5)

**The Chair:** I'm going to suspend the meeting.

[*The meeting was suspended at 5:32 p.m., Monday, September 16*]

[*The meeting resumed at 11:05 a.m., Thursday, September 19*]

• (238705)

**The Chair:** I call this meeting to order. Good morning.

We are meeting in public. Welcome to the continuation of meeting 106 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration.

I would like to remind all participants of the following points: Please wait until I recognize you by name before speaking, and please address all comments through the chair.

Members, whether participating in person or by Zoom, please raise your hand if you wish to speak. The clerk and I will manage the speaking order as well as we can.

Thank you for your co-operation.

I see that Ms. Jennifer O'Connell is replacing Ms. Kayabaga. Welcome.

Mr. Dalton, you are becoming a regular member of this committee.

**Mr. Marc Dalton:** No.

**The Chair:** You are replacing Mr. Maguire. Welcome.

We are discussing the subamendment of Mr. Kmiec to the motion by Mr. Chiang. At the time of suspension on Monday, September 16, MP Kayabaga was the next person on the speaking list to debate the subamendment. After MP Kayabaga, I have MP Zahid and then MP Kmiec.

Mr. Dalton, do you want to be on that list? Okay. That's good.

Jennifer O'Connell has the floor if she wishes to speak. Otherwise, I'm going to go to Ms. Zahid.

**Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Pickering—Uxbridge, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair, but I'll pass on my time since I'm just filling in and getting caught up. You can move to the next speaker.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We were doing the same thing previously. I knew that she would not want to go ahead, but I wanted to follow the chair's past deliberations.

**Mr. Greg McLean:** Was Ms. O'Connell on the speakers list?

**The Chair:** Ms. Kayabaga was there, and so the person replacing her will be on the list. That has always been the practice on all sides. That's why I gave her a chance, even though I knew she was going to pass it on to Ms. Zahid. I wanted to follow protocol.

**Mr. Greg McLean:** Mr. Chair, that's the first time I've seen that practice. Can I ask the clerk if that's the common practice of committees?

**The Chair:** This is the common practice in this committee. I'm sure the other members will be fine with it, because you never

know when we will have to replace someone. There's always something going on. It's not on one side; it's on all sides. That is the protocol I was following, and that's what I will continue to do unless I have unanimous consent.

Ms. Zahid, you have the floor.

**Mrs. Salma Zahid:** Thank you, Chair.

I ask for your patience, as I have to raise a very important issue.

As you will recall, in our last meeting, I had an exchange with Mr. Redekopp regarding my community of Scarborough. I'm a passionate defender of my community, as he is of his own community in Saskatoon. I've had the pleasure of visiting Saskatoon several times and meeting many local residents. Sometimes my passion gets the best of me, but I will certainly never apologize for being a champion of and for my community and its residents.

Mr. Redekopp posted a video mocking our exchange, which I felt was in poor taste, but that's certainly his choice. What I'm concerned about, Mr. Chair, is the racist, xenophobic and Islamophobic commentary that his post has attracted, which remains on his Facebook page. I will share some examples with the committee.

One commentator said, "She should not be a member of Parliament...neither should anyone else not born here [to] Canadian parents."

Another, referring to former immigration minister Ahmed Hussen replied in part, "I've been saying it for years. Since that Somali was immigration minister.... He's openly stated, he's here to make money, send money to his homeland and he will go back. I guess when he's stolen enough money."

One other commentator said, "She needs to be removed and banned." Another, "It is concerning when our politicians have accents."

• (238710)

**Mr. Greg McLean:** I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

Ms. Zahid, I'm sorry.

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Mr. McLean.

**Mr. Greg McLean:** Politicians are responsible for what they post, but responsibility for what people—

**The Chair:** Mr. McLean, I will go to Ms. Zahid.

Ms. Zahid, go ahead.

**Mrs. Salma Zahid:** Thank you.

One said, "Massive deportation now is the only answer".

In a blatant example of Islamophobia, one commentator on Mr. Redekopp's post, referring to my hijab, said, "Who the phack is this thing with the table cloth on".

Scarborough is a community where people from around the world have chosen to make their homes and build a better life for their families. Canadians from Bangladesh, from the Philippines, from Sri Lanka, from India, from Arab countries and, yes, from Pakistan, helped make Scarborough a great place to live. I am proud to raise my family there. They would be very upset by the anti-Scarborough comments that Mr. Redekopp has attracted as well.

Now, Mr. Chair, I am sure these are comments that all my colleagues across the way—some of whom I have enjoyed a productive and collegial working relationship with for several years—will want to distance themselves from. At least, I certainly hope so. However, we have seen too often that as we amp up our rhetoric, it can give unfortunate licence to hatred and vitriol that is making it more dangerous for all elected officials. I hope we can be cognizant of that in the future.

Thank you, Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Madam Zahid.

If you're done your spot, I will go to Mr. Kmiec.

The floor is yours.

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** Before I speak to the subamendment, I'm just going to say that all of the comments that were racist, prejudiced, mean-hearted and evil—those aren't Conservatives. I reject them wholeheartedly. I know my colleagues do as well.

I think we all find it really difficult to go through our comments and try to delete every single rude, obnoxious, racist, sexist and prejudiced comment that people make. We're not all perfect. You can't always get it right. We are responsible for the comments that we make.

I hope people will find that I've always been judicious in the commentary I make. I joke that I'm a minority in my own family because my kids are part Jewish and part Chinese, so I'm very sensitive to that type of aggressive commentary. My partner is from Iran, so I see that people even post nasty commentary as well on her comments that she sometimes makes publicly.

We reject them wholeheartedly. They don't represent the Conservative Party of Canada. They don't represent the Conservative movement either. That's easy to say.

On the subamendment that I moved at the last meeting, now we have a development. A beautiful, 12-word non-confidence motion is now available to the House to consider. It's that the House has lost confidence in this government—I'd move so—and that we finally have that carbon tax election this motion calls for now.

If it passes with my subamendment, and I hope we'll find agreement from all parties to do so, I really hope that we can get to the point where we can pass this subamendment to have a carbon tax election.

To prepare for this meeting, I looked up as many supporting documents as I could from different parliamentarians and legislators at the provincial level to try to persuade my colleagues that my subamendment is what the Canadian population wants.

We have three provincial elections coming up. In all of them, either the carbon tax will feature prominently as the main issue or it'll be a carbon tax election. When Premier David Eby is agreeing and now saying that basically he wants to abandon their own retail carbon tax in British Columbia, that's a carbon tax election.

I think it's incumbent upon us as parliamentarians to accept my subamendment, which will go along with the main motion to basically tell the House that we want a carbon tax election.

I've now heard rumblings that perhaps this non-confidence motion that's being moved in the House will get support from one of the other opposition parties. That's regrettable. I hope they change their minds. They have many more days to be persuaded of that, but in the interim, we could approve my subamendment and we could still report it back to the House. I've asked the clerks at the table, since I sit so close to them, and it would be a novel way of inducing perhaps another non-confidence vote in the government through this report that we would table after the motion is passed.

There was some commentary from the B.C. premier and NDP leader David Eby to scrap the carbon tax in British Columbia. This appeared in the Vancouver Sun on September 12. I'm going to quote him here.

He said, "A lot of British Columbians are struggling with affordability... The political consensus we had in British Columbia has been badly damaged by the approach of the federal government", so if it "decides to remove the legal backstop requiring us to have a consumer carbon tax in B.C., we will end the consumer carbon tax in B.C."

The article goes on to say, "Eby argued that large increases to the federal tax"—

● (238715)

**Mr. Paul Chiang:** I have a point of order, Chair.

**The Chair:** Go ahead on a point of order, Mr. Chiang.

**Mr. Paul Chiang:** Mr. Chair, I don't understand the relevance of Mr. Kmiec's comment about the carbon tax. It has no relevance to Bill C-71. That's the matter before us that we're debating. What he's talking about is completely not connected to the matter before us.

**The Chair:** Mr. Chiang, Mr. Kmiec had the floor.

Mr. Kmiec, please continue.

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** Thank you, Chair.

The relevance, to my colleague across the way, is that my subamendment to the main motion is exactly on the carbon tax election. I'm quoting back to him a seasoned politician on the NDP side who is saying that he's facing a carbon tax election in British Columbia, and that's what the public wants. I'm trying to remind my colleague across the way through you, Chair, that we need a carbon tax election, and that's why I have a subamendment on this exact subject before this committee: It's so that we can have a carbon tax election and submit ourselves to accountability from Canadian citizens, who will get to pick who will represent them in the 45th Parliament, in our next Parliament, and I'm more than happy to do that right away.

My residents back home are enthusiastic about having a carbon tax election, and I'll go back to quoting now Premier Eby, who is less enthusiastic about facing the electorate in his home province. That's because they're upset at the carbon tax, and they're specifically, I'd say, more angry at the federal government for forcing British Columbia to keep a carbon tax because of the federal backstop legislation that forces every single province that doesn't have a carbon tax to have a price imposed directly upon them.

Premier Eby has clearly said that should there not be a federal backstop, British Columbia would abandon the punishing carbon tax. It's really convenient for him to say this so late in his term and so close to the provincial election day. I think it's of interest to the committee, and especially, I think, to our chair, who happens to be from the beautiful province of British Columbia through which I backpacked for two weeks over the summer with my kids. That's why this is important.

This is the last quote I have from Premier Eby before I move to other provinces. Premier Eby argued that large increases to the federal tax, now \$80 a tonne as of April 1, are, to use another quotation, unsustainable. "Unsustainable" is what I heard at doors when I was door knocking in communities in North Vancouver, in Burnaby, in Delta, Vancouver Granville and Vancouver proper—but not Surrey.

Don't worry, Chair, I didn't make it out to Surrey to door knock, but I did door knock in New Westminster and I visited a lot of different groups as well. I door knocked also in a few spots in Seymour and North Burnaby, just to make sure that I heard directly from British Columbians, and what they were saying at the doors was that many of them wanted just what this subamendment has: a carbon tax election.

Moving on to my home province of Alberta, it's an unusual day, I think my colleagues from Alberta will agree, when we're quoting NDP MLAs, but I'm going to quote some NDP MLAs now.

Alberta NDP MLA and former leadership candidate Rakhi Pancholi spoke against the carbon tax, and this was reported earlier this year, before my subamendment even came to grace this committee to have a carbon tax election. On February 9, 2024, as reported in the Calgary Herald, she said the following: "It may be time to move beyond a consumer carbon price and focus more on the things that do work", which again is an implication a carbon tax does not work and that we should abandon it.

This is another quote: "I've been having many conversations with leading climate activists in our province, experts in this area,

and we need to continue those conversations to say, what would that climate plan look like without a consumer carbon price."

It sounds to me like she was shying away from a retail carbon tax being imposed, which is exactly the point of my subamendment, which is to have a carbon tax election. I think it's perfectly reasonable that we time it for this report going back and its impact on Bill C-71 legislation before it comes to this committee.

I'll note that the government obviously finds no urgency in passing Bill C-71, because it's not up for debate today, as far as I can tell. It wasn't up for debate yesterday. I don't see it on notice for tomorrow's business. In fact, I don't think it's on the business for several more days, and the government saw no great urgency from the moment it tabled it in May to have it debated at any time in May or June before it came here.

I'll also remind members here that this committee was in public in a multi-meeting filibuster from the Liberal side, and I heard many people comment yesterday that the bad Conservatives were delaying Bill C-71. There's no delay happening. Members are debating the merits of the bill and the contents of the bill in the House. Then I also heard the other side of the argument, which is that Conservatives take too much time at committee to do their work. I will continue to do the work the residents of Calgary Shepard expect me to do, which is to represent them.

• (238720)

The content of my subamendment is exactly what residents in my riding want to see. That's every single word in my email inbox. They want to have a non-confidence vote and they want a carbon tax election, which is what my subamendment would deliver for them.

I am going to go back this weekend. I'm going to go to my veterans walk in Glenmore Park. I'm going to go to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for the Calgary food drive that they do for the whole city. When I meet my residents, my constituents and my voters, they're going to ask me, "What did you do for us this week?" I'm going to tell them I moved at committee that we report back to the House that we have a carbon tax election. They'll be like, "Tom, that's great. That's exactly what we sent you to Ottawa for. That's what we sent you to Parliament for. That's what we want. We're tired of the government. We want to see it replaced. We want to have a say."

That's what reporting this back would give them. It places conditions on the main motion. That's exactly what my residents want to see.

I have another quote I want to read you. It's from a different Alberta NDP MLA, one whom I actually met briefly at the Alberta legislature when we were waiting in a line to greet the President of the Republic of Poland. I got a chance to meet, I think, one of her kids. She got a chance to meet my kids, and we were just talking family issues.

Alberta NDP MLA and leadership candidate Sarah Hoffman spoke out against the carbon tax. According to CTV Edmonton, on February 11, 2024, Hoffman said, "I think the consumer carbon tax is dead", and later, "So we need to find new tools that are successful."

She went on to say, "Nobody is on board with what [the Prime Minister] did with the federal carbon tax. He absolutely broke trust and broke confidence when he looked at the polls in eastern Canada and decided to exempt them."

Finally, she said, "There's no way people can be on board with the federal plan when even the prime minister isn't on board, when he's playing games with it."

Even the Alberta NDP agrees, I think, with my subamendment. The purpose is to have a carbon tax election federally. Let's get this resolved. Let the voting public pick. They can make a decision.

I believe in the wisdom of crowds. I believe that voters always have the best say. They get to choose who represents them. I hope that I can continue to earn their trust, just as we all hope we can continue to earn their trust and continue to represent them in our national Parliament. It is a great privilege to do so.

I think that's exactly what Sarah Hoffman was speaking to here. She was speaking to the fact that even the Prime Minister had abandoned the federal carbon tax. Premier Eby had talked about the fact that if there hadn't been a backstop in law, he would have abandoned it as well. That's what the subamendment proposes to do: move it up to the House and have the House confirm the committee's report to say, "not before a carbon tax election happens," because that's what the public wants to see. I think it's critically important.

With that, Chair, I'm going to stop my comments. I have more comments. I also want to note that I have a letter from the Public School Boards' Association of Alberta, which represents all the public school boards who wrote to me and other Conservative members of Parliament specifically about the impact of the carbon tax on schools in my home province, but I'll leave it at that, Chair, and I'll cede the floor.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

Mr. Dalton, go ahead, please.

**Mr. Marc Dalton:** Thank you very much, Chair.

Thank you to the committee for the opportunity to speak to MP Chiang's Bill C-71 amendment, but more specifically to the subamendment by Conservative member of Parliament Tom Kmiec, which adds, after "temporary foreign workers", the following words: "and after a carbon tax election is held so that Canadians

and Québécois can vote out this tired and out-of-touch NDP coalition government".

That is the subamendment. It has been ruled in order several times by the chair, and he did need to admonish different members for being disruptive. I'm glad to see there was no disruption to MP Kmiec's comments and I'm looking forward to being able to get through my comments here.

My remarks focus on the carbon tax and how out of touch the Liberals—and I would add the NDP and the Bloc—are with Canadians from coast to coast, and why we need a carbon tax election.

I represent Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge. That is a suburb of greater Vancouver, on the north side of MP Dhaliwal's riding, near to the south, in Surrey. It's a beautiful area. My perspective will be as a British Columbian MP, though comments I share are in line with how Canadians feel across this country.

I've never seen residents in my riding as stressed out as they are now. I've been an MP since 2019, and prior to that I was an MLA for eight years, representing the same region. I'm talking about seniors living on fixed incomes, single parents, couples with and without children, new immigrants and students, who are feeling very stretched with costs of living. I talked to one worker recently, and he told me that he's working from 10:00 in the morning until 10:00 at night, seven days a week. He says he can't give his body a break: He's exhausted, but if he does that, he's going to lose his home.

These are comments that I'm hearing throughout British Columbia and in my riding. People are maxing out on their line of credit, credit card debt, feeling anxious and frustrated. I'm sure that this is in sync with what members here at this committee may be hearing also. Consumer debt continues to rise, and it's especially impacting those who are new to the country and Generation Z, but it's being felt across the board. According to an August 27, 2024, market pulse consumer credit trends and insights report from Equifax, we have \$2.5 trillion in consumer debt. It's increased from the past year by 4.5%, which is very significant.

Millions of Canadians are tapped out and struggling to make ends meet. They're going deeper into debt, which means higher interest payments. That only puts on more pressure, because the same expenses that they had to pay for—whether it's food, gas or shelter—are not just staying the same but increasing. It's what we call a "debt trap". It is terrible. It's a very difficult place for people to be.

● (238725)

In the Lower Mainland and the greater Vancouver area, housing costs are more than a million dollars to own a home and have a mortgage. People are having mortgages of \$600,000. Then there's the increase in payments.



I just want to step back here for a second. I know that I'm mentioning different costs of living, but it all relates to the real challenge and burden that Canadians are feeling. The carbon tax, which I'll get into more, really highlights it and is an unnecessary cost that is being added to Canadians.

The increase in mortgage rates is making it tough for residents to pay for kids—to clothe them with new clothes, to pay for their sports or just to put food on the table. It is not just people who own houses; it's also people who are renting. Someone very dear to me has just rented an older one-bedroom apartment. It costs her \$2,800 before utilities. You pretty much need \$80,000 to \$100,000 just to be able to make ends meet nowadays. It is so hard. That is one of the reasons that so many people—new residents, students and others—are cramming into apartments and other places. It's just to try to share the cost of living. They're sleeping on couches and sharing bedrooms. It's really hard.

As a government, as legislators, that's not the direction that we want to see our nation go in. We want to see things getting better. I know that's the feeling of all the members here at this committee and all the representatives. We don't want to see things getting worse for people. We don't want to be adding to the misery index. We want to see things getting better. I know we share that wish, but the thing is that there are policies that are doing the exact opposite. It's time to wake up. The government seems to be like a train going off a bridge that has been blown up and going right off the edge. It's like they're not changing.

As a matter of fact, though, they are changing. They're making things more expensive: Oh, we'll just spend hundreds of millions more dollars here and billions of dollars there. We'll throw money around willy-nilly, with no real consideration of the finances and what the policies are doing to impact everyday Canadians.

In British Columbia, we pay the highest gas prices in Canada and in North America. Right now it's \$1.75 a litre. Last summer it was up to \$2.50 a litre. It's expensive. The carbon tax is a significant portion of this price. Before summer, Conservatives put forward a motion that the government—the Liberals, backed by the NDP and the Bloc—remove the GST from the carbon tax. We have the carbon tax. Then there's the GST, which only augments or elevates the price on gas. That was defeated.

People can say, “Well, just take public transportation.” I suppose that's possible in the downtown city core in Vancouver and maybe Toronto and Montreal, but for those living in the suburbs and those living in rural communities all over, it's not as simple as that. Quite often the bus systems don't operate throughout the night. A lot of times it's not direct.

● (238730)

Using the bus lines means it takes a lot longer to get to work, which only puts more stress on a person's life and means less time at home.

It's important to have a good public transportation system, and in Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, we have a bus system. West Coast Express goes one direction, with five trains in the morning going one way and five trains coming back from the downtown core. That just doesn't do it. People need to get their kids to sports or need to

go shopping, so they need to use their vehicles. It seems as if the government is just trying to get people out of their cars, to make them walk, to take us back to the Middle Ages, the dark ages.

B.C. used to be a net exporter of electricity. The direction of the Liberals, the NDP and the Bloc seems to be to just use more electricity. The fact of the matter is that British Columbia used to be an exporter, and now it's importing electricity. Saying that we need to have more and more EV vehicles.... EVs are a good option for many people, but it doesn't work when you consider all the demands on our electricity grids. It's very challenging. How can I say it politely? It is kind of foolish to say, “Well, no more—”

**An hon. member:** That's polite.

**Mr. Marc Dalton:** That's very polite. I was being very polite.

● (238735)

**The Chair:** One person at a time, please.

Excuse me; one person has the floor. We have to make sure that we take good care of our interpreters' health. That's very key.

Mr. Dalton, you have the floor.

**Mr. Marc Dalton:** It was a good point, and maybe the objective here was to make me lose my train of thought.

The Liberals and the coalition partners have said they want to basically ban vehicles using fuels by, I believe, 2035, if I'm not mistaken. It's just so impractical. It's not just impractical; it's impossible. Dealers—I mean car dealers—are finding it really hard to sell their EV vehicles. Why is that? Price is one thing, even though the price has gone down and even though there have been lots of subsidies. The charging aspect doesn't work for many people, and being able to travel to different places in the province or in the country doesn't work for many people. It doesn't work for everybody.

It's just crazy. Really, a lot of these policies are just crazy. Who is running the country? I mean, we know who's running the country, but do they actually consider the implications of what they're doing to people? Do they want people to have jobs? Do they want people to be able to move, to be able to have vehicles? Honestly, it seems as though the Liberal government is trying to bring us back down and to destroy our nation. That's what they're doing. It's not that they're trying; they are actually doing a fine job of tearing down our nation.

Let's just talk about per capita income. I think in 2017 or 2016, per capita income in Canada was about \$55,000, and what is it right now? Nine years later, it is \$54,000, approximately \$54,000. We've gone down.

When Prime Minister Harper and the Conservatives were in power, in Canada our per capita income was about the same as that of the U.S., of Americans. Our dollar was strong, but that has been whittled away. It has been whittled away by incompetence. That's a shame. I say shame.

People are feeling this and crying out. Look at food banks in Canada: Millions of Canadians are lined up at food banks everywhere. I've visited food banks in Vancouver, and they've told me that use has gone up two or three times. It's doubled or tripled.

In my community also, we have a great food bank. It provides tremendous service. It's the Friends in Need Food Bank, and I will be helping out with the food drive this coming Saturday. People are generous in our community, but they're saying they don't have the goods to give the way they used to because demand is so great.

Let's talk about Toronto. One out of 10—10% of the population—relies on food banks. Toronto has 6.5 or seven million people. People are suffering out there. It's sad.

We had a by-election in Toronto—St. Paul's. It's been a stronghold for the Liberals. I know the by-elections quite often are challenging for a government in power, and we recognize that, but Conservatives won that strong seat.

● (238740)

We had a by-election a couple of days ago in Winnipeg. Liberals gained less than 5% of the popular vote. In Montreal, they lost a seat that was a stronghold of former prime minister Paul Martin. It was held by him. They've lost their way.

Well, this is not a new thing. They're out of touch as the government, unfortunately.

I know the members as individuals. I know different ones right there. I like them as people and enjoy having conversations. I don't care whether it's the Bloc or the NDP. I appreciate that we're people and we're all human, but nevertheless we have political philosophies that I attack. I don't mean it personally, but it is something that is affecting Canadians personally.

The previous Liberal president in my riding told me that the Liberals have just lost their way, and he was going to donate to my campaign. He was a former Liberal president.

If that isn't enough, the Liberal candidate that I ran against in the last election told me that he was going to vote for me in this election. That's not something I'd want to hear if I was a Liberal. I mean, honestly, the alarm bells are ringing. You know that. You see the polls. It's obvious for the Liberals here.

I think that this is a message too for the Bloc Québécois and the NDP. They've hitched their carriage to this horse, or however the illustration goes: They're hitched to this by voting with them. I can see why they're getting pretty squirmy in trying to pull out. It baffles me a bit.

I'll mention this in some comments. The Bloc is now saying they're going to—

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** Mr. Chair, I would like to raise a point of order.

We are on a slippery slope. We are currently talking about an amendment on a carbon tax, and we are hearing partisan attacks we would normally hear in the House.

I would ask my colleague to focus on the carbon tax and not launch partisan attacks against people. However, if you want to let him continue, Mr. Chair, I feel that this committee will start looking like a circus. If we want to decently represent the people who put their trust in us, we should behave differently.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe.

Mr. Dalton, you have the floor.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Marc Dalton:** I would like to add that Mr. Kmiec's sub-amendment clearly refers to the carbon tax, but also to the fact that the government is out of touch with Canadians. My comments are therefore entirely appropriate.

[*English*]

We're talking about being out of touch and we're talking about coalitions. The NDP is tied in with the Liberals on the common working man. I've visited union shops and work sites and other places, primarily in British Columbia, with the Conservative leader, and people there are expressing their frustration. They're talking about the cost of living, about the carbon tax. They're telling me how hard it is. They have trucks, and some of them have firearms for work, and they're feeling the pinch. My riding is traditionally more blue collar, although now it's quite mixed, but the working men and women have had it.

When I was on Vancouver Island, a gentleman came up to me and introduced himself. He was actually a former NDP cabinet minister, and he told me that he had joined a Conservative board, a Conservative riding association. He said it was because the NDP—the NDP-Liberal coalition—had totally lost their way. He said they'd gone woke and were not in contact and not connected and didn't understand the working person.

Look at the map. Look at the 338. Obviously it's just a picture of where things are at right now, and it's not certain that this is what the election is going to be, but just look at where things are at. People are frustrated. Do you get the message?

In British Columbia, if the polling is correct, the Liberals and the NDP are looking at a massive loss of seats. I know each party has their own strategists, but they had better be looking at things.

Mr. Kmiec mentioned that they are looking at the polls. The premiers are looking at how people feel about the carbon tax, and 70% of Canadians don't want it.

Up until about a week ago, NDP Premier David Eby was touting the carbon tax. Last March, I believe, Conservative leader Pierre Poilievre asked him to join seven other premiers to join him in opposing the increase in the carbon tax on April 1.

What was his response? This was the CTV News headline:

'Baloney Factory': Eby mocks Poilievre letter asking B.C. to join carbon price fight

A letter from Opposition Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre to British Columbia Premier David Eby, asking him to help halt a federal carbon price increase, was dismissed by Eby as a "baloney factory" campaign tactic.

Poilievre's letter sent Friday [said that] the 23 per cent rise amounts to an extra 18 cents on a litre of fuel, and people B.C. and Canadians cannot afford it.

Poilievre's letter said the carbon pricing system set up by Trudeau is an imposition on the provinces that requires them to accept an ever-increasing levy.

"I don't live in the Pierre Poilievre campaign office and baloney factory," said Eby. "I live in B.C., am the premier and decisions have consequences."

Let's fast-forward to a week ago. What did he say? He said he would remove the government tax if the federal government removes the requirement. He said, "...the context and the challenge for British Columbians has changed. A lot of British Columbians are struggling with affordability". Well, this didn't happen in just the past four months. This has been going on for quite some time. It's a very interesting choice of words.

He says "the context has changed". What happens to be the context? The context is that he's in the midst of an election that the NDP thought they were walking away from with a massive majority, but the B.C. Conservatives are now breathing down their necks. The Mainstreet poll showed them ahead at 46% to 44%. There are other polls that show them behind. One party's ahead and one's behind. Basically, they're panicking in the NDP war room. That's why they're throwing out the carbon tax. They said, "Okay. Well, what do we have to do?" This is panic. People can see through it.

I know that Jagmeet Singh with the NDP has said they're going to reconsider the carbon tax. That's good. Let's reconsider it and let's go to an election.

[*Translation*]

I also want to tell the Bloc Québécois that this is not a tax that only affects the rest of Canada, and not Quebec. Per capita income is also going down. The carbon tax is having an impact. Things are hard for Quebeckers in their province, just as it is for Canadians in the rest of Canada.

Of course, as Conservatives, our strategy will be to blame the Bloc Québécois for keeping this government in power in Canada. This political party—I'm talking about the Liberals—is the costliest and most centralist in Canada's history. In my opinion, giving money and power to the federal government runs entirely counter to the Bloc Québécois's ambition, which is independence. They're the ones holding things up now. It's expensive to vote for the Bloc.

I thank the committee for listening to me. I wish you all a good day.

● (238750)

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Dalton.

The floor will go to Mr. El-Khoury.

I'm going to say the list first, and then I'll give you the floor, Mr. El-Khoury. On the list, I have Mr. El-Khoury, MP Kwan, MP McLean, MP Redekopp and Mr. Kmiec, in that order.

First I have Mr. El-Khoury, and then I will go to Madam Kwan. I will then come to you, Mr. McLean, and then Mr. Redekopp and Mr. Kmiec That is the speaking list.

Mr. El-Khoury, you have the floor.

**Mr. Fayçal El-Khoury:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would love to see my colleague Mr. Dalton listen to what I'm going to say—he will contradict himself 200%—but I believe he prefers to run away. Come back.

Mr. Chair, I'm really puzzled.

[*Translation*]

I am truly disappointed to see that our Conservative Party colleagues are trying to topple the government, rather than prioritize Canadians' interests. They're going from one province to the next.

● (238755)

[*English*]

When we see that Canadians need to improve their lives after the global economic difficulty, from COVID until now, when we see the interest rates drop two times and continue to drop, that will elevate the lives of Canadians.

They are just looking at their own interest, and they are not taking into consideration whether the people of Canada would like to have an election in these difficult times. I believe if you go from coast to coast, the majority of Canadians don't want to have an election now. They would like all parties in the House to work to make their lives and the lives of Canadians better.

Let me go point by point.

My respected colleague Mr. Kmiec was talking about receiving a letter from school boards asking for the removal of the carbon tax. He said that would help students go to school.

When the government proposed a bill in order to bring free meals to students and to have \$10 day care for every child, they voted against it. In the interests of the schools, the parents and the students, they should have voted yes. When it comes to improving the life of Canadians, when we presented dental care, if they cared about Canadians they should have voted yes but they did the opposite.

When we talk about the environment, we have to prepare this country for generations to come, for our children and our grandchildren to have clean air, clean drinking water, a green economy and green infrastructure, yet in every single bill, they voted against this. What they do is to declare something and then do precisely the opposite.

Regarding my good friend Mr. Dalton—and I hope he is here—this is from his portfolio from when he was in the British Columbia legislature. I would like his colleagues to listen and understand what he said in 2017:

Our government made the decision to implement a tax on carbon....

Our carbon tax appears to be working. Independent studies have found that between 2008 and 2012, fuel use in B.C. dropped by 16 percent per capita. In 2015, a review of seven independent studies suggested that B.C.'s carbon tax has reduced emissions in the province by up to 15 percent....

We view this tax as a tool to change behaviour and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

This is what Marc Dalton said in the British Columbia legislature on February 27, 2017.

I hope he has listened to this and will give us an answer.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. El-Khoury.

I will go to Madam Kwan.

Madam Kwan, you have the floor.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** Thank very much, Mr. Chair. I'll be very brief about this.

Really, all of this is just a ploy, in my view. It's playing politics at its worst.

What we're seeing here in relation to Bill C-71 is an attempt by the Conservatives once again to kill the bill. I suppose I should not be that surprised because, after all, it was them who brought in Bill C-37, which stripped the rights of Canadians and then deemed them to be second-class citizens. Irrespective of the fact that the Superior Court in Ontario has found this to be unconstitutional, the Conservatives want to persist. I know they'll make arguments and say things like, when Bill C-37 was passed, all the parties in the House supported it.

Let us just be clear on the record. In fact, Don Chapman—who is absolutely an expert about the history of lost Canadians—noted in his book that the Conservative government and Harper at the time, made it clear that, if that bill was not supported unanimously and unchanged by the parties, then he would strip all the other elements that would have impacted veterans and war brides. They would have gone to their graves without having their citizenships recognized.

What did the parties do? They held their noses and did what they had to do in order to honour the veterans and the war brides. Bill C-37 was founded on violations that, in my view, were based on sex discrimination.

Mr. Speaker, I should also add that the NDP's Olivia Chow—who was the critic at that time because I wasn't around the House at the time—attempted to raise concerns around the provisions that stripped second-generation-born Canadians of their right to citizenship. She did, in fact, call for that section to be struck or amended. Of course, that didn't happen because if she had ultimately gone down that track to do anything, it would have meant that the war veterans and the war brides and others.... There were some elements that were good in Bill C-37—

**Mr. Greg McLean:** Hear, hear.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** —that would have been lost altogether. Isn't that right, Greg?

That would have meant that all of that would have been lost and war veterans who fought for this country would have gone to their graves without having been recognized as Canadians. That is shameful. The gender discrimination of the war brides is shameful. That's what happened with Bill C-37.

Fifteen years later, we're trying to fix all of this and again the Conservatives want to play games with people's lives and their suffering. Children that are born stateless are the result of the Conservatives' bill. Separated families are a result of the Conservatives' bill. It got to the point where enough was enough and courageous people took this to court and won.

Even then, the Conservatives say, "Let's put our politics ahead of everybody else and call for an election." That would mean Bill C-71 would die on the Order Paper. That means constitutional rights will continue to be violated for these lost Canadians.

● (238800)

Mr. Chair, I would add that the Conservatives claim that they support the family members of lost Canadians. Wouldn't you know it? The leader of the official opposition, in correspondence responding to lost Canadian families, said that they would actually see Bill S-245, which is a Senate bill, go to third reading. How did that go?

Not only did they filibuster the bill in this committee for 30 hours but, after we finally got all that passed and it was reported to the House, the sponsor of the bill, Jasraj Singh Hallan, moved in the order of precedence the motion for Bill S-245 as amended to come up to the House for third reading debate and a vote eight times—I think that must be a record—to pre-empt it from actually getting voted on and passed in the House. That is the reality, folks. They can say all they want in all those speeches they just made so that they can put it on social media and say to their leader, "We did our job."

By the way, to my understanding, they're using that amendment at every committee. It is absolutely a political stunt they're trying to do. I project that they're using it at every committee because I think those are the tactics they want to engage in. That's what we see with those kinds of tactics, a repeat—throw it in, rinse, recycle, start all over again. Those are the kinds of tactics that we have seen over and over again. That's my projection—that it is the kind of thing they will do with the other committees as well, always putting partisan politics ahead of the needs of their community and of Canadians. That's what we're seeing right here, right now, today.

● (238805)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Kwan.

We go to MP McLean. Please go ahead. The floor is yours.

**Mr. Greg McLean:** There were some remonstrations I heard there about something that happened 15 years ago. Parties in the House, including not just the NDP, who just spoke, but also the Liberals, have tried this as well: “We voted for that legislation under Stephen Harper, but it's all his fault because he told us we had to.”

I mean, come on. I'm a parliamentarian with a spine. If you were in the House at that point in time and somebody said, “Don't do your job, just do what we say,” I would say that you're not doing your job as a parliamentarian. I can't speak directly to what happened 15 years ago because I wasn't here, but I will say that making excuses for your own behaviour and the decisions that you've had to make.... Every decision that we make in Parliament requires considering both sides, the pros and the cons, of what we're trying to accomplish in that. If you try and undo half of that *ex post facto*, you are pretending that there was never both a pro and a con to the argument.

Moving things quickly as far as getting more Canadians the citizenship they're due is a job we all have to undertake here. We'd like to undertake that with a bill that would be brought forth here, as well, to make sure we have a robust immigration system, but we're talking about this subamendment right now, which is about including the tactic brought forward by my colleague from the NDP to try and bypass Parliament and bring this bill directly to this committee for expedited delivery as opposed to having people actually address it at second reading in the House of Commons.

I find that to be an affront to Parliament. It has never been done before and, frankly, shouldn't be done. We have a process in Parliament that we use to debate bills, particularly bills that are going to have significant consequences for Canada's immigration system. The stunt being pulled with this motion, to which we have an amendment and a subamendment—two at this point in time—is entirely at the feet of the New Democratic Party. Thank you very much for trying to manipulate this Parliament today, not the Parliament of 15 years ago.

I am also accountable for making sure that I stand up to nonsense, and this motion here is nonsense and goes against the democratic principles we stand for in this country and abide by, which we want to make sure the Liberal-NDP coalition doesn't continue to try and whittle away as we try to uphold democracy across this country.

This subamendment to the amendment to the motion that my colleague brought forward is the number one issue on the minds of Canadians across Canada right now. If you want to talk about listening to constituents and listening to what Canadians are saying, the most important issue right now in Canada is the fact that they have lost faith in this government's words about the carbon tax.

I'm going to say this very clearly here. It's because members of the government, members on the other side here, who are not really responsible because I know they're just reading off their pages, and the government itself—the Prime Minister and each of his ministers—stand up in the House of Commons and address Canadians and say nonsense like, “This bill puts more money in your pocket than it takes out. We just take that money out of your pocket, take it into Ottawa, give it to our bureaucrats to shuffle around and then

we add a little bit of salt and pepper to it and put it back in your pocket.”

That's garbage. The Parliamentary Budget Officer has said that's garbage, yet the Prime Minister and his band of merry men and women continue on that completely false narrative. Let's call it what it is. It has been called many things, Mr. Chair, but let's call it what it is. It's dishonest. There is no government money that doesn't come from the taxpayers. Not one cent you are putting in the pockets of Canadians didn't come from the pockets of Canadians. Public finance is public finance, and drifting into a \$50-billion deficit for no reason other than the fact that you want to continue to grease your friends is no way to run a democratic government in Canada.

● (238810)

I think we need to continue to hold this government to account. I heard someone say here, in addressing the subamendment, that Conservatives spend too much time at committee examining legislation. What do you think our job is? I'll tell you that I've only been at this committee one year, but I have yet to examine legislation at this committee, because it's been filibustered so much by the Liberals, by not bringing forward legislation, both in camera and in public, trying—

**The Chair:** Mr. McLean, anything in camera we cannot mention here. Please be careful.

Thank you.

**Mr. Greg McLean:** Thank you.

Much time has been taken in addressing almost nothing in both public meetings and non-public meetings; I hope that was better said, Mr. Chair.

It is a shame that this committee has accomplished almost nothing in the 12 months I've been on this committee. When I share that with Canadians, and I hope to share that with Canadians, they're going to wonder why we're paying these people to come to Ottawa and sit in meetings where they get nothing done. Let me challenge my colleagues across the table and my colleagues down the table: We need to start getting things accomplished here. Those accomplishments need to include getting the right subamendment, which is what we're talking about here.

Let me give a quick indication of what happens at committee.

This will be illustrative, Mr. Chair. I hope you don't mind.

I was previously on the environment committee. Here's what happened on the environment committee when we were addressing changes to the Canadian Environmental Protection Act. The thing about the Canadian Environmental Protection Act is that it requires melding the science of environmental protection with the legal language of making sure that the scientific reality is put into legislation. It is an art and a science built into one. We took the time to do that. There were protestations from the Liberal side of the bench that we were taking too much time.

In the end, we made some significantly good amendments with the help of a couple of good Liberal backbenchers who actually respected things like science. They respected things like parliamentary jurisdiction and where we were overlapping with the jurisdictions of provinces. We got a better piece of legislation with some significant scientific and legal input from wonderful public officials who provided us advice on that committee.

What was the end result? The amended bill went to Parliament at report stage. All the changes that we'd laboured through in that committee—extensive, positive, constructive, scientific and legalistic changes—were undone in an instant because the Liberals were, I'll call it, blackmailed by the NDP, who said, "Undo all the amendments or else we will not vote for your legislation."

The Minister of the Environment, one Steven Guilbeault, acquiesced. He acquiesced as he shouldn't have done, because we have a parliamentary process here. Good input from several parliamentarians and the good work of several public officials was completely wasted. Nobody can tell me with a straight face and not sound like a hypocrite that we spend too much time doing the work we're supposed to do at committee. It hasn't been what I've seen done at this committee for the last 12 months.

I also heard one of my colleagues talk about Mr. Dalton's comments when he was a previously elected provincial legislator and the provincial carbon tax in British Columbia. The numbers are off, but I will say that we looked at what the actual reductions at the time were in British Columbia that coincided with the introduction of the carbon tax that was imposed in British Columbia. They almost exactly coincided with the reduction of economic activity.

I'll put that on Mr. El-Khoury's desk, if he can take a look at that, to educate himself. If you're going to have less economic activity, of course you're going to have fewer carbon emissions. If his suggestion is that in Canada we just stop economic activity in order to reduce our carbon footprint, well, we're going to have a lot more people on the street and a lot more people doing nothing. Sooner or later we'll have a lot less public officials and a lot less parliamentarians, because there's nothing to sustain the economy if the economy isn't working.

Mr. El-Khoury, please take a look at that, because it isn't necessarily as direct as what you're saying. In any event, you have now the NDP Premier of British Columbia admitting that it doesn't work and saying that, if the federal backstop legislation weren't there, he would walk away from it.

I don't know what exactly you need to hear from the people it's impacting the most. Canadian citizens have said very clearly, British Columbians have said very clearly and everybody who actually looks at the carbon tax and its ineffectiveness at reducing emissions have said that it is a cost without a benefit.

I'll go into it further later with regard to an education on what a carbon tax is supposed to do and what it doesn't do. The science is clear and the economics are also clear. We can go into that in great detail and I'll debate anybody in the House of Commons on those matters.

• (238815)

What this is really about and why we want to get towards making sure we get a carbon tax election...because we do want a carbon tax election. The reason this has gained some significant tailwinds from all Canadians, Canadians across this country, is that they know now they've been misled by this Parliament. It's a Parliament run by the leadership of the party that's facing me right now, the Liberals, with the acquiescence of the NDP and sometimes of the Bloc Québécois.

We have to make sure that we put it on trial here, and that trial will be when the Canadian people decide that they get to pass judgment on the government that has misled them beyond measure for several years now on what they're trying to accomplish. The question is, of course, if you keep jacking up this tax and keep increasing inflation, why aren't the emissions going down in the world? Why is carbon still going up? Why is carbon increasingly going up from people we should be helping reduce carbon? It's because—I'm going to say this very clearly, Mr. Chair—this government doesn't know what it's doing. It thinks that taking money out of people's pockets is the way to accomplish something, but really what it's accomplishing is taking money out of people's pockets and giving it to their friends. It's a wealth transfer and nothing but.

Like I say, Canadians now are wise to it, and I think they got wise very clearly. If I can think of a crystallizing event on it, it was when Gудie Hutchings, the Liberal Minister of Rural Development, was very clear about why eastern Canadians got a break on their carbon tax for home heating oil, which has a much higher carbon footprint than natural gas. They got a break on that because it was affecting them, and there was the question of how come eastern Canadians get that break but western Canadians and other Canadians don't. She said that maybe western Canadians should elect more Liberals and then they'd do something about it. That is the height of cynicism, and frankly, I think most Canadians thought it was grounds for her to be fired as a cabinet minister.

That partisan approach to how we take taxes from certain people in certain parts of Canada and give carbon breaks to people in other parts of Canada is not the way a country holds itself together. This government has been excessively good at divide and conquer. "Where are our votes, and how do we transfer wealth from people who might not vote for us to people whose pockets we can put money into to vote for us?" is not a strategy that holds together at the end of the day.

As Margaret Thatcher once said, sooner or later when the economy goes downhill you run out of other people's money to take away and give to your friends. That is not the way to run this country. It hasn't been the way it's been run in a proper government, and it shouldn't be run that way now.

● (238820)

Let's talk about a consumer carbon tax, because that's what we're talking about here. There are a few carbon taxes that have been put on our plates by this government. There's not just the carbon tax that's there for people to see. There is, in effect, the clean fuel regulations, which are an additional carbon tax that's on top of the other tax. It's almost double at the end of the day, because in the end, the consumer pays for everything. It's another tax that's built into the energy that goes into producing everything in our economy.

Then there is the regulatory overburden that happens. They're trying to push forward with a clean electricity standard. If you take a look at the \$40 billion-plus that has been reported for batteries in Canada, the Government of Quebec put out its number and talked about the cost per tonne of CO<sub>2</sub> reduced by batteries. It's over \$800 per tonne, which is 10 times higher than the consumer carbon tax. This is subsidization and regulation. Taxpayers' money is being poured out of governments.

Minister of Industry François-Philippe Champagne's moniker in many parts of Canada now is the "minister of writing cheques." The whole notion, of course, is that if there are going to be cheques written, you may as well have your hand out. It is now just a hand-out. We have a \$50-billion deficit across this country with no end in sight for this government's spendy ways. It's something that has to turn itself around in a hurry. Batteries, of course, are the worst example of how exactly we're feeling this right now in Canada.

Most people don't know this, but I'll tell my colleagues. I know that the only Albertans on this committee are in this party. I look at the Liberals, the NDP and the Bloc, and most of them won't realize that the first jurisdiction in Canada to have a carbon tax was Alberta. Alberta has the industrial carbon tax, and it has been there for 20 years now. It is a very good tax, and it has evolved. I was a critic of the tax in its early stages because it was rewarding activity that was not reducing emissions. Reducing emissions is what we have to do. All these systems evolve.

The 20-year evolution of the industrial carbon tax in Alberta was something during which there was a lot of trial and learning about the robustness of a system that's the envy of the rest of Canada and that this Government of Canada would like to emulate, if it could, although it doesn't like to emulate things from Alberta. It would like to emulate it as far as its own output-based pricing system and industrial carbon tax, if you will, yet it doesn't know how to do that because it doesn't have any expertise, whereas the provincial government in Alberta actually does have expertise in this matter.

When you have siloed expertise in Canada, take the lessons from the people who know what they're doing. That's step one. Find out who knows what they're doing in this process and follow their lead. Follow the Government of Alberta as far as what they're doing on carbon reduction efforts.

I want to bring to my colleagues' attention here that those efforts have led to the reduction in carbon per barrel produced in Alberta by about 34% over 20 years. Think about that. We produce energy, and the energy we produce at the production end has gone down by about a third thanks to the government's efforts in Alberta. Is there any other industry in Alberta that has reduced its carbon footprint the way the oil and gas industry has? Absolutely not.

What about the way the Government of Alberta has? Absolutely not. Where this country has actually seen greenhouse gas emissions reductions is in the province of Alberta and in our additions to the Canadian economy and our efforts to make sure that our production is the cleanest in the world by the measurement standards we have.

Please take a good look at that before you continue to just repeat your government's nonsense lines and understand where we're actually making headway on reducing emissions in Canada's economy.

● (238825)

In a carbon tax, as many people will chirp on social media or other media.... The purity of a carbon tax was introduced by a guy named William Nordhaus, who was both an economist and a climate scientist. I'll bring this to the committee's attention too, and for anybody watching: He brought the whole notion of what the cost of a carbon tax should be and could be. He initially came out with a number of about \$26, and he revised that later to about \$38 U.S. The issue is that, if you have one tax, one mechanism in society that would address the effects of carbon.... We're not abusing a public good, because the air is a public good, the atmosphere. The climate is a public good and it's not to be changed for free, so it is a way of actually addressing it.

Mr. Nordhaus's approach to it was, "What is the one thing you can do?" If you had a pure carbon tax, it would be the number he came up with, \$28 to \$38 U.S. per ton. Eighty dollars of course, is much higher than that. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency at the time thought it was around \$50, so there's not one thought on this. However, that is in the absence of all of the other ridiculous measures that this government has brought into play on the file, which include another industrial carbon tax, the clean energy regulations, the clean fuel standards, the regulations that cost—as with the batteries—\$800 dollars per tonne of emissions reductions. These are ridiculous measures on top of any purity associated with the concept of a carbon tax, which is not represented in the consumer carbon tax that this government put into play here, which is a complete in-and-out scheme for Canadian taxpayers' money.

It was tabled in Parliament this week that, based on an access to information request by one of my colleagues, this consumer carbon tax, which is an instrument of this Liberal-NDP coalition, will cost Canadians \$9 billion by 2030. That's \$9 billion in extra taxes and they're hiding it behind where you're going to have to make tax increases.

Be honest with Canadians. That's all we're asking for here. They found you misleading them about the carbon tax. They continue to try to hold you to account, and you won't give them an election on the matter. I can guarantee you that every meeting I had this summer was, "Can you please get these people to call an election? It's done. It's over." Any support this government may have had has been washed away with its dishonesty. People recognize it now very clearly.

You're no longer obfuscating in the cloudy middle or grey area of whether you're telling the truth or not—you're not. You misled Canadians. They recognize it. Now get on with it and face the music, because the music has to be faced here. There is no other outcome. We are going to have an election. People are going to remember exactly what you said on this matter, how you misled them and how much this is going to cost them.

The end outcome here, of course, is that we're here. We're democratically elected. I had a podcast yesterday, and we talked about the whittling away of democracy that's happened here. I'm going to challenge my colleagues, particularly on the government side of the bench, the Liberal-NDP coalition. If you're going to support a carbon tax and say that you're going to continue to not face the public on what it has to say about a carbon tax, then you need to recognize that you have to get better informed about it, because democracy requires people in your positions to actually understand what you are doing.

We're becoming more and more a government of siloed expertise. Anybody who tells me that somebody's an expert in lost Canadians.... Okay, they're an expert in lost Canadians, but connect the dots. Lost Canadians don't exist in silos. For lost Canadians, we have to make sure that we're doing some significant good here at the end of the day.

• (238830)

For anybody who thinks they're experts, bring that expertise to a mix of everything we need to accomplish here in society and ensure we get the right things done for this country, because I can tell you right now, there's a country here that's being wasted, a country whose productivity has gone down significantly. Our country underperforms the world now as far as our economic growth goes.

If it wasn't for the excess immigration that's happened over the last two years, our GDP—gross domestic product—would be negative. What does that tell you? The economy is shrinking except for the new people coming into the economy whom we have to make sure we continue to produce for. That's not a recipe for success. Our productivity has to get better in this country. We have to start producing more per capita.

None of this government's policies have led to any of those outcomes, and it's a shame. It's an absolute shame because I would love to see more people on the government side of the bench who actually understand the economics of what they're trying to do and how it affects everybody in the country, because it is a whittling down of what they can buy with their after-tax dollars.

Let's take a look at those after-tax dollars. With the increases in taxes brought on by this government, people have less take-home pay. Less take-home pay, in addition, buys less because of the in-

flated dollars that this government has run through as a result of their money-printing operations. Inflation has caused everything to go up in society and created less ability to buy everything Canadians need: food, shelter, clothing, goods. We get less out of the dollars we spend when our take-home paycheques are whittled away by government taxes, and then the take-home pay gets stretched because it doesn't buy as much as it used to buy.

Canada is a democracy still, despite the whittling away that happens, including in the bills that these members across the way bring to the House of Commons. Be accountable on your carbon tax. Show up. Go talk to your.... It's the number one judgment you're going to get. If you're so solid about this being a good thing to move forward with, then let's have a carbon tax election. If you don't think you've misled Canadians, then show up at their doors and tell them you only misled them for their own good. They won't believe you.

I've had many conversations on the sidelines with my Liberal colleagues, with my NDP colleagues, with my Bloc colleagues, and I want to tell them, if you don't think the by-elections in two safe Liberal ridings in June and September were a very clear indication that the Liberals don't have the support of the people anymore, then you're tone-deaf. You're not paying attention. Your eye is off the ball.

Admit to Canadians that you want to continue to dither and whittle away at their savings, whittle away at the country's productivity, whittle away at the democracy that we've fought hard for and won here in Canada, whittle away at everything Canadians stand for in order to continue this facade of what you're actually trying to do. What you're doing is ruining Canadians' lives, ruining the economy, ruining the take-home pay, making everything worse in this country.

Now I'm asking you to think about it and get to the point where we actually get better outcomes, a better Canada, for all our citizens.

I think the last thing I want to say, Mr. Chair, if I may, is...and I'd like my colleagues, particularly my colleagues in the Liberal Party of Canada, because I know most of you are backbenchers and some of you are people I've worked with well in other committees....

Ms. O'Connell, it's the first time I've been on committee with you, so welcome, but please, go to your leadership. Do a quick examination yourselves. You are people who are elected by your constituents. Do you think your constituents are going to be pleased when they look at how much money has been taken out of their pockets, through various means, including this carbon tax, and given to a bunch of your boss's friends, because that is overwhelmingly obnoxious.

The amount of money...and pardon me, I had a finance career before I came here. One thing we do in finance is that we follow the money. The money that's been taken—I'd like to say stolen, but it's not stolen—from the pockets of Canadians, despite the fact that they've been misled about it, has landed in the pockets of several friends of your leadership.



• (238835)

Take a look at all the organizations that are getting greased on the wheels of this dishonesty. Do your constituents a favour and say that you don't stand up for that. That would be a challenge I would put to you. That would be a challenge I would put to my NDP colleague who protested that the NDP only supported that bill 15 years ago because "we were told to".

Okay. Thanks very much.

Step up. Hold your head up. Go to your constituents and say, "This is what I found out. This is why I'm actually calling for an election as well."

Mr. Chair, thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. McLean.

We have three speakers on the list. We have Mr. Redekopp, Mr. Kmiec and Mr. El-Khoury.

Mr. Redekopp, please go ahead.

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It's great to be here talking about the issue of the carbon tax again, but I want to start with the comments from Ms. Zahid. I agree with her that there are a lot of trolls on social media. There are a lot of nasty comments. There are horrible un-Canadian things that are said by many people online on social media these days. It's sad that it's come to that in our country.

As my colleague Tom Kmiec said, Conservatives are not immune to this either. I don't want to get into an argument of who gets it worse, but I think all of us as politicians have experienced this. It's something that unfortunately we can't control or that we haven't yet figured out how to control. From my perspective, I've always been very fair with what I've said. I will continue to be that way and communicate that way.

Ms. Kwan spoke about the way in which this bill has gone through. I just wanted to remind everybody—sometimes so much time passes that we forget the original orientation of things—that this whole lost Canadians cause started with a Conservative bill from the Senate, Bill S-245. If we recall back, the whole point was to make it very simple. It's been tried to be fixed many times over the years. It has always failed. It has always gotten mired down in complications, which is exactly where we find ourselves today.

I just want to remind everybody that the whole intent was to make a very simple bill to fix a very specific problem of lost Canadians. The Senate actually pushed all the readings through in one day to get it here. The intention was to bring it to the committee. Everybody had previously agreed to this, so get it in and get it into law. It could have been in law for at least a year, at this point, yet because the government chose to hijack that bill and add a whole bunch of other complexity to it, that caused this problem that we find here today.

I just want to remind people that it was always our intention as Conservatives to fix this mistake, this problem, with lost Canadians, and to fix it quickly. That was our intention. However, because of the government's interference in the bill and trying to complicate things and solve 18 problems at one time, here we are. There's a

very good chance that this won't get solved in this Parliament, which is a shame.

I want to talk a little bit more about the carbon tax. It has been mentioned a few times today, but I have a bit of a different angle on this. Back in the fall, when the NDP-Liberal government chose to remove the carbon tax on home heating for those voters in Atlantic Canada—it's been pointed out this was a political decision that was made to supposedly protect votes in Atlantic Canada, which of course hasn't happened—there was an outcry.

I have a quote I want to read. It comes from Saskatchewan. Let me read it here. It says:

This exemption is a clear recognition that Canadians are struggling with crushing inflation and higher costs but it has specifically left out relief for the people of Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Alberta....

Instead of picking and choosing who gets relief based on Prime Minister Trudeau's election map, we're calling on the federal government to extend relief to all Canadian families.

Who does that sound like? Who do you think said that? I think most people would guess that it sounds like the Premier of Saskatchewan, Scott Moe. In reality, these are the words of the NDP leader in Saskatchewan, if you can believe it. The NDP leader said those words, which are essentially the same as what Premier Scott Moe said. I think most western Canadians have that belief. It's shocking. The NDP have completely reversed their position. The people on the ground have reversed that position.

I have a second quote from the NDP leader, Carla Beck, from a recent Regina Leader-Post article, as follows:

Standing beside one of Regina's business thoroughfares...Saskatchewan NDP Leader Carla Beck denounced federal policies that have failed this province...especially [the] carbon tax.

The carbon tax has got to go. Saskatchewan people can't afford it, Beck said.

Of course, most living here would agree.

I just find it kind of humorous that at a provincial level, everybody, all politicians, are running as fast as they can away from the carbon tax. Even at the federal level now, finally, the NDP are starting to. Because of the extreme pressure and the obvious math of the next election, we're seeing them start to change it.

I also want to point out that when our province of Saskatchewan decided to stop collecting carbon tax on home heating, as was done in Atlantic Canada, for me personally, my bill went down by \$20 a month instantly. That's not an insignificant amount to Saskatchewan people.

• (238840)

That's about \$240 a year for me and I think that's about the typical average that can be expected. That's a significant amount of money. That's just one little piece of it on the carbon tax. That's pretty significant.

I think it's interesting how things have evolved and how important it is for the government to wake up, listen to what people are saying and understand that very large numbers of people in this country—not just in western Canada but right across the country—very much dislike this carbon tax. However, the government continues to be adamant that it not only wants to continue with the carbon tax but continue increasing it every year and quadruple it from where it is.

That's why this amendment to the motion is important. It's to allow Canadians to have their say and have a carbon tax election, so that Canadians can speak up and tell government what they want. Then we can move forward from there.

Mr. Chair, we have spoken about this quite a lot, so I would like to make a motion that we adjourn this meeting.

**The Chair:** There is a motion on the floor to adjourn the meeting. Is there unanimous consent?

There's no unanimous consent, so we'll could go to the vote.

(Motion negatived: nays 6; yeas 5)

**The Chair:** I will go to one o'clock and suspend the meeting unless I have a unanimous consent to suspend the meeting now. Do I have a unanimous consent to suspend the meeting now? No.

Okay, we'll go to one o'clock. I will give the floor to Mr. Kmiec.

Please go ahead, and then Mr. El-Khoury is in line.

At one o'clock, I would love to call a suspension because we have not been successful, unless you want to bring this motion again.

• (238845)

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** Maybe after a few minutes of hearing me again, people will reconsider their choices.

**The Chair:** It's your call.

Mr. Kmiec, I will leave it to the members to make that decision.

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** I respect the members' choices, so that's entirely up to them.

**The Chair:** Mr. Maguire, will I put you on the list?

Thank you.

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** May I continue, Chair?

**The Chair:** Please, go ahead.

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** I guess you were given a chance to not let me speak, and I voted to not let myself speak, which is unusual. It's probably the first time in nine years I voted to not let myself speak at committee. It's like I'm at PROC all over again in my first term.

I wanted to address a few of the things I heard from the other side, because I think it's material to everything that we've been talking about on this subamendment, how we got here and the reason for the particular legislation that the main motion is referring to.

Mr. El-Khoury talked about the drops in the interest rate by the Bank of Canada, and then sort of implied—well, not implied, almost said it—that it's going to keep going down. Is the Liberal government going to force the Bank of Canada governor to lower inter-

est rates? That would be most unusual because I thought those interest rate decisions were entirely independent of government. If monetary policy is no longer independent, I think you should put it on the record that it's no longer independent.

On the \$10 day care programs, I remember the Conservative side voted for Bill C-35, which these agreements are attached to. It's a disaster in my home province, where there are many day cares, especially private day cares, that are going out of business. Especially in my riding, there are a few of my communities where I have a lot of home care that provide day homes. That's how I grew up in Brossard, on the south shore of Montreal. I grew up in these day homes, basically. They're critical. They're being put out of business by the Liberal government agreement that was forced on my province. You will see a lot of criticism from our Alberta minister at the time, before she was promoted to the environment ministry, on this particular issue.

About the school food program that Mr. El-Khoury loves to promote, it has fed exactly zero children. I'm pretty sure there's letterhead. There's probably some nice writing out there with a beautiful font going around—no children fed, zero. There are a lot of private, not-for-profit organizations that have fed more children than the Liberal government.

I'll give you an example. Brown Bagging for Calgary's Kids has probably fed more children in one week than the entire Government of Canada has in the past nine years. If anything, the government that you keep supporting on the other side has probably taken food out of more children's mouths by making it so expensive than it's actually fed.

This food program is just a total sham. It's a total sham. You should not promote it. There are other things you could talk about that maybe you could convince the public on. Judging from the polls the public doesn't trust you. They don't trust the cabinet and really doesn't trust the Prime Minister. I have not even met Liberals at the doors who would be willing to say "I trust the Prime Minister of Canada." I've found Liberals at the doors saying, "I want to continue voting Liberal." It's not, "I'm going to." They say, "I want to continue. I want to find a reason to vote Liberal."

I think they're ready for that carbon tax election that my subamendment is calling for. I think they recognize that this has to be done. There are a few more things that were mentioned about C-37, the originating piece of legislation that introduced the first-generation limit, which the superior court judge found was charter non-compliant. Again, if you read the actual judicial decision in the paragraph 60 range, specifically, the charter non-compliance is connected to the incompetence of the former IRCC minister.

The Minister of Immigration's department is incompetent. He's incompetent. He can't seem to get a handle on his file. Some people are just not meant for this. They're on their fifth or sixth immigration minister. Maybe it's time for a seventh. I'm not sure how many it will take to fix this.

Bill C-37 was unanimously voted on not once, where perhaps the argument made by the NDP would make sense, but twice. It wasn't that it was just unanimously agreed to; it was unanimous without dissent.

Because I have been the deputy House leader on the Conservative side, I'm going to reveal maybe some inside baseball things for the public. Typically in this place, House leaders talk to each other. The deputies talk to each other. We all know the positions of our caucuses. I'm not sure how the other caucuses work, but in our caucus, we run our House leadership. We tell them what to do. We have votes, and they are directed on certain matters on what to do. That's the way it works.

On Bill C-37 at the time, my understanding then would have been that if everybody unanimously supported it, you unanimously supported everything within Bill C-37, including the first-generation limit. Bill C-37 also restored citizenship to a lot of Canadians. It was fixing some of the errors in the 1977 Citizenship Act, and I think that is really important to mention.

● (238850)

To make the claim that a third party who wasn't a member of Parliament, who wrote a book and who made a claim that was not backed because that person had not talked to Stephen Harper, as far as I know, or parliamentarians, the House leadership or staffers of the time.... To make that claim...it's just that. It's hearsay: Somebody said something. I would not take that to the bank. It's also, I think, a false interpretation of what was said in Hansard. I don't have that particular page with me. It's upstairs in my desk.

I look forward to debate continuing on Bill C-71 in the chamber, and I'm going to be there every single time it comes up. I'm going to participate. I'm going to keep asking the same question I asked the minister on the first day. How many people would be affected by Bill C-71? I know how many people would be affected by my subamendment right now. It would be 40 million-plus Canadians, who are going to go to the polls and pass judgment on all of us, including the Conservatives. They're going to pass judgment on our performance, and I'm looking forward to it. I have zero fear for my constituents and the residents in my riding. I am more than willing to submit myself to their wisdom, and if they choose to vote me out, they can do so.

I'm pretty sure I'm going to be able to earn their support. I'm pretty sure. I've got a gut feeling. They're pretty satisfied with my work, based on my door knocking in my riding and other parts of the country. I have a good feeling about it this time. Even the vice-chair says he'd vote for me. I want to make sure of that as we continue to talk about this subamendment I've put forward.

I also want to talk about the delays in Bill C-71 and this sudden rush that I see from at least one opposition party and the government side now because there is a court-imposed deadline. There was a court-imposed deadline in June, and the government never

bothered to put up Bill C-71 for debate. It did not even bother. It was on notice as of May 23, so at any time afterwards it could have been put up for debate. There was almost 20 days' worth of debate during which they could have put up the bill.

Why didn't they tell their House leadership to do it? This I don't understand. There was a court-imposed deadline then as well, and their side chose not to do it, so it is interesting that, after the summer, they come back and now they claim this must be rushed because there's a court-imposed deadline for December.

I'll also remind us that the court's decision in Bjorkquist from the judge was made in December 2023. Why did it take 156 calendar days for them to table a piece of legislation called Bill C-71? It's not even that long. It's an open question; anyone can answer it. Go back to the minister. That's 156 days for legislation when there were multiple breaks in between, and then not a single day was it debated. However, today we're being told that this committee must approve an aggressive, partisan, anti-Conservative motion with a whole bunch of hearsay in the preamble to rush the bill through the House.

Then their own members complained, along with one opposition party, that we Conservatives, and others too, because they all participated in it, spent 30 hours debating different amendments and hearing from government officials, and that was invaluable. They want us to take it to committee, but then they will complain that we have to rush it through committee because we Conservatives will take too much time.

They should go back to their comms people. That's a bad talking point. Their policy people should be writing their talking points. As a former policy guy, I fervently believe this. Let the policy people write the points, not the comms people—with all the blessings to them, because I know we have them on all sides. They exist everywhere I'm sorry to say. Policy people should be the ones writing these points. It just makes no sense.

I now understand the Citizenship Act better, I think, than any other piece of legislation before the House. I'm comfortable now when I read Bill C-71 after what happened with Bill S-245, and we moved many amendments. We all know this. More than 10 of them were Liberal amendments the Conservative side voted for. We proposed over 40 amendments, some of them very substantial. That was not a filibuster. It wasn't a waste of time. It was productive. We were doing actual work.

I also made promises during that meeting so they were on the public record, and I intend to keep those promises. If they play games, then we will be here debating subamendments, amendments and main motions like this from here until the end of this session, because the public is tired of the government side especially. They're in government. They're supposed to govern. If they want to persuade us, then persuade us. Persuade my House leadership and persuade Conservative members of Parliament that they are right. So far, I haven't seen that. What I've seen instead are attempts to circumvent the process.

● (238855)

When Bill S-245 was before you, I said we could expedite that piece of legislation if we stuck to section 8, lost Canadians, which we all agree with. It's even in this legislation. We could still agree with it. It was a Conservative idea from Yonah Martin. I will also add the fact that during the minister's speech, when he was speaking in French, he referred to this.

[*Translation*]

He said “sénateur Martin” instead of “sénatrice Martin”. Not even knowing that the sponsor of Bill S-245 in the Senate is a woman, a Conservative senator from British Columbia, is truly ridiculous. His staff did not even check to see who Yonah Martin is, why she tabled Bill S-245—which is identical to Bill S-230—and why it passed so quickly in the Senate the last time.

[*English*]

I'd like to see an attempt, a serious attempt. If you want to work together, we can, I'm more than happy to, but I have members on my side who have serious concerns about Bill C-71. They also have concerns, like in my riding, that we will not have the carbon tax election my subamendment is calling for.

I find it interesting too that I heard particular members saying that Conservatives are doing this at all committees. I literally wrote that subamendment on my notepad in what I affectionately call my chicken scratch. I can sort of read it, and then I wrote out the French version right afterwards. There are no games here. I don't go to my House leadership to ask for permission. They know that. They're as frustrated with me as you are.

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** If you want to work on this collaboratively, then I invite you to move on from the political games. If you have more of these types of aggressive, partisan motions, then we're going to have more of these types of days where we're debating what I hear at the doors in my riding. When I go to the door, the people are fed up with the government and would like to see an election. They want to have their say, and their say is a carbon tax election. That's what they're saying to me. I'd say that it's the primary issue. Probably now for over 50% of the people I connect with at the door, this is a driving issue connected to the cost of living. They want to see this.

We'll have a non-confidence vote next week on Wednesday, hopefully one of many to come and be repeated. Ours will be simple. It's 12 words. I think we all agree on 12 words as we go forward on it. The carbon tax election will come. If this committee

were to accept my subamendment, that might actually expedite it even faster.

It would be great to see it happen even more quickly if we need to use the committee process to move non-confidence in the government in order to submit ourselves as public servants to the people's judgment. They have a right to judge the quality of our work. You don't get votes; you earn votes and you earn them repeatedly. It is difficult, because it's your work. It's your political party's work. It's your political movements. There are provincial parties as well. You have political leadership as well that you have to defend when you want to. You don't have to defend them. I mean that, especially on the other side. You don't have to defend your political leadership. At a certain point, self-preservation should kick in, and you should be listening to the people in your ridings.

With Bjorkquist specifically, this court ruling that is the linchpin of why now we have Bill C-71, and this claim that we need to rush, the government can always return to the court and ask for another delay, if it comes to that. I don't think it will come to that. The government side has a working majority, effectively.

● (238900)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** I raise a point of order, Mr. Chair.

I respect my colleague and I certainly do not want to interrupt, but I think we said we would suspend the meeting at 1 p.m. It is now 1 p.m. We can keep going, but I think that is what we said.

[*English*]

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** I'm looking to you, Chair, for what to do.

**The Chair:** I will tell you what the speaking list is, and then I will make a decision.

With regard to the speaking list right now, Mr. Kmiec still has the floor. If we suspend, he will have the floor next time. We then have Mr. El-Khoury, Mr. McLean, Mr. Maguire and Mr. Redekopp.

Taking into consideration that there are quite a few speakers, I think it's in the best interest of all members and the support staff that we suspend now. I will suspend the meeting.

● (238905)

[*The meeting was suspended at 1:00 p.m., Thursday, September 19*]

[*The meeting resumed at 3:41 p.m., Monday, September 23*]

● (248740)

**The Chair:** I call this meeting to order.

We are meeting in public.

Welcome to the continuation of meeting number 106 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration.

I would like to remind participants of the following points. Please wait until I recognize you by name before speaking. All comments should be addressed through the chair.

Members, please raise your hand if you wish to speak, whether participating in person or by Zoom. The clerk and I will manage the speaking order as best we can. Thank you all for your co-operation.

I would like to welcome a few guest members here today who are replacing the regular members. First, I would love to welcome Mr. Arnold to the immigration committee. On the Liberal side, we have Mr. Ken McDonald. And, of course, we have Anju Dhillon online.

Anju, welcome.

With this, we are discussing the subamendment of Mr. Kmiec to the amendment of Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe on the motion of Mr. Chi-ang. At the time of suspension on Thursday, September 19, Mr. Kmiec had the floor.

The following were on the list to debate the subamendment after Mr. Kmiec: MP El-Khoury, MP McLean, MP Maguire and MP Redekopp. Instead of MP McLean, Mr. Arnold, you will take that spot if you wish.

Mr. Kmiec, the floor is yours.

Thank you.

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** On a point of order, Mr. Chair, I was just wanting to ask a question about ministerial appearances.

We have, by my math, about six ministers' appearances that are on the schedule, so I was curious as to whether you've had any communications with the minister's office in terms of when he might be planning to come back to the committee.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** Mr. Chair, I raise a point of order.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** Can we raise a point of order to ask the chair a question, since filibustering is going on at the same time?

It seems to me that if we want to talk about a specific subject, a point of order is not valid. I may be mistaken, but I would like some clarification from the chair or the clerk.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** I'm going to pass it on to....

We do not have any information from the minister.

We'll continue with the debate.

Mr. Kmiec, carry on, please.

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** Thank you, Chair.

I left off with a promise that I was going to continue, so that I could read into the public record a letter I've received from the Public School Boards' Association of Alberta, from President Dennis MacNeil.

I'm going to read the letter into the record. I'd be more than happy also to table the letter if there's consent from the committee.

This one is addressed to Steven Guilbeault, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, and reads as follows:

On behalf of the Public School Boards' Association of Alberta, I would like to draw your attention to a pressing issue for your consideration.

As you are aware, public school divisions are funded entirely by tax dollars. School boards strive to manage these funds responsibly and effectively.

However, the introduction and subsequent increases of the Carbon Tax have significantly raised operational costs for Alberta public school boards. While we acknowledge our shared responsibility to reduce emissions and lower our carbon footprints, this tax has placed a substantial strain on the budgets, removing necessary dollars out of the classrooms and is essentially an unnecessary tax on tax. There are tens of millions of dollars each year that can not be used for the education of our students, in Alberta alone, never mind the hundreds of millions each year across Canada.

We request consideration for an exemption to organizations that operate on tax dollars, or at the very least, a carbon tax rebate similar to what is provided for private residences and small businesses. This would enhance our ability to invest in environmentally sustainable infrastructure and initiatives.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to your response.

It's signed, "Sincerely, Dennis MacNeil, President".

He has copied all Alberta members of Parliament; the Minister of Education; the chief of staff to the Minister of Education; the Minister of Environment and Protected Areas, Rebecca Schulz; the Public School Boards' Association of Alberta members; and Troy Tait, the executive director and CEO of the Public School Boards' Association of Alberta.

Literally in the letter—to the point that Mr. El-Khoury made about this non-existent federal school food program that has fed exactly zero kids—here we have an example from the Public School Boards' Association of Alberta, telling the Government of Canada, telling the Liberals, telling the environment minister, that he is costing them millions of dollars in operating funds that could be used to educate children, that could go to school food programs, and that are instead going to pay the carbon tax. It's literally on paper.

This is August 8, 2024. It's not an old letter. It's a very recent letter, sent over the summer as the school boards were required to do their budgets. When even the school boards are saying you're wrong and that you should have a carbon tax election, then you should just listen to the school boards. You should actually do what they're telling you to do.

The fact is that there are Liberal MPs on this distribution list who have received this, and there's been no action whatsoever that I have seen offering them any type of relief. This means that there are schools in Alberta—those that do have school food programs—that may be shutting them down. They can't afford them because of the high cost of the carbon tax.

It's not just my province. I'm sure there are other provinces where with the high cost of the carbon tax—which keeps going up \$15 a carbon tonne every single April 1—they're going to be shutting down programs, removing after-school activities, and shutting down school food programs and school food lunches because of your carbon tax.

When I say that people are fed up with it and they want a carbon tax election—which is why the subamendment is so timely to a hyperpartisan motion—that's why. When I get letters like this from school boards, which I would say are not the typical groups that would reach out to Conservative members of Parliament, or any parliamentarians usually, because education is a provincial area of jurisdiction.... Right there in the middle of the letter it says “There are tens of millions of dollars each year” that can't be used for the education of our students. It's tens of millions of dollars.

I'll note, Mr. McDonald, that you were one of those brave Liberal MPs who one time voted against the carbon tax in the chamber. People back home really liked that, too.

I want to give you that chance. I know you're not intending to stay with us for another round, and maybe you'll be another MHA provincially in Newfoundland and Labrador, but hopefully you'll remember, too, that the carbon tax hurts our people back home for no gain whatsoever.

The school boards in my province have made it perfectly clear where they stand on a carbon tax election. It is taking money directly out of schools for no benefit whatsoever. They recognize that they have a shared responsibility to reduce their carbon emission, and schools are doing it.

● (248745)

The public school boards all across my province are now officially asking for relief. I note that President Dennis MacNeil rightly calls it exactly what it is: It's a tax on tax. He doesn't call it an environmental plan. He doesn't say that there's some type of benefit to the environment or that it will directly address climate change; he says in his letter it's a tax on tax. That's effectively what it is.

It's a tax on school boards and all the schools that have property and buildings that they operate year-round. They have heating and electricity costs. Some of them have shops—many in my riding provide shop classes. There are extra costs being imposed on them because of the carbon tax that your government insists on imposing on everyone, punishing them, which is why there are now so many people calling for a carbon tax election.

I had the opportunity while we were away, back in our ridings, to meet with our constituents, like I did on the weekend. I got to do the Calgary food drive, which is organized by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. About half a million pounds of food was collected in just one day. They shared with me the true, intense cost of the carbon tax on food and how many families they're sharing.... The president of the Stake drive informed me there are close to 200 families now that rely on the church to help them, just in making ends meet, because food has become so expensive because of the carbon tax.

The fact that inflation came back to something stable doesn't undo all the inflation and food costs that were imposed over the last three to four years: That's an accumulation. People haven't seen an increase of 20% in their salaries. Their wages haven't gone up 20%, but the cost of food, in many cases, has gone up that high. I wanted to make that point.

While I was back home in my riding in Calgary I heard, directly at the doors as I picked up food out of vehicles and put it in bins for the Calgary food drive, that people are really hurting out there. A carbon tax election is not an inconvenience for Canadians in my riding: The residents want to make it happen. That's why the subamendment is so critically important.

I quoted a few provincial politicians...about the need for a carbon tax election. I went through the effort of going through some more articles. I can offer up some more quotes that agree with the subamendment that we do nothing until that carbon tax election is called, particularly on this subject.

As I mentioned before, I quoted Sarah Hoffman, who announced her bid for the leadership of the NDP—that's now resolved—back on February 11, 2024. This was way before today, and even back then she said that a carbon levy was dead. When talking about the federal carbon tax, she was quoted as saying it was “dead”—and that was in quotation marks right in the headline. Here is one of those direct quotes:

I think the consumer carbon tax is dead. It died provincially in the last election. The feds took it over. Justin Trudeau played dirty politics with it and picked winners and losers. If you don't have public support, you can't carry on with something like that.

She went on, and then it quotes a few other provincial members of the New Democratic Party. As I mentioned before, Rakhi Pancholi, a two-term legislature member, also said that the carbon tax was among the most pressing issues for Albertans. At the time, she was still running for leadership as well before she dropped out.

I quote this one because it's from a former provincial cabinet minister for the New Democratic Party:

Ganley, a Calgary legislature member and the first to put her name in the leadership race on Monday, wouldn't address carbon pricing directly when asked about it.

“We'll have a lot of policies to release and a lot of things to say. What I think is I am in favour of policies that result in decarbonization,” she said.

“My preference is to do that in a way that creates the most possible economic growth for the province. There's a lot of ways to achieve that goal.”

If you read between the lines, she's basically saying the federal carbon tax makes no sense. Even during the NDP's provincial leadership campaign, they talked about it as if it were an electoral issue that required an election, which is why I have this subamendment at the committee that puts a condition on when we will consider the main motion. I have thoughts on the main motion, Chair, but I'll save that until the moment that we get to it.

● (248750)

I also wanted to let you know, Chair, that I will be putting a notice of motion verbally. It's about the Immigration and Refugee Board. I have it written down—I don't want to worry the clerk—so I'll give it to him afterwards and he can take a look at it.

I want to continue with the NDP references that I want to make. Don Braid is a very well-known journalist in Edmonton. He is very well respected. He has written for the Herald and the Edmonton Journal. This is his headline: "Braid: An NDP leadership candidate's startling opener—axe the carbon tax".

That is not my leader speaking. That is the headline about an NDP member of the Legislative Assembly, a two-termer, starting with "axe the carbon tax", which implies that in an election they would run on axing the carbon tax as well. That was her opener, and this is the way it reads, right at the beginning:

Rakhi Pancholi doesn't enter the NDP leadership race with a routine splash. Her opener is more like a cannonball from the high tower.

The Edmonton MLA says it's time to dump the consumer carbon tax.

You are not hallucinating, she said what no NDP caucus member has said publicly before.

I agree. I remember when she made these comments. It was the talk of the town. We were all thinking that perhaps the New Democrats provincially had seen the light. There was definitely something going on. While door knocking, while talking to the residents, they realized that residents were very upset with all levels of government for imposing high costs that were impossible to meet. When the price of food is going up by double-digit percentage points and you're seeing milk at eight or nine dollars, and when meat and fruit and vegetables are expensive, you're really seeing the effects of the carbon tax directly.

In the article, Don Braid offers the following quote from her:

I've been having many conversations with leading climate activists in our province, experts in this area, and we need to continue those conversations to say, what would that climate plan look like without a consumer carbon price.

Again, she's saying that we need to move beyond the carbon tax. It simply makes no sense, and it isn't worth continuing.

I have another one here from Mr. McDonald's province now, because I wanted to quote all parties in this debate:

Stung by byelection loss, Furey has strong words for Trudeau and carbon tax

Premier says Trudeau has tried to "bait me" with name-calling

That seems awfully familiar. In fact, as I remember it, during question period today about name-calling, our Bloc colleague was reminding the Minister of Immigration that he name-calls and baits people into having a back-and-forth that's not about policy but is about personalities.

I'll go back to the clip, in which the premier says the Prime Minister had tried to bait him with name-calling over his carbon tax views. It goes on to explain that despite the by-election loss they experienced in their province, the carbon tax is the primary issue. It quotes the premier:

"On the carbon tax in particular, the prime minister has tried to bait me at times with certain ad hominem and name-calling, almost. But look, we have a very different opinion on the carbon tax. It's not right for the people of the province right now," he said.

"I wish the prime minister would understand that. He's being very sclerotic in his approach on this ideologic marriage that he has to this principle. That's not to say that we don't believe in fighting climate change. We certainly do, but this policy is wrong."

Hence the need for my subamendment—to wait until we can have a carbon tax election so that the public can decide whether this government deserves to stay or whether there's a new group of people who will earn the right to govern and do right by the public.

I think Premier Furey might be the last Liberal premier in this country. I'm not quite sure.

**Mr. Ken McDonald:** Yes.

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** You're saying that, yes, he is, Mr. MacDonald.

Leave it to the islanders on the rock to have the last Liberal government. Maybe that will change in the next provincial election for the MHAs and there will be a new one. It's the last Liberal provincial government left standing. That's unusual. I don't think there's even a Liberal Party of Alberta left anymore in my home province. I wanted to draw attention to that.

I did say that I had a notice of motion to give. I wanted to do it verbally, because I wanted to make sure that—

● (248755)

**The Chair:** Mr. Kmiec, I think we should focus on this one. That's what my understanding is.

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** Yes. That's why I'm giving a verbal notice of motion. I'm not going to be debating it. I wanted to make sure that the Immigration and Refugee Board and their chair were aware that she has violated the law. I'll just give my notice of motion and then continue debate on my subamendment.

This is my motion:

That the committee, pursuant to Standing Order 108(1)(a), order the production of all documents and records to all members of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, related to access to information and privacy, or ATIP, requests A-2022-02100, A-2022-02101, A-2022-02102, A-2022-02103 and A-2022-02104—

● (248800)

[Translation]

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** I raise a point of order, Mr. Chair.

To facilitate our interpreters' work, could we provide the document? That would be easier, wouldn't it, unless it is not very long?

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** I am almost done.

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** Could you speak just a little more softly for the interpreter?

Thank you, that's nice.

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** Thank you for the reminder. I will slow down for the interpreters, pardon me.

[English]

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** [Inaudible—Editor]

**The Chair:** I will give the floor to Madam Kayabaga.

Please go ahead.

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** I just called for a point of clarification.

Is he moving a motion or just putting it on notice?

**The Chair:** No, he's not—

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** Is he allowed to do that, Clerk?

**The Chair:** He's just giving a notice of motion. There will be no debate, and he's not moving it.

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** I'll pause so I can continue here.

—submitted to the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, or IRB, concerning the January 2019 policy entitled “Claims that can be accepted without a hearing”, or the “January 2019 Policy”, which have exceeded statutory deadlines since February 2023—

[Translation]

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** I raise a point of order.

I do not hear the interpretation.

[English]

**The Chair:** I'm sorry, Mr. Kmiec. Give us a few seconds.

Okay, please carry on.

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:**

—by over 20 months, including but not limited to:

all records related to the development, approvals process and implementation of the January 2019 Policy, and any amendments made to it, as referenced in ATIP A-2022-02100;

the list of countries and subnational groups eligible for claims under the January 2019 Policy, as well as any amendments to this list, all legal or policy-making authorities behind the publication of the list, and any records showing the process by which these countries and groups were added to or removed from the list, as referenced in ATIP A-2022-02101;

all communications between the IRB and other government departments, agencies, ministerial offices or the Prime Minister's Office, as well as third party stakeholders, regarding the development, finalization and implementation of the January 2019 Policy, as referenced in ATIP A-2022-02102;

any records related to pilot projects undertaken prior to the announcement of the January 2019 Policy that identified specific countries or subnational groups, including records about each pilot project, funding allocations and the roles of officials involved in the projects, as referenced in ATIP A-2022-02103; and

aggregate data regarding claims processed under the January 2019 Policy, including positive versus negative determinations, the number of claims versus the total number of persons, and records pertaining to how claims were grouped outside the regular processing order, as referenced in ATIP A-2022-02104;

and that these documents be produced within 30 days.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** I have also included all the original text of the language, so the references are in the back. I'm happy to give it to the clerk so that he has the information. I thank the interpreters. I regret speaking a bit too fast and technically. That's my notice of motion, Chair.

My next article, which I found on CityNews, was referencing the premier of my province, with the headline “urges feds to scrap 'inhumane' carbon tax hike at House committee”. This is in reference to the committee appearance that my premier made when she was here in Ottawa around the April 1 announcement that the carbon tax, again, was going to go up to \$15 a carbon tonne. This is what she said. These are direct quotes. She said:

This isn't just reckless, it's immoral and inhumane.

The premier continued:

I'm here on behalf of Albertans and Canadians who are struggling with severe financial pressures.

She went on to say:

The solution for the federal government is to increase the carbon tax on something that is life or death for Albertans in the extreme cold of weather.

Then she went on to remind the federal government that policies like these should be applied equally across all of Canada, and that when you create special exemptions for only one part of the country because they happen to use heating oil, as opposed to using clean-burning natural gas like they do back home in Calgary and Edmonton and all the smaller towns, it creates an unequal treatment of Canadians in confederation, and it's unfair. If committee members want to, they can go to the transcript of her appearance, where she raised many points like this during her time here.

The other one I wanted to reference as well was another article. Again, this backs up the need for my subamendment, because it's not just me saying it; it's premiers saying it publicly. It's the public, through their provincial officials, saying that they basically want a carbon tax election. They're all recognizing that it's a primary issue that's driving a lot of the commentary, the emails and the direct messages we get, and that people want to see a carbon tax election sooner than later. I'll remind all of us here that we're probably going to have a vote on that this Wednesday, and I hope that all opposition parties will join and vote yes to having that carbon tax election.



The next article I have here is “B.C. to scrap carbon tax if Ottawa drops its alternate tax”. That’s Premier David Eby. What he means by the alternate tax is the federal backstop that is stopping any province from attempting to remove its consumer carbon tax, through the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act, the GGPP Act. That basically prevents them from not having one. It forces it on every single province.

David Eby is quoted in the article, and these are some of the quotes I have here from the Premier of British Columbia. The article says:

“A lot of British Columbians are struggling with affordability,” Eby said.

“The political consensus we had in B.C. has been badly damaged by the approach of the federal government, so if it decides to remove the legal backstop requiring us to have a consumer carbon tax in B.C., we will end the consumer carbon tax in B.C.,” he said at an event in Vancouver alongside his wife, Cailey Lynch, and Manitoba Premier Wab Kinew.

The Premier of Manitoba is also quoted in this article further down:

[Premier] Kinew said Thursday that he is in alignment with Eby on the issue, having asked Ottawa for an exemption from carbon pricing in the spring.

He believes the tax is not the right way to fight climate change at a time when high inflation and high interest rates are making life unaffordable for many.

“I’m worried that the politicization of this issue is causing us to lose a generation of Canadians, causing us to lose so many people from the blue collar. And we can’t afford that,” he said.

It goes on and on like that. There are concerns by premiers of our great country, who are not of the same political affiliation I am but are saying the same things, which are that the carbon tax is either wrong, immoral or inhumane, or that we need a carbon tax election, or that it has an electoral impact, which is why I have this subamendment before the committee, that no action be taken until there’s that carbon tax election. That’s what we could report back to the House on the matter.

For now, I’m going to stop my commentary there, but I have more material. I have my binder with me all the time, and I’m happy to read more into the record from residents in my riding and my constituents, who have honoured me by sending me here to represent their views. I’m going to continue doing that, but I think that for now that’s enough.

● (248805)

I’ve provided, Chair, the public school board’s very important feedback. I think that what the president, Dennis MacNeil, said is incredibly important for the consideration of the subamendment. It comes from school boards where there are high costs, tens of millions of dollars, being imposed on schools in Alberta and literally taking money away from educating students for a “tax on tax”. Those are his words, not mine.

Thank you, Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Kmiec.

We will go to Mr. El-Khoury and then Mr. Arnold.

**Mr. Fayçal El-Khoury:** Thank you, Chair.

In response to my colleague Mr. Kmiec, first of all, as all the world knows, climate change is a serious problem. All humanity is facing this problem. If we don’t stand bravely, face this problem

and bring an adequate solution to it, it means we are not preparing this country for us, for our children and for the children of our children—for generations to come. We would like to prepare Canada for our children and other generations, so that they have cleaner air and cleaner drinking water, with no floods, no forest fires, no tornadoes and no hurricanes. This is the way, the only way, we can fight climate change. Besides that, we all know that the federal government gives every province in Canada a big amount of money collected from carbon tax to go into the pockets of citizens. That’s number one.

Number two, Mr. Chair, my colleague Mr. Kmiec last time said, when I said that Conservatives voted against the food program for students in schools, that this may jeopardize many businesses, which would be obliged to close because of that. I wouldn’t be surprised, because the policy of Conservatives is to make the rich richer and the poor poorer. That’s exactly what we are hearing and what we are experiencing at the moment over here. I’m surprised that a party can pretend they’re working for the citizens of Canada and vote against this program. For nine out of 10 families, with this program, the parents can go to work without having the trouble of thinking about child care. Plus, how about those parents who cannot pay the fees for a private day care?

For me, there is no explanation. There is no way to understand that behaviour from a political party pretending they are looking out for the interests of Canadians.

I will end here, but I have many comments to make, Mr. Speaker. I believe this is clear from my side.

Thank you.

● (248810)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. El-Khoury.

We have Mr. McLean on the list as the next speaker, but Mr. Arnold is filling in for him.

Mr. Arnold, the floor is yours.

**Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair. It’s an honour to be here with this committee.

It’s interesting to see Mr. McDonald. We’ve sat on the same committee for nine years now. We don’t very often see each other in other committees, so it’s a pleasure to be here with him.

Mr. Chair, I’m here to speak to Mr. Kmiec’s subamendment that this bill not be dealt with until a carbon tax election is held, so that Canadians can vote out this “out of time” NDP-Liberal coalition government. I want to thank Mr. Kmiec for the quotes he provided from across party lines and across the country.

Some of what he provided was about British Columbia. Being from British Columbia, from North Okanagan—Shuswap, I know that B.C. was one of the first provinces to implement a carbon tax. The B.C. Liberal government did that a number of years ago. That B.C. Liberal government has now had to change its party name. Its members no longer want to be affiliated with the federal Liberal government.

Just short weeks ago, the leader of that party, Mr. Kevin Falcon, was noted as saying he's "not going to leave B.C. in a disadvantaged position", when he announced that the party would scrap the carbon tax should they become elected. Since that point in time, he's pulled his party out of the election for reasons only he knows.

The debate in B.C. has now become very interesting. Mr. David Eby, the Premier of British Columbia, had called out our leader of the Conservative Party of Canada, saying that he was basically working from a "baloney factory" when he talked about the carbon tax. Now there's been a flip-flop. I would note that the B.C. NDP party is famous for flip-flops in election cycles. Mr. Eby has stated that he would end the B.C. carbon tax if the federal backstop was removed. That's an incredible flip-flop from a party that has supported carbon pricing for a long time.

I will give him credit for listening to Canadians and British Columbians who have spoken up. I've heard them all through the summer, speaking about how fed up they are with the carbon tax and how it increases the cost of everything. It's just becoming more and more frequently exposed that the Liberal-NDP carbon tax is impacting Canadians and the Canadian economy in devastating ways. More and more Canadians are pushing back against it.

This government has had to find ways of carving out carbon tax exemptions for certain Canadians in order to protect their votes. We've seen the carve-out deals for home heating that started in Atlantic Canada when the Prime Minister's Atlantic caucus revolted and demanded a carve-out. Then it had to be extended elsewhere to avoid discrimination by region over the carbon tax carve-outs.

Further, provincial premiers, such as David Eby and more, have opposed the Prime Minister's plans to tax Canadians into submission. It's happening across the country. Mr. Kmiec mentioned Premier Furey in Newfoundland. That's across the country from coast to coast. Even our northern territories are being punished by the carbon tax.

This announcement by Premier Eby was only days before calling the B.C. provincial election. Many British Columbians—being from there, I'm hearing it—are asking questions: Is this simply an election ploy similar to the federal NDP leader's pre-by-election announcement that he was tearing up the supply agreement with the Liberals?

Yes, Mr. Chair.

• (248815)

**The Chair:** Mr. Arnold, you're welcome to say anything, but out of courtesy, because the provincial government is not here to defend itself, instead of just focusing on this, I think it would be wise not to focus on the B.C. election through this committee. Those are my feelings.

I will let you continue speaking.

**Mr. Mel Arnold:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, but I believe that what is taking place in the B.C. election is very relevant to this debate today, because we're seeing how British Columbia has now shifted away from supporting the carbon tax. That is what this subamendment is about.

The leader of the federal NDP, prior to that by-election, stated that the Liberals have let people down and, "The Liberals are too weak, too selfish and too beholden to corporate interests to fight for people." Immediately after the by-election in Winnipeg, that leader had another change of heart and announced that he's going to continue to support the out of time Prime Minister, potentially just long enough to secure his own pension.

Mr. Chair, the carbon tax increases the cost of everything for everyone. Over the summer, I met with and heard from the good people of the Okanagan, of the Shuswap and from across B.C. They are hard-working and they love their country, but what I heard them say was that taxes are up, costs are up and crime is up, and they are saying that time is up.

At a grand opening of larger premises for a local food bank, we heard that one in five Canadians skipped or reduced the size of at least one meal because they can't afford groceries. One in five parents ate less so that their children or other family members could eat. In Vernon, where this announcement took place, one in 23 families relied on the food bank in the last 12 months, and one in 13 kids in Vernon depended on the food bank last year. Thirty per cent of food bank users in Vernon are children.

Many of those food bank users are hard-working middle-class families struggling to put food on the table. Some are already working two or more jobs. After nine years of this Liberal-NDP government, those people have no confidence in this government, and they want to see a carbon tax election.

I also heard from business owners over the summer, one of whom showed me his carbon tax bills. His farm operation paid \$100,000—in carbon tax alone—in 2023, and all of that cost had to be passed on to the consumer or the taxpayer, who pays the carbon tax accumulated on every food item they buy. That farmer told me that under the current regime it was not worth running his full operation, so he laid off 55 employees and set 30 million dollars' worth of equipment into idle mode because he can't operate effectively and economically under the current carbon tax regime. Thus, by shutting down that food supply chain, he probably drove up consumer costs, adding to the overall debt because of unemployment and employment insurance costs and borrowing.

Mr. Chair, I've heard about many cases like this, and cases of seniors who received an announcement that their pension cheques would be increasing, only to find out that their GIS payments would be decreased by a larger amount, leaving them with less to buy groceries, to get to medical appointments or to heat their homes. Many of those who called were in tears. They didn't know if they were going to be forced out onto the streets because of the increased carbon tax costs and the rising costs of basic living. I hear from assistance workers who are having to seek mental health guidance because they've heard so many of these difficult-to-hear cases of seniors not being able to survive because of increased costs.

Mr. Chair, I could go on much more because of what's happened in British Columbia. You urged me not to bring the B.C. election into this, but it's the time of a B.C. election that has become very much a carbon tax election, as we've seen leader after leader speak out against the carbon tax.

• (248820)

Canadians have had enough of the carbon tax, and they want to get to a carbon tax election now. I would encourage all members of this committee to grasp the severity of the situation for Canadians and give them a chance immediately to participate in a carbon tax election.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Arnold.

We will go to Mr. Maguire.

My dear friend Larry, go ahead, please.

**Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I appreciate the opportunity as well to speak to Mr. Kmiec's sub-amendment on this particular topic that has come before us, brought by the Liberals, in the discussion. I think it's very relevant that we move towards a carbon tax election, and, as well, I have some thoughts that I wish to share on that with the committee at this time.

Mr. Kmiec's subamendment says that after “temporary foreign workers”, we should add the following words: “and after a carbon tax election is held so that Canadians and Québécois can vote out this tired, out-of-time NDP-Liberal coalition government”.

There have been lots of relevant comments made by my colleagues here today already, but I find it unfortunate that this coalition, which was existing for the last two and a half years or more, has found.... Well, it's a bit encouraging that they decided they wouldn't have that, and maybe the NDP walked away from that, but every day since then it has been very obvious that the coalition is still alive and well.

Mr. Chair, I want to thank you for the discussion that we're able to have here today in this committee, and I appreciate the opportunity to discuss the subamendment before us, which specifically adds those lines, as I've said. The fact of the matter is that Canadians should be given that opportunity to decide whether or not they still have faith in the Liberals and the NDP after their disastrous coalition and failed positions and policies, which have left many in-

dividuals and families—young couples, workers, seniors and so on—struggling to make ends meet. Even in some of the words that the Liberals put forward in this motion themselves, they've alerted us to the concerns of many different sectors, but they haven't done a thing to really meet the struggles of the people who are having trouble making ends meet.

I had a flat tire the other day, Mr. Chair, and actually had the opportunity of getting into a fellow's cab to go back to get my car when it got fixed. He had given me a ride in Brandon. It's not that big a city, but he recognized me and said, “You're Mr. Maguire, member of Parliament.” “Yes,” I said. He said, “Well, I just want you to take the message back that I've been here for 12 years in Canada. There were lots of jobs and good-paying jobs when I was there, but I'm having a struggle to find a job now, other than driving this cab, and I know that many of my colleagues that have come from other parts of the world are having that trouble now as well.” He said that it's a struggle to make ends meet. I couldn't believe what came out of his mouth next. He said, “You know, my rent's gone up, my cost of food's gone up, and I'm having a struggle to make ends meet for my family.”

This is a prime example, Mr. Chair, I believe, of what's happening across Canada. That's why we've been so insistent as a Conservative Party in calling for a carbon tax election: to leave the money in people's pockets to start with, rather than taking it out of their pockets and trying to redistribute it. I'll get into that more in my discussion here in time.

As you know, poll after poll, as I've been referring to, make it very clear that Canadians demand change. This gentleman I was speaking to, who I was riding with the other day, is one of those. The 62% rule, I guess, is what I was going to say there. One of the things that I learned very early in my political career from pollsters and others when I was a provincial MLA is that when 62% of any particular group of Canadians, 62% of those people, don't like your leader, you're not going to win the election. Well, we're well ahead of that in regard to where we are with just the Liberals alone. If you put them together with the NDP, we're well over 75% to 80%.

My colleagues here have just reminded me that it was Mr. Trudeau alone who decided to call an early election in 2021, right in the middle of COVID, which was very unnecessary to call at that time, and it's Canadians' turn to have the election they want called at this time.

• (248825)

I've had my ear to the ground, the same as my colleague to my left and my colleagues to the right here, and you as well, Mr. Chair, along with the vice-chair. I think it's incumbent upon the government of the day to pay specific attention to these Canadians.

Those were the best economic times when that happened in Manitoba. The government of the day in Manitoba had 10 of the best years of economic activity ever in the province. The NDP did go on to win that election. But this isn't the case here now. We have the biggest debt we've ever had in this country. The case is being made by individuals that they cannot be taxed any more in this country. They know there was overspending during COVID. I only use that word because it's backed up by the Parliamentary Budget Officer, who said that 40% of the \$500 billion they spent to adjust to the COVID crisis had nothing to do with COVID. That's why I refer to that.

After nine years of the Prime Minister, taxes are up, costs are up and crime is up. It's easy to say that the time is up too, because time is up for these Canadians. They just can't make ends meet. Taxes are up because we have the biggest debt. Costs are up because of the inflationary spending of the government. Crime is up because they're too soft on things like bail. There's been a record number of people let out on bail. There's been a record number of murders by people let out on bail in Canada, at 256, which is up over 100 in the last four years alone.

These are things that Canadians see every day of their lives. To be blunt, they're sick and tired of it. There are really a lot of reasons why the Prime Minister should be listening to Canadians and why opposition parties—other than ourselves, who have been listening—should be calling for this carbon tax election as well.

It's a tired and out-of-touch NDP-Liberal coalition government. They must give the people the chance to vote and show Canadians whose interests they're saying they're trying to defend. Over nine long years of this coalition, the Prime Minister has imposed policies that have made life unaffordable for Canadians. I'm not just talking about things like Bill C-69. There are many others as well that I've referred to in the areas of crime and costs. They promised that the carbon tax would somehow make us richer. Instead, it's contributed to the rising costs of every Canadian family. It's become more difficult, not less, for folks to feed their families, heat their homes and drive to work, or even to get their kids to events and school.

Mr. Chair, it is time for Canadians to be heard. I'm saying that the numbers tell a story. The reality of the carbon tax is that it's a financial burden on working Canadians. According to the Fraser Institute, by 2030 the first carbon tax will cost the average worker \$6,700. That's only six years away. Today the premiers are rebelling, as my colleague from British Columbia referred to. The same thing is happening with the election that's been called in New Brunswick. I know that it's the same thing in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and other provinces. The premiers have all indicated that they are concerned that the carbon tax has helped increase this cost of living.

Mr. Chair, it's definitely important that the government pay attention, but now, instead of doing anything about that, they've caused a second carbon tax. It's set to cost our economy another \$9 billion by that same year of 2030. That's billions of dollars drained from our economy. More importantly, 164,000 jobs are projected to be lost. The last thing hard-working Canadians need during a cost of living crisis is to be losing their jobs, but that's what's happening

across the country. This tax isn't just about abstract numbers. It's affecting all of us every single day.

● (248830)

The Canadian Trucking Alliance tells us that by 2030, trucking costs will rise by \$4 billion due to the carbon tax. That's atrocious. That's money that truckers can't absorb, which means higher prices for all the goods they transport, everything from food to clothing to essentials. This is paid for by Canadians, nearly 50% of whom, according to studies, are within \$200 of insolvency at the end of every paycheque.

Now, who could be heartless enough to not pay attention to what's going on with those kinds of numbers? We dealt with it during COVID, but it wasn't dealt with well, as I have previously explained, since 40% of the money was wasted. We don't know where it went. I'm only quoting the Parliamentary Budget Officer. If he doesn't know where it went, how should we?

Is it right that Canadian families are now paying \$700 more for food—something that the taxi driver in Brandon mentioned to me the other day—this year and every year to follow? That's \$700 more than last year. This is a considerable increase in our ability to not only feed our families but also make sure our kids don't go to school hungry and make sure they can have the best opportunity to learn that they possibly can.

Is it right that millions of people are lining up outside food banks and relying on them to survive? I have raised the particular case that we have in Brandon many times in the House of Commons over the last while. I know that it's happening across Canada. Tragically, people across the country are finding themselves in this situation, including many in my riding of Brandon—Souris.

This is an excerpt from an article published on DiscoverWestman earlier this year:

Samaritan House Ministries saw an alarming increase in the number of food hampers they gave out last year.

The downtown Brandon food bank averages 24,000 food hampers in any given year. The pandemic created fluctuations in those numbers, however in 2022 they were back to their normal average of 24,000 hampers.

What's astonishing is in 2023 Samaritan House saw an astounding increase of just under 12,000 food hampers, and this was from just their food bank. Food banks across the country have seen this trend and it's not slowing down any time soon.

"2023 was an amazing year in a lot of ways, but also startling," shares Executive Director, Barbara McNish.

"We had 1,052 new people use the food bank last year who have never used it before, or were returning after years of not using it," she says. "Before 2019 we were serving about 24,000 hampers in a year. And then of course, Covid hit, and we were down, and then the province helped with the nutrition, so our numbers went up if we include the hampers dealing with nutrition. So that went anywhere from 25,000-28,000 if you include the nutrition hampers."

"In 2022 it went back down to 24,000 which would be our normal," states McNish. "Last year, for 2023 we served 35,967 hampers to people. That was a great increase and that is alarming!"

"And when you see the staggering numbers that are coming new or renewed, plus those who are already existing," she adds, "you can see that people are in need."

I have a couple more things here, Mr. Chair, and then I'll let my colleague have the floor.

This isn't the Canada we believe in. The carbon tax has contributed to these troubling trends. Meanwhile, the Liberal government continues to insist that this tax is the solution despite all evidence to the contrary. The tax does nothing for the environment while punishing families, workers and small businesses. It's merely a tax grab disguised as environmental policy.

Yes, this measure has been supported by the NDP in Parliament dozens of times, even as 80% of Canadians are worse off due to the current system.

● (248835)

The Parliamentary Budget Officer has stated that most families pay more in carbon tax than they receive in rebates. This year alone, Manitoba families—those born in the Prairies and those who have chosen our province as their new home—will face an additional \$1,750 in costs due to the carbon tax.

On top of that, Canadian taxpayers will also be paying an extra \$486 million in GST as a result of it. This has placed an unnecessary financial burden on families and businesses, all while failing to deliver the promised environmental benefits. In fact, Canada's ranking in the Climate Change Performance Index recently fell to 62nd out of 67 countries, highlighting the ineffectiveness of this policy.

There's lots more I could say, Mr. Chair, but I'll leave it at that for now and pass the floor to my colleague.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Maguire.

Mr. McLean, you were not here earlier, but Mr. Arnold was filling in for you, so we gave your spot to him and we put you back on the list.

Now, Mr. Redekopp is on the list, but Mr. Hallan is filling in for him, then Mr. Kmiec, Madam Kayabaga and then MP McLean.

**Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It's great to be back at the committee after a while. A lot has changed in this committee, but I guess the only thing that hasn't changed is that the Liberal-NDP costly coalition is still together.

I find it—

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** You haven't been around for a while. You haven't seen the way I have voted for the last while.

**Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan:**—quite shameful that....

Since Ms. Kwan wants to speak up, I guess we'll start with the original motion on Bill C-71. I'll just say it's quite shameful that we had a common-sense Conservative bill, Bill S-245—

● (248840)

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** There's no such thing.

**Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan:**—in front of us. That was a very common-sense Conservative bill that should have given lost Canadians citizenship. It was a very straightforward bill.

**The Chair:** Let's have one person at a time, please. Thank you.

**Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan:** It's shameful that—

**The Chair:** Honourable members, this is hard for interpreters and other technical staff. If you want the floor, please raise your hand, and I will be happy to give you the floor.

The floor is only with Mr. Hallan, and Mr. Hallan should be the only one making remarks at this time.

**Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

As I was saying, I find it quite shameful that Ms. Kwan, who also came here as an immigrant, like me, would hold hostage a bill—Bill S-245—that could have given lost Canadians citizenship immediately. Once again, she teamed up with the corrupt Liberal government, and we completely lost hope for all of the lost Canadians who were looking forward to that bill—I had many people reach out to me about that—much like this Liberal-NDP government has held hostage an election that Canadians desperately want, a carbon tax election at that.

I look around the room, even on the Liberal side, and, Chair, at you, and our great immigration shadow minister, the greatest shadow immigration minister that the Conservative Party has had, in my opinion. We all came here as immigrants. We had the chance to work hard, play by the rules and become citizens, and now we get to have the honour and responsibility of sitting here in Parliament. I find it very shameful that Ms. Kwan would take that hope away from those lost Canadians.

Now, like I said, they've held hostage this Parliament and a carbon tax election that Canadians desperately want. This carbon tax scam was sold by this Liberal-NDP government as lies that are clear to see, now more than ever.

First, they lied and said that this carbon tax scam somehow would fix the environment and that all of the floods and all of the fires would somehow miraculously be fixed. We know that's not true, and it's not just us saying that. It's the government's own department, which says they don't measure the carbon tax scam and what it does compared to emissions, because they know—it's like the Prime Minister—it's not worth the cost. There's nothing that directly says that by raising the carbon tax scam, somehow the environment will get fixed. That was lie number one that they sold about the carbon tax scam—proven wrong once again.

The second lie was how somehow Canadians are supposed to get back more than what they pay into the scam. Again, that was proven wrong over and over again by the government's own Parliamentary Budget Officer. I had the chance to question him as well. He said it on multiple occasions: that when you factor in the fiscal and economic impact of the carbon tax, most households are at a net loss. That goes for all of the provinces where this applies.

That was lie number two that was proven wrong, and now this costly Liberal-NDP coalition wants to quadruple the carbon tax scam. They want to make already expensive gas, groceries and home heating more expensive by quadrupling the scam. They already know that two million Canadians are going to a food bank in a single month because of their failed policies. They know that another million are going there this year. They know that families are going to pay another \$700 in the cost of groceries this year. They know all of this. They know that they've doubled the housing costs with the failed policies, but again, because of their radical ideology, they refuse to listen to the 70%, a majority of Canadians, who have said, "Do not raise the carbon tax scam." They refuse to listen to them. It's because of their radical ideology.

Why are Ms. Kwan and the NDP doing this? It's clear to see: Their leader is up for a \$2.2-million pension. That's why, in fact, they voted in favour of the carbon tax scam 24 times, all for the greed of their leader being able to get his pension, and that is why they're holding this Parliament hostage now. They refuse to give Canadians the election they want and the one they deserve—the carbon tax election.

On Bill S-245, I want to take some time to thank my brilliant Senate colleague, Senator Yonah Martin, for putting in the work she did for that bill and for getting it to where it was.

- (248845)

Again, it's sad to see that this NDP-Liberal government totally let down the lost Canadians who had hope in that. When we talk about newcomers, after nine years of this government, newcomers are some of the most hit by the failed economic policies of this costly coalition. As I said before, most of us who are sitting on this committee as members came here as immigrants. Why did we come here? There was something before Justin Trudeau that was called the Canadian dream. That dream meant you were able to work hard and put in effort and you would be able to afford a home, groceries and live in safe communities.

Now, because of wacko and radical policies by this costly coalition, none of that is true anymore, so much so that a lot of newcomers question why they came here. What was the point of moving here? They left everything behind and were promised that they would be able to have an affordable home, groceries and safe communities, but when they got here it was a nightmare. This government has doubled housing costs. They gave Canadians 40-year highs in inflation because of their out-of-control spending. That gave Canadians also the most rapid interest rate hikes in Canadian history. Violent crime, auto theft, extortions—everything is on the rise.

Even small businesses, which are the backbone of our economy, have more insolvencies. There are fewer and fewer people who want to invest in Canada, because Canada is not somewhere you

can succeed anymore under this government. It's clear to see in the numbers. I think there was a number last year that around 400,000 people left Canada. It's incredible. The number one reason that people are leaving Canada is the cost of living. Number two is that their credentials don't get recognized.

I'll put in a plug for a common-sense Conservative promise, which we'll put forward after we have a common-sense Conservative government under our leader. It's the national blue seal program, which will ensure that for our brilliant immigrants, including the 20,000 doctors and 30,000 nurses who live in Canada today and aren't licensed because of this red tape in bureaucracy, within 60 days, if they can prove their skill and take a test, they will be able to work in the field they're supposed to work in. We can get more doctors and nurses into our health care system.

We'll also make sure that we're building the homes and axing the tax in the carbon tax scam once we do form government so that people actually want to stay here. We will bring back that Canadian dream that we all got to realize. It's sad that the Liberal-NDP costly coalition doesn't want others to see that same Canadian opportunity or Canadian dream that we got to see, so much so that we have people leaving in record numbers.

Once again, it's really sad to see that all of this pain and suffering that Canadians are having to be put through is because the NDP is greedy for their leader's \$2.2-million pension. That's it. That's all this is all about. Their leader put on this grand theatre two weeks ago, where he said he "ripped up" the agreement. He made a big deal out of it. He wouldn't stop saying that he ripped it up. We said we didn't think that was true. It only took a week after that where he said, no, he taped it right back up. He used the people in Winnipeg for the by-election that he almost lost.

Now that he doesn't need those votes in Winnipeg, he has taped up that agreement once again. He says he has full confidence in the most ethically corrupt Prime Minister in Canadian history, the one who has doubled housing costs and the one who has let crime, chaos, drugs and disorder run rampant in our communities. The leader of the NDP sold out and said once again that he has full confidence in that same Prime Minister and that same government.

Now Canadians have to suffer even more, because this radical ideology isn't going anywhere. They're promising that they will inflict even more pain by quadrupling the carbon tax scam.

- (248850)

Even this costly coalition knows how bad it is. That's why they hid a report—a secret report that their department hid—which proved that around \$30 billion is the hole that this carbon tax scam puts into our national GDP. They hid that report. It took a lot for the PBO to come out about that. All of this for a \$2.2-million pension....

Newcomers who we talk to all the time have lost hope. Some of them have to sleep in their cars, as we're hearing. Some students are living under bridges. It isn't their fault at all. They were promised one thing, and when they got here, reality was something completely different. It's not their fault that this costly coalition opened the doors and said, "come on in", and then blamed them for the housing crisis. This is what incompetence looks like.

First, we had Sean Fraser, the incompetent immigration minister, the now incompetent housing minister, and he passed the torch down to someone who in my opinion is even more incompetent: Marc Miller, who doesn't even know his own file. All they did was blame the same immigrants who they said could come here. They opened the door for them, then blamed them. It's like inviting someone to your house and then blaming them for eating all the food and taking up all the beds.

This is the reality and that's why this Prime Minister is so unpopular today.

It's clear to see. Anyone you talk to is feeling the pain of failed policies by this Liberal-NDP government.

Again, this subamendment brought forward by my brilliant colleague, Tom Kmiec, highlights something that Canadians are asking for everywhere we go. Canadians are tired. Instead of getting approval from Canadians, this costly coalition will continue on their radical path to quadruple the carbon tax scam.

I say, and we say, let's give Canadians the opportunity. Let's put it before Canadians. Let's pause the carbon tax scam. I hope Ken will agree, because he has spoken out against it.

Let's put it before Canadians. Let Canadians decide. Do they want more of this costly coalition that will tax your food, your gas and your home heating and make it even more expensive with this carbon tax scam? Or do Canadians want a common-sense Conservative government under prime minister Pierre Poilievre that will axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget, stop the crime and bring home that Canadian dream that we all once knew, that country that we all love and that we all knew before?

Let's put it before Canadians and call a carbon tax election now.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Hallan.

Mr. Kmiec, please go ahead.

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** Thank you, Chair.

It's hard to follow my colleague from Calgary Forest Lawn. He's in the neighbouring riding, and he's getting a big chunk in the redistribution of the riding I represent currently, which is the second-largest riding in Canada by population size, so I'm thankful for the extra help.

I want to go back to comments made by Mr. El-Khoury. I have some more articles by independent journalists that I want to refer to on the public record. Also, I've had the time to look up a few comments that Liberal members of Parliament have made about the carbon tax. I thought I would quote them on the record, because I think you'll find that these comments agree with our position that

the subamendment should pass. These particular Liberal members of Parliament actually agree with the idea that the carbon tax is unpopular, and that should be put to the public. The public will choose to throw out those politicians who still support the carbon tax.

Mr. El-Khoury has said that his hope was for a future without tornadoes, hurricanes, wildfires and a bunch of other natural disasters, and he was tying it all into the carbon tax. We've had the carbon tax now for close to a decade, and we have had hurricanes. We have had wildfires. We have had all types of natural disasters. I'm just wondering at what price all of these will go away so I can go back to my constituents and tell them how punishing it must become, how ridiculous it must be, how radical it must be in order for all of those things to go away. It's just a ridiculous argument.

Nowhere in the IPCC report does it say such ludicrous things, that you can somehow, through a carbon tax, stop nature from taking its course, stop nature from damaging what we have. Actually, if you look at the statistics on how many human deaths have happened over the last century, they go down. The richer a country becomes, the better it can afford climate-resilient infrastructure to prevent those deaths. It's right in the IPCC report. I just find it completely ridiculous.

Mr. El-Khoury also commented that the rich get richer and the poor get poorer, and then he accused the Conservatives of having that as our plan. Well, I'm looking around at how many Liberals connected to the government have gotten richer. There are a lot. There are a lot of cronies out there who have gotten rich over the last nine years and who have been able to extract what we call "economic rent" from the government. I was busy going through some of those people who seemingly are about to make a fortune, have made a fortune or are interested in making a fortune, and they seem to be running out of time. If this subamendment passed, Chair, I'd be worried that some of them wouldn't get their chance to go and make their case to the government so that they could perhaps extract more economic rent out of the government and maybe get another \$200,000 for their company.

I'm going to bring up the Sustainable Development Technology fund, what's now been named "the green slush fund", from which a billion dollars of taxpayer cash was misspent, over \$100 million of which was spent corruptly. I want to remind those at this table, Chair, of one particular case, because it's fresh in my mind, that of Annette Verschuren, who was personally appointed as chair by the minister at the time. She was the chair of this board and was at the board meeting at which the board voted for over \$200,000 to go directly to her company. That's not me saying it; that's the Auditor General. There have been investigations. There have been parliamentary inquiries into this, all related back to exactly what the subamendment is about.

So when we're talking about the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer, I see a lot of Liberals getting really rich, really fast, and the government, the cabinet, facilitating it, making it easier, just opening themselves up to blatant corruption in that case. That's just one example.

Now we have the latest news that Telesat Holdings had \$2.14 billion afforded to it for a program, and when people inquired online about how much it would cost to get a different private sector option out there, it was over a billion dollars less. It's interesting that the heads of Telesat Holdings are good friends with Mark Carney. Mark Carney, a gentleman who is deeply connected to the Liberal Party of Canada, is now on an economic task force seemingly doing government policy work but not on the government dime, which is also interesting, seeing that he is the chair of Brookfield, an investment company, and stands to gain substantially from some of the decisions that are about to be made by the government.

• (248855)

I want to draw attention specifically to Liberal budget 2024, in which there was open talk about forcing pension plans to invest directly in capital projects in Canada. I thought that the Canada pension plan, especially, was about seeking the highest returns so that retirees, who were forced to pay into it, can get the return on the investment that they made. They are compelled to make that retirement saving, and the goal of the CPP should be to ensure that there are enough benefits, enough cash in the fund to pay out those hard-working retirees.

However, now I see there's a \$50-billion fund being put together by another Liberal, someone connected directly to that political movement who is on an economic task force—personally appointed by the Prime Minister, no less—but is not in the Prime Minister's Office. That is really interesting, because I guess he won't have access to all that Finance Canada data—unless he will. It's a \$50-billion fund, which was reported by The Logic, an online publication that tracks Canadian tech and business news. In here, it says that Brookfield is looking to take advantage of this 2024 Liberal budget announcement that would see the pension funds being forced to invest. It's a \$50-billion fund: \$36 billion would be originating from Canadian pension funds, and then \$10 billion from taxpayers, and Brookfield would commit \$4 billion. How generous of them. That's really interesting.

• (248900)

**Mr. Paul Chiang:** I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Go ahead on a point of order, Mr. Chiang.

**Mr. Paul Chiang:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I am just wondering whether Mr. Kmiec is discussing the motion on Bill C-71. The point he's bringing should be in a different committee, not in this committee.

**The Chair:** Can you clarify, Mr. Chiang, again?

**Mr. Paul Chiang:** He's talking about finance and Brookfield, and those things should be in the finance committee, not in a committee where we're discussing the motion on Bill C-71 here.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Kmiec will go to the relevance of this amendment.

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** The relevance is obviously that the carbon tax is a price imposed on all Canadians, on Canadian companies, on pension funds and on school boards. There's a cost associated with it, a cost that the public, Canadian citizens and voters no longer want to bear. That is why my subamendment is directly what I heard at the doors: People want a carbon tax election.

This fund is being billed as an answer to incentivize so-called climate investments and climate spending. That's why this is relevant. That's why this matters. All of this money, like this taxpayer cash that's going to be sent, is collected from the carbon tax, partially, and then GST is charged on top of the carbon tax. That's exactly what my school board said about how punishing the carbon tax is: a tax on tax. That is why even the school boards in my own province want to see a carbon tax election. They want to reject current government policy.

That is why I offered a subamendment that we not proceed with the main motion or with the amendment and that we proceed first with a carbon tax election, because that's what I heard at the doors, and that's what the public wants to do.

I was answering the commentary made by Mr. El-Khoury that Conservative policy is only there for the rich to get richer and the poor to get poorer. I want to demonstrate that it's false, actually. There are actually more articles on the fact that there are lots of people connected to the Liberal Party, including Mark Carney. I noticed that I was only interrupted when I referenced his name.

Typically, in an investment firm portfolio like that, they would make something like 3% off an investment: 3% of tens of billions of dollars, potentially, which could be added, is a lot of money. That's another Liberal who's going to get richer. I agree. He will get richer. Let's say "potentially" richer, because you never know with investments these days. Canadian pensioners will get poorer. The Canadian public, whom I meet at the doors, will get poorer because they're forced to pay this carbon tax. That's \$50 billion by which this investment firm is connected to a Liberal.

Let's remind ourselves of other people who got rich, or at least avoided criminal prosecution: those at SNC-Lavalin. They avoided criminal prosecution thanks to their connections to the party. There were two cabinet members drummed out of the Liberal cabinet really fast for standing up to the Prime Minister's Office and for not wanting to break the rules. One of them did so in solidarity with her friend, and there's now ample public information about that.



I also found an interesting article from the 2021 election that I wanted to bring up on the point that Mr. El-Khoury made. This is the headline: “Election Insights: Why rich Canadians are all-in for the Liberals”, and the subheading is, “Canadians who earn more than \$100,000 per year are disproportionately likely to vote Liberal on Sept. 20”. This was published on September 10, 2021, and it was written by Tristin Hopper. If you read the article, it's just polling data and self-reported data on where the interests of the public lie. To my colleague, Mr. El-Khoury, I just wanted to offer that as an opportunity if he wants to correct the record later.

In fact, the people most likely to support Liberal government policies are those who have become richer and who have earned way more than the Canadian median income. That Canadian median income is earned by those middle-class workers and those blue-collar workers I meet at the doors. They are the ones bearing the brunt of the carbon tax that's collected at the federal government level, which is then reassigned to people like those in the green slush fund, which is a perfect example. The money is sent over there to be wasted corruptly on programs that don't work or where there are obvious signs that there's corruption happening at the table. Even the AG had to step in, and the RCMP had to step in. We had parliamentary investigations. We had question period, all of that. It was obvious from the beginning, in multiple instances—not just one—where it happened. The data shows that, yes, those people who have become richer, those who earn \$100,000-plus, massively, disproportionately support the Liberal Party.

Here is another one. I was looking at an Investigative Journalism Foundation article that reviewed 1,308 judicial and tribunal appointments by the Liberal government from 2016 to August 2023. It found that 76% of judges who made donations before they joined the bench made donations to the Liberal Party of Canada. That's funny. As I've said many times in the House of Commons, I'm not burdened with a legal education, thankfully. Some of my staff, unfortunately, want to pursue legal education. However, it's funny that so many of those who made donations.... It's not all of them; it's a minority of them, but of those who made donations, three-quarters had been donors to the Liberal Party of Canada.

● (248905)

So they did get richer. I'll agree with Mr. El-Khoury on that. They did get richer. I will disagree on the food bank, on the federal food program. As I've demonstrated, even the school boards in Alberta disagree with him on that particular point.

It's interesting, you know, that Conservatives are being accused of wanting the rich to get richer. I want the Canadian public, the voting public, the moms and dads in my riding who work hard, the single dads, the single moms, the people who've adopted kids and all of them to do better. But they're not. They're not doing better right now.

When I was door knocking in Mahogany, McKenzie Towne, Auburn Bay and other parts of my riding, I heard at the door that people are fed up. They're at the edge of what they can afford. Many of them cannot; they're just going into debt slowly, if they can manage that. I even held a town hall with one of my provincial MLAs, who's a provincial minister, and I heard the same thing. I heard about people who had lost their jobs, partially related to deci-

sions being made by the Liberal government that caused them to lose their jobs. I heard about businesses that were uncompetitive because of the carbon tax. They were paying very high amounts on their carbon tax bills for their utilities but also for a lot of products they were sourcing from other parts of the country that have to be trucked in or brought in by train. There are huge costs associated with that.

It has a huge downstream effect when you see these businesses that are just struggling and are trying to get by. Those businesses feed families. Those businesses give an opportunity for families to send their kids to extracurricular activities and to make sure they have the right clothing for winter. That is not happening. I read the school board letter to members of the committee. In their case, tens of millions of dollars are being taken directly out of the education of children in the province of Alberta solely because of the carbon tax. The school board would gain quite a bit from having a carbon tax election, the way my subamendment suggests to do.

I want to move on to some more quotes, Mr. Chair. I'll quote something about the NDP in Saskatchewan. I thought it was time to maybe broaden our reach. This is an article by Murray Mandryk. The headline reads, “Mandryk: Beck's drive-by bashing of the federal carbon tax hits a pothole”. The article starts to describe the differences between the federal NDP and the provincial NDP, and the differences of opinion they have.

I just want to read a few parts:

...Saskatchewan NDP Leader Carla Beck denounced federal policies that have failed this province...especially that damnable carbon tax.

The carbon tax has got to go. Saskatchewan people can't afford it, Beck said.

Most living here would agree.

And that supply-and-confidence agreement where federal NDP Leader...propped up a Liberal minority that kept the carbon tax in place...well, that should have been gone long ago, she said.

There's a comparison to what Premier Moe has been saying and how the two don't make sense. This is where I think the “pothole” discussion in the headline is being made.

Murray goes on to describe a letter sent by the NDP leader in Saskatchewan:

On Monday, Beck unveiled a letter she sent to each federal leader in the wake of Singh's announcement collapsing the supply-and-confidence agreement and paving the way for “a federal election at any time.”

Even the NDP leader in Saskatchewan would expect that the election would be centred around the carbon tax—a carbon tax election, which is about the subamendment we have before us, that we take no actions until we have done so.

“I have outlined a federal agenda that is focused on the needs of Saskatchewan people and I am seeking your commitment to delivering on every item,” Beck demanded in her letter.

The first on the list—this is interesting—was not a school food program. It was not a day care program. It was not more climate financing so that the green slush fund could be restarted one more time. It was, to quote from the letter, “The federal carbon tax needs to be scrapped.”

So even the NDP Saskatchewan leader says so, which is interesting. The Prairie NDP is different from the NDP in other parts of the country. I find it interesting that even she believed, when she sent this letter...and this is a very recent event. This letter is very recent. It just happened, because the supply and confidence agreement was thrown out, even though now seemingly the NDP is joining with the Liberals again to save them on Wednesday at the non-confidence vote.

● (248910)

Even the NDP leader in Saskatchewan admits that the next election will be on the top issue. It will be a carbon tax election. That's the issue. She knows it too. We know it too. My subamendment addresses exactly that point.

The next one I want to quote from is The Narwhal. Perhaps some will be surprised, but I do read both left and right media, if you can put it in those kinds of broad categories. I'll even read the National Observer on occasion, because I do want to get the best position from left-wing journalism, so that I can model my arguments and maybe even be convinced of something. Who knows? Maybe it will happen one day that I'll be convinced of something.

I still want to see what the arguments are so that I can better understand them and then make the case on behalf of my constituents back home, the residents of Calgary Shepard, who want a carbon tax election—so that I can make the best case for it.

Here's one. It says, “What on earth just happened with B.C.'s carbon tax?”:

If you had the carbon tax on your bingo card as the biggest political news in Canada this week, congratulations! You're a winner!

The drama started when federal NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh suddenly announced his party no longer supports carbon pricing that affects individual Canadians.

This goes on, providing quotes from a press conference where the story is related to the fact that the federal NDP no longer supports the carbon tax—but maybe they still do. I guess we'll find out on Wednesday. I actually don't know what their position is now.

It then quotes another provincial British Columbia leader specifically on a carbon tax election. He refers to carbon pricing of any type. He says it's “an economic disaster and an environmental failure” and that it “drives up costs on everything from groceries to gas, hitting families and businesses hard while doing absolutely nothing to lower emissions.”

The article goes on:

Hours later, [Premier] Eby was asked at a press conference whether he, too, had changed his mind on carbon pricing.

To the surprise of many, his answer was yes.

If the federal government changes the law requiring a consumer carbon tax, “we will end the consumer carbon tax in British Columbia”....

Actually, I highlighted that because that's a direct quote from a press conference with Premier Eby. In the article here, the journalist basically says that this is a nod to the “federal Conservative Party Leader's...promise to 'axe the tax' if his party forms government after the next federal election.”

Even these journalists understand that the next election will be fought on the single issue of the carbon tax. There are multiple examples of this case, and there is wide agreement that it will happen, which is why I proposed this subamendment to the main issue, that we not proceed forward until we have it done. I think that's important.

I have another one here that I wanted to refer to on the record, from The Globe and Mail: “How the carbon tax's good economics became terrible politics”. I would even argue with the economic point that's being made here. It says:

Last spring, I called the carbon tax “dead man walking.” The condemned continues its sad march to the executioner's chamber. Won't be long now.

It's an opinion piece that appeared in The Globe and Mail, but I think it gets a lot of it right. It appeared on September 16.

I think the accuracy of the statement is simple. The vast majority of the public now has had nine years of experience with a consumer or retail Liberal-NDP carbon tax, broadly supported by all the parties except for the Conservatives. We fought against it every step of the way and voted against it every step of the way, the way our constituents wanted us to.

Now the public have realized the true cost they're bearing, and what they want is this carbon tax election to happen so they can have that final judgment after almost a decade of experiencing a carbon tonne hike of \$15 on April 1 every single year.

In this opinion piece, it says:

Politics lives in the realm of the possible. The carbon tax used to make its home in one of the better neighbourhoods, but not any more. Now, the eviction notices are piling up.

The latest were issued by the federal New Democratic Party and the NDP government of British Columbia. Premier David Eby, who heads the first province to bring in a carbon tax, way back in 2008, last week abruptly announced that he'd like to do away with it.

He did so while standing next to a grinning [Premier] Wab Kinew, the NDP Premier of Manitoba, who is also a carbon-tax sceptic.

Many journalists and many people who are commentators, who are voters in our country, know the same thing I do, which is that we need a carbon tax election. That is why my subamendment would make it a condition of everything in the amendment and in the main motion, so the public could have its say.

## ● (248915)

I think the public deserves to have a say for different reasons. There are those who don't believe the carbon tax ever made sense, and there are those who believe the cost of living crisis it is causing is just not worth the price. There are those who think a tax on tax makes no sense. They think being charged GST on top of the carbon tax also makes no sense. They just want to see it end.

When even the Alberta public school boards association is saying it's a tax on tax, not even referring to any.... When there is no environmental benefit from the carbon tax, you know you're on the wrong track. I think getting us back on track would be to pass a subamendment and ensure that the public gets its say.

I'm going to quote from further down, because this is where the author of this opinion piece goes from economics to political science. He said:

But when we leave the department of economics and move over to political science, we discover that, rather than choosing a more fuel-efficient car, voters may choose a less pro-carbon-tax government. That might include voters who, just a few years ago, were telling pollsters they liked the idea of a carbon tax, and who even today say they want major emissions reductions.

That's why we need elections. It's because those types of voters then get to have their say.

At the end of the day, we are all here as temporary retainers of our particular seats in Parliament until the public decides otherwise. The public gets the final choice. The public gets to decide. The public can change its mind if it wants to. That's the great thing about a democracy: You can make the wrong choice. In this case, voting Liberal would have been the wrong choice in 2021 and 2019. You can change your mind.

My subamendment makes it possible for them to have a say. We can report it back to the House. The House could vote on it and potentially trigger that election.

I have another article I want to reference as well, because it comes from independent journalists I subscribe to. I'm a believer in independent journalism. It's called *The Line*. If you're not a subscriber, Chair, I highly encourage you to subscribe. Jen Gerson and Matt Gurney, I think, are two pretty well-known Canadian journalists. One of them is a Calgarian, and I think the one lives in the greater Toronto region. Hopefully I got that right. I'm a regular listener, and I read their material as well.

This is from a contributor called Rob Shaw. It's an article called, "B.C. NDP continues fine tradition of panicked flip flops". He said, "From the carbon tax to decriminalization and, now, involuntary care, David Eby appears to be riding a rapidly shifting mood ahead of the imminent election."

I know we didn't want to talk about the B.C. election, but we just want to talk about elections generally and the purpose of elections.

In the article, he relates how multiple positions previously held by the NDP government have now changed in the span of weeks. They've reversed themselves.

I think the government has an opportunity, if it wants to save itself.... You don't want to take advice from a Conservative, I think, but this free advice is to abandon the carbon tax. That would be

great. If you're not going to do it, pass my subamendment so that we can have a vote, and the public, more importantly, can have a vote, the way the public is now going to get to choose in British Columbia whether it wants to continue with a carbon tax or not.

Seemingly, the polls are showing that it's fifty-fifty right now. I wonder how many members of the public in British Columbia want an end to the carbon tax, period. They don't really care how they achieve that. That's their main voting drive. I think, for many of us, that is the case.

In this particular piece that he wrote, he said:

After 16 months of intense political pressure, and calls for change from everyone from police to health-care professionals, Eby pulled the plug on the idea in April, reversing course to recriminalize drug use in public places.

That was the third flip-flop referenced.

On the carbon tax specifically, he has lots of quotes from the Conservative leader there, pointing out the reversal of position, which is because of the election and the opportunity the public will have to pass judgment. Here is a generic quote. It's a reference to a position. It reads:

New Democrats insist their moves have always been part of a larger plan—in the case of the carbon tax, born out of a simmering frustration with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's home heating fuel exemptions, combined with reading the public mood over affordability concerns.

That is insight being provided to the journalist writing this piece. This is Rob Shaw. He spent 16 years covering B.C. politics. He now reports for CHEK News and writes for Glacier Media, as well as for the website Northern Beat. I have checked out none of these, but I got to learn about him through *The Line*.

## ● (248920)

He's also the co-author of the national bestselling book *A Matter of Confidence*, and he hosts the weekly podcast and YouTube show *Political Capital*. Even here, he's relating back, obviously, what NDP backroom officials or staffers are telling him, or volunteers on the ground.

He says:

But the pivot is complicated by years of the NDP arguing that the carbon tax was affordable because it returned more money in rebates than people paid in the tax. New Democrats have described any political party that suggested otherwise as either a climate denier, fear-monger, or both.

Now, obviously, they've reversed themselves. They've taken the opposite position. I find this interesting. This is from an independent journalist.

Maybe I'll wrap it up with quotes from one of our colleagues, because I can't help myself by ending with—

**A voice:** [*Inaudible—Editor*]

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** No, I don't want to continue. I want to wrap it up.

These are my final comments here. I want to quote the great, wise Ken McDonald, who appeared on CBC's *Power & Politics*. He said:

Everywhere I go, people come up to me and say, you know, "We're losing faith in the Liberal party"

Wiser words have never been spoken.

He added:

I think they will lose seats not just in Newfoundland, not just in Atlantic Canada, but indeed right across the country if they don't get a grasp on this the way that I think they should.... And if an election were called today, I'm not sure if the Liberal party would actually form the government.

He goes on:

The government has to put a lens on it, a rural lens, for the sake of a better world, and try and come up with a plan that's satisfactory and appealing to people who live in rural.

I think many of our members here are from smaller towns. I've been all over rural Alberta—to different parts. I have a lot of friends whose families originate from there. I'm a transplant in Canada. I'm one of those easterners who went and migrated to western Canada so we could get a job. That was why I moved. Yes, wise words.... I think we at least have someone who would be willing to vote for my subamendment.

Chair, that's my time.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Kmiec.

I have the speaking order. It's MP Kayabaga, then MP McLean, MP Kwan and MP Redekopp.

With that, I will give the floor to Madam Kayabaga.

Please go ahead.

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm going to do my best to use the last five minutes to point out what just happened in the last two meetings on the Conservative side. Hopefully, Canadians can actually get to hear what just happened.

First of all, earlier, we had a visiting MP—our colleague Hallan—who talked about this as being shameful. There's a form of rotation happening here today. I don't know what's going on, Mr. Chair, but we've had quite a few visiting colleagues on the opposite side to filibuster.

I know he's gone now, but I would like to read this into the record so Canadians know that, today, Hallan attacked our colleague Kwan, making some egregious comments about the work she's done. However, not too long ago, he was congratulating her on the work she did on Bill S-245. Today he spent his time calling her out and disparaging her, despite the fact that they spent three hours filibustering on a motion that he was the.... Our colleague Maguire.... He was the sponsor of this motion. He spent time filibustering it. Our colleague Hallan said he wanted to do this for Canadians.

He lied to them, because he spent time not only disparaging people and colleagues who do—

• (248925)

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** I have a point of order.

**The Chair:** Madame Kayabaga, we cannot use the word "lied". It can be "misrepresentation".

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** Misleading or disparaging....

There were very strong comments against our colleague, who's done a lot of work for us to get here today. Instead of moving forward, as they promised Canadians....

I can quote him. He said:

I think [we need] to address any of these other issues [very quickly and] they should come in the form of a separate bill

He also said:

I just want to say that there's no opposition to recognizing those people

That's very misleading, because they've spent a lot of time opposing this. It's unfortunate, because they made a promise to Canadians that they're now changing their tune on.

I want to address a couple of comments they made here.

They talked about the NDP leader's pension. The biggest pension to be won here is for their leader, who has a \$230,000 pension. They talked about Canadians not being able to access housing. They forgot to mention that the biggest landlord in this country is their leader. He's a landlord, and he has a pension of \$230,000. They made promises to Canadians to move this bill very quickly, but they spent three hours filibustering it.

Shame on them. It's not shame on Ms. Kwan, who's been doing the work here. It's not shame on our colleagues, who've worked very hard to make sure we can pass this motion and honour the commitment we made to Canadians. It's shame on them for misleading Canadians and disparaging our colleagues, who are working very hard.

Do you know what? They were talking about the vote on Wednesday. All three parties in the House of Commons have said they will not vote to support this motion to affect the livelihoods of Canadians. Maybe they should be answering us on why their leader does not have security clearance. Canadians need to know that. Canadians should be asking questions as to why three parties are deciding that. Now is not the time to go into an election. Canadians do not want an election. There are 700,000 Canadians accessing dental right now, Mr. Chair, and they're talking about carbon tax. They're talking about bringing down the government. They're not even able to sit around and answer questions about their misleading words when they say, "We will not oppose this motion," yet spend three hours filibustering it.

Mr. Chair, it's unfortunate. It's a shame.

I would like to move a motion to adjourn the entire debate.

**The Chair:** Do you mean the debate or the meeting?

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** I mean the meeting—everything. End it.

**The Chair:** Could you repeat your motion, please, so the members are very clear?

(Motion agreed to: yeas 11; nays 0)

**Mr. Greg McLean:** Mr. Chair, I'm sure she moved to adjourn the debate.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** I will move to adjourn the meeting, Mr. Chair.

The meeting is adjourned.

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