



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

44th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

House of Commons Debates

Official Report
(Hansard)

Volume 151 No. 060
Thursday, April 28, 2022

Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



CONTENTS

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

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, April 28, 2022

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

● (1000)

[*English*]

POINTS OF ORDER

MOTION NO. 11

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, thank you for this opportunity. I am rising on a point of order related to government Motion No. 11, which is scheduled for debate later this morning. By rising today, I am asking that you divide the motion for debating and voting purposes. Recognizing that you will require time to consider the matter, I am rising now, as soon as the House opened today.

The procedure that I am seeking to invoke is not referenced in any specific standing order. Rather, it falls under the general structures of Standing Order 1, which states:

In all cases not provided for hereinafter, or by other Order of the House, procedural questions shall be decided by the Speaker or Chair of Committees of the Whole, whose decisions shall be based on the usages, forms, customs and precedents of the House of Commons of Canada....

As to those customs and precedents, I would refer the Chair to page 570 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, which states:

When a complicated motion comes before the House (for example, a motion containing two or more parts each capable of standing on its own), the Speaker has the authority to modify it in order to facilitate decision making in the House. When any Member objects to a motion containing two or more distinct propositions, he or she may request that the motion be divided and that each proposition be debated and voted on separately.

Government Motion No. 11 is an omnibus motion that, in the words of Bosc and Gagnon, contains “two or more parts each capable of standing on its own”. Looking at the motion on the Order Paper, it could, I think, be divided into at least seven separate questions.

First, we have paragraphs (a) and (b) and subparagraph (c)(ii), which concern extending sitting hours and consequential arrangements.

Second, we have subparagraph (c)(i), which contains voting on the main estimates and supplementary estimates in the current supply period.

Third, we have subparagraph (c)(iii), which would waive the one-sitting-day waiting period between the report stage and third reading stage.

Fourth, we have subparagraph (c)(iv), which would allow the Prime Minister, with the votes of his coalition partners in the NDP, to shut down the House for the summer whenever the political heat gets to be too much for him.

Fifth, we have paragraph (d), which would make provisions for voting on government business on June 22 and June 23, if the House is even still sitting then.

Sixth, we have paragraph (e), which would change the mandate of the Special Joint Committee on Medical Assistance in Dying.

Seventh, we have the final paragraph, which would permanently amend the Standing Orders to include the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation among the named holidays when the House would not sit.

The final part of government Motion No. 11 is the most jaded and cynical part of the entire package. Every party and every member of the House understands and believes in the importance of reconciliation with indigenous peoples. To try to stitch the House's own internal act of recognition and implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's call to action number 80 to a procedural motion with such a crassly partisan motivation to be able to ram bills through the House and then shutter our elected legislature is a nakedly cynical manoeuvre.

Is there any wonder why reconciliation efforts continue to stumble and stall under the Liberal government? It is because of political tactics and stunts like this. If ever there was a reason to draw upon this special practice among the House procedure, it is for exactly this particular situation.

As Mr. Speaker Macnaughton explained on June 15, 1964, at page 428 of the Journals, this practice can be traced to the April 19, 1888, ruling given by the United Kingdom's Mr. Speaker Peel: “It may be for the convenience of the House that the honourable gentleman's two propositions should be put together, but if any honourable gentleman objects to their being taken together, they will be put separately.” Indeed, there are very few cases to rely upon, but they are catalogued by Bosc and Gagnon at pages 570 and 571.

● (1005)

One of the Speaker's predecessors, the hon. member for Regina—Qu'Appelle, observed the following on October 17, 2013, at page 65 of the Debates:

Points of Order

In adjudicating cases of this kind, the Chair must always be mindful to approach each new case with a fresh eye, taking into account the particular circumstances of the situation at hand. Often, there is little in the way of guidance for the speaker and a strict compliance with precedent is not always appropriate.

I would observe that, in point of fact, most of the situations where the Chair did undertake an intervention of some variety occurred on procedural types of motions not dissimilar to the one that will come before the House today. In 1991, a motion to make a series of amendments to the Standing Orders was divided for voting purposes. In 2002, a motion concerning government bills, the business of a special committee and the modification of the finance committee's pre-budget consultations was divided for debating purposes and then further divided for voting purposes. In 2013, a motion concerning the reinstatement of government bills and committee business, along with the temporary management of the House and committee business, was divided for voting purposes. Of these precedent cases, today's motion comes closest, I believe, to the situation the House faced 20 years ago.

I will admit there are some parts of government Motion No. 11 that might be convenient to group together for a common debate. Take, for example, the provisions on extended sitting hours and on votes demanded on June 22 and 23. However, there are other portions that are simply stitched together for apparent efficiency by a government that continues to mismanage its parliamentary agenda and the House's time. We have, on the one part, temporary measures to structure the rest of the spring sitting. Then there is the extension of the special joint committee's work through the summer and autumn. Finally, as I discussed earlier, there is a permanent standing order amendment as part of the reconciliation process.

Procedurally, distinct debates and votes are justifiable for these matters, I would submit. Morally, the proposal for the House to discuss and acknowledge reconciliation with indigenous peoples should be kept far away from the political controversy baked into the other components of government Motion No. 11. Reconciliation between the House of Commons and indigenous peoples should be acknowledged in a mature manner, appropriate to the gravity of the issue and the common cause, which I hope all hon. members can unite behind.

The Liberal government, however, along with its new New Democrat coalition partners, wants to wedge and divide Canadians time and again. This time, it is to try to leverage deeply objectionable proposals to ram a divisive legislative agenda through Parliament as an opportunity to claim that some members of the House oppose reconciliation. In reality, nothing could be further from the truth. Instead, the only thing that should be divided is government Motion No. 11.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I ask you to do the right thing and exercise the authority vested in you by Standing Order 1 and the precedents of the House to divide government Motion No. 11 for debating and voting purposes along the lines that I have laid out to you.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am rising to respond to the point of order from the member opposite, who claims that government Motion No. 11 is a complicated question and should be divided for the purposes of debating and voting. I submit that this is not the case. The motion's uni-

fying theme is to organize the business of the House for the remaining weeks in the spring sitting period.

As members will know, there have been many motions before the House that were lengthy and dealt solely with the business of the House. Let me draw members' attention to the motions the House adopted to meet in a hybrid sitting and to require members to be fully vaccinated or have a valid medical exemption to participate in the proceedings of the House. That motion and other motions the House has adopted since the beginning of the pandemic have been subject to a single debate and a single vote. I believe that should be the approach taken with respect to government Motion No. 11.

The motion has a clear unifying theme: organizing the business of the House. The House has seen many such motions in the past, and precedents suggest that this type of motion has not been divided for the purpose of either debating or voting.

• (1010)

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the member for that intervention.

[*Translation*]

I believe the hon. member for La Prairie would like to speak.

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the point of order raised by my colleague, the House leader of the official opposition. I would like to reserve the right to respond at a later date.

[*English*]

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for that interesting intervention. I always appreciate the good debates that we have in this House. The NDP just wants to put on the record that it would have the ability to respond at a later time.

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the member for that intervention as well. That finishes that point of order.

We have another point of order, from the hon. whip from the official opposition.

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order in regard to government Motion No. 11, and in particular paragraph (b)(ii) of the motion, which states:

after 6:30 p.m. the Speaker shall not receive any quorum calls or dilatory motions, and shall only accept a request for unanimous consent after receiving a notice from the House leaders or whips of all recognized parties stating that they are in agreement with such a request.

My point of order will challenge the admissibility of the motion, since the quorum in this House is a requirement of the Constitution Act, section 48.

Some may point out that certain proceedings in this chamber have proceeded under the unanimous agreement of the House that quorum calls not be heard, but I would like to point out that in those instances, such as late shows, emergency debates and take-note debates, these debates do not result in decisions of this House. The current motion is an unprecedented departure from this usual practice, in that it seeks to remove the quorum requirement for the debate of government legislation on items that could become law should the House vote to support them.

The requirement for quorum has never been challenged before, and the quorum requirement of the House is a fundamental component of our rules entrenched in the Constitution. In fact, page 598 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, says clearly, “Nothing done by unanimous consent constitutes a precedent.”

I also recognize that the quorum necessity of 20 members is not altered directly. The inability to bring to the attention of the Chair the lack of quorum in this House indirectly waives the constitutional and procedural requirement of quorum. Since a quorum call is the only means by which quorum is enforced during the sitting, the inability to call a quorum is, in essence, the same as waiving the quorum requirement. Mr. Speaker, as you and your predecessors have reminded this House numerous and countless times, we cannot do indirectly what we cannot do directly.

If the House were to adopt Motion No. 11, it would adopt procedures that go beyond the powers conferred upon it by the Constitution. There are similar precedents regarding committees that ought to be considered. On June 20, 1994 and November 7, 1996, the Speaker ruled that:

While it is a tradition of this House that committees are masters of their own proceedings, they cannot establish procedures which go beyond the powers conferred upon them by the House.

If we are to be consistent, I would point out that while the House is a master of its own proceedings, it cannot establish procedures that go beyond the powers conferred upon it by the Constitution.

The Supreme Court of Canada ruled in 1985 that the requirements of section 133 of the Constitution Act, 1867 and of section 23 of the Manitoba Act, 1870, respecting the use of both the English and French languages in the records and journals of the Houses of the Parliament of Canada, are mandatory and must be obeyed. Accordingly, the House can no longer depart from its own code of procedure when considering procedure entrenched in the Constitution.

On page 295 of the second edition of Joseph Maingot's *Parliamentary Privilege in Canada*, in reference to the 1985 case, he lists those constitutional requirements regarding parliamentary procedure that must be obeyed and includes in that list section 48, which deals with the quorum of the House of Commons.

While these requirements are amendable by the Parliament of Canada, they cannot be amended only by one House of Parliament. This House cannot unilaterally change or suspend the quorum requirement by a majority decision. While it is said that the Speaker does not normally rule on constitutional matters, the constitutional matter of quorum is also stated in our Standing Orders, as are the financial privileges of this House. It is our responsibility to ensure that procedural requirements are observed before a bill leaves this place to become law, since the courts have the legal power to inquire into the procedural history of a bill that has been assented to. On page 186 of Joseph Maingot's second edition of *Parliamentary Privilege in Canada*, there is the claim that “the courts might be effective in ensuring the observance of procedural requirements imposed by the constitution with respect to the enactment of legislation.”

Routine Proceedings

The official opposition rejects this procedure being forced upon the minority by the majority in this House. If the House were to adopt this motion without the unanimous consent of the members, and I have my doubts whether we should have been circumventing this rule in the past by unanimous consent, we could be casting doubt upon the legitimacy of our proceedings and placing the entire institution under a cloud.

Among the first principles of our democracy is that legislation should be tested through rigorous debate. Allowing for significant portions of debate on government legislation that could become law without requiring a single government or coalition member to be present to contest and debate the legislation is a fundamental abdication of duty on behalf of the government.

• (1015)

As many Speakers have stated numerous times in this place, the Speaker is the servant of this chamber and the guardian of the members' rights and privileges. I implore you to find out of order the provision that would remove the ability of the Speaker to ensure quorum present in this chamber.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to reserve the Bloc's right to respond at a later date.

[*English*]

The Deputy Speaker: Does anybody else have an intervention?

We will try to return to the House as soon as practical. We know this motion is coming up for debate soon after business here, so we will try to come back with some responses as soon as is practical.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8)(a), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to one petition, and this return would be tabled in an electronic format.

* * *

STOPPING INTERNET SEXUAL EXPLOITATION ACT

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-270, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (pornographic material).

Routine Proceedings

He said: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Calgary Shepard for seconding this bill today. I call it the SISE act, the stopping Internet sexual exploitation act. It is an honour to rise today on behalf of the victims and survivors of companies like MindGeek, which have victimized women and girls across this country and across the world. It is great to reintroduce this bill. I introduced it in the last Parliament as well.

For years, online pornographic platforms in Canada have published sexually explicit material without satisfying any requirement for verifying the age or consent of those depicted in it. As a result, horrific videos of sex trafficking, child exploitation and sexual assault have proliferated on Canadian pornographic websites. This has to stop.

The SISE act would implement recommendation 2 of the 2021 ethics committee report on MindGeek by requiring those making or distributing pornographic material for a commercial purpose to verify the age and consent of each person depicted. It would also prohibit the distribution of this material when consent has been withdrawn.

Consent matters. If a website is going to profit from the making or publishing of content, the SISE act would ensure that they must verify the age and consent of every individual in every video. Once a video of exploitation has been uploaded, it is virtually impossible to eliminate. We must prevent these videos from ever reaching the Internet in the first place, and the SISE act would help put the burden of due diligence and corporate responsibility on companies rather than survivors.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

* * *

• (1020)

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

ACCESS TO INFORMATION, PRIVACY AND ETHICS

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC) moved that the third report of the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics, presented on Thursday, March 31, 2022, be concurred in.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes. Just so everyone knows, he lives in Brockville. He has one of the biggest handles in the entire chamber.

In my role as shadow minister for ethics, a position that I have had for just a few weeks, it has been an incredibly busy time. It comes down to the fact that the Liberals have had quite the record of scandals during their tenure in government.

We were reminded earlier this week of the unethical behaviour of the Prime Minister in that he was found, four times, by the former Ethics Commissioner, Mary Dawson, being in contravention of the Conflict of Interest Act. He was guilty of violating and contravening sections 5, 11, 12 and 21 of the Conflict of Interest Act for taking an illegal vacation. We now know, from the beginning of this week, that the Prime Minister was also investigated by the RCMP for fraud against the government under paragraph 121(1)(c) of the Criminal Code for that illegal vacation on a private island.

We also know that the Prime Minister was found guilty of contravening section 9 of the Conflict of Interest Act over his interference in the criminal prosecution of SNC-Lavalin and the unnecessary interference and his concerted campaign to pressure the former Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Jody Wilson-Raybould, into offering SNC-Lavalin a special plea deal, what is called a deferred prosecution agreement. We have to remember that Jody Wilson-Raybould stood on her principles, stood up for justice, refused to interfere and, because of that, lost her job as the Attorney General of Canada. The Treasury Board president of the day, Jane Philpott, was also fired from cabinet. Both of them were kicked out of the Liberal caucus by the Prime Minister.

We know that this scandal in itself had huge overreaching impacts on the Liberal Party. We know that the principal secretary to the Prime Minister, Gerald Butts, had to resign, along with the Clerk of the Privy Council at the time, Michael Wernick, who also resigned in disgrace.

As I go through this, I go to Bill Morneau, the former Minister of Finance, whom I am going to talk about in just a bit. Along with that, there is also the former Minister of Fisheries, who is now the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities and the MP for Beauséjour, who was caught up in the lucrative clam scam agreement when he ensured that family members, using nepotism, were awarded lucrative contracts worth over \$24 million.

When we talk about Mr. Morneau, the contents of the report that the ethics committee did, tabled here a month ago, and the report tabled in the previous Parliament, concentrated on Bill Morneau and the WE scandal, but even going into that, Bill Morneau as the finance minister was also found guilty of contravening the Conflict of Interest Act for failing to disclose that he had a luxurious villa in the French countryside. He refused to disclose that to the Ethics Commissioner for two years.

The Liberals have a long history of scandal.

As we just witnessed with the Prime Minister's failure on the issue of his private vacation and being four times guilty under the Conflict of Interest Act and investigated for fraud against the government under the Criminal Code, we do not know if the RCMP investigated Bill Morneau over the WE scandal and the contents of the report that we tabled on March 31, on which I also got up on a question of privilege, as you may recall, Mr. Speaker. We have to remember that Mr. Morneau failed to recuse himself from the cabinet table when decisions were made about awarding the WE Charity over half a billion dollars, and gave it preferential treatment.

Routine Proceedings

• (1025)

Mr. Morneau allowed his ministerial staff to work directly with the WE Charity, help them develop their proposals and intervene on behalf of WE at federal, provincial and municipal levels to deliver a program that was beyond WE's capabilities, as we found out through testimony. Additionally, Mr. Morneau failed to talk about how his own daughter worked for the WE foundation.

In the wake of this WE scandal, and in the wake of the work that was done by the ethics committee in the previous Parliament, Mr. Morneau was removed from cabinet. However, it was not just Mr. Morneau who was caught up in this scandal: We know that there were at least 10 videos made by WE that involved the Prime Minister, and we know those were produced by Door Knocker Media and were worth over \$217,000, yet the Prime Minister was not investigated by Elections Canada on third party endorsement and third party expenditures for campaign-style video productions.

We know for a fact that the Prime Minister made a campaign statement in one of the videos, where he said, "I pledge to work hard for all Canadians." This is something we hear in the House every day and heard just yesterday during question period with the Prime Minister. He always says he is working here for all Canadians. He also said that he was going to "invest in our youngest leaders: you". That was a promise to soon-to-be voters, and it was clearly a political message he used in those videos paid for by the WE Charity.

We know that the Prime Minister's wife, Sophie Grégoire Trudeau, received over \$20,000 for a weekend getaway in London for the WE Day the organization held in 2020. Just weeks before that, WE was given a contract for half a billion dollars to deliver the Canada student service grant: something that was specifically designed by the Government of Canada, orchestrated by Bill Morneau and implicated by the Prime Minister in ensuring that it was delivered through the WE Charity, which was an organization that had never done anything working with students at this scale during a pandemic.

These facts appear a clear conflict of interest, and have severely damaged public confidence in our democratic institutions, especially here in the Parliament of Canada.

During our testimony, there were calls to bring a number of witnesses who refused to attend. The House ordered, on Thursday, March 25, 2021, that Ben Chin, Rick Theis and Amitpal Singh all appear as witnesses. I want to remind everyone that Ben Chin is the senior adviser to the Prime Minister, and that he received a LinkedIn message from Craig Kielburger of WE that stated, "Hello Ben, Thank you for your kindness in helping shape our latest program with the government. Warmly, Craig". Mr. Chin responded to Mr. Kielburger, "Great to hear from you Craig; let's get our young working". Ben Chin refused to comply with the order of the House to appear.

Rick Theis, who is also in the Prime Minister's office as the director of policy and cabinet affairs, met with the Kielburger brothers from WE on May 5, 2020, regarding this new program, and Amitpal Singh, who was an adviser to Bill Morneau in early April, suggested a youth services program would eventually be developed into a tailor-made, half-a-billion-dollar WE Charity program.

All three witnesses were instructed to comply, but instead the ministers told them not to. That is contempt, and that election we just had and this new Parliament do not purge those witnesses from being held in contempt.

I also want to point out that the MP for Waterloo, who at the time was the Minister of Diversity and Inclusion and Youth, also perjured herself at committee. She testified that she did not discuss the half-billion-dollar program with the Kielburgers, yet in documentation submitted to the ethics committee, it was clear that she and her staff were working with the WE foundation.

As members can see, when we put in the litany of scandals the current government has been plagued with, and we look at the WE Charity and the scandal here, it is important we look again at this report as well as have the ethics committee do more to study this issue.

• (1030)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, I am not surprised that the Conservatives moved concurrence on a report. I am not surprised that they chose, once again, to have personal attacks against ministers.

As the Prime Minister indicated in question period yesterday very clearly, while the Conservative Party's focus is purely on character assassination and attacking, we will continue to have our focus on the interests of Canadians. We just finished having a serious debate on the budget bill, and there is so much more that is out there.

I am wondering this. Will the member reflect on the types of political games that he is playing? These are at the expense of having good, sound debate on a wide variety of issues, whether it is the war in Europe, budgetary measures or even what it is we were supposed to be debating today.

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Speaker, I am not surprised that the member for Winnipeg North wants to avoid accountability. I am not surprised that the member for Winnipeg North wants to be the chief cheerleader to help cover up the Prime Minister's, and this government's, unethical behaviour and the possibility that some of it may even be criminal these days, when we look at the investigation by the RCMP into fraud against the government by the Prime Minister himself—

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Would you say that outside?

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Speaker, I am getting heckled by the member for Winnipeg North. Again, as the chief spokesperson for lack of accountability, for cover-ups and for the unethical behaviour of this government, we can always point to the member for Winnipeg North to stand up and be there shouting the loudest.

Routine Proceedings

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there are so many things happening right now in this country. There is an overdose crisis, and a toxic drug-supply crisis that is killing people. There is a housing crisis. There are so many problems and issues that have to be resolved, such as veterans who are still waiting for their disability payments because of the backlog that started with the Conservatives.

The Conservatives are delaying having really important conversations, and they have not brought forward any solutions around the issues that I have talked about, whether it is climate change, whether it is the important need to fast-track reconciliation or the failure of the government to deliver on missing and murdered indigenous women and girls and the calls to justice.

My question to the member is this. Why are the Conservatives continually delaying and not bringing forward solutions to solve these really important issues?

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Speaker, as we see with this unholy alliance between the NDP and the Liberals, NDP members are standing here helping to support the Liberals and later today are going to push through a motion here that undermines this democratic institution. This motion is about a three-hour debate. I am talking about how the public confidence in our institutions, including the Parliament of Canada, is being undermined by this government, and the NDP is now enabling and allowing this government to cover up this failure of accountability and this unethical behaviour. Now there is this dictatorial approach on how they are going to ram through legislation in this very chamber.

• (1035)

[Translation]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, when I see what is happening this morning, I feel that today's debate in the House should be about ethics.

A debate about WE Charity is clearly a debate about ethics. Government Motion No. 11 also has me wondering about ethics.

I wonder how the NDP-Liberal coalition works, what is really going on behind the scenes and what we here in Parliament are not aware of. I wonder about the importance of being publicly accountable to the House of Commons.

I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on the current ethics situation, in 2022, in the House of Commons.

[English]

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Speaker, here we are wanting to talk about ethics. At the very basis of what we do in this chamber, we have to have the trust of all Canadians, and right now there is a cloud of suspicion hanging over the head of the Prime Minister.

This government, this Liberal-NDP coalition, refuses to be held to account and to allow Canadians to look underneath this veil of secrecy of what exactly this Prime Minister has done, whether it comes down to his private vacations or his involvement in the WE scandal. Canadians deserve to know exactly what is up, and people need to be held accountable. If the NDP want to be here giving a get-out-of-jail-free card to the Liberals, shame on them.

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is wonderful to hear the enthusiasm from the hon. gentleman opposite and to follow the esteemed member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, as we talk again about a thematic problem for the government. While the Liberals hope, try and pray that prorogation and snap elections, at a time when the Prime Minister had promised that he would not call an election, will make those problems go away, we are here today because these concerns are real for Canadians. Canadians are concerned about the integrity of the institutions that they hold dear.

I gesture this way because I talk about the government and I talk about the executive branch. It is important. We are all temporary occupants and guardians of the offices that we hold. When that is called into question, and when those offices are brought into disrepute by actions or allegations of actions, it is incumbent upon us that there be transparency and a fair hearing of that information.

The member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman laid it out very well. We have seen this pattern of behaviour by the Prime Minister over a number of years: He believes that the rules do not apply to him. It is the wrong message to send to Canadians, it is the wrong message to send to parliamentarians and it is also the wrong message to send to the world when we hear condemnations that have come from groups such as the OECD, when it comes to legislators from other countries, who are concerned about the appearance of corruption or corrupt practices by members of the government.

In this case, specifically with respect to hearings that were had on the WE Charity scandal, we had a number of witnesses who were duly ordered to appear by a parliamentary committee. They were instructed by members of the executive, by federal cabinet ministers, not to appear at committee. They were instructed to defy a lawful order of the House.

What is the precedent that sets? I can tell colleagues that on its face it is a bad one. It is that we have a government so afraid of letting the light of transparency shine that it would unroll hundreds of years of precedent and undermine the traditions, customs, practices and legal authority of this place and say those rules do not matter because they make things uncomfortable for it. That puts us in a really tough spot.

I heard questions and comments to my colleague for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman asking why we would talk about this and not talk about that. This issue could have been resolved in the summer of 2020, but the Prime Minister prorogued Parliament to kill it and then set up a system where the government “ragged the puck” so that committees could not meet. This issue was then pushed forward through the fall and into the spring of 2021, and before the issue was resolved to come back in the fall of 2021, he called an election, although just that spring he had committed to not call one. All members in the House undertook to continue advocating for the priorities of Canadians, but in this case the Prime Minister had a different priority and was protecting himself from uncomfortable questions.

The individuals named in that order to appear at committee must appear. It is incumbent on all members of the House to see to the completion of that work. It is an abdication of our responsibility as members, as the House of Commons, and as the Parliament of Canada not to complete our work.

● (1040)

Are there other important issues facing this country? We can bet on that. There is fiscal mismanagement and failure to work with the provinces on important things like health care. The member for Courtenay—Alberni was talking about his coalition partners and a need for action on the opioid crisis facing this country. Hear, hear, I agree. His party had direct input and impact on what this budget looked like. New Democrats are the ones who are going to carry this budget across the goal line for the government.

We can talk about that. We continue those consultations. Conservative members are continuing work on this important file, challenging the government on issues like addiction and mental health and what resources it is committing to the provinces. Is it collaborating with the provinces? Has the Prime Minister finally met with the first ministers, the premiers, to talk about what the future looks like for health care in this country? No, he has not.

However, unlike the Prime Minister, we can walk and chew gum at the same time. We can do both of those things. We are talking about the budget; we are talking about addiction and mental health; we are talking about reconciliation with Canada's first people. We are doing a lot of things, but we are not going to forget just because the Prime Minister took the walk up to Rideau Hall, contrary to what he said he was going to do, breaking his word, breaking a promise and acting against the will of all members of this House when we passed a motion saying there would not be an election. That is part of the pattern, so we are back, dealing with it again.

Liberals hope that water under the bridge and time on the clock are going to be enough that Canadians will forget, but it is about those precedent-setting behaviours that we take. When we decide that it is okay for ministers to instruct individuals who are duly and lawfully ordered to appear at committee not to appear because they do not like what they might say, what does that say? It says that we are going to cast aside all the traditions of this place.

We should have gotten this done in 2020. Liberals have delayed and obstructed this from being completed. We have formed a new Parliament since then. We had an election. Most of us find ourselves in different roles. I know the member for Winnipeg North continues in his role, as was pointed out by my colleague, as the defender or apologist in chief. I have other things that I am working on, but I can also do this at the same time. It is incredibly important.

In concluding my remarks, I want to underscore for all members in this place that this is important. It is important that we not allow games by the government to distract from the important role that we have as the guardians of this institution, of the rights of Canadians and of what they hold sacred, and that is trust in these democratic institutions.

I move:

Routine Proceedings

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word "That" and substituting the following: "the Third Report of the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics, presented on Thursday, March 31, 2022, be not now concurred in, but that it be recommitted to the Committee for further consideration, provided that

(a) the Committee be instructed (i) to make every effort possible to receive evidence from Ben Chin, Rick Theis and Amitpal Singh, the witnesses who did not comply with this House's order of Thursday, March 25, 2021, to appear before the Committee, (ii) to consider further the concerns expressed in the report about the member for Waterloo's failure "in her obligation to be accurate with a committee", and (iii) to report back by Monday, October 17, 2022; and

(b) the Committee be empowered to order the attendance of the member for Waterloo, from time to time, as it sees fit.

● (1045)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The amendment is in order.

Questions and comments, the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, for those who are following the debate today, it is important we recognize right at the very beginning that when the member makes reference to the idea of a "game", this is really what it is. It is the Conservative Party playing games when we should be debating the many different issues that are having an impact on Canadians every day.

What would Motion No. 11 do? Why are Conservatives playing the game today? It is because Motion No. 11 would in essence allow for us to sit longer hours, so MPs have more time to debate. It is nothing new. It happens all the time, whether it is in Ottawa or the many different provincial legislatures.

The reality is that the Conservatives do not want that additional time. They do not want to work. Why is my colleague across the way afraid to sit a few extra hours? I ask him to recognize how important debate is inside this chamber.

● (1050)

Mr. Michael Barrett: Madam Speaker, I ask the member opposite why he is afraid to have other members on his bench speak. The member speaks more than any other member. He and the member for Kingston and the Islands have the rest of them muzzled so tight that they are not even allowed to talk in this place, so we are not going to take any lessons from the member opposite.

Further, what is interesting about Motion No. 11 is that if they are talking about sitting extra hours, why does the motion stipulate that their members do not have to be here? It is just like what we saw in the last Parliament, when they would have only one person in this place, who was the member for Kingston and the Islands, because they were too afraid their members might erupt with some concern about the activities of the government and the Prime Minister, which would reflect very poorly on them.

If they had not called an unnecessary election during a pandemic, we could have dealt with this two years ago.

Routine Proceedings

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Speaker, the member for Winnipeg North said we should focus on issues that are having an impact on Canadians.

I think ethics is an issue that has an impact on Canadians. I think that confidence in institutions is an issue that has an impact on Canadians. What happened with the WE organization and the almost \$1 billion that was given to a Liberal Party crony raises some serious questions.

If we are going to talk about lobbying, since my colleague mentioned it in his presentation, the king of Canadian lobby groups is the oil and gas industry. It is the biggest lobby in Canada and controls a considerable portion of our economy.

We can go further still. The emissions reduction fund was launched during the pandemic solely to support the oil and gas sector.

I wonder if my colleague is as concerned as I am by oil and gas sector lobbying.

[English]

Mr. Michael Barrett: Madam Speaker, I am always concerned when we have a situation in which a group that is lobbying the government then gives a gift worth, let us say, a quarter of a million dollars to the Prime Minister, and the Prime Minister fails to get permission from the head of the branch of government for which he works and then satisfies all of the criteria laid out by the RCMP for a charge of fraud on government to be laid.

That type of behaviour between a lobbyist and a government official is incredibly concerning, and I hope the Prime Minister will co-operate fully with the RCMP in a case like the one I mentioned.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, I want to start by making clear that I am not part of any agreement with the governing party. My accountability is to my neighbours in Kitchener.

I know for the hon. member, as well, the housing crisis is significant in his community. This is something that I want to make sure we are speaking about on a regular basis. As for the housing and climate crisis, we might feel differently about that, but to me this place should be focused on those kinds of issues.

In his view, why is this more important than getting at the kinds of issues from housing to the poisoning crisis to the climate crisis?

Mr. Michael Barrett: Madam Speaker, that is a great question from the member for Kitchener Centre. I do not think we need to create a ranked list of what the biggest crises are. Do we have a housing crisis in this country? Yes. Do we have an affordability crisis? We sure do. Do we have an opioid crisis and epidemic? Definitely. Are we still dealing with the crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects? Absolutely, we are.

This is an issue that started two years ago, and we need to—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Resuming debate, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it has been an interesting process, to say the very least, and I look forward to the ongoing debates that we will hopefully have today on Motion No. 11. I have a considerable amount to say in regard to Motion No. 11. I really do not have that much to say at this point in time, because I do not necessarily want to play into the same game that the Conservatives are playing right now but rather focus my attention on the issues and what I believe that Canadians want us to be talking about inside the chamber.

While I am on my feet, at this point in time, I move:

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

● (1055)

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.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, we request a recorded division.

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

● (1135)

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

(Division No. 60)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anandasangaree
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Barron	Battiste
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	BibEAU
Bittle	Blaikie
Blair	Blaney
Blois	Boissonnault
Boulerice	Bradford
Brière	Cannings
Carr	Casey
Chagger	Chahal
Champagne	Chatel
Chen	Chiang
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Collins (Victoria)
Cormier	Coteau
Dabrusin	Damoff
Davies	Desjarlais
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Diab	Dong
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dzerowicz
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith	Fergus
Fillmore	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fragiskatos	Fraser
Freeland	Fry

Routine Proceedings

Gaheer
 Garrison
 Gerretsen
 Green
 Hajdu
 Hardie
 Housefather
 Hutchings
 Idlout
 Jacek
 Joly
 Jowhari
 Kelloway
 Khera
 Kusmierczyk
 Lalonde
 Lametti
 Lapointe
 Lauzon
 Lebouthillier
 Long
 Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
 MacDonald (Malpeque)
 MacKinnon (Gatineau)
 Martinez Ferrada
 May (Cambridge)
 McGuinty
 McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
 McPherson
 Mendicino
 Miller
 Morrissey
 Naqvi
 Noormohamed
 Oliphant
 Petitpas Taylor
 Qualtrough
 Rogers
 Sahota
 Saks
 Sarai
 Schiefke
 Sgro
 Sheehan
 Sidhu (Brampton South)
 Sorbara
 St-Onge
 Tassi
 Trudeau
 Valdez
 van Koeverden
 Vandenbeld
 Vuong
 Wilkinson
 Zahid
 Zuberi — 177

Garneau
 Gazan
 Gould
 Guilbeault
 Hanley
 Hepfner
 Hughes
 Iacono
 Ien
 Johns
 Jones
 Kayabaga
 Khalid
 Koutrakis
 Kwan
 Lambropoulos
 Lamoureux
 Lattanzio
 LeBlanc
 Lightbound
 Longfield
 MacAtulay (Cardigan)
 MacGregor
 Maloney
 Mathysen
 McDonald (Avalon)
 McKay
 McLeod
 Mendès
 Miao
 Morrice
 Murray
 Ng
 O'Connell
 O'Regan
 Powlowski
 Robillard
 Romanado
 Sajjan
 Samson
 Scarpaleggia
 Serré
 Shanahan
 Sidhu (Brampton East)
 Singh
 Spengemann
 Sudds
 Taylor Roy
 Turnbull
 Van Bynen
 Vandal
 Virani
 Weiler
 Yip
 Zarrillo

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif
 Albas
 Arnold
 Barlow
 Beaulieu
 Bergen
 Berthold
 Bezan
 Blanchette-Joncas
 Brassard
 Calkins
 Carrie
 Chambers

Aitchison
 Allison
 Baldinelli
 Barrett
 Benzen
 Bergeron
 Bérubé
 Blanchet
 Block
 Brunelle-Duceppe
 Caputo
 Chabot
 Champoux

Chong
 Dalton
 Davidson
 Deltell
 Desilets
 Dowdall
 Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
 Epp
 Falk (Provencher)
 Ferreri
 Gallant
 Gaudreau
 Genuis
 Gladu
 Goodridge
 Gray
 Hoback
 Kelly
 Kmiec
 Kramp-Neuman
 Kusie
 Lantsman
 Lawrence
 Lemire
 Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
 Lobb
 Maguire
 May (Saamich—Gulf Islands)
 McCauley (Edmonton West)
 Melillo
 Moore
 Morrison
 Muys
 Normandin
 Patzer
 Pauzé
 Perron
 Rayes
 Rempel Garner
 Roberts
 Ruff
 Scheer
 Seeback
 Shipley
 Sinclair-Desgagné
 Soroka
 Ste-Marie
 Strahl
 Therrien
 Tochor
 Trudel
 Van Popta
 Vidal
 Viersen
 Villemure
 Wagantall
 Waugh
 Williams
 Zimmer — 143

Cooper
 Dancho
 DeBellefeuille
 Desbiens
 Doherty
 Dreeshen
 Ellis
 Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
 Fast
 Fortin
 Garon
 Généreux
 Gill
 Godin
 Gourde
 Hallan
 Jeneroux
 Kitchen
 Kram
 Kurek
 Lake
 Larouche
 Lehoux
 Lewis (Essex)
 Lloyd
 MacKenzie
 Martel
 Mazier
 McLean
 Michaud
 Morantz
 Motz
 Nater
 O'Toole
 Paul-Hus
 Perkins
 Plamondon
 Redekopp
 Richards
 Rood
 Savard-Tremblay
 Schmale
 Shields
 Simard
 Small
 Steinley
 Stewart
 Thériault
 Thomas
 Tolmie
 Uppal
 Vecchio
 Vien
 Vignola
 Vis
 Warkentin
 Webber
 Williamson

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

*Government Orders***GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

● (1140)

[English]

EXTENSION OF SITTING HOURS AND CONDUCT OF EXTENDED PROCEEDINGS**Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (for the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons) moved:**

That, notwithstanding any standing order, special order or usual practice of the House,

(a) on the day of the adoption of this order, the ordinary hour of daily adjournment shall be 12 a.m., that until Thursday, June 23, 2022, a minister of the Crown may, with the agreement of the House leader of another recognized party, rise from his or her seat at any time during a sitting, but no later than 6:30 p.m., and request that the ordinary hour of daily adjournment for the current sitting or a subsequent sitting be 12 a.m., provided that it be 10 p.m. on a day when a debate pursuant to Standing Order 52 or 53.1 is to take place, and that such a request shall be deemed adopted;

(b) on a sitting day extended pursuant to paragraph (a),

(i) proceedings on any opposition motion pursuant to Standing Order 81(16) shall conclude no later than 5:30 p.m. Tuesday to Thursday, 6:30 p.m. on a Monday or 1:30 p.m. on a Friday, on an allotted day for the business of supply, except pursuant to Standing Order 81(18)(c),

(ii) after 6:30 p.m. the Speaker shall not receive any quorum calls or dilatory motions, and shall only accept a request for unanimous consent after receiving a notice from the House leaders or whips of all recognized parties stating that they are in agreement with such a request,

(iii) motions to proceed to the orders of the day, and to adjourn the debate or the House may be moved after 6:30 p.m. by a minister of the Crown, including on a point of order, and such motions be deemed adopted,

(iv) the time provided for Government Orders shall not be extended pursuant to Standing Orders 33(2), 45(7.1) or 67.1(2);

(c) until Thursday, June 23, 2022,

(i) during consideration of the estimates on the last allotted day, pursuant to Standing Order 81(18), when the Speaker interrupts the proceedings for the purpose of putting forthwith all questions necessary to dispose of the estimates,

(A) all remaining motions to concur in the votes for which a notice of opposition was filed shall be deemed to have been moved and seconded, the questions deemed put and recorded divisions deemed requested,

(B) the Speaker shall have the power to combine the said motions for voting purposes, provided that, in exercising this power, the Speaker be guided by the same principles and practices used at report stage,

(ii) when debate on a motion for concurrence in committee reports is adjourned or interrupted, including on the day of the adoption of this order, the debate shall again be considered on a day designated by the government, after consultation with the House leaders of the other recognized parties, but in any case not later than the 35th sitting day after the interruption,

(iii) a motion for third reading of a government bill may be made in the same sitting during which the said bill has been concurred in at report stage,

(iv) a minister of the Crown may move, without notice, a motion to adjourn the House until Monday, September 19, 2022, provided that the House shall be adjourned pursuant to Standing Order 28 and that the said motion shall be decided immediately without debate or amendment;

(d) notwithstanding the order adopted on Thursday, November 25, 2021, and Standing Order 45(6), no recorded division requested after 2:00 p.m. on Thursday, June 23, 2022, shall be deferred, except for any recorded division requested in regard to a Private Members' Business item, for which the provisions of the order adopted on Thursday, November 25, 2021, shall continue to apply; and

(e) notwithstanding paragraph (j) of the order made Wednesday, March 30, 2022, the deadline for the Special Joint Committee on Medical Assistance in Dying to submit to Parliament a final report of its review, including a statement of any recommended changes, be no later than Monday, October 17, 2022, provided that an interim report on mental illness as a sole underlying condition be

presented to the House no later than Thursday, June 23, 2022, and that a message be sent to the Senate to acquaint Their Honours that this House has passed this order; and

that Standing Order 28(1) be amended as follows: "(1) The House shall not meet on New Year's Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, the day fixed for the celebration of the birthday of the Sovereign, St. John the Baptist Day, Canada Day, Labour Day, the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, Thanksgiving Day, Remembrance Day and Christmas Day. When St. John the Baptist Day, Canada Day or the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation fall on a Tuesday, the House shall not meet the preceding day; when those days fall on a Thursday, the House shall not meet the following day."

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I very much appreciate you taking the time to read the motion. It is a very important motion.

It is important that I emphasize at the very beginning of the debate on this motion that we need to recognize that this is nothing new. I have been a parliamentarian since 1988. I have gone through minority and majority governments, and I have been in opposition and am now in government. More often than not, it is likely the case that we have extended hours during the winding up of a session going into the month of June, and that is the essence of this particular motion.

We are likely going to witness the Conservatives stand up and, in some righteous way, try to say that this motion is something it is not. However, it is a very straightforward and simple motion.

The opposition House leader, when he stands up, will get the opportunity to tell me which governments in particular did not bring in motions of this nature. In my experience, the NDP government in Manitoba, the Progressive Conservative government in Manitoba, Stephen Harper as the Prime Minister of Canada and Prime Ministers before Stephen Harper brought in motions that enabled members to contribute more during debates, and that is the essence of what this motion is all about. People need to realize that.

We are often reminded about being in a minority government, and justifiably so. The first time I was elected, it was a minority government. I was part of the official opposition, and I remember Reg Alcock, who was then the opposition House leader, indicating that we had a role to play in being creative and assisting where we could to contribute positively to legislation. This was to see if we could make changes to legislation and ensure that legislation was ultimately getting through so we had the opportunity to have debates on some of the more important pieces of legislation.

That was back in 1988, and just eight months ago, last September and October, Canadians gave us a third mandate that was greater than our second mandate. More members of Parliament were elected in the third mandate than in the second mandate, and we recognize that it is a minority government. Canadians want us to be working for Canadians, which means that at times we have to put partisan politics to the side. As members know, sometimes I can be somewhat partisan, and I will admit to that. However, at times, it is important that we put partisanship to the side.

Government Orders

I welcome comments from the opposition House leader. He should tell Canadians in the House today whether Stephen Harper brought forward motions of this nature to extend hours. I will let the member opposite know, as I am sure he knows, that the answer to that is yes. It is important that we recognize that at the very beginning, because I can prophesize to a certain degree that we are going to hear the Conservatives note how bad this motion really is.

• (1145)

Mr. Speaker, when we take a look at the details of this motion, we see that the core of the motion does two things. One, it enables the House of Commons to sit later in the evenings, and that means we could be sitting until midnight. Well, why is there is a need for us to sit until midnight? It is because there is a substantial legislative agenda. There is legislation the House needs to be able to debate. To facilitate that debate, we have to extend the hours or we have to put even more limits on the amount of debate inside the House. We often see the reaction from the Conservatives when we try to say this legislation needs to pass: They will debate and debate and then argue for more debate time.

Mr. Damien Kurek: It's called democracy.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite says that it is called democracy. That is what this bill is doing: providing additional time so that members opposite will be able to debate.

We can think of the arguments they have put forward over the last number of weeks and months, saying that they want more debate on government legislation. Well, what the heck? This is the motion they should be voting for. This is the motion they should be supporting so that it passes quickly, because it is going to enable us to have additional hours and hours of debate. Is it because they do not want to put in the effort? I can assure members that every member of the Liberal caucus, due to the support from the New Democratic caucus, will give a commitment to do the work that is necessary to pass the type of legislation that Canadians expect the House of Commons to pass.

At the end of the day, the member across the way is wrong in his assertion because of what we have seen from the Conservative Party. We saw it earlier today, just an hour ago. We were supposed to be talking about the issue of how we can accommodate additional hours so that members of the opposition and government would be able to contribute to debate on important legislation. However, the Conservatives brought forward a concurrence motion, as they continue to do to try to frustrate the legislative agenda. It was difficult for me not to speak when that motion came before us, and I can assure members of that, because I did have a number of thoughts with regard to the behaviour of the Conservative Party by bringing forward such a motion.

As we have seen, the Conservatives have somewhat of a hidden agenda here. They try to tell the public that they want to co-operate, want to do things with the government and want to assist the government in doing the types of things that need to be done, but when the tire hits the road, what ends up happening is that the Conservative Party continues to look at ways to prevent things from happening.

Let me give members a good example of that. The one that comes to my mind is Bill C-8.

Mr. John Brassard: I'm glad you mentioned that.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the opposition House leader says he is glad that I mentioned it, so let me share some thoughts.

We are talking about the fall budgetary measures. Bill C-8, the fall economic statement follow-up, is there to support Canadians in a very real and tangible way. It is hard to believe this, but it is true: That bill is still before the House. The number of days we have debated that bill is more days than we have debated the budget of 2022-23.

• (1150)

The content of Bill C-8 is of a substantial nature. We are talking about legislation that directly supports Canadians in a very real and tangible way. I could talk about, for example, the enhancement of school ventilation. If we think about the pandemic, that is very much needed and there is support for that. There was the first go-round of the rapid tests. We will remember that back in December and January, when people were saying they needed rapid tests, we were able to get record numbers of these rapid tests so that the provinces and territories would have them for distribution. Well over \$1 billion was allocated for those rapid tests. There are also direct supports for small businesses in Bill C-8, supports that small businesses are very much depending on.

Bill C-8 is a piece of legislation that should have been passed long ago, but when the government brings it up for debate, the Conservatives look at ways to prevent it from being debated. I made reference to what happened today when the opposition brought forward a concurrence motion. It has brought forward other concurrence motions, even to prevent debate on Bill C-8. The Conservatives will go out of their way to prevent members from debating. The opposition party will often put up roadblocks, no matter what the legislation is. We have even seen that on legislation that it supports. We have an official opposition that has an agenda that says it does not want the government to pass anything, period.

An hon. member: We want accountability.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: They call it accountability. That is not accountability, my friend.

Mr. Jake Stewart: Oh, yes, it is. That's accountability.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, preventing the government from passing everything it brings into the House of Commons is not accountability. We have a different approach when it comes to accountability. That, my friend, is not accountability.

What Canadians voted for was to ensure that the government works with opposition parties, but there is an obligation for opposition parties, in particular the official opposition Conservative Party, to recognize that they too have a mandate. Their mandate is to make the House of Commons a better place to serve the Canadian people.

Government Orders

I would challenge members opposite to go to any sort of real forum, like maybe a university class or something of that nature, and enter into the same discussion we will be having today on this issue and talk about it. I suspect there will be no acceptance by any member of the Conservative Party to deal with that issue, because on one hand, the Conservatives will try to frustrate and prevent debate from occurring, and on the other hand, they will say they need more debate time. They want more people to speak on this bill, that bill or the other bill. They are sending very mixed messages.

Today we are going to hear Conservative after Conservative, and, as I understand, the opposition House leader in particular, say they do not need this motion and there should have been more cooperation. The House leader is going to talk about the support from my New Democratic friends for the motion. No doubt, he is upset with that fact.

• (1155)

The only time the government can get things through the House is when we have cooperation from at least one opposition party. It does not take much to stop government legislation. Give me a dozen high school students from the R.B. Russell school, Sisler, St. John's, or the Maples, put them on the floor of the House of Commons, and I could prevent any bill from being able to proceed.

It does not take much to stop legislation. It takes an effort to be able to contribute to the debate to the degree in which one can make the modifications one feels are necessary and, for those pieces of legislation that one is in real opposition to, look at ways to allow for more healthy debate in the chamber. There is not one Liberal member of Parliament who would try to support that when there is good will coming from all sides of the House to have a debate. That is why we will see, when it comes time to vote on this motion, that every Liberal member of Parliament will vote in favour of it. One does not need to even whip the vote, as this will ensure there are additional hours of debate—

• (1200)

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): Order. The hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes is rising on a point of order.

[*English*]

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Just out of curiosity, I was wondering if perhaps the hon. gentleman had forgotten to share his time to allow another member of the Liberal caucus to have an opportunity to speak. Perhaps the member for Halifax was looking to speak. I would not want him to be deprived of that opportunity.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): That is debate.

I invite the parliamentary secretary to continue his speech.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the first thing that came to my mind when the member stood up with that particular point of order is that the opposition House leader will be following me. We

will have to wait and see with whom he will be splitting his time. We will just have to wait and see and maybe stand up on a point of—

Mr. Michael Barrett: If you cross your fingers, it might be me.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, one never knows. It might be the member who just stood. He is right.

Often, when someone rises on a point of order, it interrupts our train of thought. Here, we are talking about the Conservatives wanting to be able to have that additional debate on bills. Motion No. 11 would do just that.

The House would normally adjourn today at 6:30. Once this motion passes, all it would take is any opposition House leader, even the Conservative opposition House leader, and a government minister to come to an agreement before 6:30 to say that we would like to be able to continue on until midnight. What is wrong with that?

The legislation is there. When I look at some of the legislation, on some of it I suspect there is going to be a great deal of interest. The one that comes to my mind is the budget implementation act. I suspect that there will be a good number of people who want to be able to speak to the budget implementation act. If members want to contribute to that debate, I would like to see them contribute to that debate, if it is possible, on that piece of legislation.

The House is now saying that, if there is an agreement between any opposition House leader and a minister, they could then bring it forward so we can sit until midnight, but we have to do that before 6:30 of that day. Let us think in terms of the time opportunities and the splitting of speeches. For example, more often than not we see members split a speech, so it is then a 10-minute speech with five minutes for questions and answers. That gives the opportunity for four other people to speak to a bill or, in the case as I mentioned, to the budget implementation act.

In extending from 6:30 until midnight, one can quickly do the math, and we are talking about 20-plus additional speakers. Those are the individuals who have the full 10 minutes. That does not include the individuals who will stand up and have the opportunity, indirectly, to ask those questions on issues they might have about a piece of legislation or a budget. That is what Motion No. 11 is all about. It is about enabling those 20-plus other members of Parliament to be able to contribute if the need or the desire is there. As I say, if we factor in those three questions per speech on four speeches, there are 12 per hour. We are looking at over five hours. That is a lot of opportunity for members on all sides of the House, if they choose, to get up and provide comments, ask questions and do whatever else they might have to do. That is why I believe it is important.

Bill C-8 is the legislation that has been debated now on 10 separate occasions in the House. If we applied that same principle to the rest of the government legislation, it would not be possible. We would not be able to get it done. We would have to bring in a time allocation motion that is very wholesome in its approach. We would have to look at ways to try to pass the legislative agenda in a very, very tight timeframe.

Government Orders

● (1205)

We know, and we can anticipate, that the official opposition will bring in concurrence reports. It has demonstrated this and shown it. We know the Conservatives will bring in adjournment motions and other activities to frustrate the legislative process. That does not serve Canadians well.

The Prime Minister was very clear yesterday. The message he gave yesterday is something I would like to emphasize today. My take on the message the Prime Minister gave yesterday is that the Conservative Party of Canada, the official opposition, has its own agenda, whatever that agenda might be. More often than not, it is one of personal attack. We saw that yesterday in question period. We saw today before this motion. That is the issue it wants to talk about.

On character assassination, one of the colleagues from across the way stood up and talked about Bill Morneau. He was talking about the French villa the then minister of finance had, trying to make it impressive by saying it was in located in France and highlighting this morning that he did not declare it to the commission. The first thing that came across my mind as the member was talking about that was that, a few days after the election, when the minister of finance was elected, the cottage in France was reported in the newspaper. I do not believe the minister of finance was trying to hide anything from his constituents, let alone Canadians. It was actually in the newspaper days after he was elected.

However, it does not prevent the Conservatives from focusing their attention on character assassinations. Yesterday the Prime Minister gave a very clear message. The message was very simple. Opposition parties will do what they do, but from the Government of Canada's perspective, the Prime Minister, cabinet and Liberal caucus, at times with the support of the New Democratic Party and, even at times, members from the Bloc, the focus is on Canadians first and foremost.

We have seen that in the many different budgetary actions that have been brought forward, whether it is actions to support seniors, which there are many of, or whether it is actions that have been ongoing to support small businesses in Canada. For example, there is Bill C-8, which is the one we have not been able to pass. These are the types of things Canadians want us to get through the House of Commons.

Canadians want to see a House of Commons that is much more productive on the issues of the day. That is what I believe we, as a government, will continue to focus on. I am concerned about the cost of housing, inflation, health care and long-term care. I am concerned about the dental plan and making sure we can put that into place. I am concerned about pharmacare and the cost of pharmaceuticals.

I am concerned about our environment, and I am looking at initiatives such as the greener home build program and zero-emissions incentives, such as the incentives for electric cars and purchasing. The other day, one of the Speaker's colleagues raised that the Province of Quebec is providing an incentive for people to buy electric vehicles.

● (1210)

Now, Ottawa is doing the same, which is an additional incentive. Back then, I had put forward that this was the type of debate that I would love to see all members participate in. We all come from provinces and territories, and can all contribute to that. I take what the province of Quebec is doing as a very strong positive. My challenge to Heather Stefanson, the Premier of Manitoba, would be to do something of a likewise nature. Those are the types of debates that we could be having.

At times, we see that debate taking place. That is all a part of allowing for the extension that we are requesting through this particular motion. How many speeches have been given here in this place where we talk a great deal about Ukraine and the war that is taking place in Europe? We have already had take-note debates on it this year. I believe we have also had an emergency debate, but it could have been two take-note debates. The point is that those were debates about a matter that Canadians are generally concerned about, as they are about a multitude of different economic issues.

Canadians want to know what the government is actually doing going forward. If there is a silver lining, in terms of the line of questioning that the Conservatives have been putting forward to the government, I would suggest it is that they do not really have much to say about the budget itself, which tells me—

[*Translation*]

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a question.

[*English*]

I am trying to figure this out now. Is the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader actually trying to filibuster his own motion here? I just need to know because I am hungry. I could go for lunch and then come back later.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): That is a point of debate. The parliamentary secretary can take as much time as he wants, and there will be a 10-minute question period following his speech.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I really appreciate the member's comment and I will do my very best to keep my comments shorter than the House leader of the official opposition's. We will have to wait and see. I guess at the end of the day, we will see who actually talked more.

All I am trying to do is convince the member opposite, his colleagues, my friends in the Bloc and the NDP, why it is so important that we recognize that this is a motion that every one of us should be supporting. By supporting this motion, what we are saying to Canadians is that we are prepared to work the extra hours.

Government Orders

Who in here does not want to work the extra hours? I am prepared to work the extra hours. Who in here does not want to enable more debate time on legislation and budgetary matters? Members can put their hands up if they do not want to. I believe that all members in the House are open to it.

Having said that, why would someone not support the legislation? It was raised in the form of a point of order earlier, in regard to the issue of quorum calls and dilatory motions. We have seen these types of things on the floor of the House of Commons on many occasions, whether it is one day or extended periods of time.

Even to be able to initiate the extension of the number of hours in a day takes more than the government. We have to go back to an opposition party. It could even be the House leader of the official opposition. These are the types of things that are built into the motion.

I mentioned that there are two aspects to the motion. We have the special joint committee dealing with medical assistance in dying. I know my friends in the Bloc have been following that discussion very closely, and understandably so. I believe my friends in the Bloc initially wanted to see this put off until October or to not recess before the summer.

There are opportunities for us to ensure that the report comes back to Parliament. We are now setting a date within this motion that it be October 17, 2022, in terms of getting that final report. Given the nature of that special committee, and the requests and comments coming from members on all sides of the House regarding it, it seems to me that is also something that could be supported in the motion.

If we continue to go through the motion, there are some simple, straightforward things. When members choose to stand up, they should tell me specifically, even in the question and answer session, what would cause someone to vote against the motion. When that is done, keep in mind and reflect on the fact that these types of motions have been introduced by different levels of government and by different prime ministers, including Stephen Harper. If they could do that, it would be very helpful.

Some things that might be somewhat new are that the motion also proposes that we extend the deadline for the special joint committee and amend the Standing Orders so that the House does not meet on New Year's Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day, Canada Day, Labour Day, the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, Thanksgiving Day, Remembrance Day or Christmas Day.

I think making that amendment to the Standing Orders is a very good thing. Are there members in the chamber who would oppose that? I suspect members would actually support that aspect of the motion.

• (1215)

It amends the Standing Orders so that the House would not meet the preceding day if Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day, Canada Day or the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation fell on a Tuesday, and would not meet the following day when those days fall on a Thurs-

day. I would suggest that is something all members of the House would support.

I suspect that some members might have some concerns with respect to the clause that allows a minister to move a motion to adjourn the House until Monday, September 19, 2022. The motion does not require notice and has to be voted on immediately. There could be some concerns in regard to that. It is interesting that the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons has made it clear that a motion like this would not be moved before the last week the House sits in June.

We have no intentions of that. The House leader has made that indication. I have full intentions of being here on June 23. I plan to participate and be engaged until the very end. Whether it is me or the member for Kingston and the Islands, I suspect one of us will always be inside the chamber because we want to ensure, as much as possible, that people are engaged in the debates that are taking place. However, that cannot happen without the support of at least one other recognized party in the House. The opposition House leader is speculating as to who that might be. I will make a suggestion. There is nothing wrong with the member opposite deciding to become engaged.

• (1220)

Mr. John Brassard: Or it could be by the unholy alliance.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, when the member makes reference to the “unholy alliance”, he is referring to the Conservatives and the Bloc, the alliance—

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): The hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot is rising on a point of order.

[*English*]

Mr. Damien Kurek: Mr. Speaker, as I would not want my hon. colleague across the way to mislead the House, did he just suggest that part (c)(iv) of this motion would require another House leader from another party to be included in that? I have read government Motion No. 11 and spent great time and care examining it. I would certainly not want the member, through what I hope is an innocent error, to mislead the House in his comments with respect to the motion, which as he has pointed out many of us have serious concerns about, specifically regarding this. Therefore, I would ask you to clarify if in fact he is or is not misleading the House so that members in this place can very clearly debate with accuracy the motion we have before us.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): I thank the hon. member for his point of order, but I think it is really a matter of debate.

I will ask the parliamentary secretary to continue his speech and to clarify his thoughts on that part of the motion.

Government Orders

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I am happy to provide some clarity on the issue. I think the government House leader was fairly clear when he indicated that the motion for adjournment would not be taking place before the last week, which would be the week of June 20. At the end of the day, it is a government minister who would be moving such a motion. I will leave it at that, if that answers the member's question, or would he like me to be more specific?

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): The hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot has another point of order.

[English]

Mr. Damien Kurek: Mr. Speaker, correct me if I heard the parliamentary secretary incorrectly, but he did reference the involvement of other opposition House leaders in that process, which is not specified in the motion. I would encourage him, through you, to apologize and withdraw those remarks.

However, if he is moving an amendment to his government's motion, I am sure the House would be happy to entertain that, but I would not want the issue to be confused as we debate this very important motion, which has a significant impact on the way this place, the centrepiece of Canadian democracy, is able to do business. I hope we can get absolute clarity on this issue before we continue with the debate.

• (1225)

Mr. Chris Bittle: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I know I enjoy hearing from the hon. member, but this back and forth is debate. The Conservatives will have an opportunity to respond, and I look forward to hearing that, but all of this back and forth is truly just debate.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order to respond to the parliamentary secretary's response to my point of order.

When it comes to the content of the motion to which the other member has alleged, that is not us debating the substance. That clearly has to do with whether the House is able to accurately debate the substance of this motion, so it has nothing to do with the perspectives of different parties. It has nothing to do with the debate on the motion itself, but truly the substance at the heart of what creates the foundation for any debate within this place.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): I thank the hon. member for his point of order, but that is another point of debate. The motion is in written form. The hon. parliamentary secretary on debate.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I attempted to provide a bit of an answer. It is not necessarily questions and answers at this point in time. I can attempt to provide a more detailed answer during the questions and answers, but maybe he can review what I have said.

At the end of the day, there is a motion that has to be moved by the government. That motion does not require other members or opposition parties to sign off on it before it is actually introduced. The member needs to be aware that if the government moves a motion to adjourn for September 19, at the end of the day a vote takes place once it is moved. I suspect that getting that motion passed is going to require more than the government of the day. It is going to require at least one other opposition party.

Hopefully that provides clarity, but the member can seek more clarity during questions and answers. I made a commitment to the opposition House leader in terms of the length of my comments. I said we would have to take a look at who speaks longer. My commitment was to speak less than the official opposition House leader. I know he was concerned about that, so this is really important to me. I want to be able to speak less than the opposition House leader. I am going to wind up my comments.

In an appeal to all members, but specifically members of the Conservative caucus, I want you to think in terms of what it is that is within the motion. The motion does two things, in essence. One thing is that it extends the special standing committee to deal with MAID, and I trust no one is opposing that. If you are, please stand and let me know or come over and tell me that you oppose that. To the best of my knowledge, that is not the case. I am going to believe that is not a reason why someone would vote against this.

The other thing that the motion does is it extends the number of hours in which members on all sides of the House will be able to debate. That is something that historically and traditionally has taken place in provincial legislatures and here in Ottawa. Why would someone not allow for more time for debate, unless there is of course a hidden agenda behind it? I think there is a responsibility to tell us why it is. As opposed to just being critical, tell us why it is specifically that you feel you do not think we should be working a few extra hours in the evening. Tell us why it is that we should not be allowing more members to be able to participate in debate.

If you vote against this legislation, I suspect that any future argument you have, asking for more time to debate on legislation the government brings forward, will lack credibility. As members will know, I hang out in this place a lot. I will be sure to remind members of the way in which they voted on this motion if they end up criticizing the government because we are not allowing more time for debate. We are doing what other governments have done. Let us put Canadians and the people of Canada first. Let us allow the motion to pass. Let us put in a little more effort working in the evenings, allow for more debate, and allow for that special committee being dealt with.

Always remember it is a minority government, and Canadians expect us all to work co-operatively. Working co-operatively ensures there is a lot of accountability and transparency. It does not mean that you have to vote with us all the time, but it does mean that there has to be recognition that there is a legislative agenda. I did not even go through the details of all the legislation, but I can assure you there is a lot of good stuff that we are waiting for.

Government Orders

• (1230)

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): Before we go to questions and comments, I would remind the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons that all comments must be addressed to the Chair.

The hon. House leader of the official opposition.

[*English*]

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I grew up in a space where people are either accountable or they justify. I heard very little in the way of accountability with the member's speech, and a lot of justification.

I want to make a couple of points. He spoke specifically about Bill C-8. The bill was first introduced on December 15, 2021. It got approval at second reading on February 10, went to committee and got committee approval on March 1, and now it is at report stage. We have had four weeks off in that time, yet the government suggests that somehow the opposition is obstructing.

The other thing is that on April 4, the government put on notice a motion of time allocation. It was the NDP that refused to support that notice of time allocation. In fact, the government has mismanaged its legislative agenda, and that is why we are seeing the hammer fall as it is with Motion No. 11.

The member spoke about specific examples of other governments. The Standing Orders are very clear that there is a specific timeline in which we can extend debate. Those are in the Standing Orders, and the schedule was agreed to by all of the parties.

Can the member give examples, specifically, of where other levels of government, as he says, actually did this: extending hours at this point in time? I would be very curious and interested to hear about that.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, my first-hand experience of dealing with and seeing these types of motions in the past is that often they are reflected in the negotiations that take place. They will sit an hour and then we will often see that even before that hour is achieved, the debate will collapse, the bill will pass and the House will move on.

In order to have a legislative agenda get through, we need that sense of co-operation. I hope that helps the member better understand the importance of working collaboratively. It does not mean colleagues must listen to everything we say and obey everything we say. No, there is give-and-take. I suspect that if there was more give-and-take between the government and the official opposition there would probably be a higher sense of gratification on all sides of the House, as we want to try to do what is right for the people of Canada.

• (1235)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, medical assistance in dying is an important issue to the Bloc Québécois and to Quebec.

We have worked hard at parliamentary committee and saw that we would not have enough time to do all the work that such a sensitive topic demands. That is why the Bloc Québécois wanted to move the deadline for tabling the report to October 17. The other parties, some of which were not convinced, dragged their feet.

The government decided to include this in a motion that muzzles the opposition, when it was unnecessary to do that since Standing Order 27 allows sitting hours to be extended. It has brought out the heavy artillery, complete with a gift to the Bloc Québécois that would extend the deadline for the report on medical assistance in dying to October 17.

That is like the government asking us if we like honey and us saying yes, but then the government adds arsenic to the honey and tells us to eat up.

Why did the government choose to muzzle the opposition when it could have simply used Standing Order 27?

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, this is where I have to disagree with the member. It is quite the opposite. The member makes reference to the Bloc's desire to have the MAID committee continue on through the summer. If anything, it shows that the government was listening, instead of trying to pass it through. It shows a sense of co-operation. We recognize the importance of the issue, not only for the province of Quebec but for all of Canada. That is the reason why it is in there, on October 17. I do not quite make the connection. The member seems to be in opposition to the fact that we are giving many hours of debate into the evening.

I do not understand. For the life of me, I believe that a vast majority of Canadians would not object to Parliament sitting until midnight. While I was in the Manitoba legislature, I would sit until two o'clock in the morning at times. Sometimes there is a need to work.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my colleague talked about the types of debates that are not happening right now and that we would like to talk about, whether it be the fall fiscal update or the budget.

I think about today being a very important day, the National Day of Mourning. Today, on April 28, we know that workers, families, employers and people in our communities gather together at events, including in my riding, in Courtenay and in Port Alberni. They are held across the country, so that we remember those who have lost their lives on the job or who have been injured on the job, and we renew our commitment to creating safer workplaces.

The government, in terms of hiring people with disabilities, is the worst for any equity group in the federal public service. I have to raise this today, that with the federal accessibility legislation now in place and employment for persons with disabilities identified as a key priority, recognizing the explicit interface between disability, poverty and employment, I need to know this: What are the federal government's key strategies in accommodating employees who acquire a mental or physical health impairment and who are unable to carry on their duties?

Government Orders

Maybe the member could speak to that and the importance of that, because I have not seen enough on the action that needs to happen.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the member raises a very important issue, especially on the National Day of Mourning. I represent Winnipeg North, and the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike weighs heavily on my mind. I have attempted to bring unanimous consent through the House to recognize the historic 100th anniversary and the sacrifices that workers have made over the years. We could never give true recognition to it, or enough recognition to it. The contributions that our unions have made in the past, make today and will make into the future are incredible.

On the issue of people with disabilities, our minister has been very proactive in trying to bring forward progressive legislation to deal with some of these issues. There is a lot of work that needs to be done. I am sorry, but I just do not have the details to provide to my friend that I know he was hoping for.

• (1240)

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to follow up on this question. As the member for Winnipeg North may be aware, over a hundred MPs from all parties in this place have already shared their support for the government introducing substantial legislation with respect to a guaranteed income for people with disabilities: the Canada disability benefit. This is actually legislation that the governing party promised in the previous election.

Can the member for Winnipeg North share, should this motion pass, whether this would allow time for critical legislation like the Canada disability benefit act to be introduced and debated?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, one of the things it does not do is prevent, for example, emergency debates from occurring, or potential other types of debates, during the day, such as private members' hour. I know there is a private member's bill that deals with this particular issue, at least in good part. I believe there is at least one of them. Everything depends on when it gets called.

Unlike government legislation, there is programming that takes place with private members' bills, which will ultimately see it brought to the floor, debated and voted upon. I do not know where that particular issue is at, in regard to Private Members' Business, but I do hope to see a healthy discussion on the guaranteed annual income, because I know there is a great deal of interest out there.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was listening to the member opposite, but he did not answer the question of my colleague from Barrie—Innisfil as to which Parliament it was where these draconian requirements were ever exercised before. I have only been here 21 years, and I realize there are many other Parliaments, but perhaps it is another country where they have imposed this, perhaps Russia or China. I do not know.

While he does not mind if we are here all night, which is not a problem, the fact of the matter is that they will be putting on their pyjamas as soon as the House rises here at 6:30, and not even tuning into Zoom.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that the member started off by saying she has been here for the last 20 years as a parliamentarian. That means she was here during the Stephen Harper era. All she needs to do is pick up the phone and talk to her good friend, Mr. Harper, and ask why he brought it in. I suspect the answer he would give her is that he felt it was necessary to allow for more debate on legislation. Governments, including her former government, brought in extended hours motions such as this.

[*Translation*]

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, you are doing good work in the chair today. Thanks again.

[*English*]

Here we go again. I honestly do not know what to say after hearing the parliamentary secretary to the leader of the government in this chamber. As I said in my question to him, what I heard was a lot of justification with little accountability on why the Liberals are introducing what I would deem a draconian motion, Motion No. 11, today, when there really is no need to do so. There is nothing under this coalition with the NDP, even up to the point and in advance of the coalition being announced, that the Liberals have not been able to put forward as part of their legislative agenda.

So far, of the 18 bills that have been introduced, eight have received royal assent. There is no question that there may be some other outstanding pieces of legislation that the government wants to put forward, but there is no reason why it cannot do that in the time specified in the Standing Orders and the schedule that was agreed to by my predecessor and the other House leaders last year.

The Standing Orders talk about the possibility of extending hours. We have seen that. I have been here for six and a half years, certainly not as long as my hon. colleague from Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, who has been here for 21 years and I believe is the dean of our caucus. She has seen it all, through government and now through opposition. There has never been an example like this, at least in the history of this Parliament, and I suspect in the history of legislatures across the country in all of the provinces and territories, where on April 28 we are debating a motion that gives the government ultimate power to extend hours at this particular point of this parliamentary session.

I am going to talk later on about the consequences of that, because I think there are significant consequences to the administration of this place, to the lives and the health, mental and physical health, of those who work in this place, but what I want to focus on initially is why we are at this point, a point that I believe we certainly do not need to be at.

Government Orders

I have heard from the government House leader and the parliamentary secretary that they are focusing on Bill C-8 as one of the reasons why they are proposing this ham-fisted Motion No. 11. The reality on Bill C-8 is that, as I said earlier, it was only introduced on December 15. It received second reading in February, went to committee in March and came back to the House at report stage. There were some other issues of debate that were required as a result of its coming out of committee. In fact, I recall having a conversation with you, Mr. Speaker, about Bill C-8 at report stage and that you expressed some concerns, not in your current role as Speaker, but in your role as a member of the Bloc Québécois. Those concerns were certainly moving through the process.

Within that timeline specifically on Bill C-8, there are some important measures, measures that have already been implemented, such as purchasing rapid tests. The government has the authorities, when it issues a ways and means motion, to accelerate the spending within the piece of legislation. When we look back, we have had four weeks where we have been off. I am sure we all agree to that timeline. This is effectively a mismanagement of the legislative agenda as to why Bill C-8 has not been put forward.

As I said in my question to the parliamentary secretary, and this is important to understand because Liberals have been accusing us, the opposition, of obstructing this piece of legislation, it was on April 4 that the government put a notice of time allocation on the Notice Paper. That was the week of the budget. The budget was introduced on April 7. The motion was not moved.

● (1245)

When I asked the government House leader why he did not move the motion, the reason he gave me was that the NDP did not want to move that motion. How are we obstructing that? If the Liberals' coalition partners did not want to move a notice of time allocation, then their issue on Bill C-8 is not with the opposition but with their coalition partners, because they did not want to move the motion. If the parliamentary secretary wants to, he can confirm that with the government House leader. Hopefully he gets the truth, but that was the basis of the conversation that we had. In fact, it was brought up at the House leaders' meeting the next day.

The government suggests, specifically on Bill C-8, that somehow we are obstructing the passage of that piece of legislation. Yes, we had some people who wanted to speak to it when it came out of committee, because there were important issues. However, I would suggest, respectfully, that it was the Liberals' coalition partners who prevented the notice of time allocation from being moved, which, as I said, was introduced on April 4. We could have been dealing with this at third stage even back before the budget in that first week.

We certainly share those concerns, particularly from an agriculture standpoint as it relates to the carbon tax rebate and taxes. I know there are teachers who are waiting for that bill. It is not lost on me, and it should not be lost on anybody in the House, that it is the Liberals and their NDP coalition partners who are stopping this.

The other thing that is concerning, and I know the member brought this up as well, is the issue of medical assistance in dying and the extension within this motion on medical assistance in dying, which would push it to October 17. There was a requirement

for a legislative review to be held on this bill. We went to an election in September. We were reconvened around November. However, it was not until the end of March, in the timeline that is required for this legislative review, that the government even started talking about the Committee on Medical Assistance in Dying and the requirement for this legislative review. In fact, this review was required to be done legislatively by May, so we had discussions.

I understand my colleague from the Bloc and I understand as well that there are very serious issues with medical assistance in dying that are required to be looked at, but with regard to the legislative review that was to be done in May, we actually agreed, as the opposition, to extend the timeline by another six weeks. It was not our fault that the government delayed the legislative review. It pushed it off until March, and then we agreed to go beyond the extension. Initially, I was a little concerned about it, but we do not control the legislative agenda in this place. It is not the opposition's job to sit here and determine what is going to happen in this place. It is the government's job. When we were in government, we determined the legislative agenda that was to occur in this place.

The Liberals' failure, not just on Bill C-8 but on medical assistance in dying and the required legislative review and the timeline related to that, is their fault. It is completely on them, and that is why we agreed. I respected the concern of the Bloc House leader, and I know there are very deep and personal issues within the Bloc caucus on the issue of medical assistance in dying. That is why we agreed to extend the timeline by another six weeks and to provide the committee with what we believe was an appropriate amount of time, six weeks extra, to deal with this.

We actually also committed to having the committee sit more than what was regularly scheduled. That would have required moving resources from other committees to this committee, but we were committed to allowing that extended timeline to June 23, which all of us, including me and our party, agreed to.

● (1250)

Again, that is the government's prerogative. We do not control the administration of this place. We do not control committees. We do not control virtual sittings. We do not control translation. We do not control the administrative staff, nor do we control the clerks. It is all the government. We committed, in extending that deadline, to work and to be available during that timeline if extra sittings of the committee on medical assistance in dying were required. We committed to get the job done, yet here we are.

We are seeing now in this motion an extension to October 17. There had been discussions among the parties to extend it, and on behalf of our party, I said "no". There had to have been unanimous consent, because we had already agreed to extend it by six weeks to June 23. Again, the government wasted time putting the committee in place. It took from the time we started sitting in November to the time it finally got around to talking about it in March, which it did so it would meet the requirements of the legislative timeline.

Government Orders

The other thing the government did was call an election last September. The House could have still been sitting. We were only 18 months into that session of Parliament. We could have still kept going. The Liberals could have dealt with medical assistance in dying, or they could have dealt with other bills, such as Bill C-8, within that timeline, but they chose not to. How is that our fault? How are we obstructing Parliament? How are we stepping in the way of the government's legislative agenda, when its members, time and time again, fail to implement whatever is on their legislative agenda and fail to use the time and resources of the House in a manner that would allow them to get their job done?

That was the issue with medical assistance in dying. That is what happened, in case anyone is wondering why we are seeing that timeline in this motion. I understand, as I said earlier, that it was important to my colleague, the House leader of the Bloc, and to those within the Bloc, to see the October 17 deadline extended beyond what we had all agreed to. Although I am disappointed by that, I certainly understand, based on my discussions with my colleague in the Bloc, why that is important to them.

I do not think we have to put it in an omnibus motion in order to do that. We could have had further discussions, but I guess this was a way of handing some sort of opportunity to the Bloc to understand this motion, and that is okay. I get that those things happen, because as I said, I realize how important this issue is to the Bloc. I know the Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons wanted an explanation, and I just gave him one. We had all agreed to extend that deadline, and we did not see the reason, especially given the fact that we were willing to work with the committee to extend the hours.

There was some talk that, during the break in May, that week after Victoria Day, we would have eight-hour sittings. I spoke to our shadow minister about that, and it was an impossibility. It would have been eight hours a day sitting in committee dealing with medical assistance in dying when many of those resources could have been moved from other sources to deal with the medical assistance dying committee while the House is sitting. That could have been done, but we thought that eight hours a day of sitting in that break week in May was an unreasonable request, and I think it was, because there were members on our side who had made plans with their families during that week, and because it is Victoria Day weekend here in Ontario, so some plans were already made.

We certainly could have worked together, but we are actually seeing a pattern of this type of activity happen. Members will recall Motion No. 6, which the government introduced at one point. This is very different than that, because at the time there was strong consensus, agreement and alignment among the opposition parties. The Conservative Party, the Bloc and the NDP were in opposition to Motion No. 6, and we fought that vigorously.

• (1255)

However, because there was that alignment, the government eventually did back down from that motion, at least some of the more destructive pieces of that motion. This is different.

Motion No. 11 is different because I suspect the Liberals have the support of the NDP. Of course, the government has thrown a few nuggets to the NDP. We have seen that all that is required for

NDP's support in this unholy alliance and collusion, is just need to be thrown a few little nuggets and they will leap, because the Liberal Party effectively has the NDP in its hip pocket, to implement these types of motions. It is quite concerning.

There are extremely concerning aspects of this that really play into a pattern of what I would call a democratic decline in this country. We have seen this pattern over and over. We saw it with Motion No. 6, as I said earlier. In fact, one of the first pieces of legislation introduced after the COVID crisis hit in March 2020 was an absolutely draconian piece of legislation from the government, and I am glad all oppositions fought it. Even the NDP fought it at that time because they had not yet formed this unholy alliance, but it fought this draconian piece of legislation, which would have given the government massive powers and massive overreach to suspend the activities of Parliament and tax Canadians without the approval of Parliament.

Can members imagine a government thinking it could take that on and actually affect that within a democracy like Canada. When I speak about this democratic decline, there are numerous examples over the course of not just during COVID but also prior to that, even with Motion No. 6, where we have seen the government really overreach and overextend its powers and controls over this place, diminishing not just democracy but also our institutions. It is diminishing faith in our institutions and the respect that people have for our institutions, separating our institutions in a way that keeps them away from government politicization and government influence, yet the government continues to do that. The government is certainly doing this with Motion No. 11.

I want to go through and talk about some of the more concerning parts of the motion. It does not just concern me as a parliamentarian seeing this diminishing of democracy happen in this country. There are examples, much like in some of the countries in eastern Europe where we are seeing it on a scale that is being measured, of the decline of democracy in this country. There are measurements, and I will speak about that in a few minutes.

I would suggest that Motion No. 11 adds to that decline in democracy. When we go through the motion, we see some of the things that the government has proposed. The motion reads:

On the day of the adoption of this order, the ordinary hour of daily adjournment shall be 12 a.m., that until Thursday, June 23, 2022, a minister of the Crown may, with the agreement of the House leader of another recognized party, rise from his or her seat at any time during a sitting, but no later than 6:30 p.m., and request that the ordinary hour of daily adjournment for the current sitting or a subsequent sitting be 12:00 a.m....

Now let us think about what that means. A minister of the Crown, and it does not have to be the House leader, although the House leader is classified as a minister, but a minister could go to another party at 6:29 p.m. and say, "We want to extend the hours, will you agree with us?"

Government Orders

They need just one party, one recognized House leader, to agree. I wonder who that would be. I know that the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader said that I could agree to that, but there are certain provisions in this motion that I could never agree to, so why would I agree at 6:29 p.m. to extend the sitting of the House.

● (1300)

The government House leader or a minister of the Crown will walk over to his coalition buddy in the NDP and say, “Look, we are not moving forward on things quick enough.” It would not be up for open, vigorous debate, or for oversight or scrutiny, which is what this place is designed to do. Instead, we can sit here, and they can walk over and talk to their NDP buddy to say “Look, we want to extend the hours until midnight.” I will tell members what is most concerning about that, but the least of it is the impact the lack of planning would have on families in this place.

Here is the scenario: The House is set to adjourn at 6:30 p.m. At 6:29 p.m., the two of them are in cahoots, and they say that they want to extend the sitting until midnight. What does that do to families? What does that do to MPs who perhaps have plans? It is one thing to do it during the normal, set schedule in the Standing Orders, but it is another thing to start doing it on April 28, which is today, because this would take effect if this motion passes.

What does it do to the administration of this place? What does it do to the clerks? They work hard, and they know they have to work hard, but one minute before the House is set to rise, the government and its buddies in the NDP can say that they want to keep everybody here. They would want to keep the clerks here, the administration here and the pages here.

Have people not been through enough throughout the course of this crisis? We have had to go through the extensions of the long hours in this place, the uncertainty and the impact on mental health, on families and on people's lives, yet one minute before the House is scheduled to rise, they can suddenly extend it until midnight, and they can do that every single night if they want to.

How is that fair? How is that fair to a mom who works here who has kids at home who she needs to get home to, or to a father who works here who has kids at home who he needs to get home to? How about a husband and wife who work together, the partners and spouses who work in this place, having to work those long hours because the government is mismanaging its agenda and is not using its time effectively in this House?

What about the mental health impacts this would have? What about the drivers? What about the security guards? They will effectively be given a one-minute notice that they have to stick around this place. Come on. How ridiculous is that? The government can do it, as I said earlier, from the point this motion passes right through until June 23, or earlier if they decide that they are going to adjourn the House.

Of course, another part of the motion is talking about proceedings on any opposition motion. So, when it is government business, it is okay, we will extend the House, but not on opposition motion days. These are very valuable supply days that we get. The official

opposition gets five days in the supply period, the Bloc Québécois gets one and the NDP, I believe, gets one as well.

However, on those days, we would rise at the appropriate time. There would not be any opportunity for us to extend beyond the normal sitting time, but there would be for government legislation. Perhaps we have an issue that is important to Canadians. Perhaps it is a geopolitical issue, financial issue or an issue affecting the health of Canadians that we want to bring forward and get consensus on in the House. We would not have an opportunity to extend beyond the normal sitting time, but the government, with a one-minute notice and the help of its coalition buddies in the NDP, could extend the sitting time of the House every single day, including Friday.

On Friday, we do the business of this place for this country and the House adjourns at 2:30 p.m. However, at 2:29 p.m., the two parties can get together and say that we will be extending until midnight.

● (1305)

We can talk about the impact that this can have on families and the family unit, and the impact on the mental health and physical health of those who work to support this place. This includes MPs, many of whom make travel plans on Fridays so they can go home to their constituencies. When they go home to their constituencies, they are going out to events on Saturday and sometimes on Sunday, then working their way back here to Parliament by getting back on an airplane. Now the Liberals are suggesting that members of Parliament have to cancel their travel plans on a whim because they are not good at dealing with their legislative agenda and the schedule of the House, and they are going to keep us here until midnight on Friday.

I have sat here for six and a half years and have heard the NDP talk about a family-friendly environment in this place, about attracting more women to Parliament and about making sure that the lives of the people who work here and the lives of MPs are balanced so they can spend time with their families and can spend time in their constituencies. However, if this motion passes today, the Liberals will push to extend the timelines to midnight every single day that the House is sitting with a one-minute notice, just one minute, including on Fridays. I have no problem working Fridays. It is part of my job as the opposition House leader to be here on Fridays. However, I think it is absolutely unreasonable for anyone to expect, with one-minute notice, all of the administration, all of the support staff and the interpreters who work in this place to be here until midnight every single day, when the House starts at 10 o'clock in the morning, because the government mismanages its legislative agenda.

Government Orders

I have not even touched on the interpreters. At the Board of Internal Economy, we have been hearing about the impact that these virtual or hybrid sittings are having on our interpreters. We have seen an increase in injuries. Reports have been published that note a marked increase in the physical injury impact that this hybrid setting has been having on our interpreters. I have also talked about some of the other people who are going to be impacted by this. If the government is that concerned about the health and wellness of the people who work here, including the interpreters, why would it even suggest extending until midnight every single day? It is because of its failure to impose its legislative agenda within the timelines that have been prescribed in the Standing Orders.

This is also going to have an impact on committees, which I am going to touch on a bit later. This will have an impact on the ability of the committees to do their work because of the shuffling of resources that will be required. It stands to reason that if we are going to go to midnight, we will have to take something away from somewhere, and the important work that is being done by committees will suffer. Maybe that is the intent. Maybe that is what the government wants. Maybe it wants to take that work away from committees so it can further avoid accountability and transparency and we can further see the democratic decline that is happening in this country.

This is a beauty. As I said earlier, after 6:30 p.m., with one minute to spare because the House normally adjourns at 6:30 p.m., a member or minister of the government can go to the NDP and say, "We are going to extend." Here is the impact of that, and it is a joke. It has to be a joke; there is no other way to explain it. The motion states:

the Speaker shall not receive any quorum calls or dilatory motions, and shall only accept a request for unanimous consent after receiving a notice from the House leaders or whips of all recognized parties

• (1310)

That is just on unanimous consent. At least they have included the House leaders of recognized parties on some sort of unanimous consent motion that can be passed. However, what is interesting here is the constitutional obligation to have quorum in this place. What Liberals are saying in this motion is that after 6:30 p.m. there will not be a requirement for quorum.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: That's never been done before.

Mr. John Brassard: Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader just said to me that this has never been done before. It has never been done in a circumstance like this, and it has always been done with the agreement of all recognized parties through unanimous consent. This is a motion the Liberals are ramming through Parliament, so yes, this has never been done before without the expressed unanimous consent of all the House leaders. This does not take that into account; it imposes that on us.

Let us think about how ridiculous this is. There is no quorum call, and members of the opposition take their responsibility and role as members of Parliament very seriously. Just as it is a constitutional right to have quorum in this place, it is still a constitutional obligation on the part of the opposition to hold the government to account. We take that role very seriously. The fact they are not al-

lowing for quorum in this place means, effectively, that we can be here as an opposition and the Bloc can be here as an opposition to ask questions and debate government legislation, but government members do not have to be here. They can literally be sitting at home doing nothing, watching *This Is Us* or the Blue Jays, while we and our colleagues in the Bloc, as opposition, are sitting here debating government legislation. The way this reads right now, when questions and comments come up we could be the only ones asking questions of ourselves on government legislation.

This gives an indication of the programming of this place as a result of the motion. It means, as we know because of the agreement we have all seen that the NDP and the Liberals have signed, that things are already programmed in this place. Government members do not want an opposition; they want an audience, and they are going to get it because they do not have to be here. They could be sitting at home in their pyjamas watching CPAC while we are here doing the work of the country and debating their pieces of legislation. That is what this part of the motion means. With no quorum calls, there is no obligation for the government or the NDP to show up.

I suspect the only two parties that will be showing up are the official opposition and the third party, the Bloc, because we are the ones who want to work. I am looking at my colleagues in the Bloc. Am I the only one who thinks it is ridiculous that the government and the NDP can be sitting at home while we are debating their legislation and, in questions and comments, asking ourselves the questions the government should be asking in debate? How ridiculous is that? That is what the motion calls for.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Are you trying to con them to support you?

Mr. John Brassard: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member just asked if I am trying to con them to support us. I think Bloc members are actually smart and see how ridiculous this motion is. I think they do. I have dealt with the member for La Prairie and he is a pretty smart guy. He understands exactly what government members are doing, as we do. They do not want an opposition; they want an audience. That is what they want.

We have seen this pattern over the six and a half years that I have been here, since 2015, and I have highlighted some of that stuff, whether it was Motion No. 6 or the first bill that came through Parliament after the COVID situation. The government members seem to think they can ram anything through.

Government Orders

• (1315)

We did have an election in September and the Liberals formed a minority government. At the time, I believe the Prime Minister thought two things were going to happen. Number one, he thought people were going to throw rose petals at his feet for the way he handled COVID. That did not happen, obviously, by the results. Second, the Liberals knew very well what was going to happen in this country. They knew the economic crisis was looming. They knew the affordability crisis was looming, and the only way they could find cover from that was to hope for a majority government in September. How else can we explain the fact that 18 months into his term, the Prime Minister was willing to call a \$600-million election? Of course, they were trying to provide cover for themselves, a cover that only a majority government would provide.

It did not take long for them to find that majority government, did it? By throwing a few little crumbs to the NDP, giving them this and that to get support for at least the next four budgets, they have found that cover. I have stood up here before on this, and I cannot express my profound disappointment in our friends in the NDP for giving the government the cover it sought in September during the election. I just cannot believe it. I sit here in question period and hear some of the questions coming from NDP members and just shake my head. How can they realistically say they are holding the government to account when they are supporting every aspect of what it does?

A climate change report that came out the other day called the government's efforts on climate change a sham. It was the environment commissioner who said that, yet NDP members, who talk about being the guardians of climate, are sitting here criticizing the very people they are in cahoots with, the very government they are aligned with. It does not make any sense, unless the only thing they can buy is a few little crumbs, which apparently is the case.

I have talked about quorum and dilatory motions. The motion also reads:

(iii) motions to proceed to the orders of the day, and to adjourn the debate or the House may be moved after 6:30 p.m. by a minister of the Crown, including on a point of order, and such motions be deemed adopted,

(iv) the time provided for Government Orders shall not be extended pursuant to Standing Orders 33(2), 45(7.1) or 67.1(2)

Again, the fact that the Liberals are mismanaging the legislative agenda in the House is the reason they have decided to take a fly off everyone's forehead with an axe using this piece of legislation.

The motion goes on:

(i) during consideration of the estimates on the last allotted day, pursuant to Standing Order 81(18), when the Speaker interrupts the proceedings for the purpose of putting forthwith all questions necessary to dispose of the estimates,

(A) all remaining motions to concur in the votes for which a notice of opposition was filed shall be deemed to have been moved and seconded, the questions deemed put and recorded divisions deemed requested

Again, this is just to accelerate or fast-track pieces of legislation. Much of that is power the government already has, but it is certainly more prescriptive in this motion to make that happen.

The motion continues:

(B) the Speaker shall have the power to combine the said motions for voting purposes, provided that, in exercising this power, the Speaker be guided by the same principles and practices used at report stage

That is fairly self-explanatory. Then, of course, this is quite interesting:

(ii) when debate on a motion for concurrence in committee reports is adjourned or interrupted, including on the day of the adoption of this order, the debate shall again be considered on a day designated by the government, after consultation with the House leaders of the other recognized parties, but in any case not later than the 35th sitting day after the interruption

Reports that come out of committee come to the House for concurrence. As I said in a recent article that I was interviewed for, there are wide eyes on this place. There are people who watch the House of Commons who normally may not be engaged in committee processes or other processes.

• (1320)

A perfect example of that was this morning, when we moved a concurrence motion on the WE Charity scandal. The member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman moved a motion that it be referred back to committee, so the witnesses who had been deemed in contempt of the committee and a minister could come back to the committee, because that is what we want. We want to get down to the bottom of the WE scandal and not obstruct, but make sure we are putting the government in a position of being accountable and transparent. The Liberals are actually moving that part of the procedural process into the 35th sitting day after interruption, which effectively means that we would not be able to move any of our concurrence reports on committee recommendations until after September.

On the issue of accountability and transparency, again we see the government providing itself with cover. Certainly its coalition partners in the NDP, by supporting this motion, are helping it to obstruct not just the work of committees, but also the work of Parliament, which again is seeing a further democratic decline in Canada. We are seeing it again, so again there is this pattern.

The other thing the motion says is: "a motion for third reading of a government bill may be made in the same sitting during which the said bill has been concurred in at report stage". As ridiculous as some of the other stuff is, this is the icing on the cake: "a minister of the Crown may move, without notice, a motion to adjourn the House until Monday, September 19, 2022, provided that the House shall be adjourned pursuant to Standing Order 28 and that the said motion shall be decided immediately without debate or amendment".

What does that mean? It means that if things heat up for the Liberals, and they are, because there are brewing scandals out there, not the least of which is the RCMP investigation into the Prime Minister's admission that he did not give himself permission to accept an over \$200,000 vacation to a private island, they can simply pull the plug on Parliament. They can do this at any point from the day that this motion is adopted. It could be next week if things really start heating up.

Government Orders

I look back at some of the scandals that the government has been involved in, particularly the Prime Minister, and by extension and by involvement everybody on that side who has provided cover and has continued to support the Prime Minister on all of these scandals, whether it was SNC-Lavalin, the WE Charity scandal or the invocation of the Emergencies Act. It effectively means that if the committee gets to a point where there is no justification or rationalization for the government to impose the Emergencies Act, if things get too hot, the government can simply say “we’re done, we’re going to go home”. It could happen the day that this motion is adopted.

What it does is allow the government to prorogue Parliament without implementing prorogation. That is what it does. Let us suppose the RCMP decides that it is going to investigate the Prime Minister. I think it should, because the missing piece of its initial investigation was admitted by the Prime Minister in this place the other day: he did not grant himself approval, as the head of government, to take that trip. What if the RCMP decides that it is going to investigate? What if, speculation, on May 15 we get a report from the RCMP, or furthermore the Prime Minister is charged with fraud? Think of the political heat of that issue. It may be something else. There are other things that I know are brewing, with respect to the government and the potential for scandal.

● (1325)

As I have said many times in this place, when they get \$567 billion in spending and \$1.3 trillion in debt, among many of those zeroes, we know, as has been documented but we know there are more, there are many Liberal-connected insiders and cronies who have benefited as a direct result of this pandemic. Members know that. I can say that there are many people who are looking for those connections. What if a scandal like that hits? What if there is another WE Charity scandal?

The invocation of the Emergencies Act is a perfect example. The Liberals are very good at couching things. As a former prosecutor, the Minister of Public Safety is very good at using his words. However, the government has already indicated that under the Emergencies Act, both at committee and through the judicial review that is legislated, the Liberals are going to sit there and are not going to allow cabinet confidentiality to be moved. They are not going to allow those documents to be viewed. What if there is a brewing scandal with that?

Then there is the Winnipeg lab scandal. What happened there? It was kind of funny yesterday that I got a call from the government House leader. There was no indication from him that he was going to do what he said he was going to do. We found out last night that, with or without the Conservatives and with or without the Bloc, the government was going to have the Liberals and the NDP form a committee to look at the documents from the Winnipeg lab scandal and determine whether anything was untoward in that. It is like having the wolves looking after the hen house. They are already in cahoots. They are working together.

The government House leader called me yesterday and I said to him to let me circle back, because I was not the House leader at the time that this happened. I said, “Let me talk to my group about this.” From the time that conversation happened, which was after

caucus yesterday, until three o'clock, I found out that the Liberals had already made this announcement and that it was embargoed in the media.

There was no discussion. There was no opportunity for us to work together to try to come up with some solution. The government House leader referred to a situation back in January, which I was being briefed on at the time that I found out this agreement had been made between the NDP and the Liberals, the wolves looking after the sheep, on this document. I found out at that time that this was already a *fait accompli*. It was going to happen anyway, whether we agreed to it or not. The Liberals accuse us of the very thing that they engage in. That is obstructing the constitutional obligation of the official opposition party on the Winnipeg lab document.

The point is that, at any point from the time that this motion is introduced, the government can pull the plug on this place if things start getting bad or if it starts feeling the heat. If there is a political reason for the government not to allow Parliament to function, to not allow the opposition parties, and there are two of us that are holding the government to account, to do their constitutional obligation to hold the government to account, the Liberals can end that at any point if it gets too hot for them.

If that does not cause a concern or a problem, it is prorogation without prorogation. Members recall what the government did back during the WE Charity scandal. Things were getting close. Things were getting tight. The Liberals were feeling it. What did the Prime Minister do? He did the very thing he promised in 2015 he would never do, and that was to prorogue Parliament. He did it. Everything died at that point: all of the work of the committee and all of the reports.

That is why the concurrence motion this morning is so important. We have already asked, through a question of privilege, whether we can reintroduce the issues of contempt from the Prime Minister's Office staff and, at that time, a minister of the Crown. We asked if we could reintroduce that, and through a point of privilege you ruled that it was not appropriate. I respect the Chair, and I respect the rulings. That is fine.

● (1330)

What other course of action do we have to hold this government to account? We tried this morning, through a concurrence motion of a committee report, to bring those people back to the committee, and why not? What is wrong with being accountable and transparent? To the Liberal government, there is a lot wrong with it. This is why we are seeing this Motion No. 11.

Government Orders

The heat starts to occur as things start ramping up, and they typically do when Parliament is sitting. I will say that the issue of Public Health Canada using mobility data to determine process and health issues of Canadians without their knowledge happened during the Christmas break, but it is very rare in this place that during a two-week break period we are going to start seeing scandals. It is only when we start getting down to the business of the House, when we are getting Order Paper questions back or we are getting access to information papers back, as is the case with the RCMP investigation. It was only because of the ATIP that we found out what the missing part, or the missing link, of the RCMP investigation was not to charge the Prime Minister with fraud over his multi-hundred-thousand dollar, illegal luxury vacation.

It was only after we got that ATIP back that we realized there was one missing element to the RCMP investigation, and that was whether the Prime Minister deemed himself the head of government, and whether he, as the head of government, gave himself permission to go on that trip. As the Leader of the Opposition, in her line of questioning the other day, determined in a pointed question to the Prime Minister, he said “No.” That was the only missing link to this.

Now, we have requested that the RCMP reopen the investigation, because it now has a piece of the puzzle that was missing at the time this was investigated. I know, because I sat here yesterday and I listened to the Prime Minister talk about these personal attacks. It is never about being accountable. It is always about justification with this Prime Minister. There is no statute of limitations on fraud charges. If the Prime Minister committed fraud, with this new piece of the puzzle that has been found, then it is up to the RCMP to determine whether in fact those fraud charges should be laid against the Prime Minister for his illegal vacation, which the Ethics Commissioner already found and deemed to be against the Conflict of Interest Code. That will be up to the RCMP.

That is done because the House is sitting. It is not done because the Liberal Party and their coalition partners are sitting at home, because there is no quorum call. They are not even participating in the role of Parliament, and not even debating their own pieces of legislation. They are letting the opposition carry the water on all of this stuff. It is effectively a war of attrition: That is what this motion is all about. That happens when this place is functioning, when democracy is functioning and when we are not seeing a decline in our democracy, which is the pattern we have seen over the course of the last six and a half years.

That is what causes me some great concern, when “without notice, a motion to adjourn the House until Monday, September 19”, which is when we are regularly scheduled to come back after the summer break, could occur.

If things get really hot and the government is feeling a lot of pressure, it could prorogue without prorogation. I know what the Prime Minister is going to say and I know what his cabinet would say. They would be out there saying, “We did not prorogue.” They made that promise in 2015, despite the fact that they broke it. The reality is that this is giving them exclusive and unnecessary power to basically take this place and shut Parliament down.

There are a lot of issues, there is no question about it. There are a lot of issues that we are dealing with, not the least of which, as I mentioned earlier, is the affordability crisis. There are some geopolitical issues going on around the world. There are issues related to our economy, inflation pressures, the housing crisis and the opioid crisis. All of those things are important issues to Canadians.

● (1335)

We should not give the government the power to be able, if it feels the political heat, to shut this place down. We have a schedule that has already been approved by the parties, although I am finding out around this place, in my short time as House leader, that agreements with some of the other opposition House leaders are not even worth the ink they are written in. Because of the agreement, they just do whatever they want to do now. They give us a call as a courtesy call. Why do they call us? They call just so that they can say they called us, but the decision has already been made by this unholy alliance between the Liberals and the NDP and that is not the way it should be. That is not the way this place should operate.

In a functioning democracy that is not in decline, a government should not put itself in a position in which it is dropping the hammer and effectively making the opposition an audience, not an opposition.

Again, on the motion,

notwithstanding the order adopted on Thursday, November 25, 2021, and Standing Order 45(6), no recorded division requested after 2 p.m. on Thursday, June 23, 2022, shall be deferred, except for any recorded division requested in regard to a Private Members' Business item for which

That is a procedural thing.

Notwithstanding paragraph (j) of the order made Wednesday, March 30, 2022, the deadline for the Special Joint Committee on Medical Assistance in Dying to submit to Parliament a final report of its review, including a statement of any recommended changes, be no later than Monday, October 17, 2022, provided that an interim report on mental illness as a sole underlying condition be presented to the House no later than Thursday, June 23, 2022

I spoke earlier, at length, on this particular provision and the extension. Just to recap, as I said, the government had a legislated timeline on which it was to provide this review. That was to happen in May. It was not until the end of March that discussions officially started on this. Seeing the reasonableness of the request, particularly from my colleague, the House leader of the Bloc and the member for La Prairie, we all agreed to extend that deadline to June 23, six more weeks, in order to do this job.

The government understood that this legislated timeline was to occur. It was the government that held off on this happening until the end of March, until discussions even started taking place, so I am not going to apologize for not agreeing to this particular provision to extend that deadline to October 17. I think there is enough time from now until June 23. As I said earlier, we asked that the government allocate resources so that there could be extended sittings of the committee to do this important work, because it is important work. There are many Canadians right now who are concerned about the process of medical assistance in dying, and they want to have their voices heard.

I understand that. I just do not think that extending it to October 17 should happen. Given the reasonableness of what was agreed to initially and the government's mismanagement of the timelines on this, I think we should be able to do the work by June 23, as we all agreed to.

The other part of this, and I talked about this a little this morning in the point of order I made, is about separating what is effectively an omnibus motion. That relates to the issue of Standing Order 28, that:

The House shall not meet on New Year's Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, the day fixed for the celebration of the birthday of the Sovereign, St. John the Baptist Day, Canada Day, Labour Day, the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, Thanksgiving Day, Remembrance Day and Christmas Day. When St. John the Baptist Day, Canada Day or the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation fall on a Tuesday, the House shall not meet the preceding day; when those days fall on a Thursday, the House shall not meet the following day.

● (1340)

There is one critical element to this particular part of the motion and one that I suggest would be important to traditionalists but is not as critical. That is the change of reference from "Dominion Day" to "Canada Day". We all acknowledge that July 1 is now Canada Day. The traditionalists would like to keep the term "Dominion Day", but that is less important than the issue of the day recognizing truth and reconciliation.

I spoke about that this morning in the point of order that I brought up, and I asked for the Speaker to consider carving out at least seven parts of this omnibus motion, not the least of which is the issue of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. By putting it in this motion, which is effectively a procedural motion, the government is doing two things.

The first is taking away, in my view, the paramount importance of what that day will mean to reconciliation with indigenous people in this country. I would like to think that there are more than enough speakers in this House who would like that to be carved out, so that they can talk about the importance of that day and about what reconciliation means as one of the many recommendations that came out of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

To put this in an omnibus procedural motion like this causes in me, and I hope in many Canadians and indigenous Canadians as well, a sense of cynicism in the sense that it would be put into a procedural motion. I suspect, with the give and take negotiations with the NPD, maybe that is the reason this is in there, but I think it is important to carve this out and have it as a stand-alone motion or piece of legislation.

We have passed pieces of legislation in this place that deal with truth and reconciliation. We have done that, so I am not sure why the government feels like it should put it in here, when it is important for parliamentarians and Canadians to have their say on this.

If this is put into a piece of legislation, I would find it awfully difficult not to support, but I would like to see it go through the normal process rather than being put in an omnibus, because I think it deserves, at a minimum, the attention it requires. At a minimum, it requires the attention of Parliament, separately from this. It requires the attention of committee. It requires respect in having indigenous leaders and communities come in and speak to committee

Government Orders

about how important this day is toward reconciliation, yet it is almost like the government put it in an omnibus motion so that we could vote against it.

I am not happy with this motion. I think I have spelled out many of the reasons, but on this particular issue, if the cynical intent is to have the opposition not support the motion and in effect not support the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation as a national holiday, nothing could be further from the truth. We would support it if it was carved out of this and dealt with separately.

The Liberals are going to force us to vote against this motion to further wedge, to further stigmatize and to further divide. Worse yet, they will use this as a political wedge against the Conservative Party. I will remind members that it was former prime minister Stephen Harper who started the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. They are going to use this omnibus motion to wedge us politically and go to indigenous communities and say that the Conservatives did not support this.

● (1345)

I think I can speak on behalf of every one of our members when I say that we support the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, so there is only one reason the government would put that in this motion. Therefore, I hope that in my point of order from this morning, for the sake of the reasons I have given now and that I gave this morning, you will carve out this particular part so we can deal with it with the respect, honour and dignity it deserves.

I want to now focus on some of the other things that have come up during the course of this debate.

Obviously, the work of committees is going to be severely impacted as a result of this motion, as we take those resources away and apply them to the extended sittings. However, I had a little fun as I was researching this issue of the government's imposing what is effectively a sledgehammer on Parliament to do the things it is failing at. There have been lots of times—

● (1350)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): The hon. parliamentary secretary is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order inspired by the member's comment about the government's failing.

One of the earlier comments the member made was that I had been speaking for too long. I have spoken on this for 42 minutes and 17 seconds. I believe the opposition House leader has been speaking for well over an hour. I thought he might want to reflect on that point.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): That is a matter of debate. I would remind the hon. parliamentary secretary that the hon. House leader of the official opposition has as much time as he would like.

I invite the hon. House leader of the official opposition to continue his speech.

Government Orders

[English]

Mr. John Brassard: Mr. Speaker, I really want to thank the hon. member for bringing up that point, because it gave me an opportunity to take a drink of water.

I certainly do not wear it as a badge of honour that I have spoken longer than the member, but I hope members have found that I have something substantive to say and not just ramble on.

I did some research, as I said. The hon. member for Winnipeg North, who rose and rises often on his points of indignation, was once sitting on the opposition benches, and it is sincerely our hope that soon he will be sitting up in the corner. If there are only one or two seats, he can sit up there. That is sincerely our hope. It is funny how, when the Liberals get in government, all of a sudden this righteous indignation that they have shown in opposition suddenly becomes a supportive view and they are arguing to justify their position rather than be accountable.

In 2013, the member for Winnipeg North, who is the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader, talked about the extra cost of extended hours. I have not even touched on that. I have touched on the mental health aspects of our staff, the clerks, the administration and everybody who is associated. I have talked about the translators, but not the extra cost. Of course, the government does not worry about costs. It has not found a problem it cannot fix by throwing billions of dollars at it, so why should this be any different?

On extended hours, here is what the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader said on May 21, 2013:

I want to raise a specific issue. It was during the 39th Parliament that the previous clerk of the House of Commons told the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs that the budget for Parliament can handle two weeks of extended sitting weeks in June. However, if the extended hours were to continue for additional weeks, the government would likely have to seek Parliament's approval for more money.

I notice that the supplementary estimates (A) do not include a request to make any of the payments that will be generated by things such as overtime for House of Commons staff. I would argue that the government House leader seems to be responding to a Conservative crisis from last week and is getting anxious to leave a little early as opposed to going through the normal process.

That is the very thing I spoke about before. When he is in opposition, he is opposed to it, but when he is in government, there is no problem. The day this motion is approved, we will run the potential of extending hours, addressing the very issues that the member brought forward in 2013, but it is not a concern for him now. Why? It is because he is in government.

An hon. member: See what Peter said about that.

Mr. John Brassard: Mr. Speaker, I have some stuff that Peter said. I may get to them. I have six minutes. I hope the member is keeping time.

I will move to the former House leader of the NDP. This is part of this unholy alliance and the fact that they are working together on this. Nathan Cullen, the former NDP House leader, said this on extra cost, on the same day as the member for Winnipeg North: "The fact that they have not actually accounted for the money required to run Parliament for these extra hours for an extended time—a month, in this case—shows two things. One is that they do

not really care all that much if they have to blow more money." We are looking at two months.

Is it not ironic that the NDP and the Liberals likely are going to support this motion to extend the time, not just for a month but for two months, and all of a sudden money is not a problem? Worse yet, I would suggest, the mental and physical health of the family unit and the people who work here, not least the translators, is going to be impacted by this.

I have some more nuggets. The member for Winnipeg North stood again on May 22, 2013, and said, "The government House leader, possibly and most likely, after serious discussions with the Prime Minister's Office, came to the conclusion that what we need to do is lose a little bit of focus on what is happening in the Prime Minister's Office and to try to maybe change the channel." That sounds familiar.

• (1355)

It was a problem back then, but it is not a problem right now. They are facing numerous investigations, numerous things that they are going to have to deal with, not the least of which is the Winnipeg lab documents and the RCMP situation, which I mentioned before. They will give themselves the ability to shut this place down: shut it down, and let us all go home. Proroguing without proroguing, that is what they want to do with this motion.

I have another one. On time allocation in the House, on March 12, 2015, when the member for Winnipeg North was still sitting in the corner over there, where he is going to be soon, he said, "Never before in the history of our country have we seen a government abuse the rule of time allocation on legislation that Canadians are concerned about." It is okay when he is in opposition, but when he gets in government the hypocrisy is palpable. This is what they do. I agree it is selective, but I picked some good nuggets here, and I have more.

The member for Winnipeg North spent a lot of time talking about the government on June 3. He said, "The government, by once again relying on a time allocation motion to get its agenda passed, speaks of incompetence." I have spent the last hour and 20 minutes talking about the government's incompetence in moving forward its legislative agenda, and these are words that the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader has obviously said before, which is just perfect. He said, "It speaks of a genuine lack of respect for parliamentary procedure and ultimately for Canadians." How ironic that the member from the government side now was saying exactly the same thing. Talk about hypocrisy. He sits here and he defends and justifies the government action to implement this strong-arm, sledgehammer approach in this place. It is laughable to think about it.

Do members want to hear another one? Now I know why I woke up at 6:30 this morning, so I could look at this stuff. On April 1, the member for Winnipeg North said, "The bottom line is that the government has failed to properly manage the legislative agenda of the House of Commons and as a direct result has become completely dependent on time allocation. That is not healthy for a democracy in Canada." That is what he said.

I would suggest that what the Liberals are doing is not healthy for democracy. The reason why they are moving in this direction is that the NDP does not like time allocation. By extending and suspending debate, they are appeasing the NDP, but the other thing they are doing is putting themselves in a position, without a quorum call, where they can be at home in their PJs and their slippers watching the Blue Jays all summer and not have to worry about coming to work.

The opposition party will continue to work. Our colleagues, and I have spoken to the member for La Prairie and the Bloc, will be here as well, even if the Liberals and the NDP do not want to come here and be held accountable, to be able to justify, to be transparent and to work in this place to ensure that our democracy is not in decline. What Motion No. 11 does is cause a continuation and a further decline in our democracy, and we will continue to fight that.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1400)

[English]

RETIREMENT CONGRATULATIONS

Mr. Tony Van Bynen (Newmarket—Aurora, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to rise in the House today to recognize the career of Peter Sturup, head of school at Pickering College.

Peter began teaching at Pickering College in 1986 and has served as head of school since 1995, a remarkable 27 years of achievement, leadership, education and excellence. Founded in 1842, Pickering College is an independent day and boarding school for boys and girls from JK to grade 12. Recognized in 2020 with a lifetime achievement award from the Canadian Accredited Independent Schools, Peter's impact on excellence in education and leadership has truly travelled around the world.

As Peter reflects on all that he has accomplished as the head of Pickering College, I hope he does so with the knowledge that he has made the Pickering College community greater, better and more beautiful than how he found it. I hope Peter enjoys his retirement.

* * *

MICHAEL WILTON

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Michael Wilton, who tragically passed away in a plane crash on April 22. He was a pilot, entrepreneur, adventurer and proud father of two twin boys. He often introduced them as his junior sales associates.

I got to know Mike over the imposition of the new and unfair tax on small aircraft. He was an entrepreneur who refurbished planes, creating aerospace jobs in Calgary. He loved flying, and I mean really loved flying. We had long phone calls and exchanged many emails over his work. He was quickly becoming a policy advocate for aircraft enthusiasts. He even appeared at the Standing Committee on Finance to defend this sector.

Statements by Members

Mike leaves behind his partner Kelli Beckstrand and his twin sons Thomas James Wilton and William Scott Wilton. To his family, friends and business colleagues, we join them in their grief and sorrow. A pilot's prayer goes like this: "That he shall know the joy they feel / Who ride Thy realms on Birds of Steel." May he rest in peace.

* * *

DAVID BARBER

Mr. Terry Duguid (Winnipeg South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness that I share the passing of Dr. David Barber, distinguished professor at the University of Manitoba. As founding director of the Centre for Earth Observation Science and Canada research chair in Arctic system science and climate change, David established U of M as a global leader in Arctic research.

His tireless work has helped to place Canada at the forefront of Arctic research and created opportunity for innumerable students, professors and research staff to better understand the rapidly changing Arctic and its impacts on people and diverse habitats. His dedication helped secure major Arctic research infrastructure, including the Canadian research icebreaker CCGS Amundsen and the Churchill Marine Observatory.

On behalf of this House, I extend my heartfelt condolences to his wife, Lucette, and his three children, Jeremy, Julien and Jamie, as well as his step-grandson Ryden and grandson Luca.

* * *

[Translation]

DAY OF MOURNING

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, let us not forget them. Let us not forget the far too many workers who lose their lives on the job every year.

Last year, there were 207 workplace deaths in Quebec alone. These 207 workers were parents, brothers, sisters, friends and colleagues who died in the workplace. On behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I would like to extend my condolences to those 207 families today, since April 28 is the Day of Mourning.

On this day dedicated to commemorating people who died or were injured in the workplace, I invite all my colleagues to think of those whose jobs are more dangerous than rising here in the House. Some workers face the risk of death, injury, and also illness. We need only think of the thousands of people who contracted COVID-19 in our care facilities.

Let all of us, across party lines, make workplace health and safety our main concern.

Statements by Members

● (1405)

*[English]***INFERTILITY AWARENESS WEEK**

Mrs. Jenna Sudds (Kanata—Carleton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is Infertility Awareness Week here in Canada, a time to normalize and destigmatize the conversation about infertility.

Many Canadians face challenges on their path to parenthood. In fact, one in six Canadians experiences infertility. It can affect anyone, irrespective of age or gender. For many who are struggling to conceive, it is often a hidden and emotionally devastating struggle. Infertility Awareness Week helps Canadians break the silence by having open, honest conversations about infertility. It lets others who are experiencing infertility know that they are not alone and they should not be ashamed.

To Canadians struggling with infertility, I want them to know they are not alone. Talking about their struggles may help them, but it may also help others who are struggling alone.

* * *

*[Translation]***INFLATION**

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians have lost control of their own lives.

Whether we are talking about the individual who lost their job because of a medical decision, the single mom who cannot afford to feed her children because of food inflation or the 32-year-old who is living in his mother's basement because of real estate inflation, people cannot pay their bills because the government is making life too expensive.

The cost of government is raising the cost of living. The more the government spends, the more it costs Canadians. Inflationary taxes are increasing the cost of producing goods and services. Inflationary deficits are increasing the number of dollars needed to buy every product.

Let us stop inflation, lower taxes and give power back to ordinary Canadians, not just bankers and politicians, so they can control their own money. Let us make Canada the freest country in the world to give Canadians control of their own lives.

* * *

*[English]***CAROLE WARDELL**

Mr. Michael Coteau (Don Valley East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I address this House to remember a dear friend and an active member in the Toronto Liberal community: Carole Wardell, who suddenly passed away earlier this month.

Carole was the type of person who radiated warmth and friendliness the moment one met her. She was an admired teacher and vice-principal for many years, and someone who always had a welcoming smile on her face.

As an active member for decades on both our provincial and federal riding associations in Don Valley East, she was a staple at al-

most every local event, election campaign and fundraiser, always the first one to volunteer and to help out. She was also a long-time member of the Willowdale Women's Liberal Club, where she spent a lot of time creating space for women in politics and working to encourage more women to get involved in politics.

Carole will be remembered by me and so many other people whose lives she touched for her advocacy, her generosity and, most of all, her exceptionally kind spirit.

On behalf of the Don Valley East community, we thank Carole for all she gave over the course of her lifetime.

* * *

INDIGENOUS LAW GRADUATES

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Labrador, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today to commemorate the first graduates of the University of Victoria's indigenous law program. These 23 trailblazers are graduating with a joint degree in Canadian common law and indigenous legal orders.

In highlighting the accomplishments of these incredible students, I want to acknowledge Jolene Ashini from the Sheshatshiu Innu First Nation, the first Labrador Innu woman to earn a law degree. Jolene was drawn to the study of law through her late father's work as a leader with the Innu Nation. She noted that this program was something she needed, because it was tailored to her idea of indigenous justice and advancing culturally significant law.

We are proud of Jolene and her 22 colleagues for being the first indigenous law graduates from the University of Victoria. We look forward to seeing how their courage, their expertise and education will advance reconciliation and create a stronger Canada for all of us.

* * *

● (1410)

AVON RIVER

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Mr. Speaker, summer sandstorms have been wreaking havoc in the town of Windsor, Nova Scotia due to the dried up Avon River mud flat. The destructive sandstorms are not just an annoyance; they pose serious health threats to residents. The dry pond has also reduced summer activities on the Avon River, such as canoeing, kayaking and swimming, and has stopped the important pumpkin festival lake race. This is having a severe impact on tourism in Windsor, after two years of reduced visitor numbers.

The sandstorms are a result of a ministerial order that is renewed every two weeks by the Minister of Fisheries and that allows the head of the pond to sit dry. In an ideal world, the minister would amend the order to restore the river and lake, but the least she could do is amend it to keep the riverbed moist enough to stop the sandstorms. The Minister of Fisheries can do everyone in the Town of Windsor a favour by amending the order and fixing the Avon River issue.

* * *

LEGION AWARDS CEREMONY

Mr. John Aldag (Cloverdale—Langley City, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this weekend, after a two-year hiatus, it was my privilege to attend the Royal Canadian Legion Branch No. 6 in Cloverdale for its annual awards ceremony. The branch, home to 1,314 members, presented many awards, including years of service from 10 years to 55 years. Legion members continue to support our veterans and community despite the difficulty of the pandemic.

During my visit, I presented Dollie Greensides with the Palm Leaf to Meritorious Service Award. It is the highest award for the Legion Ladies' Auxiliary. Dollie, at the tender age of 94 years, has been a member of the Legion Ladies' Auxiliary for 63 years. I was proud to present Dollie with this honour, and I am proud to call her my friend.

* * *

[Translation]

POSTAL CODES IN INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Wendake is right in the middle of the Louis-Saint-Laurent riding and it is surrounded by Quebec City, but Canada Post has assigned Wendake a postal code that classifies it as a remote area far from urban centres.

As a result, businesses and residents in Wendake pay up to 30% more to have goods delivered, all because of a postal code that in no way reflects their reality. This is happening in Wendake, in my riding, but it is also happening in a number of other indigenous communities near urban centres.

Wendake business owner Guillaume Boulianne wrote to me to say, and I quote: "This concrete example of systemic racism on the part of a federal Crown corporation is directly affecting economic development in our communities. Not only is this situation ludicrous, but it is also unfair."

I urge the government to take swift action and to do what needs to be done to ensure that Canada Post selects postal codes based on geography, not the community. On top of just being common sense, it is a matter of respect.

* * *

[English]

BLOOD DONATION

Mr. Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, finally, after years of delay, Canada is one step closer today to the long-standing and discriminatory blood ban be-

Statements by Members

ing lifted in this country. It has been a long time coming. The pain, the stigma and the frustration that many gay, bi and trans men have felt in this country for too many years has not been fair. While today's news is welcome news, it did not need to take this long. I have been proud to stand in the House calling on the government to show some urgency in actually ending this. We are still at least five months away from this change taking effect; this, after knowing the recommendation was coming over a year ago.

There is still leadership that can be shown to have this easy and simple and safe change be made sooner. Discrimination such as this should not take this long to resolve. We will keep up the battle, but today I want to thank the many voices that pressured the government to finally act, the All Blood is Equal campaign, and particularly men who have felt this stigma first-hand, me included. After years of advocacy, change is finally coming. Long-standing discrimination is finally ending when it comes to the blood ban.

* * *

[Translation]

350TH ANNIVERSARY OF L'ÎLE-PERROT

Mr. Peter Schiefke (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an incredible feeling to rise today to mark the 350th anniversary of L'Île-Perrot, which is located in my community of Vaudreuil—Soulanges. This is an historical event that goes back to nearly 200 years before Canada was founded.

It is indeed a very special celebration, with more than 50 activities, that would not be possible without the vision and dedication of men and women who care about their island, namely Lise Charetier, Catherine Vincent, Olga Casseta, Charles-Olivier Bellerose-Bellanger, Daniel Bertolino, Catherine Champagne, Sébastien Daviau, Laurier Farmer, Louise Lapointe, Vicky Sauvé and Christiane Lévesque.

Of course, I would also like to thank the mayors of our four towns on L'Île-Perrot. They are Pierre Séguin, Danie Deschênes, Claude Comeau and Michel Boudreau, and they are all working hard to make this incredible event happen.

● (1415)

[English]

I invite all members of our community of Vaudreuil—Soulanges to come together to celebrate the rich history of our beautiful island and to wish Île Perrot a happy 350th.

* * *

NATIONAL DAY OF MOURNING

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today on the National Day of Mourning for workers killed or injured on the job, we mourn all workers who have lost their lives, and recommit to fight like hell for the living.

Statements by Members

Just two days ago, a worker at Janco Steel in Stoney Creek died in an industrial accident. Our thoughts are with his family and every body impacted by this horrible and preventable tragedy.

Working-class people continue to be sacrificed for the greed and profits of capitalism, and COVID has made things worse. Whether it is in long-term care homes, on construction or industrial sites or in meat-packing plants, far too many workers continue to be killed and injured on the job, yet corporate executives keep cashing in. All employers must be held accountable for their negligence. The Westray Law was introduced to hold companies criminally accountable for workers' safety, but only one person has ever gone to jail. This is appalling: if one kills a worker, one goes to jail.

We must continue to fight to improve the health and safety conditions for workers, because every worker deserves to get home safe at the end of the day.

* * *

[*Translation*]

YOM HASHOAH

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, these are the words of Jean Ferrat:

They were twenty and one hundred, they were in the thousands,
Naked and gaunt, trembling, in sealed wagons,
They tore at the night with their restless fingers.
They were in the thousands, they were twenty and one hundred.

On this Yom HaShoah, we remember. We remember what people can do when they lose their humanity. We remember the atrocities that evil can do when evil triumphs. We also remember that life and the strength to live, the thirst for life, solidarity, resilience, courage and love can ultimately triumph, despite the darkness, despite the terror.

We remember that memory can help us avoid repeating the mistakes already made. Memory can also make us look at the world sometimes with anger, sometimes with fear. We remember these men, women and children who were victims of hate. We remember our sacred duty to fight this hatred. We remember that we are not out of danger, especially if we forget.

On this Yom HaShoah, *zakhor*, we remember.

* * *

[*English*]

ANTI-SEMITISM

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as a Jewish Canadian, I join Jewish communities and others in Canada and around the world to observe Yom HaShoah. On Yom HaShoah, we remember the six million innocent Jews who were systematically murdered by the Nazis during the Holocaust, which is one of the darkest periods in human history.

We also pay tribute to those who survived these unspeakable atrocities and recognize the bravery of all who stood against the Nazi regime, risking their lives to save others. By telling the stories of the Holocaust, we make sure these experiences of loss and sur-

vival, of unspeakable suffering and profound resilience, are never forgotten.

Sadly, acts of anti-Semitic violence are still frequent today, and it is our solemn duty to stand united and vigilant against all forms of anti-Semitism, hatred and discrimination. We must be clear: Attacks against the Jewish community are attacks against all of us. We have a shared responsibility to continue to pay tribute to the victims of the Holocaust and ensure their stories continue to resonate with generations to come. Together, let us all vow, “never again”.

* * *

● (1420)

YOM HASHOAH

Ms. Ya'ara Saks (York Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last night around the world, Jewish communities began to mark, from sunset to sunset, Yom HaShoah, which is Holocaust memorial day.

This morning at 10 a.m. in Israel, air raid sirens sounded throughout the country. An entire nation, the Jewish people, stopped their day-to-day lives at the moment of these sirens. They were a collective cry. It was a moment to reflect, to listen and remember.

On this day, six million of our people live in all of our hearts. Today, we are the eyes that remember. Today, we are their voice. Today, we cry for them and for what was lost in their murder at the hands of the Nazi regime. We cry for their memory.

I was honoured to join the Prime Minister and colleagues from across the House this morning to stand with the Jewish community at the national Holocaust memorial to honour and remember the men, women and children whose lives have been lost forever.

We stand together as the Jewish community with our country here in Canada to say clearly and resolutely, “never again”. In every generation, it is our duty and obligation to honour the victims of the Holocaust, to learn from this tragic moment in humanity and to ensure that the words “never again” are both a focus of remembrance and a reminder to never be complacent in the face of evil and to be relentless in our efforts to fight back against the darkness of hate.

Lighting a flame of remembrance today is to shine a light into all of our hearts and to protect those who are in crisis. Then, now and always,

[*Member spoke in Hebrew*]

[*English*]

May their memories be a blessing.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Emergencies Act is so extreme that it requires the government to justify its use to prevent abuses against citizens. It requires an inquiry into the government's actions. Yes, I said the government's "actions".

Analysts and civil rights groups were not fooled. The order giving Justice Rouleau his mandate asks him to investigate citizens.

Why is the Liberal government writing the findings of the inquiry before the inquiry has even begun?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the illegal blockades of essential corridors and the occupation of Ottawa were harming our economy and jeopardizing public safety.

Our government was prudent and careful, but we also understood that we had a responsibility to protect Canada's economy and Canadians.

We look forward to receiving Justice Rouleau's report.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, neither the Minister of Justice nor the Minister of Public Safety are able to justify the use of the Emergencies Act. They are hiding behind cabinet confidence.

We are once again witnessing a concerted effort on the part of all the ministers to protect the Prime Minister, who chose to put on a political show at the expense of citizens' rights.

With the complicity of the NDP, the Liberals themselves established the rules of the committee that is supposed to analyze the government's decisions. They are preventing Justice Rouleau from carrying out the very specific mandate bestowed upon him by the act.

Why hide the truth from Canadians?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government took appropriate, targeted measures that were terminated as soon as possible.

We had a duty to protect Canadians and Canada's economy. We fulfilled that obligation, which is the central responsibility of any federal government.

We look forward to receiving Justice Rouleau's report.

* * *

ETHICS

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with today's Motion No. 11, the government is in cover-up mode again, just like with WE Charity, Jody Wilson-Raybould and the secret documents from the Winnipeg lab.

The Prime Minister received an illegal gift. The RCMP even considered filing criminal charges of fraud against the Prime Minister.

Oral Questions

Since the Prime Minister admits that no one gave him permission to break the law, will the Minister of Justice support our new request for an RCMP investigation?

• (1425)

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us be clear. The opposition is talking about something that happened in 2016, more than six years ago. The Ethics Commissioner conducted a thorough investigation and released a report in 2017.

Our government feels that Canadians are facing much more urgent issues these days.

[English]

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals need to understand that we are talking about the RCMP investigation of fraud against the government by the Prime Minister, not the Ethics Commissioner's study. The Prime Minister thinks he is above the law and the rest of us are under another piece of law. He accepted a \$215,000 luxury private island vacation from someone who is actively lobbying the government for millions of taxpayers' money.

The environment minister provided the missing piece of the puzzle the RCMP needed to charge him. He admitted he did not have permission to take the trip. The RCMP has all of the puzzle pieces they need now to charge the Prime Minister with committing fraud against the government. Will the Prime Minister co-operate with that investigation?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us be clear. The opposition is talking about something that took place in 2016, more than six years ago. This matter has been thoroughly investigated by the Ethics Commissioner, who published a report in 2017. Our government absolutely understands that Canadians want and need us to focus on more pressing challenges, such as affordability, climate change, housing and, of course, Putin's illegal war in Ukraine.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister cannot dodge these questions much longer. We have to remember, there is no statute of limitations under the Criminal Code here in Canada. In fact, the Prime Minister's silence sounds a lot like an admission of guilt.

The RCMP criminal brief said that, if the Prime Minister were any other Canadian, he would have been charged. Canadians are demanding that the Prime Minister be held to a higher standard. Will the Prime Minister lift the veil of secrecy, clear the air and proactively speak to the RCMP?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me tell the member what I hear Canadians demanding. Canadians are demanding action on climate change. Canadians are demanding action to build more houses for a growing country. Canadians are demanding that our country act urgently to support Ukraine and oppose Putin's illegal invasion of Ukraine.

Those are the urgent issues facing Canada today, and that is what our government is focused on.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the House demanded that the government appear in committee to shed some light on the worrisome dismissal of scientists in Winnipeg. The Liberals did not comply, however, and are using their alliance with the NDP to create their own committee for just the two of them, for which they can set their own rules, produce their own report and announce their own findings.

They are doing all of this without the agreement of the two main opposition parties. That is not democratic, nor is it transparent. Does the government realize that its alliance with the NDP does not authorize it to create a parallel Parliament and set its own rules?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in December we proposed a reasonable and responsible solution. The ad hoc committee of MPs that we proposed, in co-operation with a group of three former justices, would have access to uncensored documents regarding the Winnipeg lab.

Yes, we will work with the NDP to create this committee, but we have spoken with the Bloc, and we would be very happy to have the Bloc participate in this committee as well.

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, not one MP here wants to compromise national security, but no citizen wants their government's actions to be kept secret.

It is impossible to make these things up. In June, the Liberals took legal action against the Speaker of the House to avoid having to turn over documents. That is a big deal. Today, instead of handing them over to committee members who are already responsible for this type of thing, they want to create their own committee and collude with the NDP to make their own rules, while leaving the opposition out in the cold.

What kind of banana republic is this anyway?

● (1430)

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, members are responsible for doing their work on behalf of the Canadians they represent, and that includes work on matters of public interest.

At the same time, the government is obligated to protect Canadians from damage that could arise as a result of national security details being made public.

Yes, we will work with the NDP to create the ad hoc committee, but we would be very pleased to work with the Bloc as well.

* * *

HEALTH

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Quebecers have made a clear choice. They want a universal public pharmacare plan. An overwhelming majority, specifically 73%, of those surveyed in Quebec are in favour of such a plan.

Why is that? Because they know they are paying too much for their prescription drugs, and the cost continues to rise. People know that a universal plan will lower drug prices and improve their health. For Quebecers and Canadians, the question is no longer how, but when this will happen.

Will the government answer this call and come up with a solution to bring in a pharmacare plan?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, no one should have to choose between paying for prescriptions and putting food on their table.

That is why we announced an agreement with P.E.I. last August to take the first steps towards implementing a national, universal pharmacare program. This is an important first step, but there is more work to do and we will get it done.

* * *

[English]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today, on the National Day of Mourning, we remember those we have lost and those who have suffered life-changing workplace injuries. The Liberal government is planning to end the sickness benefit program on May 7. Federal workers will not have any support if they are sick and need to stay home.

While we fought to secure 10 paid sick days to protect federal workers, the Liberals are choosing to delay this important protection for Canadians. When will the Liberal government follow through and finally deliver on the 10 paid sick days workers deserve?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government puts workers first and absolutely believes in the importance of unions defending workers and ensuring a productive and effective economy. That is why our government, for the first time in Canadian history, will ensure that all Canadian workers have the right to 10 paid sick days. It is the right thing to do, and we are going to do it.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have asked many times for the government to confirm if it will disclose the evidence that justified the invocation of the Emergencies Act. Every time, it has refused. If the government has the evidence to support its extraordinary actions, it should be pleased to take the opportunity to table it in the House today.

Canadians are increasingly wondering whether the Liberal government even had the evidence at all. Can the Minister of Public Safety confirm whether the evidence exists, yes or no?

Oral Questions

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the short answer is, yes, the evidence exists. Where was my hon. colleague in January and February when businesses were shut down, people were laid off, our borders were closed and, outside this chamber, Ottawans were held hostage in their own homes? We debated those facts in the House.

I remember my hon. colleague and I having an exchange during the debate of the invocation of the Emergencies Act, which was only put forward after police officials told us they needed this special power to ensure they could restore public safety. We are going to co-operate with the inquiry so there is transparency and to make sure this never happens again.

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I guess I will take that as a no.

Appointing a commissioner to lead the inquiry into the government's unprecedented use of the Emergencies Act must be a process that is completely transparent. Parliament was in no way consulted by the Liberal government on the appointment of Justice Rouleau.

For an inquiry as important as this, Canadians deserve to know how and why the government determined that Justice Rouleau was the appropriate candidate. What was the process? What qualifications were required? How many candidates were considered? Will the government reveal this information, yes or no?

• (1435)

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if my hon. colleague wants transparency, I would encourage him to bold, highlight and underline the word “public” in the expression “public inquiry”.

Justice Rouleau has a plethora of experience in both trial law and appellate law. He is familiar with the principles of balancing cabinet confidences with the information he needs to review, so we can ensure we will get it right with respect to the Emergencies Act and take away the lessons learned from this awful episode. It would be nice to see the Conservatives appreciate just how severe this event was.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when the government declared a national state of emergency, every blockade had already been cleared by local police, except here in Ottawa.

It is a lie to say that this special legislation was needed. As in other parts of the country, the blockades were easily cleared by local police.

To try to justify his actions, the Prime Minister decided to consult the provinces. However, the provincial premiers did not think it was necessary to invoke the special legislation.

Why consult the provinces when he had no intention of listening to them?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when the illegal blockades forced the closure of the bor-

ders, the closure of businesses and the layoff of workers, it was Canadians who paid the highest price.

It was on the advice of law enforcement that we invoked the Emergencies Act. It was necessary and it worked.

We have launched a wide-scale independent inquiry and appointed Judge Rouleau as commissioner. We look forward to co-operating with the inquiry in the interest of transparency.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is where the Liberal government is not being honest. The terms of reference that it dictated to Justice Rouleau allow him to investigate wrongdoing by police but prevent him from investigating the Liberal government.

We already know the outcome of the inquiry: Protesters are bad, police officers are bad, and the Liberal government is perfect.

As with all the other scandals, it is the turn of police forces to be thrown under the bus. Why?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a fact that the economy was disrupted during the blockade. It is a fact that there were many disruptions at the border during the illegal blockade. It is also a fact that we invoked the Emergencies Act only after police forces agreed. It was a good decision, and we will now co-operate with the commissioner.

[*English*]

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Mr. Speaker, here is a fact: The government's invocation of the Emergencies Act was a dark day in Canadian history. Legal experts and Canadians know that there was no need to invoke the act, as Canada's existing laws are sufficient.

The government has since shown that it has no intention of providing any justification for stripping away Canadians' charter rights. They just simply want us to trust them. Really? We do not trust them. That is the issue.

How can the government possibly believe that Canadians trust them?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is because on this side we spoke to Canadians. We spoke to Canadians during the blockades, and their experiences were that their businesses were shut down, workers were—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Order. We did make it to question number 14 without too much of an uproar.

The hon. Minister of Public Safety.

Oral Questions

Hon. Marco Mendicino: Mr. Speaker, as I was saying before I was unfortunately interrupted by my colleagues, we spoke with Canadians during the illegal blockades. We spoke with the people who live outside of these chambers who were held hostage, who could not go to work, whose families could not take their children to school and who knew seniors who could not get access to public transportation because of the illegal occupation. It was the police who laid charges independently because of those interruptions, and it was only after we received their advice that we invoked the Emergencies Act. We had to.

* * *

ETHICS

Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister continues to dodge questions about the basic facts of his train wreck of an illegal vacation and the subsequent RCMP investigation that followed. While he attempts to convince Canadians that this issue is solely in the past, it is clear that his skeletons do not remain far from the surface. Although this is not the Prime Minister's first rodeo when it comes to trickery, deception and power-wrangling, time and time again he tells Canadians to look away when he comes under fire.

When will the Prime Minister get off his high horse and admit that he is not above the law?

• (1440)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what we are witnessing is, in fact, political theatre. The Conservative Party, virtually since 2015, has been so much focused on character assassination—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Order. As soon as we quiet down, I will let the member start over.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the official opposition makes the point. They are so much focused on character assassination and playing this game, and as much as they want to continue that fixation, I can assure members opposite that we as a government, and in particular the Prime Minister, will continue to focus our attention on what is happening in the real world and what Canadians are facing coast to coast to coast. We will continue to deliver the types of policies, legislation and budgetary measures that are going to make a difference in their lives.

* * *

[Translation]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the sanctions against Russia are necessary and valid. Unfortunately, they also penalize our businesses.

Last week, my office arranged a meeting with the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade and businesses that are suffering collateral damage from these sanctions. We met with

companies in sectors ranging from agriculture to aluminum to lumber, all of which are suffering due to tariffs on Russian products or contract terminations.

Will the government announce a strategy to offset the effects that these sanctions are having on our hard-hit businesses?

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from the Bloc Québécois member and the opportunity to talk to his constituents about the impact of the sanctions we have put in place, which are affecting farmers and other businesses in Quebec.

First, I would like to say that everyone agreed with the idea of imposing tariffs and sanctions on Russia, because we all support Ukraine. Second, I would like to say that we will be looking at the situation with respect to farms and fertilizer.

[English]

It has been impacted, and the issue of food security in Canada and global food security is one we are very much concerned with.

* * *

[Translation]

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as the member just said, the sector hit hardest by the sanctions is agriculture.

Quebec and eastern Canada use fertilizer imported from Russia, which has been slapped with a 35% surcharge.

Our farmers put their orders in before Russia attacked, so the surcharge is not penalizing Russia, which has already been paid. It is only penalizing our farmers.

A 35% surcharge for imports after the war started is legitimate, but will the government exempt orders placed before the war?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to assure my colleague that we are taking the situation very seriously. We are looking at various options.

We want to make sure our farmers have the inputs they need for a good season so Canada can contribute to food security at home and around the world.

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we need to move quickly. This affects everyone.

If fertilizer is already 35% more expensive for farmers, what will happen to food prices? At a time when the cost of groceries is already at a record high, people cannot afford to pay any more.

I would point out that the 35% tariff comes from a well-intentioned sanction against Russia. However, it is ill-conceived, because it has no impact on the Russians, only on our farmers.

Oral Questions

Will the government support our farmers before this tariff leads to higher food prices for everyone?

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, we completely agree that we need to support our farmers and our agricultural producers.

We also completely agree that tariffs and sanctions must be imposed on the Russian government and on Mr. Putin himself in order to support the Ukrainian people in this illegal war.

● (1445)

[English]

The last point I will make is that we are preoccupied with this issue. The Minister of Agriculture is working very hard on this issue to work with Canadian farmers to ensure that we are supporting food security in this country and around the world.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government continues to claim that a decrease in international trade necessitated the use of the Emergencies Act. The public safety minister testified that Canada lost \$390 million a day in trade and that the government had no choice but to invoke the act because of the damage to the economy. However, new data from Statistics Canada is showing that international trade at both the Ontario and Alberta U.S. borders increased in February compared with the same time last year.

Does the minister not understand basic economics, or is he covering up the truth? Which is it?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is important for my colleague to draw a bright distinction between statistics and the real life impacts at the time of the illegal blockades. Those impacts saw the disruption of trade and travel at the Ambassador Bridge, where we do fully one-third of our trade with our most important partner, the United States of America, which, by the way, expressed serious concerns during the blockades. That was one of the other reasons, among many, that we had to invoke the Emergencies Act. It worked. We were able to restore public safety, and thankfully trade and travel are going on again.

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, despite the blockades at the Ambassador Bridge and Coutts being cleared before the invocation of the Emergencies Act, cross-border trade was up 16%. These figures raise obvious questions about the government's use of the act, a decision the government justified by threats to economic security. The Liberals did not do anything in 2020 during the rail blockades when economic activities stopped.

Does the government only use the Emergencies Act for groups it deems racist misogynists who oppose its heavy-handed COVID restrictions?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is utterly astonishing to hear the Conservative members continue to bury their heads in the sand over the serious events that

occurred during January and February. I would encourage my colleague and all members of the Conservative Party of Canada, who do not want to believe there was any interruption, to speak to the small businesses on Huron Church Road in Windsor, or to talk to the member for Windsor West or the member for Windsor—Tecumseh, who have spoken with those businesses. They were shut down. That was because of the illegal blockades. We are helping them. Trade and travel are going on again, and thankfully it is because we invoked the Emergencies Act.

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let me get this straight. Despite the police clearing the blockades without needing the Emergencies Act, yesterday the public safety minister stated the reasons were economic. He said the impacts were devastating. He said the Windsor crossing lost \$390 million a day, and Stats Canada says that is not true.

What should Canadians think when the government tells them it cannot explain why it did what it did? With debunked news stories, invented economic data and them clinging to cabinet secrecy, what are the Liberals hiding?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the only thing the Conservatives are clinging to right now is denial. I have to say that, before coming into this chamber and spouting off statistics in the abstract, I would encourage my colleague to speak with the Canadians outside this chamber, in Ottawa, who could not leave their homes. I would encourage my hon. colleague to speak with the many small businesses not only in Windsor but in Coutts and White Rock that were absolutely devastated by these illegal blockades. It was only after we received advice from police that we invoked the act. It worked, and now we are going to make sure we co-operate with these inquiries so that—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on March 28, Russian oligarch Igor Makarov, who has been sanctioned in the United States since 2018, was able to get \$121 million out of Canada. That should have gone to Ukrainians fleeing violence. That should have gone to Ukraine to help rebuild. Instead, that money was used to prop up Russia's war.

The NDP has been calling for sanctions since before the war started. The Liberals have done too little and they have done it too slowly. When are they going to get their act together?

Oral Questions

• (1450)

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have done a lot as a government, and of course we have to do more. We are using sanctions to put pressure on the Russian regime and hold it accountable, and 1,400 entities and individuals have been sanctioned up to now. We are now proposing new measures to go even further, not only to seize but to allow for the forfeiture of the assets of sanctioned individuals and entities. These measures will allow us to compensate victims and support the reconstruction of Ukraine. These changes make Canada a leader in the G7.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, how much public money is enough for oil and gas companies already making mad profits? That is the question on the minds of Canadians reading about the CEO of Cenovus complaining that they need even more public money for carbon capture and storage. Never mind Canadians getting gouged at the pump while companies like Cenovus have profits sevenfold higher than this time last year. Never mind the billions that Liberals already gifted to them for unproven climate measures in the budget. They want more, but Canadians are not buying it.

When are the Liberals going to stop greenwashing corporate handouts and get serious about actually reducing emissions?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have good news for the member opposite. Emissions are going down in Canada. The government's own emissions are going down by 25%. We have already reached a target we had set for ourselves for 2025. Fossil fuel subsidies are also going down, by more than \$3 billion a year since 2018.

* * *

HOUSING

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, lack of affordable rental housing is a major concern for my constituents in Vancouver Centre. In February, I joined the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion to announce federal funding to redevelop 157 units of permanent affordable housing for seniors and persons with physical disabilities.

Could the minister tell us about the impact the national housing co-investment fund has on these vulnerable communities?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for her strong advocacy on affordable housing.

I was really pleased to join the member in February to announce 157 new homes for seniors and persons with disabilities, with an investment of over \$44 million. This is the national housing strategy at work, but we are not stopping there. Through budget 2022, we are investing an additional \$14.1 billion. We are not going to stop until we make sure that every single Canadian has a safe and affordable place to call home.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, millennials with good jobs just want out of their parents' basements, but the cost of living under the Liberal government is going through the roof. The budget's signature housing promise is a shiny new savings account, but who has \$8,000 a year to save, with out-of-control gas, grocery and housing inflation?

Could the Minister of Housing please enlighten us: Where will these millennials find \$8,000 a year to save, or does he believe that young families can always do what the speNDP-Liberals do, which is just go borrow more money?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola should have a talk with the member of Parliament for Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, because that member believes that we should just download the cost of housing to provinces; his leader believes we should just download the cost to municipalities, and his other colleague, from Calgary Centre, believes that we should not help first-time homebuyers. The members opposite cannot even come together to formulate a coherent policy on affordable housing. The hon. member has been on record opposing the ban on foreign buyers, which would give more opportunities to first-time homebuyers.

* * *

[Translation]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Royal Bank of Canada says that those most affected by the current inflation crisis in Canada are the poorest Canadians, and that is easy to understand when the price of food, transportation and housing are going up. These are essentials and those most affected by this situation are the poor. What the government needs to do to fight inflation is control its spending. It has not done so in seven years. It must also be sure to freeze all tariffs and tax increases, which it refused to do on April 1.

Why does the government continue to directly attack the poorest Canadians?

• (1455)

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we might think that the Conservatives are criticizing a fictitious budget and not the one that they read. Maybe they should take note of what Stephen Harper's former director of communications said, and that is that the budget is prudent and reasonable. He believes it is a budget for an economy in full swing, one that will achieve a near zero deficit in five years.

[English]

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last night I received a text from a local business owner. He said diesel fuel had jumped 24¢ in two days, which puts it at \$2.18 a litre. The average truck burns 400 to 500 litres, so that is \$1,000 per day. It costs him \$60,000 a month for three trucks. This has to stop before there is no one left to move our goods.

The government is a colossal disappointment. When will the government take ownership of its mistakes for all devastated Canadians? They need relief.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yet again the Conservatives seem to be attacking a budget they invented and not the one we actually delivered. Maybe they should read the National Post, which described the budget as “prudent and responsible”. The Post went on to say, “The efforts to expand Canada’s productive capacity and hold the line on spending are welcome, as are the new commitments to defence spending.”

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, price shocks on everyday items continue to hurt a growing number of Canadians, and it appears the worst is yet to come. Inflation is almost 7%. We have price inflation and currency inflation happening at the same time. Interest rates are on the way up. People of all ages, especially those on the margins, are trimming expenses just to make ends meet. The dream of home ownership is moving farther and farther away from many, especially our youth. The policies of the left are shrinking any disposable income.

When will the Prime Minister stop making one bad mistake after another and outline a clear commitment to control inflation?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will take no lessons from the Conservatives when it comes to supporting the most vulnerable Canadians with the cost of living. It was our government that introduced the Canada child benefit, which is indexed for inflation and has lifted almost 300,000 children out of poverty. Our government increased the GIS, which is also indexed to inflation and has helped over 900,000 seniors. When we formed government, more than five million Canadians lived in poverty. Today, that number is below 3.8 million.

* * *

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Service Canada has completely abandoned thousands of victims of fraud.

Picture this. These people lose their jobs and apply for employment insurance. Months go by and they do not get anything, so they ask questions but do not get any answers. They call back and still do not get any answers. Finally, they find out that they are the victims of fraud, that no one told them about it, that no one knows why and that no one is going to give them their money. There are people who have been out of work since December and have still not received a cent.

Oral Questions

We need to get to the bottom of this, but, first, will the government at least give these fraud victims their benefits?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for that important question.

We are aware that there has been an increase in the number of cases of employment insurance fraud. We are working with members of the Bloc Québécois to make sure that everyone gets their benefits.

We will continue to do that. It is important to ensure that every Canadian gets the EI benefits to which they are entitled, and to combat fraud.

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, things are not moving quickly enough.

Thousands of people have complained to their Bloc Québécois MPs, and there are probably more people out there who have not yet realized that they are victims. Does the government realize how many people are affected?

Some people have not had any income for months. Service Canada must notify victims of fraud. It needs to find out how this fraud happened, but first, is there a way to get these people their benefits now so they can buy groceries?

● (1500)

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, I would like to thank my colleague for raising this important issue.

We are continuing to work with members of the Bloc Québécois when we identify victims of fraud. Fraud is on the rise, and it is important that the Government of Canada ensure that it addresses and combats fraud so there are no further victims of fraud involving Government of Canada benefits.

That being said, we have made changes at Service Canada to ensure that people with legitimate complaints receive their benefits.

Oral Questions

[English]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Scot Davidson (York—Simcoe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the environment commissioner's latest report confirms that the Liberals are all talk and no action on the environment. They talk about the importance of the carbon tax, but ignore the impact it is having on small businesses and first nations. They talk about a just transition from oil and gas, but provide no support to Canadian energy workers who are losing their jobs. They fly across the country to talk about reducing emissions, while missing all of their targets every year.

These reports are scathing. Why is the Liberal government failing to protect Canada's environment?

Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can certainly speak to this government's commitment on what many refer to as just transition. I always hesitate when I say that phrase because, frankly, a lot of workers do not like that phrase. I can say one thing to this House, and I said this to the unions over these past number of days. This government will not move without the full support of oil and gas workers in this country. They are the ones who will lower emissions. They are the ones who will build up renewables. We are committed to them in the same way that they have always been committed to the prosperity of this country.

Mr. Scot Davidson (York—Simcoe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this minister is so far behind, he thinks he is in first place, but these reports confirm that the Liberals are failing in every respect: protecting the environment, fail; respecting taxpayer dollars, fail; supporting Canadian workers, fail; standing up for small businesses and first nations, fail.

The minister may try and greenwash over these failures, but Canadians know better. After all, the environment commissioner says the Liberals' environmental plan is unrealistic and lacking credibility. Does the minister agree? Yes or no.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the short answer is no.

The long answer is the commissioner says that carbon pricing is one of the most important measures to fight greenhouse gas emissions. That is exactly what we are doing.

The commissioner says that eight out of 10 Canadians are getting more money through carbon pricing than without it. The commissioner said that the federal government would reach its 25% emissions-reduction target this year, not in 2025. Our plan is working, but I will agree that there is way more we need to do.

* * *

CARBON PRICING

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the environment commissioner's report on carbon pricing states that the government has not addressed the burden from carbon pricing faced by small businesses.

There is no plan to get carbon tax money back to small businesses. I met this morning with Ward from Kelowna—Lake Country,

who owns an RV business, and much of our conversation was around various tax increases hitting the RV and camping industry.

Will the minister admit that the just transition plan is breaking the backs of small businesses and transitioning them to just hang on?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the commissioner recognized in his report, eight out of 10 Canadians are getting more money through carbon pricing than without it. We are working with small businesses to ensure that the rest of the revenues are recycled. We already have an agreement with Ontario, and it is happening with the rest of the provinces in Canada.

* * *

[Translation]

HEALTH

Ms. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, LGBTQ+ rights are human rights, and we know that there is still more work to be done.

For years, LGBTQ+ communities have been calling for a non-discriminatory blood donation system. Today, Health Canada approved the request from Canadian Blood Services.

Could the Minister of Health tell us more about this historic announcement and the impact it will have on these communities?

● (1505)

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from London West for her excellent work in support of the LGBTQ+ community.

Today is a great day for anti-discrimination, justice and equity. Canadians have been waiting for this day for many years. Health Canada has approved Canadian Blood Services' request to eliminate the deferral period for men who have sex with men and to replace this policy with a single universal questionnaire that is non-discriminatory and is not based on gender identity or sexual orientation.

This is a significant achievement and I thank everyone whose hard work led to today's announcement.

* * *

[English]

DIGITAL SERVICES

Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, over the past year, the Liberals have spent over \$600,000 on social media influencers. While they say they want to crack down on misinformation online, the Liberals literally paid thousands of dollars to influencers to give fake, sponsored endorsements of the government.

Why should Canadians trust the Liberals to regulate online activity, when they have literally hired an army of keyboard warriors, using taxpayer dollars, to fight their fights?

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the objective is very simple. We are going to ask online platforms to contribute to Canadian culture. We have heard the concerns that were raised about social media. We have gotten the message. We have fixed it. We are making it extremely clear.

Users and their content will never be regulated. Our bills will make platforms contribute to Canadian culture. That is it. It is written in black and white in the bill. Platforms are in; users are out.

* * *

PASSPORT CANADA

Mr. Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Viktoriia and her two daughters moved from Ukraine to Saskatoon West. Two months ago they received their Canadian citizenship.

One of the first things Viktoriia did was apply for a Canadian passport. However, between Passport Canada and the Saskatoon Service Canada office, all she got was hours queued up in lines and the runaround from staff. My office had to intervene directly with Ottawa as the local bureaucracy failed her.

Could the minister please explain to Viktoriia and all my constituents why the Service Canada office in Saskatoon has become the “out-of-service Canada” office?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to begin by welcoming Victoria and her family to Canada. I am glad they found refuge here from what is a very awful situation that is happening in Ukraine.

As I have explained to this House before, we are experiencing an unprecedented time when Canadians who have had their passports expire over the past two years, because they were not travelling, are now wanting to travel. Because of these volumes, Service Canada and Passport Canada are working around the clock to try to serve Canadians as best as possible.

We will continue to do everything we can to make this service available and seamless for Canadians, but there is an unprecedented volume at this moment.

* * *

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Clifford Small (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, CPC): Mr. Speaker, folks from Port aux Basques to the tip of the great northern peninsula are dismayed and worried.

Plant workers and fishermen in towns like Port aux Choix, Anchor Point and Cook's Harbour just received the news of a 20% cut in the 4R shrimp quota, after DFO stock surveys showed growth in the stock.

Will the minister keep with her new policy of leaving more fish in the water or admit her mistake and reinstate last year's shrimp quota?

Oral Questions

Hon. Joyce Murray (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my mandate is to grow the fish and seafood industry. For that, we need stocks that are viable and abundant.

I am focused on advancing consistent, sustainable and collaborative fisheries to benefit rural, indigenous and coastal communities now and for future generations. Earlier this year, a full stock assessment was held and, yes, there is an increase in area SFAs. However, in SFA 5, there was a 12% biomass increase and SFA 6 continues to be in the critical zone.

We will continue working with all harvesters and consult—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Scarborough Centre.

* * *

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every time I stand to speak in this House, I am struck by how privileged I am to be a Canadian citizen representing the people of Scarborough Centre. I became a citizen in May of 2004, and it was one of the happiest days of my life. Unfortunately, many people have faced delays in taking their oath of citizenship since COVID-19 hit in March 2020.

Can the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship update the House on the progress of citizenship ceremonies?

• (1510)

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague from Scarborough Centre for her passion for Canadian citizenship and for her work on behalf of her constituents. Since April 2020, more than 240,000 applicants have become Canadian citizens through virtual oath ceremonies. We had to pivot our strategy after it became impossible to host large events for people together in a room. We are now hosting 350 virtual ceremonies each month, and each week approximately 5,800 applicants are invited to deliver their oath virtually.

I am happy to announce that just last month, we set an all-time record by welcoming more than 41,000 applicants to complete their journey toward Canadian citizenship. Moving forward, we are going to continue to explore more options. The hon. member began her—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Edmonton Griesbach.

*Government Orders***HEALTH**

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government is finally acting to change its discriminatory blood ban against men who have sex with other men, gay men and transwomen. This is a crucial step in increasing the blood supply at a time of ongoing shortages, and it is a step toward ending a policy that reinforced homophobia and transphobia, but New Democrats share the concerns of activists that the government could still be leaving people out.

Will the government commit to working with the 2SLGBTQI community to end the arbitrary exclusions still contained in the new policy?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am so pleased to be able to hear our colleagues speak about this great day we are having today in removing discrimination in this particular matter. As our colleague said, we are so grateful to the activists, as well as the scientists, for having worked so hard over the last few years to get to that outcome. We look forward to working more together to make sure that Canada is a country in which we can live safely, in dignity and without discrimination.

* * *

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Kevin Vuong (Spadina—Fort York, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, many of my constituents have been contacting me about the severe delays in processing immigration applications and the pause placed on the express entry draws. People have had to put their lives and careers on hold, living in IRCC purgatory, all while Canadian businesses are facing a labour shortage. IRCC is a total farce. Along with the quagmire at passport offices and the mess in obtaining social insurance cards, all are colossal failures.

Does the government have any viable plan to get “dis-Service Canada” back to Service Canada any time soon?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the last number of months, we have taken a number of steps to boost the processing capacity of IRCC, with \$85 million announced in the fall economic statement. We have made available an additional \$385 million to be processed in the recent federal budget. We are launching a modernization of the digital platform to boost processing time further and creating more immigration level space.

The result of these investments is actually seeing the numbers in the express entry system under the federal high-skilled streams decrease from 112,000 to 48,000. The draws for the Canadian experience class in the federal skilled workers stream will resume this July, and we will be back to the service standard we enjoyed before COVID-19 was something we had ever heard of.

* * *

COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLOCAUST

The Deputy Speaker: Following discussions among representatives of all parties in the House, I understand there is an agreement to observe a moment of silence in commemoration of the Holocaust.

I now invite hon. members to please rise.

[*A moment of silence observed*]

* * *

● (1515)

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is great to be back after a couple of weeks in the riding.

We have a busy time coming up in the legislative agenda. I am sure the NDP is already aware, but for the sake of my colleagues and the Bloc, would the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader please advise the House what the business will be over the next week?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this afternoon and tomorrow we will deal with Bill C-8, the economic and fiscal update. On Monday, we will resume debate on Government Business No. 11 concerning the extension of sitting hours and commence third-reading debate on Bill C-8. It is also our intention to begin consideration at second reading of the budget bill on Tuesday and continue with this debate on Wednesday and Thursday.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS[*English*]**WAYS AND MEANS**

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2022, NO. 1

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): moved that a ways and means motion to introduce an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 7, 2022, and other measures be concurred in.

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

The hon. House leader for the official opposition.

Mr. John Brassard: Mr. Speaker, we would like a recorded division.

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

● (1600)

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

*(Division No. 61)***YEAS**

Members

Aldag
AliAlghabra
Anandasangaree

Government Orders

Angus	Arseneault	Scarpaleggia	Schiefke
Arya	Ashton	Serré	Sgro
Atwin	Bachrach	Shanahan	Sheehan
Badawey	Bains	Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Baker	Barron	Singh	Sorbara
Battiste	Beech	Spengemann	St-Onge
Bendayan	Bennett	Sudds	Tassi
Bibeau	Bittle	Taylor Roy	Thompson
Blaikie	Blair	Trudeau	Turnbull
Blaney	Blois	Valdez	Van Bynen
Boissonnault	Boulerice	van Koevorden	Vandal
Bradford	Brière	Vandenbeld	Virani
Carr	Casey	Vuong	Weiler
Chagger	Chahal	Wilkinson	Yip
Champagne	Chatel	Zahid	Zarrillo
Chen	Chiang	Zuberi — 181	
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Collins (Victoria)		
Cormier	Coteau		
Dabrusin	Damoff		
Davies	Desjarlais		
Dhaliwal	Dhillon	Abouttaif	Aitchison
Diab	Dong	Albas	Allison
Drouin	Dubourg	Arnold	Baldinelli
Duclos	Duguid	Barrett	Barsalou-Duval
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Ehsassi	Beaulieu	Benzen
El-Khoury	Erskine-Smith	Bergen	Bergeron
Fergus	Fillmore	Berthold	Bérubé
Fisher	Fonseca	Bezan	Blanchet
Fortier	Fragiskatos	Blanchette-Joncas	Block
Fraser	Freeland	Bragdon	Brassard
Fry	Gaheer	Brock	Brunelle-Duceppe
Garneau	Garrison	Calkins	Caputo
Gazan	Gerretsen	Carrie	Chabot
Gould	Green	Chambers	Champoux
Guilbeault	Hajdu	Chong	Cooper
Hanley	Hardie	Dalton	Dancho
Hepfner	Housefather	Davidson	DeBellefeuille
Hughes	Hussen	Deltell	Desbiens
Hutchings	Iacono	Desilets	Dowdall
Idlout	Ien	Dreeshen	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Jaczek	Johns	Ellis	Epp
Joly	Jones	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Jowhari	Julian	Fast	Ferreri
Kayabaga	Kelloway	Fortin	Gallant
Khalid	Khera	Garon	Gaudreau
Koutrakis	Kusmierczyk	Généreux	Genuis
Kwan	Lalonde	Gill	Gladu
Lambropoulos	Lametti	Godin	Goodridge
Lamoureux	Lapointe	Gourde	Gray
Lattanzio	Lauzon	Hallan	Hoback
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier	Jeneroux	Kelly
Lightbound	Long	Kitchen	Kmiec
Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	Kram	Kramp-Neuman
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacDonald (Malpeque)	Kurek	Kusie
MacGregor	MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Lake	Lantsman
Maloney	Martinez Ferrada	Larouche	Lawrence
Masse	Mathysen	Lehoux	Lemire
May (Cambridge)	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
McDonald (Avalon)	McGuinty	Liepert	Lloyd
McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	Lobb	MacKenzie
McLeod	McPherson	Maguire	Martel
Mendès	Mendicino	Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
Miao	Miller	McLean	Melillo
Morrice	Morrissey	Michaud	Moore
Murray	Naqvi	Morantz	Morrison
Ng	O'Connell	Motz	Muys
Oliphant	O'Regan	Nater	Normandin
Petipas Taylor	Powlowski	O'Toole	Patzé
Qualtrough	Robillard	Paul-Hus	Pauzé
Rodriguez	Rogers	Perkins	Perron
Romanado	Sahota	Plamondon	Poilievre
Sajjan	Saks	Rayes	Redekopp
Samson	Sarai	Reid	Rempel Garner

NAYS

Members

Government Orders

Richards	Roberts
Rood	Ruff
Savard-Tremblay	Schmale
Seeback	Shields
Shipley	Simard
Sinclair-Desgagné	Small
Soroka	Ste-Marie
Stewart	Stubbs
Thériault	Therrien
Thomas	Tochor
Tolmie	Trudel
Uppal	Van Popta
Vecchio	Vidal
Vien	Viersen
Vignola	Villemure
Vis	Wagantall
Warkentin	Waugh
Webber	Williams
Williamson	Zimmer— 144

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland moved that Bill C-19, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 7, 2022 and other measures, be read the first time and printed.

(Motion deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

The Deputy Speaker: It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, National Defence; and the hon. member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, Public Safety.

* * *

[Translation]

ECONOMIC AND FISCAL UPDATE IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2021

BILL C-8—TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.) moved:

That in relation to Bill C-8, An Act to implement certain provisions of the economic and fiscal update tabled in Parliament on December 14, 2021 and other measures, not more than one further sitting day shall be allotted to the consideration of the report stage and five hours shall be allotted to the consideration at third reading stage of the said bill; and

That, 15 minutes before the expiry of the time provided for Government Orders on the day allotted to the consideration at report stage and at the end of the five hours provided for the consideration at third reading stage of the said bill, any proceedings before the House 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 then under consideration shall be put forthwith and successively without further debate or amendment.

[English]

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 67.1, there will now be a 30-minute question period.

● (1605)

[Translation]

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.

[English]

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I spoke at length earlier about the government mismanaging its legislative agenda. This bill was introduced back in December. The second reading was in February, it went to committee and was approved March 1, and it came back to the House in April at report stage. Not only members of the opposition, but also members of the Bloc had significant concerns about this piece of legislation coming out of committee that opened up debate, but subsequent to that we had four weeks off in this place.

I know that the government is going to blame obstruction and obfuscation on the part of the opposition, but nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, on April 4, the government gave notice of time allocation and the reason it did not move it was because the NDP would not agree to it. Is that not correct?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Madam Speaker, what Canadians want from all of us, Canadians across the country and who vote for all of the different parties represented in the House, is for us to get down to work and do the work of the country. That is what the measures in Bill C-8 do. These measures, frankly, should be receiving unanimous support in the House.

These measures include a tax credit for businesses to improve their ventilation to keep COVID at bay. Is that not a good idea right now, as we are facing a sixth wave? They include an expansion of the school supplies tax credit for teachers, who bought additional supplies during COVID and are now working so hard to get our kids back up to speed. Bill C-8 includes \$1.7 billion for rapid tests, which again are so essential as we get down to living with COVID. They include a tax on underused housing, which is such an important part of our housing strategy.

I would urge everyone to set aside partisan games and partisan posturing and pass this essential legislation.

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Madam Speaker, my question is with regard to small craft harbours. For some reason, the fall economic statement and the current budget contain zero new money for small craft harbours. Small craft harbours are in desperate shape. There are over 10,000 of them in Canada, and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans estimates that it will take almost \$700 million just to bring the small craft harbours in southwest Nova Scotia up to operational standards.

I would ask the Deputy Prime Minister this: Why is the government not including any new money for small craft harbours?

Government Orders

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Madam Speaker, I welcome the question about small craft harbours, because they are absolutely essential for our country. We absolutely understand their importance, particularly, but not only, in the amazing province of Nova Scotia. That is why, in the 2021 budget, we put forward a historically unprecedented investment in small craft harbours of literally hundreds of millions of dollars. Our job now is to deploy that money and to execute on those investments, and I can say that I was so glad we put forward that historic investment. It is making a difference, and it will continue to make a huge difference in small craft harbours across our amazing country.

• (1610)

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Madam Speaker, one of the items in this bill that is of particular interest is the educator school supply tax credit. I heard from a teacher in the riding I represent. Jessica is a teacher in a small village in north-west B.C. She filed her taxes, and apparently CRA is sitting on the tax returns of a whole bunch of teachers who have claimed this tax credit because it has not yet been passed into law.

I share some of the concern about the fact that this place has not managed to pass Bill C-8 in a timely way. If we are able to get this bill through, can the minister assure teachers, particularly in British Columbia, who have spent thousands of dollars of their own money on school supplies, which is another issue we need to deal with, that CRA will prioritize getting their returns in their hands as quickly as possible?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Absolutely, Madam Speaker, and I am very glad to have the issue of tax credits to teachers for school supplies brought up. I raised this in my first answer, and it is one of the reasons that it is really astonishingly wrong that this legislation has been held up for so long.

All of us know how hard COVID was on our children and how hard it was on teachers across the country. Yes, it was hard in B.C., but let me say teachers in my province of Ontario have been knocking themselves out as well. They have really gone the extra mile to help kids learn virtually, and now they are working really hard too, because kids struggled during COVID and there is a lot of work to make up.

I absolutely believe we have a responsibility for the more than 45,000 teachers across this country. It is a priority of our government for teachers to get their tax credits. We are working hard to make it happen. I would urge all members of the House to get to work. Let us support our teachers and really let us not have dilatory tactics to delay this essential legislation.

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Madam Speaker, Bill C-8 talks about an underused housing tax act. The recent budget, in conjunction with Bill C-8, talked about implementation of the underused housing tax act. Indeed, this is something we have in British Columbia already, but I would be remiss if I did not point out the obvious gaps included in the act, including the fact that under this new law, foreign students would still be able to purchase real estate in British Columbia. Anyone in the House who has followed the news in British Columbia knows that many students with wealthy offshore parents have used that to get massive gains when Canadians have been priced out of the market.

Why did the Liberals provide an exemption for foreign students to continue purchasing real estate when so many British Columbians cannot do so themselves?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Madam Speaker, let me just say it is a bit rich for the Conservatives to be talking about action on housing, particularly action on foreign buyers, when they have blocked our historic efforts in this space at every turn. The member is quite right: One of the essential elements in Bill C-8 is the historic underused housing tax act. This is an important step. It is an important step for affordability for Canadians, yet this legislation has been repeatedly blocked by the Conservatives.

When it comes to foreign buyers, I was very glad that in the budget we presented earlier this month we were able, again historically, to introduce a two-year ban on foreign purchases. I would say that if the Conservatives actually support this measure, which I think they should, let us see them support Bill C-8. Let them move it through quickly and support the budget.

• (1615)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, my question for the Minister of Finance is a simple one.

It is now the end of April. Bill C-8 was introduced in December. Is it essentially the sum total of all the government's foot-dragging since that totally pointless election?

It took some time to get back to work, appoint ministers and open Parliament. This is a budget statement from last fall. The budget has since been tabled, and we are debating it, but we are still beating around the bush with Bill C-8.

It is the minister maybe a little embarrassed about that?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Madam Speaker, once again, I am pleased that all members support the measures in Bill C-8 and, of course, the budget. That is a good thing.

However, if the members really think that these measures are necessary, and I definitely agree with this idea, then they have to help us pass this bill. We need real support, not a hypocritical stance that, on the one hand blocks our efforts to help Canadians and, on the other, asks critical questions about why these measures are not in place.

If the members opposite want them, and that would be a good thing, they have to support the government and vote in favour of these measures if necessary.

*Government Orders**[English]*

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I am well aware we are debating time allocation. I will not comment on the substance of Bill C-8, but on the question of the use of time allocation.

The hon. minister will know that, for as long as we have both served in the House together, I have opposed time allocation as a sign that we are disrespecting the parliamentary process by pushing legislation through. On the other hand, I am also aware of what this debate on Bill C-8 has canvassed in the past few moments and for a long time in this place. I want to put forward on the record the best way to handle it. I am not going to get into House leader discussions. It is not a failure of the government or of the opposition, but collectively a failure of the management of the legislative agenda. I point to a failure to uphold our rules, which makes it possible for opposition party leaders to tell the government that they do not know how many members they want to put up for debate and will let it know later.

Although I am not in the room, or a fly on the wall, our rules still say that members cannot deliver a prepared written speech. If we were held to that, it would be like the Parliament of Westminster in the U.K. None of the members here would be able to stand up and deliver a speech on a subject they did not know well enough to speak to off the cuff with the knowledge they had in their heads. That would significantly expedite the process of passing good legislation.

I would put that to the member for her comments.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Madam Speaker, I want to say that I have tremendous respect for the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands. She is someone who has served Canada and the House for a very long time.

I want to say to her, through you, that our government takes absolutely no pleasure in using time allocation. This is a measure we are introducing solely because Canadians need this support now. We have heard from the members opposite, the same ones who have been obstructing and delaying this legislation, how important the legislation is. Therefore, I think members can grasp the absurdity of that position and the necessity we are faced with in having to use this measure that we take no pleasure in using.

I will also say to the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands that when it comes to comparing the practices of this House with those of other parliaments, while I would by no means claim we are perfect, I think we as Canadians can really hold our heads up high when it comes to how our parliamentary democracy functions compared with others anywhere else in the world.

● (1620)

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Madam Speaker, my question is with respect to the 12,000 independent travel advisers across Canada, primarily women, who we know have suffered very much during this pandemic. They have not yet been included in any of the economic statements.

My question to the member opposite is why, when they have met with multiple members and been promised to be included in relief funding, they have not been. Why?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Madam Speaker, let me say this. Our government has provided significant support to travel and tourism. We recognize that sector has been particularly hard hit by COVID. That is why the support has been there and will be there until May 7.

I will also say that I think every single member of the House would agree with me that it is absolutely essential that our country and economy continue to function and come roaring back, even in the face of the continued presence of COVID and a sixth wave among us. That is why it is so important to get Bill C-8 passed. The ventilation, the rapid tests and the support for vaccination credentials are all key to getting through this sixth wave.

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to highlight that the government, under the leadership of the Prime Minister, has been conscious about being there for Canadians. It has been a very challenging time, and disproportionately for certain segments of the population. What is clear is that supports are still needed, and many of those measures are available in Bill C-8. Though it is unfortunate we are having to use a tool to get this legislation voted on, I am glad to see that we might have a vote sooner rather than later, because many people in my riding of Waterloo and the surrounding areas will benefit.

I would like to ask the minister to comment on some of the Canadians who would benefit from these measures. People have been waiting for way too long to ensure these measures and investments will start to flow.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Madam Speaker, all of us here in this House seek to serve our constituents and be connected with our communities, but I know of no one here who is better connected and who more fiercely and more effectively represents her constituents than the member for Waterloo.

I am also very aware of the hard work the member for Waterloo has done for young Canadians, for the people who are our future. That is why one of the measures that are so important in Bill C-8 is the tax credit for teachers, the tax credit for those very, very dedicated and self-sacrificing teachers who reached into their own pockets and bought school supplies for their students.

I really think everyone in this House will agree with me, and I am sure the member for Waterloo and her constituents will agree with me, that those teachers deserve our support. They deserve a tax credit. That is why I would urge everyone in this House to set aside the partisan posturing and help Canadians.

[Translation]

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Madam Speaker, the economic update presented by the Minister of Finance last fall did not include a single item or line about the possibility of increasing interest rates. The same is true of the recent budget. The minister has completely ignored any such increase, which demonstrates the level of Liberal incompetence.

Can the minister tell us what this will mean in terms of debt? How much is this going to cost Canadians in additional interest given the higher interest rates we are going to have this year? We have heard nothing about their impact.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Madam Speaker, I apologize to the House, but what the opposition member just said is simply not true.

The budget contains a number of analyses that talk about inflation and interest rates, and I can find those page numbers. The budget was subjected to a stress test examining the effects of various scenarios on the economy and the fiscal situation of our country.

With regard to the debt, I want to point out that, for this fiscal year, the cost of paying down the Canadian debt will represent 1% of our country's GDP, which remains a historically low level.

I want to again emphasize that there are several analyses in the budget showing the impact of various scenarios in relation to inflation, interest rates and the war in Ukraine.

• (1625)

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, I know that I already spoke about this issue when I gave my speech on Bill C-8. I spoke at length about it with my colleague from Joliette, and we came to the conclusion that this interferes in Quebec's and the provinces' jurisdiction over property tax.

We are accused of picking fights, but why is the Liberal government constantly encroaching on the responsibilities of Quebec and the provinces? My colleague from Joliette may have an amendment to propose wherein the tax on secondary residences would apply only in the provinces that want it so that they, and Quebec of course, can choose for themselves.

Why is the government taking a centralist approach yet again and trying to interfere in a jurisdiction belonging to Quebec and the provinces?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for the question and for pointing out how our government always tries to work in close collaboration with the provinces and territories, including Quebec of course.

Many measures in Bill C-8 have to do with the fight against COVID-19, which is ongoing, and the vital efforts to keep Canada's economy going and ensure that society stays open during the sixth wave of this pandemic. I want to point out that our government, the federal government, is the one that has supported the provinces and territories in this fight.

In March, we sent \$2 billion to the provinces and territories to strengthen their health care systems. The bill provides for \$300 million to support the proof of vaccination systems implemented by the provinces and territories, as well as \$1.7 billion for the rapid tests that we are sending to the provinces and territories for free.

[English]

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, people and their families are paying more for rent, groceries and gas, and instead of helping people out, the Liberal governments keep protecting, in this instance, their wealthy friends who own grocery chains. This seems to be a pattern with the current govern-

Government Orders

ment, which gave Loblaws \$12 million for fridges. Now we are in the middle of a recession and families are struggling.

Why does the government continue to not help families in need?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Madam Speaker, with the greatest respect, I have to disagree with the hon. member. The reality is that Bill C-8 and our most recent budget include a number of measures to help Canadians with the cost of living. They include dental care; they include doubling the support provided through the first-time homebuyers' tax credit; they include a multi-generational home renovation tax credit, which recognizes that many Canadians want to live together with an extended family; and they include, crucially, a \$500 payment to those facing housing affordability challenges.

Of course, the budget does also include some significant tax-raising measures targeted precisely for those who are at the very top.

• (1630)

Mr. Doug Shipley (Barrie—Springwater—Oro—Medonte, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have a very straightforward question. Where I come from, Barrie—Springwood—Oro—Medonte, the average price of a home is over \$900,000. It is getting very tough for young people to buy their first home. In the recent budget 2022, there was a tax-free savings account set up to a maximum of \$40,000. If someone hits that \$40,000 in my area, they are still nowhere near being able to buy their first home.

Can I maybe get an explanation as to why we are topped off at only \$40,000 and how that is supposed to help people buy their first home?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Madam Speaker, I am very glad to have another question on housing, because I think something that every member of this House does, and certainly should, agree on is that housing is one of the most serious economic and social challenges Canada faces today. We have the fastest-growing population in the G7, and the reality is that our housing supply is just not keeping up with a growing country. That is why the budget that I presented earlier this month puts forward the most ambitious plan ever put forward by any Canadian federal government on housing.

Government Orders

What does it include? We recognize in the plan that housing is a big, complicated and multi-faceted challenge. We were upfront with Canadians and said there is no silver bullet, no single measure, not even a single budget that will fix it, but we are rolling up our sleeves and we are working on it. We are doing concrete things: the tax-free first home savings account; the \$4-billion housing accelerator fund; a homebuyers' bill of rights, including a plan to end blind bidding; and the unprecedented two-year ban on foreign buyers.

Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Madam Speaker, with all due respect, with all the challenges our health care system had throughout the pandemic, how does charging a carbon tax to a hospital, in the order of hundreds of thousands of dollars, reduce greenhouse gas emissions?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Madam Speaker, the member opposite has touched on two really important issues for Canada. One is action to fight climate change, and the other is supporting Canada's health care system. When it comes to fighting climate change, I really believe that Canada today has a national consensus, a consensus that crosses party lines and a consensus that reaches from coast to coast to coast, and that is that climate change is real and that our country must ambitiously fight climate change.

Let me also say, as finance minister, that yes, climate action is a moral imperative, an existential question, and we owe it to our children and future grandchildren to act on climate change, but it is also an economic necessity. The industrialized economies that are our trading partners have decided to go green, and the only question is whether Canada is going to be in the vanguard of the transformation, or falling behind.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Madam Speaker, in part 5 of Bill C-8, the government has earmarked \$300 million to continue to fund proof of vaccination requirements by the provinces.

All the provinces that I am aware of have actually gotten rid of the proof of vaccination requirements. I am just wondering why the federal government is bothering to earmark and spend \$300 million on something that the provinces are not asking for, and quite frankly are not even using right now.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Madam Speaker, I had the real privilege yesterday of representing Canada at the funeral of Madeleine Albright, the former Secretary of State and U.S. ambassador to the United Nations.

To get to Washington, I flew on an airplane. To get on the airplane, I had to present my Ontario proof of vaccination. I was glad, as I got on that plane, to be surrounded by other people who had been vaccinated. I was very glad that the Province of Ontario has arranged for me to be able to receive three doses of the vaccine, and has arranged for me to be able to have a proof of vaccination certificate.

• (1635)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Bill C-8 is one of a number of pieces of both legislative and budgetary measures with which the Government of Canada has been supporting Canadians and small businesses going through the pandemic.

Could my colleague and friend, the Minister of Finance, explain from her perspective why it was so important, as a government, that we be there to support small businesses, whether it is within this legislation or other legislation and budgetary initiatives that the government has taken?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Madam Speaker, it is important to support small businesses, because they are the heart not only of our economy but of our communities.

Our measures have worked. We have prevented economic scarring. We have prevented a wave of bankruptcies, which people were concerned about when COVID first hit. Canada has now recovered 115% of the jobs lost to COVID, compared to just 93% in the United States.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): It is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith the question necessary to dispose of the motion now before the House.

[*English*]

The question is on the motion.

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.

The hon. member for Calgary Shepard.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, on behalf of Her Majesty's official opposition, I ask for a recorded division.

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

And the bells having rung:

• (1705)

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on the motion. Shall I dispense?

Some hon. members: No.

[*Chair read text of motion to House*]

• (1720)

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

(*Division No. 62*)

YEAS

Members

Aldag
Ali
Angus
Arya
Atwin
Badawey
Baker
Battiste
Bendayan
Bibeau
Blaikie
Blaney
Boissonnault
Bradford

Alghabra
Anandasangaree
Arseneault
Ashton
Bachrach
Bains
Barron
Beech
Bennett
Bittle
Blair
Blois
Boulerice
Brière

Government Orders

Casey	Chagger	Zarrillo	Zuberi — 176
Chahal	Chatel		
Chen	Chiang		NAYS
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Cormier		Members
Coteau	Dabrusin		Aitchison
Damoff	Desjarlais	Aboultaif	Allison
Dhaliwal	Dhillon	Albas	Baldinelli
Diab	Dong	Arnold	Barrett
Drouin	Dubourg	Barlow	Beaulieu
Duclos	Duguid	Barsalou-Duval	Bergen
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Ehsassi	Benzen	Berthold
El-Khoury	Erskine-Smith	Bergeron	Bezan
Fergus	Fillmore	Bérubé	Blanchette-Joncas
Fisher	Fonseca	Blanchet	Bragdon
Fortier	Fragiskatos	Block	Brock
Fraser	Freeland	Brassard	Calkins
Fry	Gaheer	Brunelle-Duceppe	Carrie
Garneau	Gazan	Caputo	Chambers
Gerretsen	Gould	Chabot	Cooper
Green	Guilbeault	Champoux	Dancho
Hajdu	Hanley	Dalton	DeBellefeuille
Hardie	Hepfner	Davidson	Desbiens
Housefather	Hughes	Deltell	Doherty
Hussen	Hutchings	Desilets	Dreeshen
Iacono	Idlout	Dowdall	Ellis
Ien	Jaczek	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Johns	Joly	Epp	Fast
Jones	Jowhari	Falk (Provencher)	Fortin
Julian	Kayabaga	Ferreri	Garon
Kelloway	Khalid	Gallant	Généreux
Khera	Koutrakis	Gaudreau	Gill
Kusmierczyk	Kwan	Genuis	Godin
Lalonde	Lambropoulos	Gladu	Gourde
Lametti	Lamoureux	Goodridge	Hallan
Lapointe	Lattanzio	Gray	Jeneroux
Lauzon	LeBlanc	Hoback	Kitchen
Lebouthillier	Lightbound	Kelly	Kram
Long	Longfield	Kmiec	Kurek
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)	Kramp-Neuman	Lake
MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacGregor	Kusie	Larouche
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney	Lantsman	Lehoux
Martinez Ferrada	Masse	Lawrence	Lewis (Essex)
Mathysen	May (Cambridge)	Lemire	Liepert
McDonald (Avalon)	McGuinty	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Lobb
McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	Lloyd	Maguire
McLeod	McPherson	MacKenzie	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
Mendès	Mendicino	Martel	McCauley (Edmonton West)
Miao	Miller	Mazier	Melillo
Morrice	Morrissey	McLean	Morantz
Murray	Naqvi	Moore	Motz
Ng	Noormohamed	Morrison	Nater
O'Connell	Oliphant	Muys	O'Toole
O'Regan	Petitpas Taylor	Normandin	Paul-Hus
Powlowski	Qualtrough	Patzer	Perkins
Robillard	Rodriguez	PaUZé	Plamondon
Rogers	Romanado	Perron	Rayes
Sahota	Sajjan	Poilievre	Reid
Saks	Samson	Redekopp	Richards
Sarai	Scarpaleggia	Rempel Garner	Rood
Schiefke	Serré	Roberts	Savard-Tremblay
Sgro	Shanahan	Ruff	Schmale
Sheehan	Sidhu (Brampton East)	Scheer	Shields
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Singh	Seeback	Simard
Sorbara	Spengemann	ShipleY	Small
St-Onge	Sudds	Sinclair-Desgagné	Steinley
Tassi	Taylor Roy	Soroka	Stewart
Thompson	Trudeau	Ste-Marie	Thériault
Turnbull	Valdez	Stubbs	Thomas
Van Bynen	van Koevenden	Therrien	Tolmie
Vandal	Vandenbeld	Tochor	Uppal
Virani	Vuong	Trudel	Vecchio
Weiler	Wilkinson	Van Popta	Vien
Yip	Zahid	Vidal	

Government Orders

Viersen	Vignola
Villemure	Vis
Wagantall	Waugh
Webber	Williams
Williamson	Zimmer— 146

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

REPORT STAGE

The House resumed from April 4 consideration of Bill C-8, An Act to implement certain provisions of the economic and fiscal update tabled in Parliament on December 14, 2021 and other measures, as reported (with amendment) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the member of Parliament for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, I welcome this opportunity to put the observations my constituents share with their MP on the public record. I am their servant. While the bill may have many parts, I intend to focus on the sections relevant to Canadians.

With Liberal inflation, tax cuts are non-existent. With Liberal inflation, house prices will keep on rising. This will fuel more Liberal inflation, which in turn raises house prices even higher. It is a vicious circle.

What started this cycle? This cycle was started by huge deficits commencing back in 2015 after the federal election. The Conservatives do not blame COVID-19 pandemic mitigation measures, which we supported. The Prime Minister's inflationary deficits have been a signature policy of the government since long before COVID-19 hit. In fact, billions and billions of deficit dollars are being spent on things unrelated to the pandemic.

In the case of defence spending, the Parliamentary Budget Officer has identified billions in borrowing that are unaccounted for. Taxpayers' dollars are being poured down a black hole, but this socialist government refuses to tell Canadians what that spending is for. Canadians have a right to know how their tax dollars are being spent.

When the NDP-Liberal socialist alliance inflates the monetary base, it is effectively devaluing the spending power of the money people have. By devaluing that spending power, it is actually hurting the people who have to spend that money on basic goods. The only way to get ahead of the inflationary spiral is to quit printing money. By continually printing money, which is called running a deficit, our currency is debased. This leads to greater deficits and more Liberal inflation. This in turn makes everything more unaffordable.

Canadians who contact me are fearful about any Liberal plan to implement an electronic currency, or e-currency. They have no confidence that the money they earn and the money they save will keep its value. My constituents have read about negative interest rates, the seizure of bank accounts and social credit scores that Communist China keeps on its citizens, and they do not like what they hear. Accounts can be seized with the stroke of a keyboard. Just ask any "freedom convoy" supporter.

Canadians who contact me tell me how divisive to society these socialist policies are. Since 2015, the gap between the rich and the poor in Canada has actually widened. Nowhere has this policy failure been more evident than in the rise in the cost of a single-family home. This is a big problem. Unaffordable housing prices are a direct result of the NDP-Liberal socialist coalition's monetary policy. Blaming the Russians, Chinese, new immigrants, unseen foreigners or whoever else the socialist coalition wants to reserve this week's two minutes of hate for is divisive, hateful and just another diversionary tactic to draw attention away from the real problems Canadians face.

Young Canadians who call me simply expect a fair chance. They would like to believe that Canada is a country in which hard work and savings are realistic paths to home ownership. Young people in Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke want affordable housing where they can raise families, while not losing more than half of their paycheques each month to put a roof over their heads. Seniors want to grow old living in their own homes. This is not an unrealistic ask in a functioning democratic and free-market society.

The socialist coalition wants to move away from this successful model. Since the government came to power or shortly thereafter, six years ago, the average price of a family home in Canada has shot up 87%. In 2016, the average price of a new house was \$476,000. It is now \$811,000, according to the Canadian Real Estate Association. What was the coalition's response? It was another tax.

Starting in the 2022 calendar year, Bill C-8 will charge a 1% federal surtax on non-resident owners of passively held real estate in Canada. That means even Canadians who own a home but live abroad for work are going to pay an extra 1% annually on the value of their home back here. It is like a municipal tax for those people who own property or their own single-family home, only the money goes to the feds. I am still waiting for a credible explanation of how this will create more affordable housing.

● (1725)

The proposal is troubling in other ways. Taxing properties is municipal jurisdiction. Municipalities in my riding of are having serious financial difficulties. Now the federal government wants to pick their pockets too.

Interfering in property tax is a serious mistake. It sets a dangerous precedent of interference from the federal government. Municipalities in the counties of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke charge a range of development fees. In Arnprior, development charges for a single or semi-detached dwelling run around \$16,000. In Renfrew, it is \$9,000. In Petawawa, development charges are over \$6,000. In Cobden, the cost is roughly \$5,800, and it is under \$4,000 in Pembroke.

Six municipalities in Renfrew County do not charge development fees: Admaston/Bromley; Bonnechere Valley; Laurentian Hills; North Algona Wilberforce; the township of Killaloe, Hagarty and Richards; and the township of Head, Clara and Maria.

In a recent presentation to county council, which is looking to increase development charges, fees in the rest of Ontario were examined. Some counties across Ontario charge almost \$25,000 in development charges for a single detached or semi-detached dwelling. Others, such as my neighbour to the south, Lanark County, charge on the lower end of the scale at roughly \$1,500 for development charges on a new residential home.

The federal government needs to be working in co-operation with municipalities to help them decrease development fees. Only by increasing the housing supply will prices stabilize. Residents in Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke are very concerned about the planned home equity tax. That is another idea that undermines the municipal property tax base.

With record sales, high prices for real estate, and the recent disclosure about CMHC funding studies to look at ways to raise revenues by taxing principal residences, Canadians have every right to be skeptical when half-hearted denials are made by the federal government. Canadians will have to wait and see when a new federal home equity tax, currently under consideration, will be implemented.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1730)

[English]

CONSERVATION OF FISH STOCKS AND MANAGEMENT OF PINNIPEDS ACT

Mr. Clifford Small (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, CPC) moved that Bill C-251, An Act respecting the development of a federal framework on the conservation of fish stocks and management of pinnipeds, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Madam Speaker, Canada's coastal regions are facing an ecological disaster. As such, I stand today for the second reading of my bill, Bill C-251, an act respecting the development of a federal framework on the conservation of fish stocks and management of pinnipeds.

Pinnipeds are a group of marine animals that include seals, sea lions and walrus. The focus of the bill is to address the harmful effects of seal and sea lion predation on the biodiversity of our oceans.

Historically, Canada has had the most productive oceans in the world, as it should, having the longest coastline in the world. However, since the eighties, the productivity of our oceans has been drastically reduced, resulting in the loss of billions of dollars in our blue economy and the loss of traditional ways of life for our first nation communities. Currently Norway, a fellow North Atlantic country, has a blue economy worth three times more than that of Canada, with a coastline that is 2.5 times shorter than Canada's.

Private Members' Business

Thus, Norway's ocean is nearly eight times more productive than Canada's oceans.

Since the eighties, Canadian fisheries have undertaken vast conservation measures to improve the health of our fish stocks. This year marks the 30th anniversary of the moratorium on northern cod off Newfoundland and Labrador. There has been a commercial moratorium on Atlantic salmon for the same amount of time, and we have recently seen the closure of the mackerel fishery and the spring gulf herring fishery in Atlantic Canada.

Capelin quotas are currently less than 10% of their historic highs. In Labrador, the snow crab quota has been cut by 80% since 2000. In British Columbia, salmon quotas are down 80% since 2014. This year the Pacific herring fishery has been completely closed. These are a few examples of the conservation measures that have been taken over the last 30 years, but to no avail.

Iceland had a capelin moratorium in 2019 and 2020, and their conservation measures have worked. This year, they have set a capelin quota of almost 900,000 tonnes. Canada once had a 250,000-tonne capelin fishery, but it has steadily declined to only 22,000 tonnes this past year. Norway, Russia and Iceland currently have a million-tonne cod fishery, but Canada's northern cod cannot recover after a 30-year moratorium.

Cod and many other species rely on capelin as a main food source, and DFO estimates that 7.6 million harp seals consume 1.8 million tonnes of capelin. Now, if folks cannot envision 1.8 million tonnes, they can try envisioning four billion pounds. In addition to the destruction of our capelin stocks, seals have turned their attention to the Atlantic salmon. Anglers in my province have observed seals in salmon rivers such as the Humber River and the Northwest Gander River, as far as 50 kilometres upstream from the ocean.

Local seal harvesters off the coast of Labrador have counted as many as 150 female crabs in the stomach of one seal. At an average survival rate for those crab eggs, that one seal, in a short period of time, destroyed millions of dollars' worth of adult crab, should they have survived to maturity. Seals have even been observed eating lobster in Nova Scotia and south and western Newfoundland, but they told the server to hold the garlic butter.

Rivers have been closed to salmon fishing, and the cod quota has been slashed in fishing area 3Ps on the south coast of Newfoundland and Labrador. The common denominator is predation by grey seals, which have had a population explosion that puts their numbers at five times historic levels.

In Atlantic Canada, the population of all combined species of seals in 1970 was approximately two million. Today, it is over 10 million. These massive herds of seals consume the entire commercial catch in just 15 days. That means they consume 24 times the annual commercial catch in Atlantic Canada every year.

Private Members' Business

• (1735)

On Canada's Pacific coast, pinniped populations are more than 10 times higher than they were in 1970. Fifty per cent of salmon smolts entering the ocean from B.C.'s rivers are consumed by pinnipeds. They also consume millions of returning adults.

Sea lions in rivers consume 40 pounds of salmon per day. They even wait near a narrow passage at the north end of Vancouver Island to take about two million Fraser River sockeye as they form schools on their annual migration. Pinnipeds even compete with resident killer whales as they forage on salmon and herring.

Massive conservation measures have been made in B.C. fisheries in a similar fashion to those measures taken in Atlantic Canada, but with no results. When Norway and Iceland take conservation measures, they get results. We share the same ocean, so why do we not get the same results? It is very simple. It is because these countries manage their pinniped populations, and those populations have remained stable over the last 30 years.

Many factors contribute to the decline of fish stocks. However, we can only control two. Number one is the amount of fish harvesters take out of the ocean. Number two is the number of pinnipeds that prey on those fish stocks.

Bill C-251 would require the creation of a framework for the conservation of fish stocks by pinniped management. By managing our pinniped populations, we can restore balance in our marine ecosystems. At the same time, we can help restore livelihoods that were lost in first nation and northern communities.

With the vast decline in, and in some jurisdictions the end of, commercial pinniped harvesting, the negative effect was twofold. The 2009 EU decision to ban non-indigenous commercial pinniped products removed the checks and balance in the predator-prey relations in our oceans. It also had the unintended consequence of destroying markets for Inuit hunters.

Pinnipeds are currently harvested in the U.S.A., Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Iceland, Namibia and Russia. The framework of this bill calls for a yearly census on all species of pinnipeds to ensure the conservation of pinniped populations and that these populations remain viable.

This framework calls for a study of how other countries in the northern hemisphere maintain their pinniped populations at successful and viable levels that do not infringe on the productivity of their oceans. We need to learn from these countries. This framework shall address trade barriers and work to remove them because these barriers are the root cause of our ecological imbalance and the destruction of the livelihoods of the first nations communities that depend on harvesting pinnipeds.

We have the products developed for trade, and I am not necessarily referring to fur. There is a massive demand for healthy omega-3 oil produced from pinnipeds, both for medicinal purposes and as food supplements. My good friend, the doctor from Cumberland—Colchester, knows all about this wonderful topic.

Why is seal oil better for us than other omega-3 oils? Number one, seal oil naturally contains 24% omega-3 without concentration. Number two, seal oil is extremely high in DPA, which is not

found in fish oil. In fact, the only other source of DPA is breast milk. Number three, the fatty acids in seal oil are nearly identical to human fatty acids, and are, therefore, much more readily absorbed than those from cold-water fish or plant sources. A shelf-stable, nutrient-rich protein powder has even been developed, and the iron it contains is many times more readily absorbed by the body than iron from any other source.

• (1740)

Products such as these, derived from full utilization of harvested pinnipeds, have enormous potential to help Canada fulfill its role in feeding the approximately 800 million starving people on Earth.

Through consultations with industry stakeholders and first nations communities, I have found tremendous support for this bill and a great desire to have a pinniped management protocol that works side by side with other aspects of fisheries management.

I thank the Pacific Balance Pinniped Society, which has developed a seal management plan that was proposed to DFO that currently has over 700,000 supporters, including 115 first nations groups, the Sport Fishing Institute of British Columbia, the B.C. Wildlife Federation and UFAWU-Unifor.

I thank the many industry stakeholders that encouraged me to move this bill forward on their behalf. I thank Chief Mi'sel Joe of the Conne River Mi'kmaq Tribal Nation for his support.

I also thank Bob Hardy of the Atlantic Seal Science Task Team, my colleague, the MP for South Shore—St. Margarets, Senator David Wells, the Library of Parliament and my dedicated staff for helping me to put this bill together.

Bill C-251 calls for the government to table a yearly progress report for the framework it develops. My bill, if passed, would provide a long-term conservation opportunity to sustainably rebuild the valuable, renewable, green resource that is our fishery. At the same time, we would rebuild a renewable industry in the harvesting, processing and trade of pinniped products, and would provide both conservation and economic opportunities to first nations and coastal communities.

Mankind has allowed an imbalance to occur in our ecosystem that has resulted from pinniped overpopulation, and it is time to bring an end to this ecological disaster.

Private Members' Business

Mr. Mike Kelloway (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure working with the member opposite on the fisheries committee, and I enjoy our conversations outside of committee.

The bill calls for a yearly census to be conducted on pinnipeds. Would the member agree that the increased spending this bill requires for conducting that census would be important?

Mr. Clifford Small: Madam Speaker, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans has had a massive increase in its budget since 2015. All we need is a simple diversion of funds taken out of the regular science budget that it has right now.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame for his great speech and his bill.

You spoke about ecological imbalance and the repercussions for indigenous communities. There is still much to do with respect to acceptable population levels by species.

Do you think that retaining the criterion of historical levels would result in a drastic reduction in populations?

• (1745)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would like to remind the member to address her comments through the Chair and not directly to the member.

[*English*]

The hon. member for Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame.

Mr. Clifford Small: Madam Speaker, I am not exactly sure what my hon. colleague means, but I think she is asking me how we are going to look at historical data to create the framework moving forward.

What I mean is that we would look back at where historical populations of pinnipeds were, and establish acceptable levels of where they should be so that our fish stocks could recover and get back to the levels they were at before the explosion in the population of pinnipeds. In the eighties, we started making conservation measures at the same time as there was an end to the commercial harvesting of pinnipeds. That was this. It caused the collapse of our fish stocks.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his speech. I appreciate being part of the fisheries and oceans committee alongside him.

I want to ask a question. The bill speaks at length about the management of pinnipeds, and I am wondering if the member could expand on what he means by management. In particular, maybe he could play that out a bit more. What would that look like? Also, what would happen with the pinnipeds that are being managed?

Mr. Clifford Small: Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from Vancouver Island, who is originally from my home province of Newfoundland and Labrador. I think that is why she cares so much about the management of pinnipeds. It is a traditional thing that runs through her veins.

What I mean by the management of pinnipeds is that not only do we set quotas, but we support the harvesting of pinnipeds. We can also make sure to support the marketing of the products we obtain from full utilization, and endeavour to get access to the world markets that we so desperately need. The world needs our products. That management also helps in the conservation of fish stocks. When we bring pinniped populations down, their prey populations go up.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to be able to talk about issues that are important no matter where one lives in Canada. In fact, from coast to coast to coast, as well as inland, our fishing industry is of critical importance. We can talk about Lake Winnipeg, the north, Atlantic Canada and the Pacific, where we have relatively healthy industries that are of critical importance to all Canadians, not just to those who fish our oceans or our inland lakes.

The member made reference to one of our chamber colleagues about how, being from Newfoundland and Labrador, it is kind of in the blood. I think of the member for Labrador, whom I have come to know over many years, and her position on the issue of seals. I can very much appreciate the sensitivity with respect to what is taking place.

The member made some specific references to numbers, numbers we should all be concerned about. I will give him that. When we talk about the number of seals out there today, it is a significant number. He often made reference to pinnipeds, such as seals and walrus, which consume vast quantities of fish.

I am pleased the member has brought forward the debate in the form of a piece of legislation, because it reflects a lot of the discussions I have personally had with the member for Labrador, but also with other members, in particular from our Atlantic caucus. We are all concerned, some maybe a bit more than others. That is something I have witnessed first-hand. I can assure the member that I have always been somewhat envious of the members of the Atlantic caucus when they get their teeth into an issue, and I know this is an important issue for them. However, this is not just an issue for Atlantic Canada. That is why I started off talking about what is taking place not only in the Atlantic Ocean. We also need to be concerned about the Pacific Ocean, the Arctic and our inland lakes.

We have the DFO management group, which in essence puts into place measures to try to provide a level of comfort to people that we are on the right track. I can appreciate that there will always be some members who will say that we should be moving more in a particular direction. What this bill is attempting to achieve is some form of a more detailed management system that would ultimately provide additional assurances. The government itself, in recognizing the special situation that is taking place in Atlantic Canada, brought together the Atlantic seal task team. It is not a task force; it is a team of individuals, but one could ultimately call it a task force of sorts. However, at the end of the day it is a group of individuals that includes people who are fishing our seas.

Private Members' Business

I think it is really important that as politicians we all have an opinion on it. I can sit across the way and talk to my friend who introduced the bill. It appears he has some fairly solid arguments, and I respect that. Having said that, I think we also need to factor in, much like when we went through the coronavirus, that we have science that needs to be taken into consideration and controversial issues that have to be overcome.

• (1750)

I look at the seal population and the damage that industry has caused as a direct result of, what I would call, unfair practices by a number of people to make it sound as if there is no role for a seal industry. I would like to believe that there is a healthy future for our seal industry here in Canada.

When we take a look at fishing stock issues, we need to focus a great deal of attention on the issue of science. We need to listen to the people who get paid to do the job they are doing and listen for the advice they might have to offer.

When we talk about the industry, as a whole, it is significant. We are talking about billions of dollars of seafood. It is probably somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$8 billion to \$10 billion, depending on the year. Yes, the United States is the primary country we export our products to from our oceans and inland lakes, but it is not the only one.

Members might be surprised, and I know this from past discussions and debates, that there are many countries around the world we export to. It is not just the United States. The products that are pulled from Canada's oceans are well recognized. I believe there was a time when there was an idea to fly fresh lobster from either Nova Scotia or New Brunswick directly to France because the demand for fresh Canadian lobster was so high.

There is a very real market. We are talking about literally hundreds to thousands of direct and indirect jobs. I suspect we will see during debate of the member's piece of legislation many contributions that will hopefully allow for us to have an informed vote when the time comes. We will have to wait and see whether it ultimately passes.

The member is fortunate in the sense that he is in the first draw, which allows the member to ensure the legislation will, in fact, be voted on. There might be an opportunity to see it go to committee. We will have to wait and see. One of the things I do know is that there are members in all political parties who are taking a look at the issue of pinnipeds populations, because it is not just seals, as we can factor in walrus and so forth. They are having this huge impact.

I can appreciate that the impact is probably the most significant in Atlantic Canada. I do not want people to lose sight of the fact that one does not have to be from Atlantic Canada to care about the industry. I would like to see the advancement, as I said earlier, of a seal industry. I think we can improve our seal industry here in Canada. It might be colleagues of mine who will wear a seal tie. In fact, I do not have perfect eyesight, but the member opposite might be wearing a seal tie because it seems to have that gloss to it.

There are many products out there. I think there is a potential demand, but we have to work with the different partners and stakeholders, whether they are indigenous people, environmentalists or industry reps. We need to make smart decisions on this industry. It is worth billions and involves thousands of both direct and indirect jobs.

• (1755)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, BQ): Madam Speaker, I will not keep anyone in the dark. The Bloc Québécois supports the principle of Bill C-251, an act respecting the development of a federal framework on the conservation of fish stocks and management of pinnipeds. That said, it all depends on the content and the application of that content.

The interaction between fishing activities and various species of pinnipeds has been an issue for many years, particularly in the St. Lawrence estuary. As early as 1985, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans had detailed studies on the losses suffered by fishermen who came into contact with seals, particularly in terms of damaged nets and partially consumed fish in those nets.

I am feeling emotional this afternoon because of my experience as a daughter of the river, an islander, coming from a line of sailors and sport fishermen. My ancestors were so rich with invaluable knowledge of the land. How proud my father would be to hear me defending his river and all the life it contains.

Back in the early 1980s, my father was already talking to me about his fear of seeing cod disappear, primarily as a result of seal overpopulation. In the absence of predators, these poor animals grew too large in number, and hunger drove them to gorge on several species in the St. Lawrence River and in the gulf. What is more, my partner scuba dives in the St. Lawrence, and on several occasions, he has seen countless cod with their guts torn out.

My father used to say that he would not see cod disappear completely in his lifetime, but that the next generation probably would. He said we would be the ones to see the St. Lawrence without cod. What a surprise it was to him when, 25 years later, he realized there was no longer any cod in the river.

Cod is a succulent fish and has had pride of place on our tables throughout Quebec's history. I really want to make the urgency of the situation clear today. We must implement finely tuned measures that are consistent with overarching ecological principles, and we must do it as soon as possible. Underpinning these principles is a notion we must embrace if humanity is to survive its own ignorance of nature's priorities: equilibrium.

Here on earth, there is a simple but powerful system that keeps everything in equilibrium. That system is called the food chain, and at its core is the concept of predator and prey. When that equilibrium is upset, everything becomes dysfunctional. That's what we are seeing with the overpopulation of pinnipeds. However, much of what has happened is also due to human ambition, which is driving the planet to its doom.

Back home, we coexist with nature. We do not try to conquer or disrupt it. We know that nature rests on a delicate balance, as do we. The fish plants back home certainly are not pocketing billions of dollars from economic development, but people in the industry make a good living, and living in harmony with nature is the only way to survive in the long term. People in the industry know that.

I am certainly not indifferent to the death of an animal. I have four cats and a dog, and my nine chickens all have names. I do not enjoy watching a cougar catch an antelope to feed its young, but that is nature. No hunt is a happy one, but it is a necessary part of maintaining ecological balance, which we rely on, and we know that our own equilibrium is directly connected to the equilibrium of wildlife resources. This has been true since the beginning of time.

That said, all the scarcity problems among marine species are not just due to pinniped overpopulation, which is why it is so important to use science to understand the different factors currently having an impact on biological balance in the marine ecosystem. That is why we must move forward with this bill, which we hope will show us a better way to manage marine biodiversity.

● (1800)

Let us come back to Bill C-251. The Department of Fisheries and Oceans must act to promote conservation and the protection of marine ecosystems. Based on what I have read, I have no doubt that pinniped populations have a significant impact on fish stocks. However, we cannot focus on just this one variable to understand the dynamics affecting fish stocks.

For that reason, when we study the bill I would like to ensure that the strategy to be deployed by the minister takes into account both human and natural factors that affect the ecosystem. It is 2022: We must consider the environmental impact. A good policy must manage the impact of both human activity and climate change on nature and, in turn, the impact of natural disruptions on human activity.

The study and analysis of the impact of pinniped populations on fish stocks must not distract from the deleterious and devastating impact of overfishing, and in particular industrial fishing methods that are responsible for a true catastrophe on a global scale, specifically the overfishing and drastic reduction of fish stocks. Approximately 33% of global fish stocks are totally overexploited, and that increases to 66% for reserves that are fully exploited. If we continue at this rate, overfishing will deplete the oceans by 2048, pinnipeds or no pinnipeds.

In other words, we have to do something to protect fish stocks and to control the pinniped population, but in so doing we must ensure that we do not punish nature for a human error.

Let us take some of the measures set out in this legislation.

The bill should require the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to constantly update its studies on the interactions between pinniped and the fish populations. The department already has expertise in and knowledge of the impact of the pinniped population on fish stocks. We must ensure that the new framework created by Bill C-251 allows for this knowledge to be mobilized so that we can act effectively.

Private Members' Business

To that end, a pinniped census may be a tool, but the scientific component of the framework should not focus exclusively on a census. In fact, could we look into the need for such a census? How is that better than using methods that estimate the size of populations?

With regard to acceptable population levels for different species, it is important to pay close attention to the criteria used. Using historical levels as a criterion would suggest that population levels have drastically decreased. Does it make sense to compare our populations to those of other countries when the ecosystems are different? Does it make sense to use the same framework for all pinnipeds? Should the approach not vary for different species of pinnipeds?

There are many issues to consider, and a lot of questions come to mind. What does it actually mean to remove barriers to trade in seal products? What are those barriers? Are there examples of projects that promote the manufacture and sale of seal products? There are so many questions surrounding this bill.

The Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, on which I serve as vice-chair, will be undertaking a study on the management of pinnipeds beginning in a few weeks. Several issues need to be carefully examined. Our study of Bill C-251 will have to take into account the recommendations made by the committee, which will do everything it can to meet with experts, coastal populations, people on the ground, and even officials from other countries such as Norway, Iceland and Finland. The committee plans to visit those countries next fall, in order to look at what has and what has not worked on the other side of the Atlantic.

I will continue to be attentive and proactive. I will leave no stone unturned to ensure that the committee can give the public all the facts and provide a just and objective report to the government, based on the values that will allow for the survival of the marine world in all its splendour.

● (1805)

[English]

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for bringing forward this bill today. It is an honour to rise today to speak to Bill C-251. I know that the member for Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame cares deeply about this issue and many others. As someone who was born in Newfoundland and now lives proudly in Nanaimo—Ladysmith on Vancouver Island, I can say Canada's coastal communities and marine ecosystems are a true passion of mine. As the country with the longest coastline in the world, we are particularly interconnected to our oceans. The way in which we treat our oceans and the marine environments impacts all Canadians.

Private Members' Business

This bill recognizes a really important part of the current state of many of our fisheries. On all of our coasts, our fisheries and marine ecosystems are facing an emergency. Cod populations have struggled to recover in the Atlantic for decades since the 1992 moratorium. Just last year, the government announced closures of 60% of the salmon fisheries on the west coast. Successive Liberal and Conservative governments have failed to implement sustainable recovery plans for depleted fish populations. Workers who rely on our fisheries are worried about their futures, and Canadians across the country are scared that we have squandered our incredible natural resources beyond the point of recovery.

In many coastal communities, there are concerns about the role of pinnipeds with respect to fish populations. This bill proposes to take steps to address gaps in the scientific literature around pinniped populations across Canada and their role in marine ecosystems. It is abundantly clear that across Canada's marine ecosystems, we failed to invest in data and monitoring efforts. I believe that this legislation could help to highlight the shortfalls of data around pinniped populations in Canada. Across the board, we must continue to invest in this kind of monitoring, especially as we are increasingly seeing more fish populations struggling.

The bill also calls upon the federal government to provide stronger supports for indigenous and remote communities that have relied on the commercial seal harvest. New Democrats have long supported a seal harvest that supports the rights of the first nations, Inuit and other groups to engage in traditional and commercial seal harvesting. It is one that is sustainable, with zero tolerance for any inhumane practices.

In many cases, pinnipeds have been used as a convenient scapegoat by politicians when their promises of fish stock recoveries have failed. Brian Tobin, just as one example, a former minister of fisheries and oceans, remarked in 1995 that the cod moratorium needed to be extended due to predation by harp seals, conveniently deflecting away from decades of fisheries mismanagement by Liberal and Conservative governments in Ottawa. We need to do better, and that starts by recognizing that human causes are the key drivers of the state of our fish populations today.

This issue does not have a simple fix. A 2018 report from the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans highlighted the testimony of DFO research scientist John Bratley. He underscored the scientific consensus around the decline of northern cod, saying that in this case, pinniped predation was not found to be a significant driver of northern cod in the period between 1985 and 2007. This is a trend that has not changed.

He also highlighted that capelin availability and fishing efforts were far more important in driving the northern cod population, and that climate change, poor management and the inability to protect our marine ecosystems were the root causes of our challenges. To that end, it is extremely worrying to see that, since 2015, capelin stocks have declined by an estimated 70% in this region. Unfortunately, there is no silver bullet that will solve this crisis, and the federal government has consistently failed to act on the issues we know are driving fish declines.

Our solutions need to recognize that the only way we can address this crisis is by taking bold action that recognizes the complexities

of our marine ecosystems. Most pinnipeds are described as opportunistic feeders, which means that as specific fish stocks decline, pinnipeds will look for other food supplies that are in greater abundance. When we look at managing only one part of our ecosystem, such as that of pinnipeds, we struggle to imagine a prosperous and abundant ecosystem. We often imagine the bare minimum needed to keep specific populations going for just another few years. After decades of decline, it is understandable that we cannot imagine a more sustainable future at this point, but that is exactly what we need to do in order to leave a more sustainable future for generations to come.

● (1810)

Single-species management policies ignore the interconnection within our ecosystem and often see our oceans' value exclusively as what can be extracted from them. We see pinnipeds as a problem because they get in the way of our ability to take more fish out of the ocean. Managing pinnipeds to reduce fish mortality does not take into account the species that rely on pinnipeds, like transient killer whales. Along the west coast, we have only recently started to see the recovery of this incredible population, and the science has clearly stated that it is in large part due to the recovery of pinniped populations. I think most Canadians would agree that targeting specific species without considering the entire ecosystem could end in irreversible consequences.

One of the other concerns we have is that this legislation calls for management regardless of the availability of the market to support a sustainable hunt. As we have seen in Newfoundland and Labrador, the commercial seal harvest now represents no more than 1% of the labour force and an increasingly small percentage of the province's GDP. Moreover, the bill's language on establishing acceptable levels based on biomass and historical levels is far too vague, and I do not think we could reasonably be able to determine a scientific consensus on what that would mean in practical terms.

One of my biggest concerns in this legislation is around the proposal to promote the use of an antipredator device to protect infrastructure and fish populations. In recent years, Canada has taken steps to ensure that we are moving to more humane solutions. Importantly, we have seen international partners like the United States set out policies that they will not allow imports of seafood in areas where marine mammals are being harmed by fisheries. The possibility that this legislation might threaten our seafood exports to our largest foreign market is deeply troubling.

As I conclude my thoughts, one area that is incredibly vital to put front and centre in these discussions is the importance of seal harvesting for many indigenous communities, especially Inuit communities. While many Canadians remember the heated debates through the 1970s, 1980s and beyond on seal harvesting in Newfoundland and Labrador and the international media spotlight that this received, Inuits have been one of the largest participants in a sustainable seal harvest in Canada. However, their story and experience have been largely ignored. While not targeting Inuits directly, international campaigns against sealing have had an enormous impact on Inuits' ability to support their families and earn a livelihood.

It was an absolute pleasure to recently watch filmmaker Alethea Arnaquq-Baril's documentary *Angry Inuk*. The film really centres the story of this international debate on Inuit culture, traditions and livelihoods. It highlights the economic and social costs that resulted from Inuits no longer being able to access markets for seal products. As seal product bans were put in place, Inuit communities suffered. Inuits are still living with decisions made without consideration of the impacts on them to this day, and the impacts are felt through long-term food insecurity and some of the highest suicide rates in the country, to name just two. The film also underscores the beauty of the traditions around seal harvesting and the community that these activities foster. As we work forward through reconciliation, we need to recognize the immense cost that colonialism has had on indigenous communities and ensure that indigenous people reclaim their traditions.

Once again, I would like to applaud the member for raising an important issue with this private member's bill. This is an important issue across the country. I know that if we work together across party lines, we can help build stronger marine ecosystems where all species are prospering and where traditional seal harvesting is done sustainably and supports indigenous communities. There is much work to be done, and I look forward to working with the member across the way as we move forward.

• (1815)

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to join this discussion and listen to the thoughtful remarks of my colleagues from the House of Commons Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans. I am also pleased to rise to speak to Bill C-251, an act respecting the development of a federal framework on the conservation of fish stocks and management of pinnipeds.

I would first like to thank and congratulate my friend from Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame for his hard work on this important issue and for this innovative bill. Like him, I come from a riding that depends on the Atlantic Ocean for the local fishing economy, and I have many constituents who are concerned about the damage pinnipeds are having on our marine ecosystems.

The science is clear: Pinniped overpopulation is having a severe impact on fish and other marine life populations from coast to coast. I hear from fishermen at every wharf I go to along South Shore that they are worried about how this overpopulation is impacting the stocks of many species that they fish commercially. This includes, but is not limited to, mackerel, halibut, shrimp, crab, capelin, Atlantic and Pacific salmon and even lobster. Pinnipeds are devouring them all.

Private Members' Business

There is also scientific evidence that suggests that plummeting cod stock populations off of Newfoundland in the 1990s, which led to the cod moratorium, was due to an overabundance in the seal population, as well as Spanish and Portuguese overfishing. I sat in as a staffer on the ad hoc committee on the fishery in those years during those decisions.

Additionally, many residents on both Atlantic and Pacific coasts have seen pinnipeds deep into rivers like never before. Rivers are not a natural habitat for them. They are chasing the food that would otherwise be abundant in the ocean, but the animals are adapting to the diminishing food stocks in the oceans they have been consuming and trying to find their source of protein and fat elsewhere.

Every day it seems like another fishing industry is faced with perilous quota reductions and warnings from DFO that, if overfishing continues, more moratoriums and fishing closures will happen. The Liberals are intent on leaving all the fish in the ocean in order to feed pinnipeds and reduce economic activity. These gloomy warnings cause stress for families that depend on the economic benefit that commercial fishing provides.

Countless studies have shown that pinniped overpopulation is contributing to reduced stocks and an imbalance in the ocean and in our biodiversity. For example, there were 2.7 million seals at the start of the cod collapse, the cod moratorium, in 1992. Now, 10 million seals in Atlantic Canada consume the weight of the entire Atlantic commercial catch every 15 days. On top of that, seals in Atlantic Canada annually eat 97% of what is taken out of the ocean.

Harvesters, indigenous groups, coastal communities and scientists are desperate for updated population estimates for pinnipeds. It is reported that seal populations are at their highest levels in a century, and these populations simply continue to grow. In order to address this problem, we need to know just how bad it is and ensure that DFO comes up with a plan to deal with it, which they have not done for 30 years.

Let me repeat, the purpose of the bill before us is not to prescribe a solution. Rather, it is to compel the government to produce an annual census of pinnipeds in Canadian waters and use science to implement a management plan. We have a duty to ensure that the Minister of Fisheries and DFO are working in the interest of commercial fisheries and fishermen to protect the sustainability of our oceans. All parties agree on this. That is why there has been unanimous consent at the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans to study this issue in both this Parliament and the last.

Private Members' Business

Supporting Bill C-251 is common sense, and coastal MPs from every party in the House have recognized that a pinniped census is required to ensure that DFO is doing its job to protect the biodiversity of our oceans. If there is not all-party support, I would be curious to hear the rationale from members as to why they are prepared to let our oceans face these catastrophic outcomes.

The bill calls for a federal framework to be tabled in the House of Commons within one year and annually after that to provide a yearly pinniped census and a management plan to tackle the problem. We need to know what we are facing.

● (1820)

I have heard hon. members talk about and question costs, which is always a consideration in the House for the government. DFO does biomass studies every year in the \$2-billion increase it has added to its budget since 2015. We do annual biomass studies of many species, but not enough. Why would we not do biomass studies of the largest predator of our commercial stock? We have not done that ever in the history of our country. This framework calls on that.

The goal is to promote conservation and protection of marine ecosystems. At the end of the day, I think this is a principle that all members can agree upon. We cannot allow an ecological disaster to take place in our oceans simply because the actions required to stop it may not be politically popular. We cannot turn a blind eye to the carnage and suffering that will take place if pinnipeds run out of things to eat. It is a fact. They will starve within 10 to 20 years.

The situation is putting our entire biodiversity at risk. DFO has estimated that if something is not done about the grey seal population off the coast of Nova Scotia, the entire Nova Scotia fishery will disappear within 10 to 20 years. Membertou First Nation in Cape Breton is taking an innovative approach to this problem, which is having a severe impact on the first nation's ability to fish and maintain its livelihood. The band has been piloting a grey seal harvest. It is calling on the government to allow a full commercial harvest of grey seals. The band is teaching its community members how to humanely harvest pinnipeds.

Over the past few years, a small number of seals were harvested by Membertou, with flippers and loins processed by a Maritime seal company. Most of a pinniped can be harvested. Over eight countries in the world are harvesting pinnipeds now, and up to 100% of them is being used for things, as my colleague mentioned, from protein powders to omega-3 and food sources for Canadians and other people around the world.

We should look to the experiences and ingenuity of first nations on how this issue can be dealt with. After all, it was our first nations who were first harvesting seals. We should expand and broaden our knowledge of their uses, such as meat and fur. We have seen how regulated and careful management of pinnipeds can be successful.

For example, Norway has managed its seal populations to a successful equilibrium, and Iceland has ensured its thriving fishing economy is not damaged by the overpopulation of pinnipeds. These two progressive, democratic states have found ways to protect the sustainability of the North Atlantic by keeping an eye on pinniped

populations and continuing to be strong exporters of this seafood product.

This is an important number. Russia and Norway catch more Atlantic cod than the entire Canadian fishery, yet that species was in decline at the same level in 1992 as it was in Canada. We did a moratorium. They managed pinnipeds. There is no reason why we cannot continue to have our leadership on the world stage, as we do in so many areas, when it comes to the humane and sustainable fishery of pinnipeds for generations of Canadians to come.

In fact, we need to do this for our coastal communities to ensure the biodiversity of the ocean is returned to its natural state and we can continue to reap the benefits with a robust commercial fishery and a sustainable diversity of our oceans in the years to come.

● (1825)

Mr. Bryan May (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to be here today to discuss this private member's bill, Bill C-251, an act respecting the development of a federal framework on the conservation of fish stocks and management of pinnipeds. I share the desire of the member for Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame to support fish stock conservation efforts and, in doing so, the livelihood of commercial fish harvesters and communities from coast to coast.

Like the hon. member, this government sees sustaining healthy and productive aquatic ecosystems as a priority. We are also acutely aware of the need to support fish stock conservation efforts and, in so doing, the livelihoods that depend on wise management of our fisheries, oceans and ocean resources.

Accordingly, I appreciate the opportunity to discuss Bill C-251.

Pinnipeds are a group of marine mammals that includes seals, sea lions and walruses. Our government's current approach to pinniped management focuses on a sustainable, well-regulated seal harvest that supports Canada's indigenous, rural, coastal and remote populations. This approach is informed by the best available scientific evidence. Accordingly, management of the harvest is designed to provide economic opportunity to harvesters within a sound scientific framework. There are currently more seals available for harvest under the management approach than are taken by the harvesters, many times more, in fact. This is a gap that we believe we must close.

Turning to Bill C-251, however, I note the bill is primarily targeted at seals, which some commercial fish harvesters view as the cause of slow recovery for some key fish stocks. The bill would require the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard to develop a framework that includes, among other things, measures to regulate management and control of pinniped populations to establish acceptable levels for pinniped species, address impacts caused by pinniped populations, encourage the use of anti-predator mechanisms and promote year-round controls on pinnipeds.

I respect the desire to protect fish stocks that lies behind Bill C-251 and I recognize the significance of the fish and seafood sector to our economy. In 2021, Canada exported 8.7 billion dollars' worth of fish and seafood to 119 countries around the world, and \$6.2 billion of that, over 70%, was to the United States.

• (1830)

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired and the bill is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

[English]

The hon. member will have six minutes and 55 seconds the next time this matter is before the House.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[English]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Madam Speaker, as the member of Parliament for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, home to the training ground of the warriors at Garrison Petawawa, Canada's largest army base, I welcome the opportunity to hold the government accountable for the safety and security of our women and men in uniform.

Earlier this year, I asked a very specific question regarding the readiness of Canadian soldiers now that they found themselves in a situation where chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear weapons, or CBRN for short, are threatened. The lack of response follows the short-sighted decision of a previous Liberal government to shut down the emergency preparedness college in Arnprior. It was confirmed this week by the CBC government propaganda agency that the earliest the Canadian Armed Forces might be properly equipped and trained against these 21st century terrors is 2030. The government does not learn.

The war in Ukraine is today, not eight years from now. It is today. Today, there are more than 200,000 active cases of COVID-19 in Canada. Canadians will recall the decision by the government to send soldiers to Latvia during the COVID-19 pandemic without inoculation. A significant COVID-19 outbreak struck Canadian Armed Forces' members deployed to Latvia.

Adjournment Proceedings

The majority of the deployed Canadian soldiers were not vaccinated ahead of their mission because of the failure of the government to procure vaccines after a botched deal with the Chinese communists. What limited vaccines were received were given to federal prisoners, rapists and murderers, before they were given to our soldiers.

The official position of the divisive socialist coalition Prime Minister was that our soldiers are young and healthy. They should recover from the virus. They would, dare I say to the censure-loving socialist coalition that does not believe in science, develop natural immunity. What a hypocrite our blackface wearing Prime Minister is when he expects soldiers to develop a natural immunity and not other Canadians. It is a failure to both inadequately prepare and to not urgently respond in a manner that is commensurate with the threat.

Chemical weapons such as nerve agents, once inhaled, can directly attack the respiratory systems of soldiers and be fatal. Thus, even a small exposure to contaminated air can pose a significant risk to soldiers. Soldiers who are exposed to CBRN weapons become casualties. CBRN material is used as an umbrella term for those agents in any physical state and form which can cause hazards to populations, territories and forces. It also refers to chemical weapons, precursors and facilities, that is, equipment or compounds that can be used for the development or deployment of weapons of mass destruction, CBRN weapons or CBRN devices.

Over the past few years, CBRN weapons or CBRN devices have been used, so over the past few years there has been an increase in the number of conflicts globally. This has led to an increase in the demand for CBRN defensive weapons, such as personal protective equipment, detection systems, vehicle-mounted improvised explosive devices detection systems, detonators and decontamination devices. Canada has been ignoring the threat while other countries got prepared. The losses, in terms of life and equipment, have triggered the enhancement of CBRN defences for our troops.

Despite budgetary constraints, our allies in NATO and Europe are investing in improving CBRN defences for both troops and vehicle. In September 2021, NATO held its 17th annual conference in weapons of mass of destruction, arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation in Copenhagen. Canada was warned of the threat. NATO's combined joint CBRN defence task force, a NATO-deployable military asset, is a key part of the alliance's work on CBRN defence. It consists of—

• (1835)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sorry, but I actually gave a little more time for flexibility.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence.

Adjournment Proceedings

Mr. Bryan May (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, COVID-19 has affected every part of our society and every Canadian, including members of our Canadian Armed Forces. I would like to clarify that, in fact, COVID-19 did not stop CBRN training for new recruits, as the member has incorrectly alleged. Although some of our training and recruiting had to be scaled down during the earliest days of the pandemic, our military was not stood down. To say so is completely inaccurate and, frankly, disrespectful to the Canadian Armed Forces members who have worked tirelessly to help Canadians through this pandemic. We will never compromise on readiness, and our priority is maintaining a fighting force that can be deployed anywhere in the world.

Russia's egregious invasion of Ukraine has not only resulted in instability across the globe, but shown that we must never step back from that responsibility. Today, our organization is in the midst of a substantial forces-wide reconstitution program to rebuild our strength and readiness for the future. This includes making sure our members receive the right training so they can effectively and safely perform their required duties.

I would like to thank the member opposite for highlighting the importance of the chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear course. Canadian Forces leadership and recruit schools have continued to provide this course given that all CAF members require CBRN training to qualify for deployment. As part of basic military qualification and basic military officer qualification, CAF members also learn to operate in a contaminated environment.

National Defence maintains and manages a robust inventory of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear protection equipment to ensure that Canadian Armed Forces members can safely conduct operations in the most adverse conditions. On operations, Canadian Armed Forces members are issued protection equipment directly, including CBRN equipment, or the equipment is transported and stored on location for use, if needed. As part of pre-deployment processes, equipment is verified for proper functionality. Canadian Armed Forces members also receive training to ensure they know how to use such equipment.

To ensure the readiness of our Canadian Armed Forces, we are also improving and modernizing our operational capabilities in the face of a rapidly evolving security environment. We are moving forward on important projects for the navy, army and air force, including our Arctic offshore patrol ships, new armoured combat support vehicles for the Canadian Army and our planned fleet of 88 advanced fighter jets. We are ensuring the CAF is ready to meet adversities in non-traditional domains like cyber, space and information, including by integrating our activity in those domains with what we are already doing at sea, on land and in the air.

Through our reconstitution efforts and the work we are doing to deliver on key capital projects, we are making sure that our people are well equipped and well supported for whatever comes their way. This will ensure they are ready to meet traditional and non-traditional defence and security threats to Canada and our allies from across all domains and from all directions, now and for decades to come.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Madam Speaker, NATO's combined joint CBRN defence task force consists of the CBRN defence battalion and the CBRN joint assessment team. The task force was activated for the very first time in a deterrence and defence capacity in March 2022 in response to Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine and its dangerous rhetoric around nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.

When facing a new threat, be it chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear, there is a call for safety: Protect our men and women at the highest level using all precautions. Scale the protection up. Despite repeated warnings from our allies, as recently as last month, the threat to our soldiers is being downplayed or ignored. The threat of an escalation in hostilities to use these weapons is very real.

Canada needs to be procuring, maintaining, enhancing and developing effective soldier protection systems now.

Mr. Bryan May: Madam Speaker, while COVID-19 has impacted some CAF training and recruitment efforts, we have never wavered in our commitment to operational readiness. We know we must redouble our efforts to ensure that we have a sufficient number of CAF members available for domestic and international missions and that they have the tools and training they need to excel no matter where the task.

To address these issues, the chief of the defence staff has launched a forces-wide reconstitution program that is complementary to our efforts to deliver on the promises we put forward in Canada's defence policy. As we conduct a review of this policy to account for the changing global security environment, we will keep working together to build a Canadian Armed Forces that is ready to tackle our biggest threats today and into the future.

• (1840)

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise, as the New Democratic critic for public safety, to follow up on a question I asked the minister on December 10 of last year. That question was following an important report that was tabled in the 43rd Parliament on systemic racism in policing in Canada. I gave a very clear question to the minister at that time, when I asked him directly if he and his department would "implement the recommendations so that the RCMP could better serve all of our communities."

Adjournment Proceedings

His answer was that he was “going to continue to work with the RCMP to ensure that they provide top, world-class law enforcement right across the country so that we can have public safety for all Canadians.” Unfortunately, that is a little light on details, and I sincerely hope that the parliamentary secretary tonight can provide some clarification and more detail on exactly what the government is hoping to do.

Before I get into the details, I think it is important to really provide a basis for why this report and its recommendations were so important, and I am going to quote from the report:

Given the pervasive nature of systemic racism in policing in Canada, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security...has concluded that a transformative national effort is required to ensure that all Indigenous, Black and other racialized people in Canada are not subject to the discrimination and injustice that is inherent in the system as it exists today.

During the study, the committee acknowledged from witnesses, and they had a very broad cross-section of witnesses, a resounding acknowledgement of the reality of systemic racism in policing in Canada. The committee was told that accountability, oversight and transparency are critical to restoring trust with indigenous and racialized communities that are subject to systemic racism.

When we are talking about systemic racism, the committee provided a helpful quote from Senator Murray Sinclair. He said:

Systemic racism is when the system itself is based upon and founded upon racist beliefs and philosophies and thinking and has put in place policies and practices that literally force even the non-racists to act in a racist way.

I want to say this, because my communities in Cowichan—Malahat—Langford are entirely policed by the RCMP, and I have a tremendous amount of respect for what those frontline officers do in our communities. They are often the first on the scene and they are dealing with the opioid crisis, but we cannot step away from the fact that the RCMP itself, as a force and as a wider entity across Canada, is in need of reform.

I want to hear from the parliamentary secretary, because she was a member of the committee that produced that report, so she is very familiar with the witness testimony and the deliberations the committee went through. There are very specific recommendations in that report that could be instituted through legislative reform of the RCMP Act.

For example, there is recommendation 1, which really tackles the mandate, independence and efficacy of the Civilian Review and Complaints Commission. This recommends making sure it has the ability to refer cases or recommend that criminal charges be laid, creating statutory timelines for responses from the RCMP, requiring the RCMP commissioner to annually report to the minister on steps taken to implement CRCC recommendations, and tabling that report to Parliament.

In closing, the recommendations 2, 3, 4, 5, 7 and 8 are all there for the government to follow up on, and I would like to have a clear answer from the parliamentary secretary on when her government is going to implement those recommendations.

• (1845)

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford for this important question and

for his continued excellent work on the public safety committee. As he mentioned, I have served as a member of the committee since being elected to this place, and I am incredibly proud of the work our committee achieved in the last Parliament through our report on systemic racism in policing.

I would be remiss if I did not also thank the hon. member for bringing a motion to the committee that received unanimous support, for the chair to retable that report. The work done in the previous Parliament was important. The committee made 42 recommendations, and it is essential that the government provide a fulsome response to that report. I look forward to that response being tabled in this place soon.

Tonight I am pleased to speak to the steps the government has already taken to begin to address systemic racism and increase accountability in policing. Police services in Canada are entrusted with a broad mandate and significant powers to enforce the law, keep the peace and maintain public safety. Maintaining the trust of the public through accountable, transparent policing is crucial to effective policing.

Incidents of excessive use of force by law enforcement in Canada and the United States against indigenous, Black and racialized people prompted demands for change in 2020. We know that systemic change is needed. That is why concrete action has been taken to modernize the RCMP, transform its culture and identify and eliminate systemic barriers and systemic racism.

In budget 2021, the government allocated \$75 million over five years and \$13.5 million ongoing to support the RCMP to take action to combat systemic racism, including through reforming recruitment and training, improving the collection, analysis and recording of race-based data, more rapidly evaluating the impact of police activities on marginalized communities and improving community engagement and consultation with Black, indigenous and racialized communities.

The RCMP is also piloting the use of implicit bias testing as part of the recruitment process. Following the launch of the equity, diversity and inclusion strategy in January 2021 and the application of a GBA+ review, new and modernized entrance exams assessing applicants' cognitive and personality attributes were added and will roll out in the coming months.

Additional reforms are needed, including external reviews of the RCMP's sanctions and disciplinary regime and modernizing de-escalation training to include training on implicit bias, specialized training for experienced officers, updated training for cadets, and mandatory training on cultural awareness and humility and anti-racism.

Adjournment Proceedings

In addition, through the launch of the Independent Centre for Harassment Resolution, we have committed to greater externalization to ensure that there can be no conflicts of interest while reviewing complaints against RCMP members. In addition to internal reforms, independent civilian review bodies like the Civilian Review and Complaints Commission are key to keeping the RCMP accountable to the public they serve. That is why the Minister of Public Safety has been mandated by the Prime Minister to bring forward legislation that establishes defined timelines for the RCMP to respond to recommendations made by the CRCC.

Additionally, in support of greater police accountability, we are committed to enhancing the management advisory board to be in line with other Canadian police services. These are some of the important measures we are taking to address systemic racism, and I look forward to working with the hon. member on this critical issue to ensure that all 42 recommendations are implemented.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Madam Speaker, I, like the parliamentary secretary, look forward to seeing the government's responses to all of those recommendations tabled in the near future. One of the main things we can do here in the Parliament of Canada, as a legislative body, is that we can tackle reforms to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Act. I have asked the Library of Parliament to take the specific recommendations that were in that report, the ones that deal with reforming the RCMP act. I have asked the Library of Parliament to show me what those reforms and amendments would look like.

The only question is whether it is going to be up to me as a private member to introduce that as a private member's bill. Can I ask the government to take the lead on this and actually introduce a government bill to take the reforms that are necessary on that act?

Ms. Pam Damoff: Madam Speaker, I would just say to the hon. member that I appreciate his doing that and reaching out to the Library of Parliament, and I hope that he will share that report with me and that we can work together to ensure that the RCMP act reflects the recommendations from our report.

We are bringing forward clear timelines for compliance with the recommendations made regarding the CRCC. Those were very important recommendations and ones that will provide oversight for the RCMP, as well as consequences, which is something we had heard was lacking. We will continue to work collaboratively with partners, including the hon. member.

• (1850)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6:51 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Thursday, April 28, 2022

Points of Order

Motion No. 11

Mr. Brassard	4467
Mr. Lamoureux	4468
Mr. Therrien	4468
Ms. Blaney	4468
Mr. Calkins	4468
Mr. Therrien	4469

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Government Response to Petitions

Mr. Lamoureux	4469
---------------------	------

Stopping Internet Sexual Exploitation Act

Mr. Viersen	4469
Bill C-270. Introduction and first reading	4469
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)	4470

Committees of the House

Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics

Mr. Bezan	4470
Motion for concurrence	4470
Mr. Lamoureux	4471
Mr. Johns	4472
Mr. Lemire	4472
Mr. Barrett	4472
Amendment	4473
Mr. Lamoureux	4473
Mr. Simard	4474
Mr. Morrice	4474
Mr. Lamoureux	4474
Motion	4474
Motion agreed to	4475

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Extension of Sitting Hours and Conduct of Extended Proceedings

Mr. Duclos (for the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons)	4476
Motion	4476
Mr. Lamoureux	4476
Mr. Barrett	4478
Mr. Brassard	4479
Mr. Brassard	4482
Mr. Therrien	4482
Mr. Johns	4482
Mr. Morrice	4483
Mrs. Gallant	4483
Mr. Brassard	4483

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Retirement Congratulations

Mr. Van Bynen	4493
---------------------	------

Michael Wilton

Mr. Kmiec	4493
-----------------	------

David Barber

Mr. Duguid	4493
------------------	------

Day of Mourning

Ms. Chabot	4493
------------------	------

Infertility Awareness Week

Mrs. Sudds	4494
------------------	------

Inflation

Mr. Poilievre	4494
---------------------	------

Carole Wardell

Mr. Coteau	4494
------------------	------

Indigenous Law Graduates

Ms. Jones	4494
-----------------	------

Avon River

Mr. Perkins	4494
-------------------	------

Legion Awards Ceremony

Mr. Aldag	4495
-----------------	------

Postal Codes in Indigenous Communities

Mr. Deltell	4495
-------------------	------

Blood Donation

Mr. Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	4495
--	------

350th Anniversary of L'Île-Perrot

Mr. Schiefke	4495
--------------------	------

National Day of Mourning

Mr. Green	4495
-----------------	------

Yom HaShoah

Mr. Champoux	4496
--------------------	------

Anti-Semitism

Mr. Morantz	4496
-------------------	------

Yom HaShoah

Ms. Saks	4496
----------------	------

ORAL QUESTIONS

Public Safety

Mr. Berthold	4497
Ms. Freeland	4497
Mr. Berthold	4497
Ms. Freeland	4497

Ethics			
Mr. Berthold	4497	Housing	
Ms. Freeland	4497	Ms. Fry	4502
Mr. Bezan	4497	Mr. Hussen	4502
Ms. Freeland	4497	Mr. Albas	4502
Mr. Bezan	4497	Mr. Hussen	4502
Ms. Freeland	4497	The Economy	
Public Safety		Mr. Deltell	4502
Mr. Therrien	4498	Ms. Freeland	4502
Ms. Freeland	4498	Mrs. Kramp-Neuman	4503
Mr. Therrien	4498	Ms. Freeland	4503
Ms. Freeland	4498	Mr. Schmale	4503
Health		Ms. Freeland	4503
Mr. Boulerice	4498	Employment Insurance	
Ms. Freeland	4498	Mr. Garon	4503
Employment Insurance		Ms. Gould	4503
Mr. Green	4498	Mr. Garon	4503
Ms. Freeland	4498	Ms. Gould	4503
Public Safety		The Environment	
Mr. Lloyd	4498	Mr. Davidson	4504
Mr. Mendicino	4499	Mr. O'Regan	4504
Mr. Lloyd	4499	Mr. Davidson	4504
Mr. Mendicino	4499	Mr. Guilbeault	4504
Mr. Paul-Hus	4499	Carbon Pricing	
Mr. Mendicino	4499	Mrs. Gray	4504
Mr. Paul-Hus	4499	Mr. Guilbeault	4504
Mr. Mendicino	4499	Health	
Mr. Motz	4499	Ms. Kayabaga	4504
Mr. Mendicino	4499	Mr. Duclos	4504
Ethics		Digital Services	
Mr. Brock	4500	Mr. Nater	4504
Mr. Lamoureux	4500	Mr. Bittle	4505
The Economy		Passport Canada	
Mr. Savard-Tremblay	4500	Mr. Redekopp	4505
Mr. Virani	4500	Ms. Gould	4505
Agriculture and Agri-Food		Fisheries and Oceans	
Mr. Perron	4500	Mr. Small	4505
Ms. Bibeau	4500	Ms. Murray	4505
Mr. Perron	4500	Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship	
Mr. Virani	4501	Mrs. Zahid	4505
Public Safety		Mr. Fraser	4505
Mrs. Kusie	4501	Health	
Mr. Mendicino	4501	Mr. Desjarlais	4506
Ms. Lantsman	4501	Mr. Duclos	4506
Mr. Mendicino	4501	Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship	
Ms. Lantsman	4501	Mr. Vuong	4506
Mr. Mendicino	4501	Mr. Fraser	4506
Foreign Affairs		Commemoration of the Holocaust	
Ms. McPherson	4501	The Deputy Speaker	4506
Ms. Joly	4502	Business of the House	
The Environment		Mr. Brassard	4506
Mr. Blaikie	4502	Mr. Lamoureux	4506
Mr. Guilbeault	4502		

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Ways and Means

Budget Implementation Act, 2022, No. 1

Ms. Freeland	4506
Motion for concurrence	4506
Motion agreed to	4508
Bill C-19. First reading	4508
(Motion deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)	4508

Economic and Fiscal Update Implementation Act, 2021

Bill C-8—Time Allocation Motion

Ms. Freeland	4508
Motion	4508
Mr. Brassard	4508
Mr. Perkins	4508
Mr. Bachrach	4509
Mr. Vis	4509
Mr. Lemire	4509
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	4510
Ms. Ferreri	4510
Ms. Chagger	4510
Mr. Gourde	4510
Ms. Larouche	4511
Ms. Gazan	4511
Mr. Shipley	4511
Mr. Mazier	4512
Mr. Patzer	4512
Mr. Lamoureux	4512

Motion agreed to	4514
------------------------	------

Report Stage

Bill C-8. Report Stage	4514
Mrs. Gallant	4514

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Conservation of Fish Stocks and Management of Pinnipeds Act

Mr. Small	4515
Bill C-251. Second reading	4515
Mr. Kelloway	4517
Ms. Bérubé	4517
Ms. Barron	4517
Mr. Lamoureux	4517
Mrs. Desbiens	4518
Ms. Barron	4519
Mr. Perkins	4521
Mr. May (Cambridge)	4522

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

National Defence

Mrs. Gallant	4523
Mr. May (Cambridge)	4524

Public Safety

Mr. MacGregor	4524
Ms. Damoff	4525

Published under the authority of the Speaker of
the House of Commons

SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

The proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees are hereby made available to provide greater public access. The parliamentary privilege of the House of Commons to control the publication and broadcast of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees is nonetheless reserved. All copyrights therein are also reserved.

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the Copyright Act. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the Copyright Act.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

Also available on the House of Commons website at the following address: <https://www.ourcommons.ca>

Publié en conformité de l'autorité
du Président de la Chambre des communes

PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

Les délibérations de la Chambre des communes et de ses comités sont mises à la disposition du public pour mieux le renseigner. La Chambre conserve néanmoins son privilège parlementaire de contrôler la publication et la diffusion des délibérations et elle possède tous les droits d'auteur sur celles-ci.

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la Loi sur le droit d'auteur. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre des communes.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la Loi sur le droit d'auteur.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

Aussi disponible sur le site Web de la Chambre des communes à l'adresse suivante :
<https://www.noscommunes.ca>