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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



CONTENTS

(Table of Contents appears at back of this issue.)

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, June 4, 2021

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1000)

[*Translation*]

BROADCASTING ACT

BILL C-10—TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Mona Fortier (Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.) moved:

That, in relation to Bill C-10, An Act to amend the Broadcasting Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts, not more than five further hours shall be allotted to the consideration of the committee stage of the bill; and that, at the expiry of the time provided in this order, any proceedings before the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage on the said bill shall be interrupted, if required for the purpose of this order, and, in turn, every question necessary for the disposal of the said stage of the bill shall be put forthwith and successively without further debate or amendment.

[*English*]

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I understand we are now applying the will of the full House to the operations of the work of a committee. This is unusual, and I understand we have the powers to do it, if it is placed before us as a motion of instruction.

What I just heard the hon. minister say does not appear to me to be a motion of instruction. I would like a ruling from the Chair to assist us to be sure the motion put before us is actually in a proper form—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Yes, I have just confirmed it is a motion of time allocation that is perfectly legitimate.

Ms. Rachael Harder: Madam Speaker, I am rising on a point of order in order to challenge this ruling, the admissibility of the time allocation that has been moved by the government, because it does—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member cannot challenge a ruling.

Some hon. members: Point of order.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): One at a time, please.

I was just told we cannot challenge a ruling that has been made already. The instruction for committee is perfectly legitimate.

An hon. member: Point of order.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Since I have not read the motion yet and it has not been brought forth to the chamber, I am going to read the motion first and then we will listen to the points of order.

[*Chair read text of motion to the House*]

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

BILL C-10—TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am rising on a point of order in order to challenge the admissibility of that time allocation motion because it does not satisfy the requirements of Standing Order 78(3) and the usual practices of this House. Please allow me to explain further.

Standing Order 78(3) contemplates a minister proposing a motion “for the purpose of allotting a specified number of days or hours for the consideration and disposal of proceedings...provided that the time allotted...is not to be less than one sitting day”. Of course, it goes without saying that the House has sitting days with predictable schedules and whatnot, but not at our committees. How should this rule apply to committees then? I would respectfully submit that it is through the allocation of hours and past practices back me up.

A canvassing of records of the House show that in the 50 plus years Standing Order 78(3) has been in our rule book, it has only been invoked three times before when a bill was referred to a committee, other than a committee of the whole. Ironically, all three times were when the Chrétien Liberals were trying to shut down Bloc Québécois resistance. The shoe seems to be on the other foot this morning.

Firstly, on April 25, 1996, the House passed a time allocation motion concerning the human resources committee's study of Bill C-12, the Employment Insurance Act. Referring to page 260 of the Journals shows that “not more than 10 further hours shall be allotted”.

Points of Order

Secondly, on February 24, 2000, the House passed a time allocation motion concerning a legislative committee's study of Bill C-20, known as "the clarity act". Looking at page 1018 of the Journals shows that "not more than ten further hours shall be allotted".

Most recently, on September 19, 2000, the House passed a time allocation motion concerning the justice committee's study of Bill C-3, the Youth Criminal Justice Act. Page 1928 of the Journals reveals that "not more than ten further hours shall be allotted".

In all three cases, the House, when invoking Standing Order 78(3), allocated 10 hours for committee study. Now because this motion has allocated fewer than 10 hours, I would respectfully submit that it is not consistent with the usual practice of the House and must therefore be ruled out of order.

• (1005)

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would concur with my colleague from Lethbridge that the practice and the tradition of the use of Standing Order 78(3) is no more than one further sitting day. It does not appear to us, with the five hours that is proposed in the motion, that it meets the test of what has been clear parliamentary practice.

It also raises another question and given that this is such a rare tool to be used, which has not been used in over two decades and was not used under the former Harper government, it does raise further questions such as what the allocation of amendments would be during the report stage of the bill.

With those considerations in mind, we certainly raise broad concerns about the form and the proposal that has been brought forward with this motion this morning.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have listened to the interjections from the Conservatives and the member for New Westminster—Burnaby. I would submit that, despite the fact that previous usage of this particular procedure may have allocated a certain amount of time, the procedure does not indicate how much time needs to be used specifically.

Furthermore, since the members are referencing that this is something that has not been used many times, if they do not feel as though this should be one of our standing orders, then they should bring forward suggestions on how to amend the Standing Orders. In the interim, it is one of our standing orders. It is a rule that we have. The fact that it has not been used often certainly is not an excuse to suggest that it cannot be used.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We do not want to turn this into a debate. I have the standing order in front of me and it makes this motion perfectly legitimate. I will read it.

It states:

...a motion during proceedings under Government Orders, for the purpose of allotting a specified number of days or hours for the consideration and disposal of proceedings at that stage;

It does not say the number of hours specifically, so the motion is in order.

The hon. member for Carleton.

• (1010)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member across the way concedes that the practice the government is undertaking right now is not the way it has been done in the past. I thank him for making that concession at the outset of his remarks. However, he made a mistake moments later when he said that the rules do not specify the amount of time typically allotted for this practice.

I will quote Standing Order 78(3), which contemplates a minister proposing a motion.

It states:

...for the purpose of allotting a specified number of days or hours for the consideration and disposal of proceedings...provided that the time allotted...is not...less than one sitting day...

The member is quite wrong to say that there is not an allotted period. I see he is getting very agitated with me quoting the facts—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The interpretation so far has been that five hours is the equivalent of a sitting day and there are other examples, as I have been told by the table officers, of five hours of debate on motions.

I think I have ruled on this and we should move along.

The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I just want to ensure the record reflects that in my point of order when I said an amount of time I was indeed referring to hours. I am aware that it references days.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Carleton.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Speaker, you said the table officers have given all of these examples. You have not shared any of the examples; you just stated a ruling without providing any evidence. You are asking us just to assume that what you are saying is in the—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I absolutely have a problem with the doubting of my word and the word of the table officers. There are examples. We have business—

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Share them.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I am not directed by the member to share or not. If you are interested, the table officers will provide the examples.

The hon. member for Carleton.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Speaker, if the Chair in fact has evidence, then the Chair would share the evidence, but so far the Chair has shared no evidence. The Chair is not meant to simply help the government ram through legislation by breaking the Standing Orders. That is not the role of the Chair.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Is the hon. member for Carleton challenging the Chair?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Yes.

Points of Order

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We will come back to the House with a statement on the precedence. After the 30 minutes of debate, we will have something to share.

The hon. member for Elgin—Middlesex—London.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to read from Standing Order 10, “Order and decorum. No appeal”, which states:

The Speaker shall preserve order and decorum, and shall decide questions of order. In deciding a point of order or practice, the Speaker shall state the Standing Order or other authority applicable to the case. No debate shall be permitted on any such decision, and no such decision shall be subject to an appeal to the House.

I just wanted to bring that forward as I believe there is a lot of discussion here today and we would really like to understand why this will be going forward.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): As I have just stated, at the end of the 30 minutes of debate we will come back to the House with a statement.

The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I really appreciate the intervention by the acting House leader. She is indeed correct. You did follow that procedure. You provided your ruling, you provided the reference within the Standing Orders and you have completed your duties with respect to that ruling.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We are getting into debate.

The hon. member for Carleton.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Speaker, the member just read the standing order that requires the Speaker to list the precedent that is underlying the ruling rather than implementing the ruling. It is not the role of the Speaker to implement a ruling that she has not yet made.

• (1015)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I will absolutely come back to the House at the end of the 30 minutes with the information required.

The hon. member for Elgin—Middlesex—London.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, we will be debating a motion that we do not believe is admissible in the first place. Those are some of the concerns as we are moving forward here.

If we could please have that precedent put forward so that we have an actual authority to move forward, that would be wonderful. I would really like to have the precedent before—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I have already ruled that it is in order. We will just be providing further elements to sustain that ruling.

We will now move into debate.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Speaker, I rise on the same point of order.

Unfortunately, the ruling was brief and we did not have the opportunity to hear it in both official languages. All members have the right to hear the rulings rendered in both official languages.

With all due respect—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): That is exactly why we have interpretation in the House, but I will repeat that the motion is in order. I have ruled.

We will come back to the House with more information in 30 minutes. I will accept no further points of order.

[*English*]

I have ruled. We are entering debate.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Please, can we understand that we have an answer to bring to the House in 30 minutes' time?

The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, I just want to acknowledge that when highly contentious issues of order are brought before the House, it is not uncommon for members to spend some time having exchanges about the substance of the matter of order.

We will recall that the government House leader, a few weeks ago, in fact spoke for over an hour in this place specifically with respect to a matter of order. There is a big difference between debating a substantive issue under the rubric of Points of Order and debating a question of order under the rubric of Points of Order.

This is an extremely contentious matter, extremely rare. It is not surprising that members have points they wish to raise with respect to it.

Personally, I want to raise an issue with respect to the motion that is different from issues that have been raised by my colleagues, one that I would ask—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): As I have stated previously, the ruling has been made. The arguments will come within the next 30 minutes. I am going to read the motion now.

Pursuant to Standing Order 67(1), there will now be a 30-minute question period. I invite hon. members who wish to—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I am asking the question. I invite hon. members who wish to ask questions to rise in their places or use the “raise hand” function so the Chair has some idea of the number of members who wish to participate in this question period.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen’s Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have had my hand up for a while, and I believe I am entitled to ask a question at this point.

Points of Order

My question is with respect to the importance of the legislation. Given the limited amount of time and the procedures we have seen, in particular from the official opposition, would the minister not agree that if we do not bring in this form of time allocation, it would be virtually impossible to see the legislation ultimately pass through, because the Conservatives have given no indication that they are prepared to see it move forward?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Madam Speaker, let me give an example of what has been happening at the heritage committee over the past many weeks.

During the first four meetings of the committee, this committee was able to study 79 amendments. During the next 11 meetings of the committee, which is when—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

• (1020)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): My apologies to the minister.

I will answer the points of order after the 30 minutes of debate. I have ruled on this, and we are going to proceed.

An hon. member: You are a disgrace.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Madam Speaker, as I was saying, during the next 11 meetings of the committee, which is when the Conservative Party started systematically obstructing the work of the committee, only seven amendments were studied or voted on. At this rate, it would likely take more than six months of committee meetings before the committee is able to bring this bill back to the House.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Madam Speaker, the minister is using every trick in the book to make people believe that the Conservatives are anti-culture and standing in the way of Bill C-10. We all know the bill is bad. Many experts who testified at the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage said so.

The bill now has over 120 amendments, more than one-quarter of which were put forward by the government itself, even though it wrote the bill. Every member of the committee did everything they could to fix the problems with Bill-C10. What the minister is not telling us though is that the work hit a roadblock when he decided to amend the bill midstream to include social media. That was when people, including experts, former CRTC commissioners and thousands of Canadians across the country, started raising objections.

The only reason why it is taking so much time to study a bill with over 120 amendments, not to mention all the proposed ones, is the work of the minister himself, who introduced a bad version of Bill C-10.

The government is therefore imposing time allocation on a bill that is fundamentally wrong because it attacks freedom of expression. The minister is attacking the freedom of expression of parliamentarians who are trying to do their job. I would like to know one thing. Instead of telling us that we are preventing work from mov-

ing forward and are anti-culture, could the minister explain to us how he can justify imposing—with the help of the Bloc Québécois, I might add—time allocation on parliamentarians while we still have 40 amendments to study together?

In committee, the main problem was that the Liberals opposed our request to hear from the Minister of Justice for two weeks before finally agreeing. If they had agreed from the beginning, we would have had two more weeks to work on this. If they had agreed to reinstate section 4.1 of the Broadcasting Act, as we tried to get them to do, we would be moving forward in a logical manner to try to fix this bad bill. How does the minister explain his mistake and his mismanagement of this file, which has brought us to a complete dead end?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Madam Speaker, I would first like to point out that the premise of my colleague from Richmond—Arthabaska is absolutely incorrect.

First of all, as the Minister of Canadian Heritage, I am not the one who decides what changes are made at committee; it is the committee itself that decides.

Second, as I have said repeatedly, every bill has room for improvement, and this bill to amend the Broadcasting Act is no different. That is why we ourselves brought forward amendments as a result of recommendations we heard from people in the arts sector and several stakeholders in the cultural sector, as well as requests from committee members.

Third, I would like to clarify that Bill C-10 is supported by cultural organizations from across—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

• (1025)

[*English*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Order. The minister keeps being interrupted. I advise members to put themselves on mute when they do not have the floor. I will answer the points of order after the 30 minutes.

The hon. minister.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Madam Speaker, the fourth point I want to make, one that my colleague raised earlier, has to do with freedom of expression.

We had an independent analysis done by public servants at the Department of Justice that found that Bill C-10 is entirely consistent with—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

[*English*]

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Point of order, Madam Speaker.

Points of Order

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Order. I have ruled that the motion is in order. We are proceeding with the 30-minute debate. We will come back to the House with examples of precedents. As the hon. member for Elgin—Middlesex—London has reminded me, I am responsible for keeping decorum in the House. This is the way we are going to proceed.

The hon. minister.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Madam Speaker, as I was saying when making my fourth point, which was about freedom of expression, the deputy minister of justice appeared at committee and said that Bill C-10 was entirely consistent with freedom of expression in Canada.

Furthermore, with respect to legislation governing the CRTC, I would point out that the CRTC is not a state within a state and must also abide by Canadian laws, including the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

[*English*]

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I am not aware that the Standing Orders have been suspended to not allow points of order. I believe that would have to be something that is agreed to by the House. It is astounding that debate is being censored on censorship.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): As I have advised members, the motion as was presented is in order. We are going to bring the House the answer to the questions that were raised in the previous points of order and we will listen to other points of order. Now we are just proceeding with this debate, and we will come back with the answers. I cannot invent answers that I do not have at my fingertips. I have ruled.

Hon. Candice Bergen: You need to suspend, Madam Speaker, if you do not have a ruling.

• (1030)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): No, I have ruled that the motion is in order because it respects the—

Hon. Candice Bergen: There are points of order, Madam Speaker. If you are confident it is in order, then take the points of order.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We are in the middle of a debate. We have 30 minutes.

Mr. Dan Albas: Madam Chair, point of order.

Hon. Candice Bergen: There are quite a few points of order coming forward, Madam Speaker. I respectfully suggest that you take those points of order as they are coming up. I know this is difficult, but, respectfully, it is what you need to do.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): My job here is to ensure decorum of the House and that the work of the House is done. All parliamentarians will be allowed to speak, as I said, after we have the 30 minutes of debate and I have the answers to give the House.

The hon. member for Elgin—Middlesex—London.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Madam Speaker, and to all my Conservative colleagues, the reason we are seeing this lack of decorum today is that we are outraged. We recognize that they are taking the right of Canadians' free speech away in this bill and this is exactly what we are seeing here. They have chosen to move—

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Point of order.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Excuse me. I appreciate that the member for Kingston and the Islands has lots to say and he has spent all of his time here for the last number of weeks. I have not been able to hear my own colleagues because I have heard his voice over these things.

I recognize this is the issue. We went immediately into the 30 minutes of debate before we even had the opportunity to discuss our points of order. This lack of decorum is because the freedom of speech right here, especially what we are seeing in the sections of these amendments, is being quashed and we will continue to fight.

I request, Madam Speaker, that you please deal with the points of order so that we can have decorum in this place. I do believe that it is the right of Canadians.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: On that point, Madam Speaker, through her intervention, the member for Elgin—Middlesex—London just admitted that the reason they are being obstructionist is that they are not happy with the bill. That certainly is not a point of order. A point of order has to do with—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): That is debate.

The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciate that you have made the decision to listen to the points of order that members are raising, and it is important that we establish whether the motion is in order before we proceed to any question and comment period on it. The questions that I am raising about order are different from questions that other members have raised about whether this motion is in order. There are a number of different concerns with respect to the motion that I would ask you to take into consideration, as well.

I agree with points that have been made by my colleague, with respect to the fact that the Standing Orders prescribe a specific time period. The ruling that has been made with respect to the number of hours equivalent to a day in the House is very different from the hours for which committees can sit. However, there is a particular situation that I confront as the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan. I have put forward amendments that deal with specific subject matter on the bill at committee, which is that foreign state-controlled channels seek access to Canada's broadcast system. Those channels have been broadcasting horrific human rights abuses, forced confessions and other human rights abuses. In response to concerns raised by constituents as well as stakeholders, I have undertaken to put forward amendments at the committee stage of the bill, and those amendments would deal with this important subject matter that relates to our broadcasting system.

Points of Order

It is the right of all members, not just members of the heritage committee, to move amendments at the committee stage with respect to a bill, and this is a right that is particularly important to me. Obviously, I am not a regular member of the heritage committee, so I am not normally part of the clause-by-clause process, but because of the work that I am doing on behalf of my constituents and others with respect to the particular issues around forced confessions and human rights abuses, I am putting forward amendments at the committee stage. I have given notice of those amendments. Those amendments have been translated and distributed to members of the heritage committee. They are in their proper form. They are available to be considered, but the motion that has been put forward today would obstruct my right, and the right of other members who have put amendments on notice, to be able to move those amendments forward for consideration.

Having been following the proceedings, I think there is a significant risk that the way the motion has been worded in particular restricts the movement of further amendments. Normally, when time allocation is moved in the House, any amendments that have been moved or put forward are then up for consideration and a vote is prescribed at the end of that time. Also, if a question is put forward, for instance a motion that a question not be further adjourned, that issue is voted on by the House before moving to the vote on the question. Regarding the rights of members, if this motion, and in particular the prohibition on moving amendments, is able to advance, it would prevent me from being able to move an amendment at committee that I had given notice of months ago. It would prevent any reconsideration of aspects of the question, the debate, the movement of the amendment or a vote on it.

I have the same concerns that various colleagues have raised, with respect to the impact of the limited time that has been created, but I also think we need to hear specifically about the measures that prevent members like me from bringing forward amendments that are important to their constituents and to people around the world, in terms of the impact on international human rights. These amendments send a clear message about Canada not being complicit in broadcasting or promoting these horrific abuses. There are forced confessions: People are tortured and forced to confess on TV, and then those messages are being aired in Canadian broadcasting. That is a very important issue. It is an amendment that I think reflects the public interest, and it is an amendment that I suspect would have broad support. I suspect even members of the government would be willing to support some of those amendments that deal with human rights issues, which have not been as widely discussed in the public domain.

I would ask you to rule on the implications, for the rights of members, of this real attack on the ability to move amendments at the committee stage and what it means for the fact that we are supposed to be able to bring forward substantive amendments that we cannot always bring forward in the House.

What does that mean for our rights, as well as the issues of time that I think are still outstanding, insofar as we have not had a ruling on those in the proper form? I would ask you to take these issues under consideration and advise the House on them.

• (1035)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I will take them under consideration, and we will advise the House.

The hon. member for Saint-Jean.

* * *

[*Translation*]

BROADCASTING ACT

BILL C-10—TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am pleased that we have come back to questions and comments. I will take the opportunity to say that despite the uproar around the current debate, there is no reason to abandon our decorum and lose our dignity as MPs. Some of the comments we have heard are cringeworthy to say the least.

The government's decision to move a time allocation motion to speed up the work in committee is not without consequence, as we have seen this morning. For months, Bill C-10 has been held up because it was so late getting passed at second reading and because of the Conservatives' systematic obstruction at the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage.

Far too often we have seen the Liberals filibuster to impede the will of the majority of members of a committee. We saw that at the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, the Standing Committee on National Defence and the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics.

However, when it comes to Bill C-10, it is not just the committee that is being held hostage by the Conservatives, it is the entire cultural sector. We have a responsibility to be reasonable. Time allocation must be an exceptional measure—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I have to interrupt the hon. member because the member for Peace River—Westlock is rising on a point of order.

* * *

[*English*]

POINTS OF ORDER

BILL C-10—TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, typically when we run across a standing order that is not regularly used and we are about to make new precedent with it, the Speaker gives a long ruling on whether this issue is in order or not. We have not heard the logic for this being in order. This is new to all of us. A text message from my staff last night said, "This is going to be interesting in the morning. We have never seen this before".

It seems to me that we would see a large ruling. I was expecting to hear from you for several minutes on why this was going to be admissible and how it played into the reasons that this should be going on to a vote this morning. We are voting on Friday, and that also is unusual. Many things about this are unusual, and I was expecting to hear the logic on how we were going to be proceeding on this. I have heard none of the logic on this, and now it feels like this is—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): As I told hon. members, I will come back to the House to explain.

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Madam Speaker, it is not your job to do the government's bidding but to work so that we have a functional House that we all agree on and that we move forward.

When we end up in areas of the Standing Orders that are not regularly used, we typically would see an explanation before we move forward. I have heard from many of my colleagues who have said that they have concerns with this. They have spent the night preparing their arguments as to why this should be in order or not in order, and to have that just run over is not doing the job of the Speaker.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciate that your position can be difficult at times. Today is a certain expression of that, but we have points of concern that have been raised about members' rights. I agree 100% that decorum is important, but decorum comes from having a process.

When we have a motion of the government that clearly has not been used in this type of format for many decades, there are legitimate questions about the lessening of our rights as members to debate and discuss important issues. This bill also deals with the Canadian Charter of Rights. I am very surprised that the Liberal party is trying to push forward a process that not only clearly violates our rights as members to fully debate these things. This material legislation may also affect the Canadians we represent.

I ask you to come back with an extensive ruling on this practice so that it does not set a precedent for future governments that will point to today and this abuse of our ability to discuss this issue at report stage. I hope we also agree that when the government is proposing changes to the Broadcasting Act that infringe upon those rights, you should have a clear process in a minority Parliament that would clearly build the goodwill of all members. This cuts off debate without having proper process, without giving justification that this is not infringing upon our rights and without having the ability to debate. These are section 2(b) freedom of expression rights that are clearly laid out in the Charter.

I am surprised that the Liberal government is attempting to push through such a large-scale change at report stage without having a clean process. I know that decorum is central to your work because you are in charge of making sure of the business of this place, but I have seen today that, unfortunately, it is not there. It is not your fault, but it is your obligation to members who are concerned about our privileges here. We must know the process is clean. I hope you will listen to this intervention. I hope that the government will reconsider the way it is conducting itself. I do not even want to get into the other parties. I am surprised that after so many interven-

tions protesting the use of time allocation, the NDP would tie themselves to a process that hurts this institution and sets precedent for future governments.

There is a lot on your plate, I understand. I hope that we can start focusing on making good laws and wise decisions. I would hope, Madam Speaker, that you would utilize the table officers to their fullest, and that you would suspend this hearing so that you could go through this and bring back the justifications that have been asked for by members with respect to this process today.

We cannot go back to our constituents and say the process was not clean. This is Canada. We believe in democratic governance, and that involves—

• (1040)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We are getting into the debate of a point of order. I take the hon. member's comments.

The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I will—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I do not know who is rising on points of order in the hybrid setting and who is rising on points of order in the House.

The hon. member for Northumberland—Peterborough South.

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Madam Speaker, I wanted to raise a point on behalf of the Green Party. Oftentimes they do not get the opportunity to speak. They have been polite and quiet while waiting. They have been up there. I could see on my screen that they were among the first. They are always some of the most respectful party members from one of the most passionate parties. Even though I disagree with them on a lot, I want to hear their voices, just like I want to hear all Canadians' voices.

I think it is incredibly important that we hear voices across this country, on the Internet and in—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I thank the hon. member for pointing that out to me. I will get to a member of the Green Party soon enough.

The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, on the point of order, the sticking point on this has been what constitutes a day, so I want to read a precedent into the record so you can reflect on it when you ultimately come back to the House.

Points of Order

The member for Regina—Qu'Appelle, when he was Speaker, determined that a sitting day was equivalent to an average of 4.7 hours, or approximately five hours. He made this ruling following a point of order that was raised when the government moved a time allocation motion in hours, not days. This is from the Debates of June 12, 2012, pages 9231 to 9236, and on June 18, 2012, pages 9680 to 9681.

• (1045)

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am not going to get into the thrust of this, except to ask the Conservative members who are calling you a disgrace to stop doing so and apologize. As we go down this rough road, we can at least have some self-respect and decorum.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I appreciate the hon. member's words.

The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, I would like some guidance. I appreciate the assistance from colleagues.

I had made a point of order, which you rejected. My hand was up for the purpose of putting a question to the minister. I do not believe that the current motion before us is legitimate, by the way, but I am prepared to put questions to the minister, to ask why he is prepared now to put closure on a committee, a process we have not seen in several decades.

Do I ask a question of the minister now or speak to a point of order?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We are on a point of order.

The hon. member for Lethbridge.

Ms. Rachael Harder: Madam Speaker, I am looking for some clarification, because it has been a bit of a shemozzle.

We raised some points of order; a member got cut off partway through his point of order; the Speaker insisted on then going into the 30 minutes for questions and comments. Now we are back to points of order, which I appreciate. I am curious if the clock was stopped during those 30 minutes, to resume once the points of order have been heard.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Yes, it was stopped.

Ms. Rachael Harder: Madam Speaker, I wanted to ensure that speaking time is protected.

I have another point of order, but I will allow you to go to others first.

Mr. Dan Albas: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I hate to throw more onto the docket, but I have been informed that New Democrats are not supporting this and I named them earlier as having been partnered with the government. I want to apologize to those NDP members and thank them for telling me I was misinformed.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): That is appreciated.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the leader of the government in the House.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I want to raise what I believe is a point of order. In listening to what has been taking place over the last half hour, it brings me back to a time when there was an issue with decorum in the chamber during a budget debate. It was the behaviour of members of the official opposition, who were banging their desks, ultimately storming out of the chamber. The Speaker at the time made a ruling. Official opposition members did not support it and they ended up walking out of the chamber.

You have made a decision, Madam Speaker, and you were prepared to allow the debate to continue. The difference between your position and the other incident that I referenced is that we are in a hybrid system. I counted at least four or five Conservative members speaking when you called for decorum, and rightfully so. However, we need to put in place something that allows individuals to hear the questions and answers when there is inappropriate behaviour virtually. If it were in the chamber, you would have the Sergeant-at-Arms remove the person, but you do not have that tool virtually.

I raise that as something that can be taken into consideration, but at some point, the House needs to deal—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Agreed.

The hon. member for Portage—Lisgar.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have to correct my hon. Liberal colleague from Manitoba. I do recall when we, in opposition, pounded the desks and did not let the then finance minister, Bill Morneau, deliver a budget. It was not because the Speaker had delivered a ruling; it was because we did not believe Bill Morneau was fit to be finance minister after all his ethical lapses. I recall that quite well.

Respectfully, the issue here is that this is such a rare manoeuvre for the government to take and there needs to be confidence that it is indeed in order. I understand that you believe it is order, Madam Speaker, but you have also indicated a number of times over the last half hour that you do not have the answers as to why you believe it to be in order. We trust you are confident you will get those answers. Why not suspend the House and speak with your officials, those who are assisting you? That is absolutely reasonable. Then you can come back when you feel confident you indeed have the answers and you can make your point, and have the confidence of everyone that it is in order.

Because it is a rare issue coming before us, my suggestion and my request would be that you suspend the House, Madam Speaker.

• (1050)

Mr. Scott Aitchison (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am looking for clarification.

The Deputy Speaker ruled on June 12, 2012, which has already been mentioned, that points of order raised during time allocation debate did not count against the 30 minutes provided for the debate. I want to be absolutely clear that this is in fact the case here, that the points of order being raised right now will not count against the 30 minutes of debate on the issue.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The clock has been stopped, as I indicated previously.

The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, I want to raise two points to follow up from the discussion on the points of order. First, the member for Kingston and the Islands is using stickers on his computer as a prop, but I will let you deal with that separately.

In response to the points of order raised by the member for Kingston and the Islands, he spoke about precedents set by the admittedly very wise, thoughtful and effective previous Speaker, the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle, who said that time allocation for a day applied to a certain number of hours. That was based on the House. The precedent he cited the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle ruling on was not with respect to the length of a sitting day at committee; it was with respect to the sitting day in the House. The member for Kingston and the Islands is, as we have come to expect, incorrectly citing a precedent.

What we do not have is clarity on what constitutes a sitting day for the purposes of a committee. One of the reasons this is relevant is because committees sit for a much longer day. The sitting day of a committee effectively begins at 8:45 in the morning, which is the time when committees can start sitting. I am part of a committee that routinely sits until 9:30 at night and sometimes later in this time zone and even later if a member is on the east coast.

On the question of a sitting day, the framework used by the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle for establishing the length of a sitting day is based on how long the House sits, which is, on average, for a period of about five hours. However, if we take into consideration how long committees sit, it is actually more than 12 hours. That is the available sitting day for parliamentary committees. It is a different length of sitting day.

The member, in the motion, as well as in the arguments made by the member for Kingston and the Islands, is applying the sitting day of the House to a committee, but there are, in fact, different bodies with different lengths of days. The procedure that was used by the Speaker at that time was to say what constituted a sitting day in normal times in the context of that body, which was five hours for the House. Therefore, that is what is meant by a sitting day in the House.

If we were to apply the identical procedure to committees, using more correctly the precedent that was put forward by the Speaker, we would say that in a sitting day, the committees of the House function between 8:45 a.m. and 9:30 p.m., so that is 12 hours and 45 minutes. It would be a more correct application of that procedure to say that based on the ruling made by that member, it was a 12-hour, 45-minute period of time. That would be the correct application of the precedent that has been previously set by the Speaker, the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle, building off and correcting

Points of Order

the points made by the member, who has stickers on his laptop, which violates the rules on props.

I wanted to also return briefly to my previous point of order. It was with respect to the issue of members' rights and privileges with respect to moving amendments at committees and the fact that I have a number of amendments of which I have given notice, for which I have support at the committee, that are in order and that have strong stakeholder support, but I may not now be able to move because the motion would prevent me from doing so.

I want to underline that we are dealing with, and maybe more, at least two distinct questions of order with respect to this motion. One was originally raised by the member for Lethbridge around the length of the day. The other was raised by me with respect to the issue of amendments at committees. Those are separate issues that do require separate rulings with respect to whether this particular motion is in order. When I first raised that, Madam Speaker, you said you would come back to that. We certainly have not heard anything with respect to a ruling on that second question. Therefore, the House does need to hear certainly with respect to that.

We have many issues, but these two in particular require rulings, especially the second one. We have had no indication of whether the Chair intends to rule on it. I agree with the suggestions of our deputy leader that this is one of those matters in which we need to have the clear information and data as well as the precise ruling coming from the Speaker. There is a lot of precedent in the House for when governments, or other parties or other members try to do things that are unprecedented, things that are controversial, that we have an opportunity for arguments to be heard and made.

• (1055)

Frankly, it is much more common for members to have the opportunity to come back to the House with arguments. There may be members who would like to reflect over the weekend on the particulars of the motion and make arguments to the House on those issues.

We actually did not see this motion until it was initially moved in the House. We had notice last night that the government intended to move a motion with respect to time allocation in committees. However, we did not know whether it was going to be for five hours or the 12 hours and 45 minutes I have mused about. We also did not know whether members would have the opportunity to move amendments or not.

It is very important that, reasonably, on a groundbreaking issue like this, which is just so important for the freedoms of parliamentarians and Canadians, that members be given the opportunity to come back to the House and share arguments, and for members who may not have been following the proceedings precisely, to note that motion and to bring arguments as well.

This is the way the House has always operated on these kinds of matters. It is important that we proceed in that way as well. The rights and privileges of this House and of its members, wherever they sit, need to be protected. Members are right to zealously defend their privileges. The principle of order in the House is based on the consent of members.

Points of Order

The Speaker is not imposed on the House by some external body. The Speaker is not directly elected or appointed by a monarch. The Speaker has had this beautiful, crucial role since the beginning of Parliament, which is as the voice of the House, as the servant of the House. The Speaker cannot seek to impose a particular interpretation of the rules that defies, clearly, the consensus of members.

If that attempt happens, if there is ever a way in which it seems like there is a risk of the Speaker's role moving away from those historic traditions, members have to stand up and defend the prerogatives of this House, the prerogatives of members and the appropriate relationship that is supposed to exist between the members of this House and the Chair.

Madam Speaker, we do so with eminent respect for your office and for the challenges in discharging it. There are many challenges. In fact, many early speakers of the House were executed by the monarch, which reflects the willingness of those speakers to serve the House—

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: How is that relevant?

Mr. Garnett Genuis: The point is that it is a challenging job, and we acknowledge that it is a challenging job. The role of the Chair is crucial in defending the rights and prerogatives of the House.

To just respond briefly to the absurd heckles, even more absurd than the usual heckles from the member for Kingston and the Islands, I was not in any way implying that—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I think we have heard all the arguments. I am now ready to rule on the point of order raised by the hon. member for Lethbridge.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I am ruling on the point of order made by the hon. member for Lethbridge. I have started my ruling.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Yes, we are approaching 11 o'clock, when we will have to go to Statements by Members. I am ruling. I am going to rule on the hon. member's initial point of order.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I am going to rule on the hon. member for Lethbridge's point of order. We can go back to points of order after we deal with Statements by Members and Oral Questions.

• (1100)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Speaker, on a point of order. For your ruling to have weight, members of the House must have had the opportunity to hear the debate that led to that ruling. In the middle of the speech by the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, which is not in Saskatchewan but in Alberta, I could—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I think the member is going to tell me about the French and English interpretation, but it was available.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Speaker, it was not the issue of French and English, although that is a very important issue because we are a bilingual country. The issue was audibility.

The member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan was in the middle of speaking when the member for Kingston and the Islands began to yell and scream about kings and monarchs and other matters that are unrelated to the debate, which rendered the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan inaudible to members of the House. Therefore, we are not able to judge whether or not your ruling, Madam Speaker, includes the comments that he has made in this debate.

Now, I think that the views of the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan are particularly important to this particular matter, because, of course, Edmontonians have a profound history of defending their freedoms and their freedoms of expression that goes back many generations, which is why I think this member has raised the point.

The role of the House of Commons is to raise issues on the floor of the chamber that reflect the values of their constituents, but if the member for Kingston and the Islands begins speaking with such volume that the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan cannot be heard, it is not the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan who is silenced, but the hundred thousand constituents who live in his riding whose voices do not resound in this august chamber.

This leaves you, Madam Speaker, in a position where you are expected to render a ruling without having heard the arguments because of the obnoxious behaviour of one particular member on the other side. I note that we have here a number of Conservative, Bloc and NDP members who are contributing to the debate, but one member in the Liberal caucus is making more noise than all of us combined, and that is rendering the debate inaudible.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I have been lenient in allowing this debate to proceed.

I see the hon. member for Elgin—Middlesex—London rising.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Madam Speaker, I recognize that this is a very difficult topic, so I would ask that we actually move to statements of the day, go to question period, and then resume this discussion.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

CHANTEL MOORE

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I rise this morning on a very sombre occasion. It is June 4, the first anniversary of the killing of a beautiful young mother and member of the community of the Nuu-chah-nulth. Chantel Moore was killed a year ago today. As I speak here, the hon. member for Fredericton is with Chantel Moore's mother at a memorial service in Fredericton.

It has been a year since Chantel Moore was killed. We know the name of her killer. He is a member of the Edmundston, New Brunswick police force. He killed her on the threshold of her home. She was shot five times. This was in the course of a wellness check.

I am wearing yellow. It was Chantel Moore's favourite colour. Her mother would like us to wear yellow for all of the indigenous people who have been shot, killed and injured by police forces across Canada.

Since Chantel's killing, two more members of the same indigenous nation have been shot by the RCMP. This must stop. Let us fight for Chantel Moore, her memory and the truth.

* * *

• (1105)

PASTOR RALPH BENSON

Mr. Scott Simms (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise with great sadness today to honour Pastor Ralph Benson, who died tragically last month.

Pastor Benson faced many challenges as a young man, but through his relationship with our saviour he persevered to become a pillar in his church, his family and of all Newfoundland and Labrador. Known for his infectious energy and having a huge heart for people, he served Gander and the surrounding area in many ways. Pastor Benson was always there to support and love.

Serving with him through it all is Paulette his wife. They raised three wonderful children, Melissa, Adam and Melanie, and that brings us to perhaps his best role, as "Poppy". His love and pride for his grandchildren were limitless. Nick, Julia, Daniel, Gracie, Avery, Luke and Jesse will walk with his spirit for the rest of their lives.

The loss of Pastor Benson leaves a great hole in our lives and in our hearts. On behalf of all of us here in the House of Commons, I offer our condolences to the family. We will think of Pastor Benson often, until we see him again. God bless.

* * *

YELLOWHEAD

Mr. Gerald Soroka (Yellowhead, CPC): Madam Speaker, last month the community of Tomahawk faced a wildfire. Preparing for the worst-case scenario, certain areas of the community were evacuated. From the start of the fire, food and monetary donations

Statements by Members

poured in and there were numerous offers to help transport and board livestock.

I am in awe at the strength of Tomahawk and the surrounding area, and proud to represent a community so dedicated to helping one another in times of need. This crisis brought the community together and perfectly showcases what it means to be an Albertan.

I would also like to congratulate all the 2021 graduates in my riding of Yellowhead, who have supported each other while doing part of their school year online. These graduates worked through the challenges presented to them and succeeded. I send my congratulations to the class of 2021 on their hard work and dedication. They should remember that this is only the beginning of what they will accomplish.

* * *

TONY DE SOUSA

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise in the House today to pay tribute to Tony De Sousa, a beloved member of the Portuguese community. Tony tragically passed away from cancer on May 26 at the age of 63.

An entrepreneur, born in Lourinha, Portugal, he made Canada his home in 1970. Throughout his life, he remained deeply connected to his roots and was dedicated to the continued success of the Portuguese community in Canada.

As president of the Portuguese Cultural Centre of Mississauga for six years, Tony was a leader who worked tirelessly to keep Portuguese traditions, culture and language alive. He was particularly committed to engaging youth and fostering the love of Portuguese music, dance and culture in the next generations.

One of the local Portuguese newspapers said that he died too young, with too much fado left to listen to, too much music to dance to, and many traditions and cultures still left to live. He will always be fondly remembered, and his contributions will be honoured and never forgotten.

I send our deepest condolences to his wife, Luisa, as well as to his daughter and son-in-law, Michelle and Bruno, and his granddaughter, Jessica.

* * *

COVID-19 PANDEMIC RECOVERY

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have a dream. It is not a big dream. I dream of sitting on a patio with a cold beer and some friends.

I dream of seeing my mom, whom I have not seen in a year and a half. I dream of seeing my brother, my sister and my little nieces, who are growing like wild weeds.

I dream of watching the very first match of the Cochrane Cricket Club in the Northern Ontario Cricket League, and I do not even know if I like cricket.

I dream of ICU wards that are not full of people desperately trying to stay alive.

Statements by Members

I dream that the state of emergency in Fort Albany, Timmins and Moosonee will be lifted so people can travel and see their loved ones.

To make this dream a reality, I am willing to do my part. I am going to get that second dose. I am going to limit contact and break the chain of transmission.

I dream that this nation will come out of these very terrible times a better nation, a more compassionate nation, that we will learn the lessons from these very, very hard months and come together to build a country that leaves no one behind.

That is my dream, and I am looking forward to that beer.

* * *

[Translation]

INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS IN ORLÉANS

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Orléans, Lib.): Madam Speaker, yesterday, June 3, was World Bicycle Day, a day to highlight road safety awareness and the importance of active transportation for our communities.

I am taking this opportunity to commend the government for its active transportation policies, and also for its support to our municipalities, which allows us to revitalize and improve our neighbourhoods.

On Monday, I joined my colleague, municipal councillor Matthew Luloff, to announce the construction of a picnic area at Queenswood Ridge Park in Orléans. This was made possible by an investment in our community of more than \$1 million as part of the municipal component of Infrastructure Canada's investing in Canada infrastructure program: COVID-19 resilience stream.

Pavilions, pedestrian walkways and multi-use paths that will allow cyclists to ride safely are among the projects approved in our community.

* * *

● (1110)

[English]

MATERNITY BENEFITS

Mr. Chris Lewis (Essex, CPC): Madam Speaker, at the outset of the pandemic, Canadians facing hardships were promised the support they needed.

Today, I stand with the MP for Kildonan—St. Paul to bring attention to a maternity benefit issue that needs urgent action. Many mothers have lost their jobs during the pandemic. Those still working have reduced hours and may not qualify. Some Chrysler workers from my riding may face layoffs until the fall.

New mothers and pregnant women currently receiving EI benefits may be forced back to work within weeks of giving birth. They will need to file a new claim, requiring new insurable hours to qualify. These moms should not have to cut short precious time with their newborn children. As a temporary measure, Conservatives are calling on the government to allow expectant mothers and new

mothers on EI to receive their full maternity benefits regardless of insurable hours.

Time is running out for these mothers. To quote my colleague, “Protecting maternity benefits is something all parliamentarians can support.”

* * *

UKRAINE INTERNATIONAL AIRLINES FLIGHT 752

Mr. Majid Jowhari (Richmond Hill, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the downing of flight PS752 has struck a chord with my constituents and the Iranian Canadian community.

The long road to have full accountability, justice and reparation has been challenging, with little transparency on the part of the Government of Iran. Throughout this painful journey, the Canadian government and the strong community voices continue to lead on this fight. On May 20, 2021, the Ontario Superior Court joined this fight and ruled that the downing of flight PS752 was an act of terrorism.

In addition to the steps taken by our government to date, a path to permanent residency for families of victims and the appointment of Mr. Payam Akhavan as a senior adviser on the PS752 case are other key steps in continuing an approach of support and to strive for just closure.

Let there be no mistake. Those who were involved will be held responsible through all means and tools available in both courts of law and people. I would like to thank the Government of Canada for its ongoing leadership and support for all who have been impacted—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Oakville North—Burlington.

* * *

ALS AWARENESS MONTH

Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.): Madam Speaker, June 2 was Lou Gehrig Day, and June is ALS Awareness Month.

Lou Gehrig was one of the best baseball players to play the game. After his diagnosis of the disease that would one day bear his name, he told Yankees fans that even though they had read about his “bad break”, he considered himself “the luckiest man on...earth”.

That was 1939. My friend Tim Robertson lived with ALS for 13 years, and Tim had that same attitude. Whether it was sporting events or Sherpa-ing my signs during election campaigns, Tim never let the disease define him.

However, little has changed since 1939 for those diagnosed with ALS. Today there is still no cure.

ALS Canada provides services and support, funds research, and advocates for change. On June 20, I will be joining Tim's wife, Beth, and walking virtually in the Walk to End ALS. I invite members to join us and support ALS Canada.

* * *

• (1115)

SASKATCHEWAN SUMMER

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Madam Speaker, for 15 months, Canadians have been asked to deal with a lot of very difficult situations, from lockdowns to celebrating family holidays without family or saying goodbye to loved ones in a detached and unfamiliar way.

I truly believe the end of COVID-19 is in sight. I want to thank all frontline workers and their families for their hard work and dedication during the pandemic.

One province has shown true leadership during this pandemic, and that is my home province. The residents of Saskatchewan have been diligent, have done what they were asked to do, and as a result are returning to normal faster than every other province.

Premier Moe announced that if 70% of people aged 12 and up are vaccinated by June 20, Saskatchewan will lift all restrictions by July 11. This means family barbecues, live music and kids playing sports in parks, baseball fields and football fields. Of course, all of us in Saskatchewan are looking forward to hearing the roar of Rider Nation at Mosaic Stadium.

I hope all Canadians can have a Saskatchewan summer.

* * *

EMILY CARR PUBLIC SCHOOL

Ms. Kate Young (London West, Lib.): Madam Speaker, a few days ago, I met virtually with a group of amazing students from Ms. Sesto's grade 6 class at Emily Carr Public School in London West. They all wrote me letters demonstrating their passion for global justice and equality, showing that even at a young age, they are bright, articulate and well-informed global citizens.

Ava, writing to raise awareness about the millions of girls around the world who are not going to school, writes, "Think of all the potential every girl has. We are stronger together."

Ahmed urges us to do more to seriously address climate change, or else, quite truthfully, he writes, "countless people are going to die".

It is inspiring and sobering to see young Canadians so engaged on complex, serious issues such as support for refugees, child soldiers and landmines.

As the member of Parliament for London West, I am pleased to have the opportunity to highlight some of the concerns of my youngest constituents to this chamber.

I thank the students at Emily Carr Public School.

Statements by Members

HONG KONG

Mr. Kenny Chiu (Steveston—Richmond East, CPC): Madam Speaker, the goddess of democracy carries a torch, a torch lit through historic action. One brave man carrying a great burden stood in front of a column of tanks, when gunfire and tanks were used against peaceful students and workers.

Then, thousands were inspired with umbrellas on the streets facing police in riot gear because they believed in something greater for their nation.

For 32 years, the people of Hong Kong have carried their torches. Be it rain or shine, they continue to seek freedom and democracy, peace, prosperity, a responsible and contributive China.

This year, for fear of increasing state retaliation, they cannot. They have been forbidden from remembering the truth of events. This is why we must now carry the great burden, our umbrella torches. We join the world in carrying the torch of lady democracy. Liberty, much like Tiananmen, must never be forgotten.

[Member spoke in Mandarin]

[English]

* * *

HUMAN RIGHTS IN CHINA

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, the iconic image of a single protester standing in front of a large row of tanks in Tiananmen Square is something I will never forget. I was 12, and I will always remember the images of those tanks rolling through student demonstrators in Beijing.

Those students were peacefully protesting political corruption, economic inequality and severe restrictions on their personal freedom and speech. The Chinese government imposed martial law, sent 300,000 soldiers into Beijing and killed demonstrators. These were their own people and their own citizens.

Prime Minister Mulroney saw the Chinese communist regime for what it was in 1989. His government took a firm stance against those catastrophic events inflicted on the Chinese people.

Two Canadians, 32 years later, sit in a Chinese prison on trumped-up charges. Genocide is being committed against the Uighur ethnic minority in China.

Let us not forget the lessons taught to us on June 4, 1989. Let us honour the memories of those who lost their lives, speaking out against tyranny.

I urge the Prime Minister to stand up for Canadian values when it comes to the Chinese communist regime.

Oral Questions

VIOLENCE AGAINST INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND GIRLS

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, the Liberal government's national action plan to implement the missing and murdered indigenous women and girls' 231 calls for justice was finally released yesterday. Sadly, instead of an actual plan, Kukpi7 Chief Judy Wilson called it a bunch of "aspirational statements", with promises we have all heard before.

What the Liberal government needed to do was say clearly that Canada was responsible for the historic and ongoing genocide and outline the steps with a timeline and accountability measures to end this colonial violence against indigenous women and girls. The Liberal government's failure to deliver an actual plan means genocide is going to continue.

Since the national inquiry, hundreds of women and girls have gone missing and been murdered. This is as appalling as the government's refusal to stop taking indigenous children to court, as devastating as the impact of residential schools.

The government is out of excuses and must step up and take full responsibility to end this colonial violence.

* * *

• (1120)

[Translation]

D-DAY

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Madam Speaker, on June 6, we will commemorate the day that Canadian and Quebec soldiers landed in Normandy as part of Operation Neptune, one of the most important moments of the Second World War.

Historian Sébastien Vincent compiled first-hand accounts from French Canadian soldiers who participated in the operation, including infantryman Émilien Dufresne, of the Régiment de la Chaudière:

Goddammit! The morning of June 6, 1944, I remember coming face-to-face with death—real death. A cold death that clings to you and feels unassailable, in spite of any victory we may have envisioned.... I am up to my shoulders in water, holding my gun high above my head. I know that this gun must be protected at all costs. My life depends on it.

To the French and English Canadians who participated in D-Day: We will honour your courage forever.

* * *

[English]

RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Madam Speaker, the discovery of a mass grave at a former residential school in Kamloops has shocked the entire nation, including my constituents in Carleton. The nation grieves the lost little ones and the families that lost them.

Since the news, I have spoken with the former chief from Kamloops, Manny Jules, who rightly reminded us of the need to immediately implement Truth and Reconciliation Commission calls to action 70 through 78.

For example, 74 calls upon the federal government "to work with the churches and Aboriginal...leaders to inform the families of children who died at residential schools of the child's burial...and to respond to families' wishes for appropriate commemoration ceremonies and markers, and reburial in home communities where requested."

That is the very least we can do. It is only the start. Reconciliation is a long journey, and it requires action and action now, so we may move forward together.

* * *

RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

Mr. Sameer Zuberi (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I speak to members now from the unceded traditional lands of the Kanien'kéha people, what we know of today as Montreal.

What happened to indigenous peoples in residential schools is unconscionable. The bodies of 215 children were found in a Kamloops residential school mass grave. This happened here in the Canada we call home. The residential school policy of "kill the Indian in the child" led to horrendous acts, acts the Truth and Reconciliation Commission concluded amounted to cultural genocide.

I have elementary-aged girls. I cannot begin to imagine the terrible pain parents felt when their children were ripped from their loving homes and never came back. As a society, we must continue to fully reconcile with indigenous peoples through self-learning and self-reckoning, as difficult as this is.

Through this, I hope that we as a country will become an example of reconciliation.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Madam Speaker, Canadians need jobs. Workers have been dealing with instability and uncertainty throughout this pandemic. Rising house prices and the challenges of lockdown are just two of the reasons Canadians need stability.

Today we learned that Canada shed 68,000 jobs in May alone. The Prime Minister had promised one million new jobs, however. Why does he make promises that he cannot keep?

Oral Questions

• (1125)

[English]

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and to the Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would point out the obvious for the hon. member that the recent jobs report is a factor not of some fundamental flaw with our nation's economy, but instead of public health measures that have been put in place to protect the public's health and, in fact, secure the long-term interests of our economy. I would also point him to the fact that after the second wave we saw in Canada in February and March, more than 560,000 jobs were added to the economy.

The reality is that we know the best thing we can do to protect our economy is to launch a strong public health response. If the hon. member opposes those public health measures designed to protect Canadians, he should say so.

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Madam Speaker, before the pandemic, the unemployment rate was below 6%. Now that we are in the economic recovery phase, we expect the rate to start going back to normal.

However, the unemployment rate is trending in the opposite direction. According to Statistics Canada, it has gone from 8.1% to 8.2%. We are getting nowhere with the Liberal Party. In fact, we feel like we are constantly going backward. When does the Prime Minister plan to change course?

[English]

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and to the Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for pointing out that before the pandemic, because of the measures our government had put in place, we actually achieved the lowest unemployment rate since we started keeping track of those statistics in Canada more than 40 years ago.

With respect, our strategy in response to the public health emergency has been to launch the strongest public health response possible and to put financial supports in place for households and businesses. We know, in the long term, that our recovery depends on their participation.

I am pleased to see that the hon. member would support these initiatives that are designed to support households and businesses. That is what is going to help protect Canadian jobs in the long term.

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Madam Speaker, we know that the unemployment rate keeps going up and that Canadians are starting to get discouraged and have given up looking for work. Canada is supposed to be a land of opportunity, but it is clear that Canadians are losing hope.

We lost 68,000 jobs in May in addition to the 207 jobs lost in April. Will the government focus on Canadian workers and jobs, as promised?

[English]

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and to the Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is sincerely disappointing to see that Canada's Conservative Party is misrepresenting the statistics. What is actually happening is, yes, we have seen a decline in job numbers this month, but it is because provincial governments have done the responsible thing to restrict certain activities to protect the public's health and secure the long-term economic outlook of the Canadian economy. The member forgets that in February and March, over 560,000 jobs were added to the economy. Canadians deserve honesty in this conversation.

The best thing we can do to protect the long-term economic outlook for Canada is to launch a strong—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Carleton.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member blames these disastrous job numbers on provincial health restrictions, restrictions that the Prime Minister made necessary by his COVID response failure. He failed on vaccines, failed to close the borders to COVID hot spots. Now we have lost another 68,000 jobs, the second consecutive month of catastrophic job loss, while the Americans have added half a million new jobs.

We now have the second-highest unemployment in the G7, even though all those other countries have COVID too. The difference is they have COVID, we have a Liberal government. That is why Canadians are losing their jobs.

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and to the Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the hon. member criticizes the government's public health response. I would remind him that Canada recently became the highest-ranked country of any G20 nation in terms of the number of people who have gotten the first dose of their vaccine.

If he would like to compare us to the Americans, I would point him to the fact that we have now had 80.9% of the jobs recovered compared to 65.9% in the United States. Our labour force participation is higher in Canada than in the United States.

The reality is that the Canadian economy is on stable footing, as reaffirmed recently by the credit rating agencies across the world. We are on stable footing. We will see these jobs come back—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Carleton.

Oral Questions

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member cites “jobs recovered”. We had so much more unemployment in this country, and so many more people who needed to recover their jobs, because the government’s failure drove unemployment much higher than our competitors. In fact, we have higher unemployment than the U.S., the U.K., Japan, Germany and France. Only socialist Italy, which the government is trying to replicate, has worse unemployment than Canada.

As for doses, other countries are on to their second doses while we only have single digits who have had them. Why is the government killing—

• (1130)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and to the Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is insincere for the hon. member to suggest that we have underperformed compared with our international counterparts. If he actually wants to dig into the raw data, we have more Canadians working as a portion of our labour force today than the Americans. He criticized my argument about the number of jobs recovered. I expressed it as a proportion, so his argument falls apart entirely on the basis that we have somehow lost more jobs. The reality is that Canada has launched one of the most ambitious recovery plans. It has saved millions of Canadian families from unnecessary hardship. We will continue to be there for Canadians as long as it takes, no matter what it takes. It is disappointing—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Saint-Jean.

* * *

[*Translation*]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, we know immigration delays are endless.

However, we learned today from the Information Commissioner that the federal government is also taking it upon itself to decide who is asking too many questions and deliberately delay their files.

The commissioner said that Immigration Canada arbitrarily tacks on extensions to avoid responding to access to information requests from people who want to know what is going on with their file.

Will the minister at the very least respect people, respect the Access to Information Act and answer immigrants’ questions about their files?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Madam Speaker, our government is committed to openness and transparency.

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada receives more than half of all government access to information requests, and the number of requests has gone up by 36%. Even so, we continue to make progress, and most requests are fulfilled within 30 days. Im-

migration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada also closed 26% more requests than the previous year. We will keep working on this.

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, last month, we learned that the minister deliberately slowed down the processing of permanent residency applications from skilled workers who had been selected by Quebec.

Now we learn that he is delaying not only applications, but also access to information requests filed by people who want to know what is happening with their case. The problem is even worse for Quebec applicants.

The minister is putting the future of people and families at the bottom of the pile. When will he start helping to deal with the backlog instead of deliberately making things worse?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Madam Speaker, here are the facts. We are on track to meet Quebec’s 2021 targets, including for the family class. We have added resources. We went from paper to digital. We gave priority to family reunification applications, and we have already supported over 14,000 foreign workers in Quebec’s agricultural sector.

This is good for Quebec, and it is good for the economy. We will continue to work with our partners in Quebec and across Canada because immigration is important for the economic strategy.

* * *

AIRLINE INDUSTRY

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, Air Canada executives are making out like bandits, bandits who are receiving \$6 billion in public funds, bandits who are taking advantage of the wage subsidy for workers, bandits who have shamelessly laid off thousands of employees, bandits who are adding insult to injury by giving themselves obscene bonuses.

Why does the minister not speak out against Air Canada? How can she suggest that this is none of her business? Is she afraid to go after the large corporations that call the shots?

[*English*]

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and to the Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to correct the hon. member. As the minister pointed out, the behaviour of Air Canada is completely unacceptable in these circumstances. The notion that it would issue large bonuses to corporate executives, at a time when it is taking public funds designed to support workers, is not fair. Canadians see that.

Oral Questions

I would like to point out for the hon. member that we have made changes to the wage subsidy program to insist that companies will have to pay back their wage subsidies if they increase executive compensation. In the recent deal we struck with Air Canada, we placed a cap on executive compensation. It will not be able to avoid that cap until one full year after it has paid back every dollar owed to the Canadian taxpayers.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is not just Air Canada that is taking public funds and paying big executive bonuses, because the Prime Minister seems to be giving unprecedented support to banks and billionaires through this pandemic. Banks have received \$750 billion in liquidity supports through government institutions. They have made nearly \$60 billion in pandemic profits and banks are repaying Canadians by jacking up bank fees. The government has the tools to prevent gouging. It is choosing not to use them.

At this difficult time, why are the Liberals letting the banks rip off Canadians with higher bank fees?

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and to the Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I point out to the hon. member that some of the supports he is referring to were offered by independent organizations to the banks, to allow them to loan more money to Canadians to help provide relief for mortgage payments.

The reality is the wage subsidy program was designed to support workers. I am pleased to report that it has helped keep more than 5.3 million Canadian workers on the payroll so they could contribute to the economic recovery and were able to put food on the table in the interim.

The reality is that the member voted against our opportunity to raise taxes on the wealthiest 1% so we could cut them for the middle class. When he had an opportunity to send less money to millionaires through the Canada child benefit and put more money in the pockets of nine out of 10 Canadian families, he voted against it as well, so—

• (1135)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Richmond—Arthabaska.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Madam Speaker, in Bill C-10, the Liberals are attacking freedom of expression and net neutrality. Now, they are attacking the freedom of expression of the parliamentarians who are examining the bill in committee by imposing a gag order. That is unbelievable. The problem with the bill has to do with freedom of expression, and to solve it, they are imposing a gag order with the help of the Bloc Québécois.

Is there a Liberal in the House, a single one, who will have the courage to speak out against this undemocratic move?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Madam Speaker, first, I would like to say that the premise of

my colleague's question is completely false because public servants who are independent from the Department of Justice Canada conducted an independent analysis of Bill C-10 and the deputy minister appeared before the committee to say that Bill C-10 falls completely within the framework of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The committee has already adopted a clause in Bill C-10 that states that the CRTC must exercise its power within the limits of freedom of expression, journalistic freedom and creative freedom—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Order. The hon. member for Richmond—Arthabaska.

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Madam Speaker, what the minister is doing here, trying to silence the Conservatives with this gag order, is unacceptable. In doing so, the Liberals are ignoring the advice of experts, university professors, former CRTC commissioners and thousands of Canadians who have been standing up for freedom of expression and net neutrality since the very beginning of this study. I would be ashamed to be a Liberal member today.

How can they show so little respect for all these Canadian citizens and experts by muzzling parliamentarians in committee?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would remind my colleague that Bill C-10 is the result of the Yale report, issued by a commission that worked for over 18 months and received 2,000 submissions from across the country.

Furthermore, Bill C-10 is supported by the entire arts community across the country. A petition signed by several thousand artists supports Bill C-10. As recently as last week, *The Globe and Mail* published a letter signed by several leading Canadian artists who also support Bill C-10.

The problem with Bill C-10 is that the Conservative Party unfortunately does not want to support artists.

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Madam Speaker, the minister is spreading misinformation. We have nothing against culture, but we do oppose this minister's and the Liberal's censorship.

Today they are showing us that they are opposed to net neutrality; they are attacking Canadians' freedom of expression on social media and they are using any means they can to give more power to the CRTC. If we do not think like the Liberals, then we deserve to be silenced.

To make things worse, the Liberals have been trying for six years to make us believe that committees are independent and today they are imposing time allocation. How—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Order. The hon. minister.

Oral Questions

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Conservative Party is attacking our artists and artisans. Every month that goes by, the Conservative Party is depriving Canada's artistic community of \$70 million. Bill C-10 will make web giants pay. I do not understand why the Conservative Party has decided to stand with some of the richest companies in the world, such as Google, rather than support our artists.

[English]

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, "how low can they go" is the name of the game when it comes to free speech with the Liberals and their attack, time and time again.

Bill C-10 undeniably threatens the voices of Canadian creators. MPs have contended for them by standing up for their voices and their right to both freely express and be freely heard. What the government is doing now is nothing less than a gag order. Censoring the voices of creators was not enough. Now it is having to stop members of Parliament from debating this atrocious bill at committee.

Why is that?

• (1140)

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to remind my colleague that the Bloc Québécois supports Bill C-10. The NDP supports Bill C-10. The Greens support Bill C-10. Obviously, the government supports Bill C-10 and artists across the country support Bill C-10.

The real question is, why has the Conservative Party decided to side with some of the wealthiest companies in the world, such as Google, instead of supporting our artists?

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, no other democratic country in the world uses its broadcasting act to censor what Canadians post online. Let that sink in for just a moment.

It would appear that the Prime Minister wants Canada to be likened to countries like North Korea and Communist China. Experts have called Bill C-10 the most regressive piece of legislation they have ever seen.

Why is the Liberal government so determined to rush it through, to silence our voices and to move on this piece of legislation that it is shutting down debate within committee?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Madam Speaker, for the Conservative Party of Canada to say that it supports artists is like when it says it supports climate change, yet it voted down a motion to recognize climate change at its annual meeting. The Conservative Party says it supports the Charter of Rights, yet 81 Conservative members voted this week to strip away women's right to choose.

Canadians do not buy it, and artists certainly do not buy it. The Conservative Party has never been in favour of artists. When it was in power, we saw a number of cutbacks. Frankly, this is just more of the same.

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, we are talking about free speech. The government's Bill C-10 intends to censor artists and creators who are achieving success online.

We were in the middle of going through Bill C-10 clause by clause in committee, which is the normal and right legislative process here in this place. The government does not want any more problems to be discovered with its bill, and it is plagued with them, by the way.

Why is the government shutting us down? It is nothing less than a gag order.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Madam Speaker, yet again, we have more fearmongering on the part of the Conservative Party.

Let me point out that during the first four meetings of the committee, the committee was able to study 79 amendments. Since the Conservative Party decided to start systematically obstructing the work of the committee, during the last 11 meetings, we were barely able to make it through seven amendments.

If the committee were to pick up the same pace that it had initially, it would have plenty of time to go through all of the remaining amendments. However, if we continue going at the rate we are going now, in six months' time the bill would still be in front of the committee.

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[Translation]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, yesterday the Senate adopted a motion calling on the Minister of Immigration to grant citizenship to Raif Badawi. That is the exact same demand that the House of Commons unanimously passed in January. It is unanimous. Everyone wants the minister to take action. I am emphasizing that this was unanimous because it means that even the minister agreed. The minister has the power to grant citizenship to Raif Badawi, who has been imprisoned for nine years even though he did not commit a crime. His wife and children are waiting for him in Quebec.

When will the minister finally do something?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his leadership on this issue.

I know they are quite passionate on that side of the House. I will continue to work with all members of the House. We recognize the motions that have recently been passed by the House and the Senate. We will always stand up for human rights here, in Canada, and around the world. We should be very proud to have an immigration system that is based on compassion and the rule of law.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, allow me to repeat what I just said.

Yesterday, the Senate called on the government to grant citizenship to Raif Badawi. The House unanimously called for the same in January. That is right: in January. That was five months ago. The clock is running.

I am not sure if the minister realizes that time can feel like an eternity in prison in Saudi Arabia. Time feels like an eternity to Mr. Badawi's wife. Time feels like an eternity to his children who have not seen their father in nine years.

When will the minister grant citizenship to Raif Badawi?

• (1145)

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as I was saying, I have a great deal of respect for my colleague. I know that this is a very important issue.

Canada will always stand up for human rights around the world and we remain deeply concerned about Mr. Badawi's detention. This case is very sensitive and we will continue to put his health and safety first. Every Canadian MP and, in fact, every Canadian wants Mr. Badawi to be reunited with his family.

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[English]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Madam Speaker, every time the government partners with the Communist regime in China, Canadians end up suffering. First, it was the Prime Minister's partnership with China on vaccines that put the lives of Canadians at risk. Now it is the government's foolish investments in the China-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. The Prime Minister has given millions of dollars to a bank that invests all over Asia, but not in Canada. Meanwhile, our two Michaels languish in Chinese jails.

Why is the Prime Minister partnering with the Chinese Communist government while ignoring two innocent Canadians?

Mr. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as we have said before in this House, Canada will remain firm and resolute in defending our principles and interests when it comes to China. We have a complex and multi-dimensional relationship with China. It presents many challenges for Canadians. Many of our international partners also face similar challenges and we are actively engaging with them on all of these issues.

Our policies are based on Canadian interests, our fundamental values and principles, including human rights, as well as global rules and strategic partnerships. We will stand firm and smart in our relationship with China.

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Madam Speaker, they are all talk and no action.

The finance minister has refused to say whether she made the return of the two Michaels a condition of throwing millions of taxpayers' money at this China-led bank. She also will not tell Parliament how many Canadian jobs this bank has created or how many of our small businesses have benefited. The lack of accountability is appalling. Meanwhile, it has been over 900 days since China threw the two Michaels into prison.

Why does the minister continue to appease China when she cannot even secure—

Oral Questions

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there is no appeasement going on. The situation of Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor weighs upon our minds and our hearts and our actions every day. Our ambassador is in touch whenever we are able to get consular access to them, as well as others, including Mr. Schellenberg, and others we are not able to get access to.

We will stand firm, resolute and smart in our relationship with China. We continue to stress the principles that Canadians expect us to stress and we will continue to work with our partners around the globe, ensuring that we find a way to have the international rules-based order and human rights adhered to by China.

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SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, the government's lack of a plan for a safe, permanent reopening and late vaccine deliveries have taken a brutal toll on small businesses. Many still need access to the Canadian emergency business account to have a fighting chance for survival. A keystroke error should not mean weeks or months of delay or denial of access to the government's most basic small business pandemic support.

When will businesses be able to correct simple mistakes and typos and qualify for the CEBA?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to report to this House that yesterday an advisory was sent to our financial institutions. We have found a solution for those new businesses that are having difficulty accessing the CEBA loan program, whether it is the \$40,000 initially or the top-up of \$20,000 that we introduced in September.

I would also like to add that we are working on a number of other initiatives, including a very important initiative that was mentioned in the budget, in order to lower credit card transaction fees for our merchants, as well as a new program—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Calgary Rocky Ridge.

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, announcements and promises are not a correction mechanism.

Oral Questions

Small businesses are drowning in debt and need their customers back. The government's failure to procure vaccines and make prudent use of other tools has kept too many businesses closed for far too long and contributed to the recent brutal jobs numbers.

Will the government finally table a plan for areas under its jurisdiction for a safe and permanent reopening?

• (1150)

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as the member opposite knows, it is the provinces and territories that are responsible for imposing local restrictions that may be affecting our small businesses. What the member opposite should also know is that this federal government has been there since the very beginning in order to support all of our small businesses and all of our entrepreneurs right across the country. We have introduced, of course, the wage subsidy and the rent subsidy, as well as numerous other supports, and extended those supports in the most recent budget.

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FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Madam Speaker, in my riding, wild salmon is key to our cultural and economic health and needs immediate action from the government to survive.

In 2019, the Liberals made it clear, both in the election and then in the minister's mandate letter, that fish aquaculture would be changing. The parliamentary secretary has been consulting on this since well before Christmas with the industry, indigenous leaders and the public.

Now, after waiting over two months, aquaculture workers and wild salmon advocates are looking for clarity. There is no time to waste. Would the parliamentary secretary give us a date on when we can expect to see this report?

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard and to the Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages (B.C.), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I very much appreciate this question. In fact, wild Pacific salmon is a priority for this government, which is why budget 2021 dedicated \$647 million to the recovery of abundance in wild salmon. It is a historic and unprecedented announcement.

I also appreciate the opportunity to discuss the report. We have been consulting with stakeholders across British Columbia, and I fully expect that the report will be ready in the next number of weeks.

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INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, one year ago today, a New Brunswick police officer shot and killed Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation member Chantel Moore, during a wellness check. The first nation and family requested a meeting

with the public safety minister and meaningful police reforms to address violence against indigenous people.

Since Chantel was killed, two more police shootings, one fatal, have occurred to Tla-o-qui-aht community members.

What is it going to take for the minister to bring forward police reforms and meet directly with the family and leadership of the Nuu-chah-nulth people?

Hon. Bill Blair (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Madam Speaker, our thoughts, of course, are with the family and friends as they mark the anniversary of the tragic death of that young woman.

Following the tragic passing of Ms. Moore, which involved the Edmundston municipal police service, I spoke with the New Brunswick regional chief and the president of the Nuu-chah-nulth tribal council to discuss wellness checks and the different rules of the police in our communities. I think it is essential that there always be a timely, transparent, independent investigation in these matters.

The Quebec independent police oversight agency has investigated this case and has turned over the results to the province's public prosecution services—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Surrey Centre.

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PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Randeep Sarai (Surrey Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Surrey region was hard hit by the coronavirus this spring. Nurses, doctors, respiratory therapists and other health care providers have worked around the clock to care for patients and administer vaccines.

As we see a decrease in cases across the country and an increase in vaccines administered, I would like to ask the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement when more Canadians can expect to begin receiving their second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to give a shout-out to and thank my colleague for Surrey Centre for his support for frontline health care workers and for highlighting the collaboration with provincial and territorial partners, which has been key to our vaccine rollouts.

Canadians are already being scheduled for and receiving their second doses, and every Canadian who wants to will be fully vaccinated by September. In fact, my hon. colleague will know that 3.85 million doses have been delivered to his home province. Over two-thirds of British Columbians have received at least one dose. At least two million doses are arriving in Canada every week in June and July.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer—Mountain View, CPC): Madam Speaker, rural Canadians have been waiting years for accessible, affordable and reliable Internet service. Last week, the Liberal-appointed chair of the CRTC, who has previous ties to big telecom companies, slashed hopes with a reversal of the commission's previous decision on wholesale access rates.

My constituents are tired of this backroom lobbying by large telecom companies. Why does the Liberal government consistently refuse to stand up for Canadian consumers, and why has it abandoned its election platform commitment to affordable Internet services?

• (1155)

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would say that we are standing up, and we share the member's goal, and I think the goal of all members in this House, around affordability, competition and innovation. The member will know that our government has been relentless in promoting competition to lower prices while working to improve the quality and increase the coverage of telecom services in Canada. We are ensuring that Canadians pay affordable prices for reliable Internet services, regardless of their postal code.

We will keep working with service providers and we will fight for—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Souris—Moose Mountain.

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HEALTH

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Madam Speaker, right now the demand for mental health services in Canada is higher than ever, and the government has failed the many struggling Canadians who are still waiting for help.

It has been nearly six months since this House passed a motion to establish a national suicide prevention hotline, and instead of taking action, the Liberals are passing the buck to the CRTC, causing more delays.

Why does the government continue to drag its feet on immediate action to this life-saving initiative?

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Madam Speaker, on the contrary, since the beginning of our mandate we have made investments in mental health supports as we know this has been a critical area of investment prior to COVID, throughout COVID and post-COVID.

When it comes to the three-digit hotline, I am happy to say that the CRTC has announced a consultation period. I implore everyone to provide that feedback.

We also have invested in resources now, like Wellness Together Canada, that provide immediate services to over a million Canadians and we will continue to invest in this critical area.

Oral Questions

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Chris d'Entremont (West Nova, CPC): Madam Speaker, the residents along the Avon River in Nova Scotia are looking for the Minister of Fisheries' final decision on the Windsor causeway.

Her interim decision a few months ago has created chaos along the river. Lake Pisiquid is now a dusty, dry basin, apparently causing respiratory problems for residents of the town of Windsor. There are reports of fish and turtle kills upstream, where fresh water and salt water are now mixing. The new unpredictable water flow is causing bank erosion, causing nightmares for families and farmers.

What decision will the minister make, aboiteau or no aboiteau?

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard and to the Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages (B.C.), Lib.): Madam Speaker, protecting the environment and biodiversity is a priority for our government. We remain committed to ensuring adequate passage for fish at the Avon River tidal gate.

Our department is currently reviewing, under the Fisheries Act, an application from the Government of Nova Scotia for replacing the existing tidal gate. The project will be evaluated for fish passage for all species likely to use the Avon River.

* * *

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Madam Speaker, last year the government entered into an agreement to compensate federal public servants with Phoenix pay damages, and yet one year later retired and former public servants cannot even apply, let alone be compensated, because the government has failed to set up a claims process.

After one year, when will the government stop dragging its feet and see that retired and former public servants receive the compensation they are entitled to?

Oral Questions

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague well knows that the Conservatives left us with a brutal mess in terms of the Phoenix pay system. We have had to clean it up and indeed extend compensation to all public servants, including retired and former public servants. We will continue to do that. Public servants have all received their general damages, and retired public servants and former public servants will similarly see this compensation.

* * *

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, tomorrow is World Environment Day, but I would like to remind the House that this government authorized hundreds of oil drilling projects off the coast of Newfoundland, abolishing environmental assessments over an area of 735,000 square kilometres.

On May 5, the Minister of Natural Resources explained that he sees the oil industry as a partner in the fight against climate change, adding that this is how we are going to achieve net zero by 2050.

Can he explain to me how drilling for oil without an environmental assessment over an area half the size of Quebec can fight climate change?

[English]

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we have a bold and ambitious plan to protect our environment, reduce emissions and create a sustainable economy for our kids and grandkids. Do not take my word for it. Former leader of the B.C. Green Party and leading climate scientist Andrew Weaver called our pollution pricing plan the gold standard and described our plan as an innovative, inspiring climate plan. We are here to protect the environment, to fight climate change. It is a crisis, and we are taking significant, bold action.

● (1200)

[Translation]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Madam Speaker, tomorrow is World Environment Day.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind the House that, when Ottawa announced its new greenhouse gas reduction targets, it promised to give those targets force of law. On April 22, the Minister of Canadian Heritage said, “we will include Canada’s 2030 climate change target in Bill C-12”.

Not only did the government not do that, but it is also fighting the Bloc Québécois in committee to prevent us from doing so in its stead. Why is it refusing to include the targets in the bill? Is it because it has no intention of meeting them?

[English]

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Canadian net-zero emissions accountability act has robust account-

ability and transparency. Just to name a few aspects, it has a legally binding process for the federal government to set climate targets and bring forward plans to meet those targets; rigorous ongoing process reports; yearly reports by the independent advisory body; and ongoing audits by the Office of the Auditor General of Canada.

As the minister has previously stated, we are open to amendments from all committee members, and we look forward to speedy passage of the bill through committee.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Business Council of Canada says that the government is stifling our economic recovery by not presenting a clear plan to reopen. Now we see, as a direct result of this inaction, 68,000 job losses in May.

In the United States, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has specified what citizens with two doses can and cannot do. Premier Moe has announced that if 70% of people age 12 and up are vaccinated by June 20, all restrictions in Saskatchewan will be lifted by as early as July 11.

Why is the Prime Minister’s default position on reopening plans always no? Clearly, he should be thinking more like our Premier Moe. Where is the Prime Minister’s national reopening plan?

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and to the Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would be happy to offer the hon. member a basic lesson in civics. It is the responsibility of provincial governments, as he just alluded to in his question, to bear the responsibility for the economic activities that are permissible in a community. Thankfully, his criticism of job numbers is also without merit, as it is a reflection of—

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Sean Fraser: —the provincial public health restrictions that have been put in place to keep people safe. He interrupted me because he does not have the ability to remain calm when dealing with facts he does not agree with.

The fact of the matter is that we have had an excellent record both to protect the public health of Canadians and to support them through this pandemic from the very beginning. We will not stop until it is done.

HEALTH

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister has announced that next week he will be travelling to Europe for in-person meetings. He has been able to attend these types of meetings virtually for the last several months.

I do not doubt that he is itching to travel abroad and put himself an ocean away from parliamentary scrutiny, but there are countless businesses that rely on customers crossing the border that are not being extended this same courtesy.

Which hotel will the Prime Minister be staying at when he returns home or will he just have the taxpayers of this country pay his new \$5,000 fine for him, as he walks past the rest of us with his nose in the air?

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Madam Speaker, when it comes to our border measures, Canada has some of the strictest border measures in the world and we have done so precisely to add layers of protection. Each of these layers of protection is in place to track, trace and stop the spread of COVID-19.

While the Conservatives one day say they want stricter border measures, the next day they say they do not. The only thing consistent with the Conservatives when it comes to public health measures is their inconsistency. We will not take lessons from them. We will listen to science and experts to make sure we keep—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Foothills.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am glad that the parliamentary secretary said they will listen to science and data, because for months we have asked the Liberals to provide data proving that the mandatory quarantine hotels are more effective at limiting the spread of COVID than quarantining at home. However, thus far the Liberals have refused to provide that data, likely because it does not exist.

The report from the expert panel could not be more clear. The hotel quarantines are expensive, ineffective and should be shut down. The Liberals did not consult provinces when they initiated the hotel quarantine, so they do not need to consult now.

Will the Liberals listen to those experts, listen to science and data and shut down the hotel quarantine program now?

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Madam Speaker, once again, leave it to Conservatives to have an Ottawa-knows-best approach. We do not think so. We actually agree with working with provinces and territories on public health measures, including working with them when it comes to lifting restrictions. As I said before, the border measures are in place specifically as layers of protection to track, trace and stop the spread of COVID-19, which will save lives.

Again, the Conservatives are inconsistent on their border measures. I do not know which day of the week they are going to change their mind—

● (1205)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Etobicoke Centre.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Yvan Baker (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, this Saturday, we will celebrate World Environment Day. The theme this year is ecosystem restoration. From forests to plains to coasts, we all depend on healthy ecosystems for our survival.

Would the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment tell the House what our government is doing to restore our ecosystems for current and future generations of Canadians?

[English]

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Etobicoke Centre for his tireless work to safeguard our environment.

Canadians understand the value of nature and wild species, and the essential role they play for our health and well-being. This is why our government is committed to conserving a quarter of Canada's lands and oceans by 2025, thanks to a further investment of over \$4 billion for nature in budget 2021.

We will continue our work with Canadians and indigenous communities to restore our ecosystems and protect our environment for our kids and our grandkids.

* * *

CANADA SUMMER JOBS PROGRAM

Mr. Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, local non-profits and our youth have faced great challenges during COVID. Canada summer jobs is supposed to help them.

That is why it is disturbing to learn from applicants like the Ridge Meadows Recycling Society, the Fraser North Farmers Market Society and Northridge Church that, unlike past years, there is no flexibility on the number of positions, hours or weeks a job can last. The government's lack of flexibility means we have unfilled positions and unemployed youth, the last thing the economy needs.

Why are the Liberals making things so difficult?

Oral Questions

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Canada's prosperity and post-COVID economic recovery depends on young Canadians getting the education and experience they need to succeed in their careers. That is why the Canada summer jobs program is an important part of our government's youth employment and skill strategy, and we are committed to significantly scaling up this program.

Last year, we approved 80,000 Canada summer job placements. This year, a record-breaking 150,000 job opportunities are now available through the Canada summer jobs program, meaning more opportunities for young Canadians than ever before.

We will continue to be there to help young Canadians through these challenging times.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Madam Speaker, after the Prime Minister's embarrassing comments about whipping out our fighter jets, he shifted from air support to training Iraqi soldiers. Canadian soldiers sent to Iraq reported evidence their trainees had committed war crimes, but were ignored.

The minister claims no knowledge of the evidence again. His parliamentary secretary told the House that the government was no longer training those particular Iraqis and a rigorous screening process had been put into place.

Why were soldiers instructed to ignore evidence of war crimes, other than to protect the Prime Minister's decision?

Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Canada is determined to keep greater peace and security in the world and remains a strong partner in the fight against Daesh. We are committed to meeting our obligations under international and domestic law.

Our government takes allegations like these very seriously. We are actively looking into these very troubling allegations since we have learned of them.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mr. David Yurdiga (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Madam Speaker, the government has borrowed and spent an unprecedented amount of money in the time the Liberals have been in power. In the past year alone, the debt-to-GDP ratio has grown by almost 20%.

If the government insists on dumping all this new spending onto the Canadian economy, how does the Prime Minister expect the prices will not rise? Why is the Liberal government forcing Canadian people to endure the massive inflation that is coming?

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and to the Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, this is a key example of where Conserva-

tive ideology gets in the way of formulating successful policy. If he has complaints about the amount of money we are spending, I would point him to the major credit rating agencies. He can take his pick.

Moody's, S&P and DBRS have all reaffirmed Canada's AAA credit rating. If he is concerned about our debt-to-GDP ratio, I would point him to the fact that we have the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio of any G7 economy.

The reality is that when we launched into this public health emergency of a scale we have never seen before, we decided we would be there for people and for businesses. The effect of that response—

● (1210)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Sudbury.

* * *

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Sudbury, Lib.): Madam Speaker, throughout this pandemic, regional development agencies have been an invaluable tool in delivering money directly to businesses that needed it most. In budget 2021, this government has signalled that our RDAs will continue to play an important role in job creation and economic growth, including with the creation of an independent FedNor.

Could the Minister of Economic Development tell the House how an independent FedNor will help northern Ontario to grow its economy?

Mr. Terry Sheehan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages (FedNor), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Sudbury for his outstanding advocacy for all of northern Ontario.

Canada's regional development agencies have been a key part of our COVID response, and they will continue to play an important role as we look toward economic recovery.

As we announced in budget 2021, we are committed to creating an independent FedNor, which will help get support out more quickly to northern Ontario businesses, organizations and communities. Our government believes in an economy where no one is left behind. By empowering FedNor, we are ensuring that people across northern Ontario get the benefits of job creation and economic growth.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, this week, the International Institute for Sustainable Development recommended that indigenous governments, leaders and communities play an active role in navigating and benefiting from Canada's journey to net zero as equal partners.

New Zealand created the Office of the Maori Climate Commissioner, so Maori are equal partners in how to meet their climate obligations. Here in Canada, instead of working with indigenous peoples, the Liberal government is fighting them in court.

Will the government commit to an equal partnership with indigenous Canadians as we move to net zero?

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his passion about Canada achieving net zero by 2050, which is a commitment the government has made through Bill C-12 that is making its way through committee.

Indigenous knowledge forms a central part of that bill and of the expert committee involved. That is a commitment by the government, and something we will continue to do to ensure that Canada meets its targets of net zero by 2050.

* * *

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Ramesh Sangha (Brampton Centre, Ind.): Madam Speaker, the global COVID-19 pandemic situation has been prevalent here for more than one year. There are still vaccination shortages in hotspot areas.

Why is the government failing to speed up the supply and distribution of the second dose of vaccinations to Canadians?

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague will know that we are not third; we are not second, but we are first in the G20, in the G7 for first doses of vaccines. Well over 60% of Canadians have received that first dose; 29 million doses have been distributed right across the country and 25 million administered.

Canada is proud of its leadership position, and we see cases coming down all over the country. We are very happy with how vaccines are proceeding.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Mr. Scott Simms (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I want to apologize in the beginning, with your indulgence and that of the House.

I was informed by the IT ambassador that when I did my member's statement, my mike was not working. With the indulgence of the House, I was hoping to repeat my statement.

Points of Order

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Do the hon. members consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Scott Simms: Madam Speaker, it is with great sadness that I rise today to honour Pastor Ralph Benson, who died tragically last month.

Pastor Benson faced many challenges as a young man, but through his relationship with our saviour he persevered to become a pillar of his church, his family and all of Newfoundland and Labrador. Known for having an infectious energy and huge heart for people, he served Gander and the surrounding area in many ways. Pastor Benson was always there to offer support and love.

Serving with him through it all was Paulette, his wife. They raised three wonderful children, Melissa, Adam and Melanie, and that brings us to perhaps his best role: Poppy. His love for and pride in his grandchildren Nick, Julia, Daniel, Gracie, Avery, Luke and Jesse were limitless. They will walk with his spirit for the rest of their lives.

The loss of Pastor Benson leaves a great hole in our lives and in our hearts. On behalf of all of us here in the House of Commons, our condolences to the family. We will think of Pastor Benson often until we see him again. May God bless him.

● (1215)

BILL C-10—TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. In response to the minister on Bill C-10, the NDP has supported the process to this point for Bill C-10, but we are waiting for a full discussion and the final bill to make our decision.

DECORUM

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, although I have significant points of order regarding the proceedings this morning, I will leave those for another time.

I would specifically call your attention to how important it is that the actions of members on camera also reflect the expected high standards in the House. Specifically, this morning the member for Fleetwood—Port Kells held up a sign in his camera that was a picture of a meter, and “BS meter” was displayed clearly for members to see. I would urge you to consider very carefully whether that fits within the decorum that is expected on the very important issues that we debate within this chamber.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I thank the hon. member for bringing it to our attention. We will look into it and come back to the House.

Routine Proceedings

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like you to rule. The member for Central Nova made a very personal attack on the member for Regina—Lewvan with respect to his abilities, his management of his feelings and so forth. I think you will find those comments are unparliamentary and should be withdrawn.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Again we will review it and come back to the House, if necessary.

monton, when in fact his riding is in Sherwood Park, it will then have a corrupted result. I would just like to confirm that we have his riding properly named in the roll call.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The Chair has been calling for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan correctly, not for Edmonton. The member was counted properly.

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(Division No. 129)

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8)(a), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 12 petitions. These returns will be tabled in an electronic format.

While I am on my feet, I move:

That the House do now proceed to orders of the day.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): If a member of a recognized party present in the House wishes to request a recorded division or that the motion be adopted on division, I would invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I believe we can adopt this on division.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Madam Speaker, I would request a recorded division.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Call in the members.

Before the Clerk announced the results of the vote:

• (1310)

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, I am rising on a point of order. I committed, without intending to, the cardinal sin in democracy of voting twice. I came in and then I realized it was after the question, so although I voted in the standing vote, I also then voted on the app.

Therefore, I believe, because I voted on the app, my vote should count for nay, but it should only count once and not twice. There may be confusion in the records if I am listed as having voted twice, and I want to make sure my vote is not being counted twice, or not at all, but as one vote.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Yes, that is duly registered. We will now wait for the table to count the votes.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Speaker, I am rising on a point of order. Earlier today, inadvertently, the member who has now introduced a bit more complexity into the vote by having voted twice had his riding named "Edmonton" rather than "Sherwood Park". The problem is that if the roll call records him as a member for Ed-

YEAS	
Members	
Alghabra	Anand
Anandasangaree	Arseneault
Arya	Badawey
Bagnell	Bains
Baker	Barsalou-Duval
Battiste	Beaulieu
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	Bergeron
Bérubé	Besette
Bibeau	Bittle
Blair	Blanchet
Blanchette-Joncas	Blois
Boudrias	Bratina
Brière	Brunelle-Duceppe
Carr	Casey
Chabot	Chagger
Champagne	Champoux
Charbonneau	Chen
Cormier	Dabrusin
Damoff	DeBellefeuille
Desbiens	Desilets
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Dong	Drouin
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dzerowicz	Easter
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Ellis	Erskine-Smith
Fergus	Fillmore
Finnigan	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fortin	Fragiskatos
Fraser	Fry
Garneau	Gaudreau
Gerretsen	Gill
Gould	Guilbeault
Hajdu	Hardie
Holland	Housefather
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Ien
Jaczek	Joly
Jones	Jordan
Jowhari	Kelloway
Khalid	Khera
Koutrakis	Kusmierczyk
Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Larouche	Lattanzio
Lauzon	LeBlanc
Lebouthillier	Lefebvre
Lemire	Lightbound
Long	Longfield
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney
Marcil	Martinez Ferrada
May (Cambridge)	McCrimmon
McDonald	McGuinty

Routine Proceedings

McKay
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
Mendicino
Miller
Morrissey
Ng
O'Connell
O'Regan
Perron
Plamondon
Qualtrough
Regan
Rodriguez
Romanado
Saini
Saks
Sangha
Savard-Tremblay
Schieffe
Serré
Shanahan
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Simard
Sorbara
Ste-Marie
Tassi
Therrien
Trudel
Van Bynen
Vandal
Vaughan
Virani
Wilkinson
Young
Zann

McKenna
McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Michaud
Monsef
Murray
Normandin
Oliphant
Pauzé
Petitpas Taylor
Powlowski
Ratansi
Robillard
Rogers
Sahota (Brampton North)
Sajjan
Samson
Sarai
Scarpaleggia
Schulte
Sgro
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simms
Spengemann
Tabbara
Thériault
Trudeau
Turnbull
van Koeverden
Vandenbeld
Vignola
Weiler
Yip
Zahid
Zuberi — 184

Kmiec
Kurek
Kwan
Lehoux
Liepert
Lobb
MacKenzie
Manly
Masse
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McCauley (Edmonton West)
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Melillo
Morantz
Motz
O'Toole
Paul-Hus
Qaqqaq
Redekopp
Rempel Garner
Rood
Sahota (Calgary Skyview)
Scheer
Seeback
Shin
Singh
Soroka
Steinley
Stubbs
Tochor
Van Popta
Vidal
Vis
Warkentin
Webber
Wilson-Raybould
Yurdiga

Kram
Kusie
Lake
Lewis (Essex)
Lloyd
MacGregor
Maguire
Martel
Mathysen
Mazier
McLean
McPherson
Moore
Morrison
Nater
Patzner
Poilievre
Rayes
Reid
Richards
Ruff
Saroya
Schmale
Shields
Shipley
Sloan
Stanton
Strahl
Sweet
Uppal
Vecchio
Vierson
Wagantall
Waugh
Williamson
Wong
Zimmer — 142

NAYS

Members

Aboultatif
Albas
Allison
Arnold
Bachrach
Barrett
Bergen
Bezan
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Block
Bragdon
Calkins
Carrie
Chong
Cumming
Dancho
Davies
d'Entremont
Doherty
Dreeshen
Duvall
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Fast
Gallant
Gazan
Genius
Godin
Gray
Hallan
Harris
Hughes
Jeneroux
Julian
Kent

Aitchison
Alleslev
Angus
Ashton
Barlow
Benzen
Berthold
Blaikie
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Boulerice
Brassard
Cannings
Chiu
Cooper
Dalton
Davidson
Deltell
Diotte
Dowdall
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Epp
Falk (Provencher)
Findlay
Garrison
Généreux
Gladu
Gourde
Green
Harder
Hoback
Jansen
Johns
Kelly
Kitchen

PAIRED

Nil

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I declare the motion carried.

(Motion agreed to)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

It turns out that you were right. It was I who said that the member was from Edmonton, when he is, in fact, from Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan. What caused the original confusion is that the riding is actually in Alberta, but it has the name “Saskatchewan” in it, so that can lead some who are not familiar with the geography to confuse the province of the member. It turns out the member is actually a proud Albertan, but not an Edmontonian.

• (1315)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We understand that, absolutely.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Madam Speaker, I am tabling responses to Order Paper Questions Nos. 629 to 634.

Points of Order

[English]

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The minister just made reference to answering a number of questions. Generally, those answers are associated with numbers. I wonder if that was a mistake on his part or if there is an aspect in the Standing Orders of the House that I am not aware of.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The minister did mention a series of numbers.

The hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, I appreciate that, but the numbers were not translated into English. As much as I am proud of our bilingual heritage, I would ask that it be repeated, so that members who are not fluent in Canada's other official language would be able to hear the specifics of the questions that were named.

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Could the hon. Minister of Canadian Heritage repeat what he said?

[English]

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Madam Speaker, the numbers are from 629 to 634.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

PROCEDURAL ROLE OF SPEAKER

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): Thank you, Madam Speaker, for recognizing me on the House of Commons floor.

Madam Speaker, according to the green book, the role of the Speaker is as follows:

The office of the Speaker must be distinguished from its incumbent, who requires the support and goodwill of the House in order to carry out the duties of the office. The Speaker's authority and responsibilities as Presiding Officer in the House of Commons flow in large part from the Constitution and from the written rules of the House.

It goes on to say:

The duties of the Speaker of the House of Commons require the balancing of the rights and interests of the majority and minority in the House to ensure that public business is transacted efficiently and that the interests of all parts of the House are advocated and protected against the use of arbitrary authority. It is in this spirit that the Speaker, as the chief servant of the House, applies the rules. The Speaker is the servant, neither of any part of the House nor of any majority in the House, but of the entire institution and serves in the best interests of the House as distilled over many generations in its practices.

That is a powerful statement, "over many generations".

Today, I rose in the House immediately following the party opposite moving a motion that called for time allocation on Bill C-10 in committee. When I rose in the House and I called a point of order, Madam Speaker, you immediately rolled your eyes at me. You did not know what I was going to say, which means that you made a judgment against me presuming that you knew what I would say.

Regardless, it is my right as a member of Parliament, my privilege, to be able to stand in this place and to have my voice heard. As the Speaker of the House, according to the green book that I hold in my hands, which is the document that directs this place, it is

your responsibility to gain the support and goodwill of this place. When you fail to show respect and honour to each and every member on the floor of this chamber, you produce a lack of decorum, because chaos will ensue when there is no respect and when there is not mutual honour.

Madam Speaker, the fact that you started by rolling your eyes at me and then proceeded to ignore me every single time I rose in the House to raise a point of order is absolutely inappropriate. When I rise here, I rise as the member of Parliament for Lethbridge. I was duly elected by the people of Lethbridge to have their backs right here in this place. I do not speak with my own voice. I speak with their voices, and so, Madam Speaker, when you roll your eyes at me, you roll your eyes at more than 120,000 constituents who have elected me to be here on their behalf. That, Madam Speaker, is incredibly disrespectful and in disregard for democracy.

I invite you to consider those actions and I invite you to take the next steps forward.

• (1320)

DECORUM IN OPPOSITION LOBBY

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, on a separate point of order, when this House agreed to the terms of Parliament and the rules that were established between parties, which were adopted through direction of the Speaker or the Speaker announced those, we set limits with respect to how many members should be in the House and how many people should be present during debate.

Routinely, during the filibustering and the interventions that were going on from the other side as they were making their remarks and being funny about things, I would hear an uproar of laughter coming from the opposition lobby. I would suggest to you, Madam Speaker, that perhaps those rules that were agreed to have not been followed. I think it is important that we look into it to make sure that, in the middle of this pandemic, the opposition parties are living up to their responsibilities under the rules that we agreed to and set out in advance.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Madam Speaker, I respect where the gentleman is coming from, but the fact is that it is extraordinarily difficult for one person to measure how many people may be in another room due to hearing voices. I am not going to indicate how many people are in this room, but I can tell members that Liberal voices are very loud in this House of Commons regardless of how many are present.

An hon. member: Thank you. I am doing my best.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Madam Speaker, I would ask if the member could, just for one moment, be quiet.

As we know, today has been a very difficult day. We have been working hard for the dignity of democracy and for the free speech of all Canadians. The member is now questioning who we have in the lobby. Recognizing that we do need to have support staff, we are always going to have somebody sitting at the desk in the lobby, which is the appropriate thing to do. We also have a member from the House leader's office who is also assisting me. However, for recognizing that there must be many people there, the member is way off course. All he is trying to do is say that Conservatives do not care about health. That is so not the case.

We are doing our job. We are putting all of the people in place, but the member wants us to go in there and count how many people there are. We are working, and perhaps if the member would care more about what his party is doing and a little less about what we are doing working together, we may have a little better discourse.

BILL C-10—TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, I do recognize this has been a challenging day for all of us. However, we have inherited the rules in this place and, quite honestly, those rules were based on the values of the members who originally debated and set forward those original Standing Orders, and which have been updated from time to time, after drawing consensus.

The government has chosen in its procedures today to draw upon something that has not been used in decades. There have been legitimate concerns raised by members of the Conservative caucus as to the applicability, especially considering the serious nature of the bill that is before us. It is very important to point out that there will be disagreements on what exactly the rules say and the values that we hold here today, not 30 years ago and certainly not when the country was first formed in 1867.

What I am simply saying is that the government member, the member for Kingston and the Islands, who spoke earlier, to suddenly say that the rules are well known, well, they are. However, if we use an archaic and often not used form, especially at report stage of a bill, when members have issues and have put forward, in good faith, proper amendments to the bill, to suddenly wash that all aside and decide that the rules have been decided, I would suggest the member should actually do it the proper way. At the beginning of every session, we are all allowed to come forward and present suggestions on the Standing Orders. That member could add some clarity to the Standing Orders as to the applicability of this at report stage. That is where we are.

The member also mentioned voices outside the chamber. The voices we should all be concerned about are those of our constituents. We are raising them here. I do think there is a challenge when we have members who are attributing voices outside of the chamber, because this chamber is not like the Centre Block House of Commons. Oftentimes we will have people walking through who inadvertently, and I am sure the Speaker has heard this many times, being adjacent, may sometimes be loud. We may attribute that to someone or some party, but we have no actual knowledge of who it is.

Madam Speaker, I would ask that before you give your ruling, please do take into account that the charges of the previous speaker,

Points of Order

the member for Kingston and the Islands, to suddenly attribute sounds from outside of this direct space in this particular chamber is erroneous. The only voices we should be considering are the voices of our constituents, and not the physical sounds that come into this arrangement, in this chamber, as it is different from what it would be in Centre Block, where the chamber is basically kept separate from the voices outside.

I am going to quickly repeat two things for the member. This place has long abided by the rules that we put together. They do not come together easily. They are done through a common discussion on our values and debates to come up with specific rules. From time to time, those particular rules are revisited by parliamentarians, usually after every election. They are improved so that everyone understands the rules.

That is why we are asking for this ruling. It is so incredibly important for us to know whether the government can arbitrarily just mark down a certain number of hours and then use the tool of time allocation to disregard the legitimate and properly processed amendments that were presented to this House on a bill that touches upon so many things. It touches upon net neutrality, touches upon section 2(b) of the charter, something that the Prime Minister, his ministers and his caucus have said they want to always adhere to.

I will give credit to the NDP for voting against moving to Orders of the Day. I hope that we can all stand up and push back to make sure the government does not feel that even when it is in a minority position, it can simply run roughshod over members' rights, particularly that right to put forward amendments and to be heard.

• (1325)

I hope I have made a couple of important points. I hope that they will be heard, not just by you, but by members opposite, including the member for Kingston and the Islands.

At the same token, this is a great country, not just because of what we have accomplished, but because of the way we try to accomplish things, which is by listening and accommodating. Now, more than ever, we need to listen to voices that are different from our own. We need to learn to garner consensus and not just run roughshod over legitimate concerns as they are presented.

I do know today has been a challenging day. I do respect the role the Speaker has and that you have tried to be as fair as possible. I hope we end up after today in a better place. I also hope that the government perhaps takes some time over the weekend and reconsiders the way it is presenting its motions to this place. They are doing so with very little respect for the members present, but most importantly, with little respect for the members previous, who put together these rules so we can keep this country strong and together, even in disagreement.

We have those common ties, those values and those rules in our standing orders, which we all respect, so we do not end up with just a product. We end up with a process that makes us proud to be Canadians.

Private Members' Business

DECORUM IN OPPOSITION LOBBY

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Madam Speaker, there was an allegation made by the member for Kingston and the Islands that somehow Conservatives were disrespecting public health advice. I think that was what he was trying to imply. I, as the whip for the official opposition, want to assure all members in this House and, in fact, all Canadians that the Conservative Party certainly does take the public health advice incredibly seriously.

As the member mentioned, there was some discussion among parties about how we would best conduct ourselves during a pandemic, and numbers in the House were a part of that. The guidelines have all been followed in setting out the distance between seats. I can assure everyone that Conservative members have, in fact, far exceeded the expectations of physical distancing and guidelines in the House, as have all parties.

I will point out as well that, when the member refers to people being in a lobby or an area behind the chamber, he well knows that we do not refer to the presence or absence of members in the House of Commons, and he is incorrect to do so. I would hope that you would call him to order on that.

• (1330)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): There have been quite a number of points of order today. We will get back to them next week, as necessary.

It being 1:30 p.m., we will proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

INCOME TAX ACT

The House resumed from February 18 consideration of the motion that Bill C-234, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (home security measures), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to rise today to talk about Bill C-234, another Conservative attempt at introducing a boutique tax credit. We know that Conservatives were extremely popular for doing that back in the day because, of course, Conservatives like to give tax credits to the rich at the expense of everybody else, and that is exactly what Bill C-234 is about.

The proposed legislation being considered today would amend the Income Tax Act to provide a non-refundable tax credit at a rate of 15% for up to \$5,000 in eligible expenses incurred by the taxpayer for home security measures. Qualifying home security measures would include expenses for the purchase, installation, maintenance and monitoring of a security system installed in one's home.

In responding to the proposal, I would first note that our government is committed to a tax system that is fair and works for the middle class. Second, I would note that this proposal in the bill falls quite short of aligning with this objective. The benefits of a tax credit for home security expenses are expected to be skewed toward

higher-income households, which are more likely to have the means to pay for such expenses. By disproportionately benefiting high-income Canadians, this bill would undermine the goal of sustaining a fair tax system.

As hon. members are well aware, the personal income tax system raises revenues based on the ability of individuals to pay. In this context, tax credits and other kinds of tax relief are mainly meant to recognize and offset the effects of factors such as income, family composition, age and health status on a person's ability to pay tax. The Canadian income tax system generally does not, as is proposed in Bill C-234, recognize personal and discretionary expenses of other individuals. A tax credit for home security expenses would, therefore, be subsidized by all taxpayers, including those who choose not to incur those expenses, those who cannot afford it, as well as those who are not able to claim the credit at all, such as renters.

Rather than asking Canadians to subsidize the spending of Canadians who can afford a home security system, our government has undertaken in the last few years to eliminate poorly targeted, unfair and inefficient tax exemptions and has committed to undertaking another tax expenditure review to ensure this process continues. The government has cut taxes for middle-class Canadians, raised them for the wealthiest 1% and increased benefits for families and low-income workers.

Our government has also improved tax fairness by closing loopholes, eliminating measures that disproportionately benefit the wealthy, and cracking down on tax evasion. We all need to pay our fair share, especially during a crisis. All Canadians deserve a fair and equitable tax system. The proposed tax credit for home security measures that would disproportionately benefit higher-income Canadians, which, as I indicated earlier, has always been a priority of the Conservative Party, would be at odds with the government's stance on these types of boutique tax measures.

Our government's approach has been to target support to the middle class and those working to be part of it. The government estimates that the annual federal cost of the proposed tax credit would be approximately \$130 million. This aspect of the proposal should also be taken into consideration, especially at a time when the government is focused on helping Canadians through the challenges they face as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The government is also focused on tackling the work of recovery to create the conditions for new employment and new growth, now and in the years ahead.

As part of our COVID-19 economic response plan, we introduced the Canada emergency response benefit, which supported over eight million Canadians. Then, last August, the government transitioned the support to a suite of new temporary benefits: the Canada recovery benefit, the Canada recovery caregiving benefit and the Canada recovery sickness benefit. Each of these three latest programs will remain in place to deliver support to individuals who are directly affected by COVID-19 through to the fall of 2021. Last year, in the early days of this pandemic, we also introduced a special goods and services tax credit top-up payment for individuals and families with low and modest incomes, as well as a special Canada child benefit top-up payment for families with children.

• (1335)

Our government is providing additional support to low- and middle-income families with young children in 2021 by providing up to \$1,200 through the Canada child benefit for children under the age of six. We are also making payments in recognition of the extraordinary expenses faced by persons with disabilities and seniors. With budget 2021, the government has a renewed pledge to do whatever it takes to support Canadians right through to the end of this pandemic.

As we continue to navigate through this pandemic, we will continue to assess the needs for additional support where it is needed. This enormous responsibility must be central to our considerations when looking at new proposals. I would also like to add that tax changes should ideally be undertaken through the budget process, which enables the government to fully consider trade-offs, balance priorities and undertake new fiscal commitments only to the extent that they are affordable. At a time when we are making unprecedented fiscal commitments to support Canadians through the challenges posed by COVID-19, this has never been more important.

With this in mind, and taking into account the concerns we have with this bill, it would be very difficult to support Bill C-234. I would add that we have seen boutique tax credits like this before from the previous Conservative government. We have seen time and time again that the Conservative Party is interested in only helping the wealthy. They have absolutely no consideration for what the impacts of this bill would be.

As I asked in my speech, how do they think we are going to pay for the efforts that are proposed in this bill? We would pay for them from the general tax revenue, which is essentially going to be affected by this measure. That includes everybody in the lowest part of the spectrum and in the middle. This bill is asking low-income Canadians to subsidize a boutique tax credit for people who have home security systems in their house. Who has home security systems in their house? It is people who can afford them. Home security is not something that is a need or a requirement, especially not in a country like ours.

• (1340)

Mr. Randy Hoback: Really?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, the members across the way yell, "Really?" Yes. It is not a requirement. It is something that people get installed because they want to have it. Desperately wanting something does not make it a requirement, and that is what is so mind-boggling about Conservative logic. They think that just be-

Private Members' Business

cause someone really wants something, it suddenly becomes a need. It is not a need. We do not live in a country that needs home security systems.

Of course, there are a lot of people out there who want them. I have one in my house, but I do not think that it is a requirement, and therefore the federal government, through the taxpayers of this country, should not be subsidizing and effectively paying for it. What kind of country do we live in when we agree that the federal government needs to help people install and pay for home security systems in their houses? It is ridiculous. This bill should not pass.

I implore all members of this House not to vote in favour of this bill. It is not worthy of their vote. It is just a bill that advances hidden boutique tax credits, because that is where Conservatives have always liked to put the tax advantages: to the wealthy. They are doing it with this bill here.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-234. Since my colleague from Joliette already announced it in a previous speech, it will come as no surprise when I say that the Bloc Québécois will vote against Bill C-234. We have serious doubts about the effectiveness of such a bill and feel it would only push people to spend more on security systems that would not actually make them safer.

This bill seeks to amend the Income Tax Act to create a non-refundable tax credit for individuals who purchase a home security system. It would grant a credit of up to \$5,000 for the total of all amounts spent on home security. This includes the acquisition, installation, maintenance and monitoring of a security system installed in an individual's home. The eligible home includes any structure that is separate from the house, such as a garage or even a barn. The credit could be used every year. However, in cases where more than one member of the household claims it, the maximum amount eligible would be \$5,000.

In my speech, I will approach this bill from three angles. First I will explain why we believe this money could be put to much better use. I will then talk about the issue of rising crime, which we discussed at the Standing Committee on the Status of Women. Finally, I will propose some solutions to address this problem.

Private Members' Business

First of all, we oppose Bill C-234 because we believe that the money that would be spent to subsidize the purchase of such systems would be much better spent on provincial police, indigenous police and the RCMP. First nations police services are in dire need of resources, and the government needs to start by funding them properly to help remote communities. Just this week, actually, when I was filling in at the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, we were discussing the problem of lack of resources at the RCMP.

Bill C-234, introduced by the member for Prince Albert, from the Conservative Party, says that rural crime is increasing at a higher rate than urban crime. It attributes this to the fact that rural areas are sometimes not as well served by law enforcement, which apparently leads some residents to install security systems, such as cameras or alarms. If the police already have a hard time responding, what is the point of investing in an alarm system?

Clearly, the police response would be too slow to prevent the crime anyway. I myself live in what would be considered a rural area, and I have sometimes come across this problem and this reality. The member even acknowledged that his bill will not fix the problem. The Bloc Québécois is not indifferent to this concern, of course, and neither am I, after hearing testimony at the Standing Committee on the Status of Women. However, why not invest more in the RCMP and in provincial police forces by transferring that money to Quebec, the provinces and the territories?

This type of tax credit encourages people to spend money on systems that are not likely to prevent crime. The preamble to Bill C-234 nevertheless tries to justify the relevance of this bill by stating:

Whereas the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, in its Thirty-third Report of the 42nd Parliament, recognized that crime in rural areas is of growing concern to rural residents across the country; Whereas the Committee heard that while crime in rural areas is more acute in western Canada, eastern provinces are also experiencing high crime rates in rural areas; And whereas the committee heard from witnesses of incidents related to property crimes, such as break-ins, thefts and, in some cases, violent assaults, including sexual violence and violence towards women;

I will repeat that Bill C-234 will merely push people to spend money on goods and services that will only give them a false sense of security.

Indigenous communities are sorely lacking in resources and are often poorly served by police forces. Money spent by this bill would be much better spent on security in first nations communities, which are asking that this become an essential service. According to Jerel Swamp, the vice-president of the First Nations Chiefs of Police Association, indigenous police services work with limited resources. What we did realize at the Standing Committee on the Status of Women is that indigenous women are often the most affected by security issues. It is difficult to understand why indigenous police services are the only ones in Canada that are not deemed an essential service.

• (1345)

I have another example from the Rama police service in Ontario, which does not have money to fund forensic and crime investigation units or to provide aid to victims. This is essential in cases of sexual assault.

In its throne speech, the federal government committed to accelerating the implementation of a legal framework to recognize first nations policing as an essential service. It promised to take action on this shortly after the 2019 election. These promises were renewed after indigenous protests against the Coastal GasLink pipeline in British Columbia. Those indigenous peoples are still waiting for royal assent.

Again according to Mr. Swamp, Public Safety Canada currently funds services through the first nations policing program, but the funding received is inadequate to provide the services the communities require.

The federal promise to make first nations policing services an essential service is a step in the right direction. Our departments, Public Safety, have said that passing legislation to make indigenous policing an essential service will require developing a better funding framework.

The first nations policing program was created in 1991 to provide funding for agreements between the federal government, the provincial or territorial governments, and first nations and Inuit communities to provide policing services to these communities. The federal government contributes 52% of the funding for the first nations policing program, with the remainder coming from the provincial and territorial governments. The program provides policing services to nearly 60% of first nations and Inuit communities.

In 2018-19, the Department of Public Safety spent more than \$146 million through that program to support 1,322 police officer positions in over 450 first nations and Inuit communities. According to Mr. Swamp, however, the funding is inconsistent and always allocated for the short term. This makes planning difficult and creates a lack of predictability. Even so, the police chief believes that these services are effective in investigating violent crimes using their limited resources.

Second, as part of its study on women living in rural communities, the Standing Committee on the Status of Women addressed the issue of crime, not only in urban settings, but also in rural areas.

Some of the other potential solutions proposed by witnesses in committee include a suggestion that the government transfer operational funding, on an ongoing basis, to Quebec, the provinces and the territories for the community-based shelters and halfway houses that help women affected by violence. Another suggestion was that more money be sent to Quebec and the provinces to help survivors of violence.

Some recommended better training on the realities women face, in particular for the RCMP, to help stamp out bias and teach officers how to respond to the trauma these women may have experienced. Others said that we need to work on lifting women out of poverty by, for example, getting them better access to the job market by supporting universal child care services.

Speaking of universal child care, I want to point out that the government must give Quebec the right to opt out of the federal program, with full compensation, since Quebec already has its own program, which has been proven to lift many women out of poverty.

I am calling for the government to take a feminist and economic approach to this crisis that recognizes that the programs are often poorly suited to women entrepreneurs.

Third, we also need to work on prevention by enhancing social programs that improve our health care system, particularly in the area of mental health. There is no magic solution for that. It will take more resources, financial resources in particular. It is absolutely essential that the government increase health transfers significantly, permanently and unconditionally so that they cover up to 35% of health care system costs. That would enable us to take care of our people.

In closing, I believe, as does my colleague from Joliette, that the fight against crime begins with the fight against poverty. We need to work proactively to improve the situation and to ensure greater equality of opportunity. That is a value that is important for Quebecers. The end justifies the means. If we help people stay out of a vulnerable position where they have no food and live in unsafe, inadequate housing conditions, then we will be helping to reduce opportunities for crime. We have a duty to act.

• (1350)

[English]

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am rising virtually today to speak to Bill C-234.

I want to recognize and express sympathy for residents in rural communities across the country who more and more are living under fear of being the victims of crime. This increases as the population in many rural communities diminishes. People are more isolated. They not only feel more vulnerable, but they are more vulnerable. It is important to recognize that we need to have a response to that increased vulnerability. The question is how best to do that.

One of the things to note about the bill to establish a tax credit for Canadians who install security systems in their home is that there is a cost to the program. Those tax measures come at a cost to the public purse, so the question is whether that money is being effectively spent for the purpose of reducing that vulnerability.

The first point I would like to make is a general one in respect to these kinds of tax rebates as a way of implementing policy. It is important to note that when it comes to this way of effecting public policy, the fact is that the assistance goes overwhelmingly to the people who already have resources. First, people need to have the money in the bank to get a security system installed and it is only afterward that they recover some of that cost. The more income

Private Members' Business

people make, the more able they are to get the security service installed. The more taxes they pay, the higher ability they have and the more they can receive in benefit as a rebate on the taxes they pay.

There is already a fundamental issue here where it is the people who have the most resources to respond to the problem who get the most assistance. Of course, while their higher income correlates with a higher benefit under a program like this, people's vulnerability to crime in rural communities is not proportionate to their income. People with lower incomes are not less vulnerable to crime in rural communities. It makes sense as a matter of fairness to pursue solutions that will benefit people equally regardless of their income and the amount of tax they pay. What we need are solutions that work for everyone.

When we look at the study that was done on rural crime in the last Parliament, as a consequence of the motion brought forward by then NDP MP Christine Moore, some problems were highlighted. When I had the pleasure of working with folks in the RCMP on the issue of collective bargaining, one of the things I heard loud and clear was that often the roster for local detachments was unfilled by 50% or more. I have heard this from RCMP members who live in Elmwood—Transcona, but are, in some cases, posted to communities outside of Winnipeg, so they have experience with policing in rural communities. While positions exist for policing in rural communities, often there is an insufficient amount of trained officers to fill those positions.

When we talk about public investment to stem rural crime, we should ensure RCMP detachments are staffed to the recommended staffing level instead of asking officers to make do with less and to work tons of overtime and, in many cases, to respond to calls alone. In some cases, they are leaving to respond to a call from a location that might be an hour or more away. It seems to me that investing in filling up those staffing rosters is a better use of public funds.

We also heard in the course of that report about the way the RCMP conducted its business. In many cases, rookie officers are assigned to rural postings and do not have a lot of experience. They do not have training particular to the circumstances of the rural communities and the indigenous communities that they are responsible to police.

• (1355)

They need investment in better training for RCMP officers, so they understand better the communities that they are working in. Hopefully they could then do a better job, particularly if they had the resources and adequate staffing levels to not be overextended the way that they are. They need to be supported with appropriate training so they can really do the right kind of policing work, alongside the communities they are assigned to protect, and to address some of the underlying causes and increases in rural crime.

Private Members' Business

It was stated earlier, and it is quite true, that the success of a security monitoring system is only as good as the response time of the local authorities. The fact of the matter is that, as long as our RCMP detachments and other rural policing forces are chronically understaffed, those response times are simply not going to be adequate to the task. At the very least, one could say that this bill puts the cart before the horse. There is a lot more to do in terms of not just investing in more police officers for rural Canada, but investing in the training so they can deliver policing in communities in the right way that has the appropriate impact.

One of the things that they need in order to do that, in addition to appropriate staffing levels and the right kind of training, is to make sure that the right kinds of supports are there in the communities. That may mean mental health supports, and we know that rural Canada is chronically underserved in a proportion even worse than urban Canadians, and they still do not have adequate mental health supports.

Mental health is not adequately integrated into our health care systems across the country, but that is felt even more so in rural communities. Having better services available to rural Canadians is an important part of the solution here, not just in respect to mental health, but also in respect to women's health, especially when some of the crimes of concern are sexual or violent crimes.

How do they address those problems and that feeling of vulnerability? While certainly adequate protection is part of that package, adequate services are also needed to make people feel that they are supported at the outset, and that, if something did happen, they are not going to be on their own. We do not want them to be isolated out in the place where they live with maybe just a handful of friends and neighbours who, nevertheless, live at a considerable distance.

This is an issue that has come up in some of the efforts of my colleague from Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, who is concerned about certain behaviours that are not, themselves, what might be considered under law right now as acts of abuse but, through isolating people, set the stage for certain kinds of abuse. The more abusers can isolate people and get them into a position where they do not have other resources to rely on, the more the table is set for the kinds of abuse that we do not want to see any Canadians suffer. That investment in the right kind of supports is also very important.

As New Democrats, when we look at what is needed, we see a need to make sure that we have the appropriate staffing levels that are already recommended. They are there on paper, but not there in actuality.

We see the need for appropriate training and perhaps more experienced officers being assigned to rural communities, so it is not just a matter of new officers with little training trying to figure out how a community works and what the particular sensitivities are, cultural and otherwise, and finding their feet even as they struggle with these immense challenges.

Then, of course, there is the need to have the supports there for people who may commit acts of crime themselves. There is also the need for supports for potential victims of crimes, so they know they have the resources they need in order to live a good life, even

though they do not live in an urban centre, which should be perfectly possible in a country like Canada. I know there are many people who are proud to live in rural communities, and they should be able to do that with a strong sense of safety.

• (1400)

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Madam Speaker, I disagree very much with the previous three speakers, so much so that I am not even sure I am going to refer to the notes that I have in front of me, but let me see if I can make some sense out of the nonsense that I have heard and the falseness of the arguments that have been presented about this very important Private Members' Bill.

In recent years, we have seen crime rates rise across Canada and that crime is getting more severe. This is especially true in rural Canada. In 2017, the crime rate was 23% higher than in urban centres. In some parts of the country, particularly in the Prairies, it is staggeringly higher: between 36% and 42% higher. While provincial governments have responded with concrete measures to tackle this serious issue, the Liberal government has not only refused to take any meaningful action, but has actually made the situation worse.

I want to thank my colleague for Prince Albert for introducing this Private Members' Bill, Bill C-234. This bill seeks to create a non-refundable tax credit for home security measures. It is unfortunate that this bill is necessary, but the Liberal government refuses to undertake the necessary reforms to our justice system, something that no one from the Liberal Party, the Bloc or the New Democratic Party wants to talk about. This is necessary to protect rural Canadians. The issue is the justice system.

We need to do what we can to support Canadians in their efforts to acquire and put in place the devices and mechanisms so that they can feel safe, or at least have some semblance of feeling safe, in their homes.

During a recent study, the Standing Committee on the Status of Women heard testimony from two women who had been repeat victims of rural crime. These women spoke about the toll it takes on a person's mental health when they are constantly worried about being victimized over and over again. They spoke about how repeat offenders from outside their communities target them because they know that help from law enforcement is a long way away, and that if the police come to the scene the criminals are already usually long gone.

They told us how the vast majority of people in their communities have been victims of crime, often more than once, and that many people do not even bother reporting crime anymore: They do not see the point because the justice system continues to let them down. They also spoke about how these criminals are more often armed with firearms and are not afraid to use them, yet shamefully the Liberal government is cracking down on farmers and hunters and law-abiding firearms owners while softening punishments for criminals who use their firearms illegally.

Private Members' Business

The idea that Canadians are giving up on the idea of justice should be of deep concern to all members of Parliament. When people see that the system does not work for them, they lose confidence in it. When that system is the police and the courts, the consequences of inaction are dire. It is already starting to happen: An Angus Reid poll from January 2020 found that confidence in the RCMP, local law enforcement and the criminal courts has been declining steadily since 2016. The same poll noted that in 2020, 48% of Canadians said they noticed an increase in crime, while only 5% of Canadians thought there had been a decrease.

People may be wondering how we got here. I grew up on a farm. When I was a young man, we were not particularly worried about crime at all. We could leave our doors unlocked when we worked in the fields or went into town. We could leave keys in the ignition of our pickup trucks with the windows rolled down when we parked in town to go into a store for a few minutes. We did not wake up at night scared that someone was armed and prowling around our yards looking to help themselves to our property. The only problem we really ever had was that once in a while, somebody would come into the yard, pull up to the gas tank and fill up their car.

However, the world is a different place now. For the past five years or so it has been getting worse. When it comes to rural Canada out west, the Liberal government does not get it or simply does not care, as we have seen from the member for Kingston and the Islands. He never mentioned crime, which is what this bill is all about. He never mentioned the justice system, which is what this bill is all about. He never mentioned that businesses can write off all of the things that this bill proposes to do, but private citizens cannot. He never mentioned those things at all.

Very often it seems that rural Canadians are the last of the Liberals' worries. Policies that are touted as landmark achievements of the government are typically at the expense of rural Canadians: the carbon tax, the tanker ban, the no-more-pipelines bill and the gun grab, just to name a few.

Another extremely damaging policy that has contributed to the increase in rural crime is Bill C-75 from the last Parliament. Bill C-75 took a number of very serious offences and made them hybrid offences so that they could be dealt with through a fine or a minimal amount of jail time. It also made the requirement that bail be given at the earliest opportunity with the least onerous conditions.

My colleague's legislation was brought forward, in part at least, in response to the Jordan decision by the Supreme Court of Canada. This decision clarified that the timeline for a trial to begin is in order for the Crown to uphold the constitutionally protected right to trial in a reasonable amount of time.

One would think that if the justice system was backed up with numerous serious cases, to the point where trials were being thrown out, the logical decision would be to increase the capability and capacity of the justice system to appropriately deal with it.

• (1405)

This would have allowed accused individuals to have their right to a fair trial upheld in a timely fashion and kept public safety and the administration of justice as a key objective for the security of Canadians.

Instead, the Liberals took the path of least resistance and decided to clear up backlogs of serious offences by giving prosecutors the ability to offer light sentences for serious offences. They also ensured that more people got out on bail just for good measure. The Liberal government, through its changes, took the already quickly revolving door of the justice system and made it spin even faster.

For rural communities, this meant that offenders who regularly target residents would be back on the street shortly after being arrested. In rural Canada, where a small RCMP detachment can be responsible for a vast geographic area, the government has created an almost impossible task. Instead of getting tough on crime, which I vividly recall our current Attorney General of Canada referring to as "stupid on crime", the government decided to put criminals' needs ahead of victims and their families in rural communities.

It is important to note that those tough-on-crime policies that the Minister of Justice smirked at were hugely successful at reducing the crime rate and the crime severity index and in instilling confidence in our justice system. Instead of doubling down on our Conservative formula and putting public safety at the heart of the justice system, the Liberal government has now also introduced Bill C-22. This bill slashes punishments for a number of serious firearms-related offences and ensures that all of the offences that the Liberal government hybridized in Bill C-75 are now eligible for conditional sentencing, which basically means jail time in one's house.

My constituents are absolutely shocked at the Liberal government's decisions to put the wants and desires of criminals above the needs and safety of law-abiding Canadians. Instead of providing them with assurances that the government understands the issue and that they are working to restore confidence in our justice systems, the Liberals have done the complete opposite.

That brings us back to Bill C-234. This bill is starting down the path of trying to correct what the Liberals have broken since forming government in 2015. Since that time, we have seen crime increase in frequency and severity, yet the Liberals have taken no meaningful steps to curtail it, only to exacerbate it. That is why my Conservative colleagues and I have formed a Conservative rural crime caucus to come up with solutions to this epidemic that the Minister of Justice and Attorney General cannot seem to be bothered with.

The legislation that we are discussing today is a great first step in addressing the rural crime epidemic. It will help Canadians get the tools that they need to protect themselves and their homes from criminals by providing a non-refundable tax credit. Tools like security gates and other access control devices to keep the yard safe could help deter criminals by preventing access and making it harder for criminals to target a rural property. Cameras and alarms could help provide valuable information that law enforcement could use to hopefully identify and catch these criminals, even if they are not able to respond while the crime is in progress because they are so far away.

Private Members' Business

While this bill is an important step, Conservatives understand that it cannot be our only step. Deterring criminals to find a less prepared victim is not a permanent solution. To that end, I was pleased to introduce my private member's bill, Bill C-289, back in April. It seeks to create an aggravating factor for targeting people or property that is experiencing increased vulnerability due to its remoteness from emergency police or medical services.

My bill would also seek to make existing aggravating factors for home invasion more inclusive of rural properties and face the realities of rural crime. Last, Bill C-289 would ensure that a judge would give careful consideration as to why an offender did not get bail when the judge is considering extra credit for time that was served before the trial.

Rural crime is a complex issue. Given the unique challenges posed by geography and more humble resources in many of the communities, it requires a thorough, multi-faceted approach, and the federal government needs to be an engaged partner. In fact, over a year ago, there was agreement for the provincial and federal government to create a pan-Canadian working group on rural crime. We have heard nothing about this since then from the Liberal government. While the governments across the west in the provinces have been quick to back up these words with action, we have seen no movement from the Liberals at all. The provinces have done an admirable job, but we cannot escape the reality that this is an issue that requires federal leadership.

This should not be a difficult decision for the government, so it raises the question of why the government is so opposed to doing the right thing. Is it because the government really has no understanding of the challenges facing rural Canadians? Is it because rural crime is disproportionately an issue based in the west and the electoral math does not portray it as a worthwhile initiative when there are plenty of policies that the government still wants to enact? Is it because the Minister of Justice is so blinded by ideology and so committed to his hug-a-thug plan that he is willing to let rural Canadians bear the cost of his inaction?

Canadians have a right to life, liberty and security of the person. For rural Canadians in many parts of our country, the Liberal government is not creating the conditions for those rights to be realized.

• (1410)

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank all members of Parliament for considering this bill, Bill C-234.

To provide the House some background, this came from town hall meetings we held back in my riding, where 300 or 400 people would show up, all talking about the seriousness of rural crime and crime in general. They talked about being broken into, not just once, but twice or three times. They talked about how they are no longer able to get insurance.

At these meetings, it was interesting that we would bring in members of the RCMP, who would talk about repeat offenders, crime watch and things they could do to protect them and their families. They talked about the tools they needed in order to get the appropriate prosecution and to arrest these individuals who, most

times, were repeat offenders, attached to gangs, and in and out of the criminal system.

One of the things that came out of these meetings was this bill. It was not a Conservative plan to create a boutique tax credit and take care of the rich, as my colleague from the Liberal Party mentioned today. That is not true at all. Rather, it is to say that we need to do something at the federal level to address the issue. This was one way of doing it. When I introduced the bill, I said that it was not the be-all and end-all, but part of a package of measures we need to address the crime issue, especially in rural Canada.

I talked about how I would be more than willing to let the committee massage it, make it better and actually have the conversation on crime. That is why I was so disappointed today when I sat here and listened to my colleagues across the aisle and other parties. When I listened to the member from the Liberal Party, he did not mention crime. He did not understand the intent of the bill. The intent of the bill is to get us talking about a very serious issue that is going on in rural Canada and across Canada. He talked about taxation, unfairness, boutiques and partisanship. I am not an overly partisan person. Members know that and he knows that, too. I was looking for results.

I will give credit to the members from the Bloc and the NDP. At least they talked about the issue I was trying to address. If I have success with this legislation, even if it does not pass, it would be the fact that we brought the subject, put it on the benches in the aisles here in the House of Commons and started the debate on it. If the government is going to be deaf to the debate, it will do so at its own peril. This is something that rural Canadians and Canadians in general want to talk about.

What I find interesting about these crime watch meetings is that we get a lot of people who come out. The RCMP showed up, and even a prosecutor showed up and talked about the frustrations with respect to prosecuting these people, but we never see a judge show up. We never see the minister talk about these issues. The minister or the parliamentary secretary has never looked at the issue and phoned me to say that I was addressing an issue that maybe we need to address. There has been total silence. The response from the government with respect to crime is total silence and denial. This is a huge problem. It is a problem that Canadians want us to talk about in the House of Commons. It is a serious issue. This is an issue that if we did it right would actually benefit people right across this country and make people feel safer. It would address the crime issue.

Unfortunately, we are probably not going to see this bill move forward. I am hoping my colleagues in the Bloc and NDP will maybe have second thoughts, because there are dairy farmers in Quebec who want this bill; there are cattlemen in Saskatchewan who want this bill; there are unionized workers who live in the rural areas who want this bill. Hopefully, they will reach out to those parties and ask them to change their minds and at least get it to committee to debate it, maybe make some good suggestions and make it better.

Private Members' Business

If a boutique tax credit is not the right way to go, they should tell us what the right way to go is, but at least address the reality that this is a real issue. Let us put forward some solutions to address the issue. Unfortunately, if this bill does not pass, I do not know when the issue of rural crime or crime will ever come up again in the House of Commons in this session, unless we see another private member's bill from a member who understands how important this issue is.

I thank everybody in the House for considering the bill. I hope members will reflect upon it before the vote and maybe we will see it go to committee, because that would be the right place to address the issues and maybe see a really good piece of legislation come out of the House of Commons.

• (1415)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):
The question is on the motion.

[*Translation*]

If a member of a recognized party present in the House wishes to request either a recorded division or that the motion be adopted on division, I invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

[*English*]

Mr. Randy Hoback: Madam Speaker, I would request a recorded division.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):
Pursuant to order made on Monday, January 25, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, June 9, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

[*English*]

It being 2:15 p.m., this House stands adjourned until next Monday at 11 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 2:15 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Friday, June 4, 2021

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Broadcasting Act

Bill C-10—Time Allocation Motion

Mrs. Fortier	7955
Motion	7955

Points of Order

Bill C-10—Time Allocation Motion

Ms. Harder	7955
Mr. Julian	7956
Mr. Gerretsen	7956
Mr. Poilievre	7956
Mrs. Vecchio	7957
Mr. Lamoureux	7957
Mr. Guilbeault	7958
Mr. Rayes	7958
Mr. Genuis	7959

Broadcasting Act

Bill C-10—Time Allocation Motion

Ms. Normandin	7960
---------------------	------

Points of Order

Bill C-10—Time Allocation Motion

Mr. Viersen	7960
Mr. Albas	7961
Mr. Lawrence	7961
Mr. Masse	7962
Ms. Bergen	7962
Mr. Aitchison	7962

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Chantel Moore

Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	7965
--------------------------------------	------

Pastor Ralph Benson

Mr. Simms	7965
-----------------	------

Yellowhead

Mr. Soroka	7965
------------------	------

Tony De Sousa

Ms. Dzerowicz	7965
---------------------	------

COVID-19 Pandemic Recovery

Mr. Angus	7965
-----------------	------

Infrastructure Projects in Orléans

Mrs. Lalonde	7966
--------------------	------

Maternity Benefits

Mr. Lewis	7966
-----------------	------

Ukraine International Airlines Flight 752

Mr. Jowhari	7966
-------------------	------

ALS Awareness Month

Ms. Damoff	7966
------------------	------

Saskatchewan Summer

Mr. Steinley	7967
--------------------	------

Emily Carr Public School

Ms. Young	7967
-----------------	------

Hong Kong

Mr. Chiu	7967
----------------	------

Human Rights in China

Mr. Albas	7967
-----------------	------

Violence against Indigenous Women and Girls

Ms. Kwan	7968
----------------	------

D-Day

Mr. Desilets	7968
--------------------	------

Residential Schools

Mr. Poilievre	7968
---------------------	------

Residential Schools

Mr. Zuberi	7968
------------------	------

ORAL QUESTIONS

Employment

Mr. Martel	7968
Mr. Fraser	7969
Mr. Martel	7969
Mr. Fraser	7969
Mr. Martel	7969
Mr. Fraser	7969
Mr. Poilievre	7969
Mr. Fraser	7969
Mr. Poilievre	7970
Mr. Fraser	7970

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship

Ms. Normandin	7970
Mr. Mendicino	7970
Ms. Normandin	7970
Mr. Mendicino	7970

Airline Industry

Mr. Boulterice	7970
Mr. Fraser	7970
Mr. Julian	7971
Mr. Fraser	7971

Canadian Heritage

Mr. Rayes	7971
Mr. Guilbeault	7971
Mr. Rayes	7971
Mr. Guilbeault	7971

Mr. Rayes	7971
Mr. Guilbeault	7972
Ms. Harder	7972
Mr. Guilbeault	7972
Ms. Harder	7972
Mr. Guilbeault	7972
Ms. Harder	7972
Mr. Guilbeault	7972
Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship	
Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe	7972
Mr. Mendicino	7972
Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe	7972
Mr. Mendicino	7973
Foreign Affairs	
Mr. Fast	7973
Mr. Oliphant	7973
Mr. Fast	7973
Mr. Oliphant	7973
Small Business	
Mr. Kelly	7973
Ms. Bendayan	7973
Mr. Kelly	7973
Ms. Bendayan	7974
Fisheries and Oceans	
Ms. Blaney (North Island—Powell River)	7974
Mr. Beech	7974
Indigenous Affairs	
Mr. Johns	7974
Mr. Blair	7974
Public Services and Procurement	
Mr. Sarai	7974
Mr. MacKinnon	7974
Telecommunications	
Mr. Dreeshen	7975
Mr. Champagne	7975
Health	
Mr. Kitchen	7975
Ms. O'Connell	7975
Fisheries and Oceans	
Mr. d'Entremont	7975
Mr. Beech	7975
Public Services and Procurement	
Mr. Cooper	7975
Mr. MacKinnon	7976
The Environment	
Ms. Pauzé	7976
Mr. Bittle	7976
Ms. Michaud	7976
Mr. Bittle	7976
The Economy	
Mr. Steinley	7976
Mr. Fraser	7976

Health	
Mr. Calkins	7977
Ms. O'Connell	7977
Mr. Barlow	7977
Ms. O'Connell	7977
The Environment	
Mr. Baker	7977
Mr. Bittle	7977
Canada Summer Jobs Program	
Mr. Dalton	7977
Mr. Kusmierczyk	7978
National Defence	
Mrs. Gallant	7978
Ms. Vandenberg	7978
The Economy	
Mr. Yurdiga	7978
Mr. Fraser	7978
Regional Economic Development	
Mr. Lefebvre	7978
Mr. Sheehan	7978
The Environment	
Mr. Cannings	7979
Mr. Bittle	7979
Public Services and Procurement	
Mr. Sangha	7979
Mr. MacKinnon	7979
Points of Order	
Statements by Members	
Mr. Simms	7979
Bill C-10—Time Allocation Motion	
Mr. Masse	7979
Decorum	
Mr. Kurek	7979
Mr. Genuis	7980

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Government Response to Petitions	
Mr. Lamoureux	7980
Motion	7980
(Motion agreed to)	7981
Points of Order	
Procedural Role of Speaker	
Ms. Harder	7982
Decorum in Opposition Lobby	
Mr. Gerretsen	7982
Mrs. Vecchio	7982
Bill C-10—Time Allocation Motion	
Mr. Albas	7983

Decorum in Opposition Lobby

Mr. Richards 7984

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Income Tax Act

Bill C-234. Second reading 7984

Mr. Gerretsen 7984

Ms. Larouche 7985

Mr. Blaikie 7987

Mr. Calkins 7988

Mr. Hoback 7990

Division on motion deferred 7991

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