



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

44th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

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# House of Commons Debates

Official Report  
(Hansard)

Volume 151 No. 117  
Tuesday, October 25, 2022

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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, October 25, 2022

The House met at 10 a.m.

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*Prayer*

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1000)  
[*English*]

### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

HUMAN RESOURCES, SKILLS AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE  
STATUS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

**Mr. Robert Morrissey (Egmont, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities in relation to Bill C-215, an act to amend the Employment Insurance Act (illness, injury or quarantine).

The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House without amendments.

HEALTH

**Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Health in relation to Bill C-31, an act respecting cost of living relief measures related to dental care and rental housing.

The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House with amendments.

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### PETITIONS

SINGLE-USE PLASTICS

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to take the floor this morning as we begin proceedings.

The petition I am presenting today deals with the ongoing problem of single-use plastics. The petitioners point out that the current regulations that have been put forward are full of loopholes and would allow such things as individual single-use items like plastic forks to be considered durable if they can be used more than once, as opposed to durable products lasting for years.

The petitioners ask the government to review the regulations, tighten them so they focus on the dangerous single-use plastics that are now contaminating our oceans and environment, such as plastic cup lids from single-use cups and so on, and follow the leading examples. The petitioners point to countries such as Chile and many within the European Union that present regulations that Canada could build on.

The petitioners ask that the government take meaningful steps to fulfill the promise the government has made to eliminate single-use plastic items.

INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

**Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to table petition e-4062.

The petitioners recognize the ongoing crisis we have with intimate partner violence, as we now have the fifth year of consecutive increases. In doing so, they call on the government to introduce legislation to make coercive and controlling behaviour a criminal offence in this country and to enact a suite of measures, in concert with the provinces, to provide better supports to those who are survivors of intimate partner violence.

• (1005)

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am presenting a petition today from people who, in the preamble, recognize that disability financial support payments in Canada are currently far below the official poverty line of Canada and that 1.5 million disabled Canadians currently suffer every single day in a state of legislated poverty.

The petitioners are calling upon the Government of Canada to end the current practice of legislated poverty and establish a federal disability benefit of \$2,200 per month.

*Business of Supply*

YAZIDIS

**Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to table a petition initiated by the Women Refugees Advocacy Project. They are calling on the Prime Minister and the minister to provide an expertly designed, culturally sensitive therapeutic program of recovery for trauma, as well as safe, stable housing for Yazidi refugees. I know that earlier this year, Project Abraham and other partners also called for measures to cut red tape and expedite family reunification for Yazidi families.

The petitioners are saying that the government must keep its promises to resettle Yazidi survivors of Daesh and support survivors in their healing, especially women who need psychological support.

OPIOIDS

**Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of petitioners who recognize that the poisoned drug crisis is a public health emergency. They state and make clear that more than 26,690 people across the country have died opioid-related deaths and that groups like the Canadian Public Health Association have recommended drug decriminalization.

As a result, the petitioners call on this House to declare a public health emergency due to these deaths, to reframe this crisis as a public health issue and not a criminal justice one, to take a comprehensive, multi-faced approach to this crisis, to listen to recommendations from those on the front lines and to decriminalize drugs across the country.

FALUN GONG

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Falun Gong is a traditional Chinese spiritual discipline that consists of meditation, exercise and moral teachings based on the principles of truthfulness, compassion and tolerance.

In July 1999, the Chinese Communist Party launched an intensive nationwide persecution campaign to eradicate Falun Gong. Hundreds of thousands of Falun Gong practitioners were detained in forced labour camps, brainwashing centres and prisons, where torture and abuse are routine, and thousands died as a result. There is also the recent issue of forced organ harvesting.

The petitioners are asking all parliamentarians to do what they can to become more aware of the issue and do what they can to assist.

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## QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

## BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—TIES BETWEEN THE CANADIAN STATE AND THE MONARCHY

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ)** moved:

That, given that,

(i) Canada is a democratic state,

(ii) this House believes in the principle of equality for all,

the House express its desire to sever ties between the Canadian State and the British monarchy, and call on the government to take the actions necessary to do so.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I must admit, reluctantly, that I am disappointed. I hope no one informs Charles III that his subjects are so slow to rally because he would be disappointed. One would have thought that there would be a massive assembly of MPs primed to protect the British monarchy. I get the feeling that the Bloc members are more passionate about it.

Parliament is a democratic institution. In principle, this means that it is the citizens of Quebec and Canada who, through their elected representatives, one riding at a time, make the decisions. The voters choose who is elected. Then again, it is hard to believe that the voters chose His Majesty King Charles III. Still, even though the monarchy is the very pinnacle of power in the structure of Canada's Constitution, we are being told that it is no big deal, it is not the most important issue, it is not a priority and we could be doing other things.

Just a few minutes ago, I was telling the media that I can breathe, talk and hold my phone at the same time. I can even stand on one leg if I have to. I can do everything at the same time. We are capable of discussing several subjects. There are parliamentary committees that will be sitting this week to discuss a whole bunch of subjects at the same time. We can debate the most and the least important. I would like to show that today's topic is important.

Parliament is required to decide everything, namely budgets, laws and positions, which are often just principles. The motions we vote on after question period, on unanimous consent, are merely statements of principle. The best evidence of this is that, when the House gives the government a directive, the government usually disregards it. Perhaps the principles we state as principles already have an intrinsic value.

There is also the whole question of international relations and perception. There must be people all around the world who are looking at us and wondering what is happening because Canada is supposed to be a modern state. However, its leader is a foreign king, and a conqueror at that. This already presages something deeply serious.

They say that the monarchy is symbolic. A \$70-million a year symbol, that is not bad. That is quite a symbol. We need to take into account the allocation of these \$70 million a year, which, in general, go to lemons and airplane tickets; the monarchy is not on its last lemon. That is a lot of money. There is the distribution of all that in the provinces and Quebec, but we are told that that does not matter.

The constitutionalists have at least finished third grade. They are extremely intelligent people who have been debating since the Parti Québécois opened the debate in Quebec on the oath of allegiance. They debate what is necessary and what is not, what is important and what is not, and how to do it or not to do it. I think that these people do not have time to waste. It is because they think that what they are doing is important.

What could we do with \$70 million? Seniors between the ages of 65 and 75, whom the government stubbornly refuses to help, could use \$70 million. People with social housing challenges could use it, too. We realize that the government's housing measures will help pretty much everybody, but far less in Quebec, because it had already taken action. I have colleagues who would like to hear that we were getting \$70 million. For the transition to green energy, \$70 million would go a long way. Forestry, fishing, the restoration of ports in eastern Quebec transferred from the federal government to Quebec, all need far more than \$70 million. Can we spend the money there? No, but we are pleased to make arrangements for the royal family to visit western Canada on the taxpayer's dime.

We are being told we would have to reopen the Constitution. My God, having to reopen the Constitution to change this. That means it must be really important. In general, when we say the word "Constitution", especially with a French accent, English Canada goes into a panic. It must be a very important issue, I cannot think otherwise.

● (1010)

We need the unanimous consent of the provinces, the Senate and Parliament. That is how important it is. When someone puts 14 locks on their shed, it is because they really like their lawnmower. They are terrified of reopening the Constitution because, in my opinion, no one is comfortable with what is in there. It must be because it is important to keep it just the way it is. They are afraid that reopening the Constitution will lead to Alberta claiming independence or indigenous peoples claiming real rights. For now, we are protecting the British Crown at the expense of our first nations. That must be important.

According to the polls, neither Quebeckers nor Canadians want a monarchy. It is not a question of votes. In general, people do not wake up at night—although I know two or three who do—to say that we need to get rid of the monarchy. However, if they are asked, they will say that it is over, that it is a thing of the past, that we need to get rid of it, that it is expensive and that we do not need it. As the magnificent Yvon Deschamps would say, "The monarchy, what is the point?" The people want us to get rid of it. That has to be important.

It is the people's preference. That means that this idea that, on some level, defines who we are, who Canadians and Quebeckers are—and please do not confuse the two—must be something fundamental. It is especially fundamental for Quebeckers because, for Quebeckers and for all those of French descent or who adopted the identity, to varying degrees, of French ancestry, the King of England is the king of the conquering empire.

They tell us that that was in 1760, and that we should stop talking about the conquest. They tell us that the Patriotes rebellion was in 1837-38, and that we should stop talking about the Patriotes.

### *Business of Supply*

However, if we are swearing an oath today to the King of England, it is because we are still a conquered people, who had to swear an oath to the then king of the conquering British Empire, an empire that was incredibly racist and engaged in slavery. That is not trivial. Can we start adding the word "important" to the sentence?

I feel like asking what they are afraid of when it comes to reopening the Constitution, but I think I have already answered that question: No one can identify with Pierre Trudeau's Constitution.

There are 338 ridings in Canada and, when we add more, it will be to the detriment of Quebec. There are approximately 100,000 people in each riding and around 60,000 to 70,000 electors, so if not everyone votes, only 50,000 or so voters per riding vote in elections. They never choose a king. They always choose a member of Parliament and, as a result, the leader of the country. They never voted for a king. I do not know anyone who said they voted for Charles, for example. I have not seen that happen, and yet, at the top of Canada's food chain, there is the Crown. That must be important.

Are not the tens of thousands of people in every riding more important than an expensive, frivolous monarchy? Are they not more important than a foreign king who knows nothing about us—I am not sure that he would pass the test immigrants have to take in Canada, not to mention Quebec—and who is a descendant of the king who crushed us with his cannon balls and muskets? That must be important.

The Prime Minister says that the state is democratic and secular, and he is protecting a king who is the head of a Church. That must be important for the Prime Minister.

● (1015)

It is important, but it is unjustified. It is obsolete, not to say archaic, reactionary, paleontological, backward and humiliating. It will anger some people that I call the monarchy backward. The people who are angry prove that I am right. It makes no sense. We need to get out from under it because it is important.

There are more important things. To name them one at a time, it is true that it is more important to go to the Supreme Court to fight Quebec's secular values. It is true that it is much more important to go to the Supreme Court to fight Quebec's efforts to strengthen the promotion of French. It is true that it is much more important to open new maritime territories to oil drilling when we know that the North Atlantic right whale is endangered. It is true that it is much more important to hand out contracts to Liberal friends for Roxham Road. It is true that it is much more important to meddle in Quebec's and the provinces' jurisdictions, especially when it comes to health transfers.

If I am wrong and it is not important, why do we not get out from under it quickly, easily and light-heartedly and move on enthusiastically to something else?

*Business of Supply*

The Liberal Party's Quebec lieutenant worked himself up to such a fever pitch that he now has a sore throat. Neither he nor the Prime Minister have answered any of the basic questions. Canadians and Quebeckers nevertheless have the right to know whether, when the Prime Minister and his Quebec lieutenant swore the oath, they swore it to a foreign king, a conqueror, a spoiled, ridiculous man. I have had a good life, but no one has ever ironed my shoelaces. With great discipline, not only did I learn how to tie them, but I also learned to put toothpaste on my toothbrush. It took a while, but I succeeded.

Canadians, Quebeckers and Quebec voters in the case of the lieutenant and the admiral, have the right to know whether they swore the oath to the British Crown or the Canadian people.

The monarchy is not important. However, is an oath important? Swearing loyalty and allegiance is a serious matter. What is there more important than a solemn oath of allegiance? Let us say it is not important. Does that mean that the commitments these people make to their voters are not important? Does it mean that they can frivolously ignore their commitment to their voters, like they frivolously ignore their commitment to the sovereign? Is it not important? It seems important to me.

On the other hand, the Bloc Québécois says that an oath given under duress is meaningless. If it does not come from the heart, it has no value. The Bloc's members swear an oath under duress in order to be able to enter Canada's Parliament to expose to Canada what, in many ways, is a lack of respect for Quebec, for the French language, and for the values of secularism and equality, the hypocrisy of a system created to drown us slowly in institutions where our space and our weight is almost inexorably dwindling.

• (1020)

That is no small matter. We come here to speak out against the fact that the government is not doing anything about environmental issues, despite the threat looming over the entire planet. We are here to speak out against the fact that the government's ultimate allegiance is perhaps to the lobbies.

Spoiler alert: The Bloc Québécois is not sincere in swearing allegiance to the Queen. However, the Bloc Québécois is irrevocably sincere, heart and soul, in its pledge and commitment to Quebeckers, and to the Quebec nation alone. If the Liberals, the Conservatives and the NDP are not sincere, then their constituents have the right to know. For our part, we are stating that we no longer want to be subjects of the empire that conquered us, because we live in a democracy. A foreign king and religious leader: That is as important as it is unacceptable.

We invite members to free themselves and us from the monarchy; otherwise, we will show Quebeckers who we are and who they are. I invite all members to think carefully about this before praying for the English King tomorrow, just a few hours before voting on the Bloc Québécois's motion.

This motion is a test of the sincerity of this solemn oath. It is a test of loyalty to our citizens and constituents. It shows that an oath to a foreign monarch and religious leader takes precedence over a pledge to members' constituents. There is no question that the Bloc Québécois is at the service of Quebeckers and only Quebeckers.

• (1025)

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I would like to pick up on the point the Bloc leader referenced. Here we are getting through a pandemic and serious inflation-related issues, which the government is attempting to address on a daily basis through a multitude of different budgetary measures and legislation. There are so many things on the minds of Canadians, whether it is our seniors, our health care system or having a job. The separatist party here in the House of Commons wants to focus on constitutional change.

Does the member really believe, given the priorities I just emphasized, that now is really the time to open up the Constitution? Does he believe Canadians want the constitutional debate to occur today?

[Translation]

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet:** Madam Speaker, I forgot to acknowledge the absolutely amazing role the Queen played during the pandemic. She helped us so much. How could we possibly have gotten through the pandemic without Her Majesty?

If we really need to set priorities, the member could have chosen to stand with the Bloc tomorrow rather than ask me a question that does not really have any bearing on the issue. It would have been quicker.

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I do not understand why the leader of the Bloc decided to introduce this motion here today. Quebeckers are concerned with other, more important problems, such as the cost of gas, food and heating, and immigration at Roxham Road.

Does the leader of the Bloc believe that the matter he is raising is more important than inflation and immigration at Roxham Road?

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet:** Madam Speaker, I have no qualms about recognizing that, when the Conservative Party has priorities, they are clear: The Conservative Party talks about inflation and oil, and that is all.

However, there are parliamentary committees discussing many different subjects simultaneously. During question period, we ask questions about many different subjects on the same day. It is a big challenge, and the answers have to be read out, but we are capable of talking about multiple subjects. We are a Parliament. There are 338 members here. We all went to school. Most of us know how to read.

Can we talk about more than one subject at a time? If not, this country is even more dysfunctional than I thought.

*Business of Supply*

• (1030)

[English]

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Madam Speaker, when we look at the preamble of today's motion, it is something everyone in the House could agree on, that “Canada is a democratic state,” and that we do believe, very much, “in the principle of equality for all”.

However, in what the motion is calling for, the Bloc has missed a clear opportunity, especially if it believes in the preamble. If we really want to tackle equality in Canada and uphold our democracy, we have to look at how we elect members to this legislature and to provincial legislatures. We can look to the provincial election in Quebec. There are four opposition parties, each with between 12% and 15% of the vote, yet they have wildly different seat counts. We can also look at how we elect members to the House of Commons, where there are, again, wildly different seat counts compared to the percentages of Canadians who voted for them.

If we all truly believe in the principles of the preamble, why would the Bloc not tackle something such as democratic reform here in the House? If we truly believe in equality for all Canadians, we should look at a proportional voting system to ensure it would be foundational here in the House of Commons.

[Translation]

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet:** Madam Speaker, in 2015, the Prime Minister said it would be the last time Canadians voted in that kind of election, but once he got comfortable on that branch, he realized that chopping it off would bring about his own downfall.

As a result, the system has not changed since then, and I fully agree that we should consider some form of proportional representation. Unlike a New Democrat, however, I myself would never presume to tell Quebec how to proceed, because Quebec is capable of having its own debate.

As to the other issue, which is truly not important or a priority, someone needs to explain to me how a political party can get behind burning *Adventures of Tintin* books while supporting a monarchy whose empire was built on slavery and racism.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Beloeil—Chambly for proposing this topic for debate in the House today. However, what he is suggesting is just half a proposal, merely seeking to abolish our constitutional monarchy. Does he have any alternatives to propose?

We currently have a head of state, who is the monarch. We have a head of government, who is the Prime Minister. Does the Bloc Québécois believe that the Prime Minister should be promoted and also serve as head of state?

The vast majority of Canadians have no problem with our existing constitutional monarchy. Things are totally different in Europe. In France, the system recognizes an elected president as head of state. In the United States, the head of state and the head of government are the same man, and I say “man” because, unfortunately, this has always been the case.

What does the Bloc Québécois propose?

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet:** Madam Speaker, we would gladly take part in a discussion of this nature at any time.

I would immediately rule out giving any more powers to the current Prime Minister. A little trouble is fine, but to ask for more would be madness. Furthermore, some degree of independence is needed, and I think that is feasible.

As members know, one nation, or better still, two nations, that have the technological capacity to go into space should be able to come up with an alternative to a king who has no idea who we are as a people. This could be the subject of some discussion.

If it were up to me, Canada and Quebec would each have their own constitution. Quebec could then start thinking about one that is uniquely Québécois, one that Quebecers can identify with, and I sincerely hope this happens, but one never knows.

**Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague, the member for Beloeil—Chambly and, incidentally, leader of the Bloc Québécois and my distinguished friend, on his speech.

Our Conservative and Liberal colleagues will spend the day saying that there are other, more important priorities to deal with. That is absolutely true, but when governing a country, it is essential to be able to deal with more than one issue at a time, issues both big and small.

I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on this. Does he agree that this inability to simultaneously address issues of varying importance when leading a country demonstrates absolute incompetence? Does it worry him that this seems to be the case with the current government?

• (1035)

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet:** Madam Speaker, given my colleague's question, it is very tempting to respond that basically they are not capable and they are not competent. I do not think so. They are probably quite capable, but they do not want to.

They say this is not important and they have other priorities. However, the reason is that they do not want to. They do not want to because Alberta will want to have its jurisdictions. Alberta will not want anyone meddling in its affairs because it does not care about the planet and wants to extract oil. They do not want to because first nations will ask for the recognition of a number of fundamental rights in the Constitution. There is always room for improvement. Quebec will certainly have a very interesting shopping list to discuss.

They do not want that. Everyone is terribly afraid of that. That is why the Constitution is triple-locked, why there is a bunch of padlocks and why the keys are at the bottom of the river—probably in the Thames rather than the St. Lawrence. The point is that they are competent enough to know that if they reopen the Constitution, it is a battle they are indeed not competent to win.

*Business of Supply**[English]*

**Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today on the motion tabled by our hon. colleague from the Bloc Québécois to speak to an important issue. That issue is Canadian democracy and the Crown. We will be opposing this motion.

*[Translation]*

I know I speak for all my colleagues when I say that representing a riding in the House of Commons is an honour and a privilege. One of the very foundations of our democracy is political representation and the fact that the people we represent elect us through transparent, fair and independently administered elections.

*[English]*

With democracy being challenged in so many countries around the world, it is easy to think of examples of what happens where this no longer holds. As all of us gathered here today know, the strong and resilient form of democracy we have in Canada today did not simply appear one day fully formed. It is the product of over a century of evolution. It has been fought for, and it has been gained at the cost of many men and women's blood. Today, we will continue to defend that democracy.

While Canada continues to do well on most international measures of democracy, there is, of course, always room for improvement and change. Democracy is a work in progress. It requires our constant attention. We must continue to work to ensure that Canadians in all their diversity, including marginalized people, can make their voices heard. This includes our important ongoing journey toward reconciliation with indigenous peoples.

*[Translation]*

In July 2022, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, or OECD, published its report on trust. The report reveals that OECD countries, including Canada, have a strong democratic system. OECD countries are constantly looking for ways to improve the delivery of services to the public and the transparency of their public administrations. However, we also know that there is still work to be done. OECD countries must listen to their citizens and ensure that public policies meet their expectations. That is especially true in the context of the pandemic and global inflation. One of the main lessons learned from these challenges is that to obtain the trust of citizens, government must be aware of citizens' realities.

● (1040)

*[English]*

We know that trust is earned through performance, but to be able to get to that, we need to understand citizens' needs and their expectations, and this is something governments must continue to dedicate themselves to. Public engagement, conversation and dialogue are critical to understanding what is important to our citizens and important parts of an effective, open and transparent government. They are critical to our efforts to build and renew public trust.

Hearing from our citizens helps us better understand the diversity of opinions to ensure we focus on what is most important to them. There are many things that are on the minds of Canadians, and I

would say the Bloc Québécois motion today is not the foremost one. The recent OECD open government scan of Canada notes that Canada has a strong public consultation culture and that Canada scores comparatively well when it comes to stakeholder engagement. This is both an affirmation of what we have done so far and a reminder that we can always do better. We can do more to earn and maintain citizens' trust.

Our institutions and practices reflect our societal values. We need to protect them. While the founders of our Parliament took inspiration from the halls of Westminster for sure, in our geography, our design and in our buildings, we have always adapted our own institutions and our own practices. They are made-in-Canada solutions to fit our own realities and our needs.

*[Translation]*

No one doubts the fact that decisions affecting Canada today are made here, in this place, and in the legislative assemblies of the provinces and territories of our country. Of course, the House is just one part of Parliament and Parliament itself is just one part of Canada's governing system.

As we all know, Canada is a constitutional monarchy. I imagine that it will be in place for quite some time. Historically, the Crown has played an important role in the evolution of our country. In 1982, the Queen of Canada, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, signed our Constitution and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. These two pillars of democracy help ensure the stability of our country and guarantee the rights and freedoms of its citizens. Although our attachment to the Crown has historical and cultural significance, its role is for the most part based on formalities. These are the principles that underpin our democracy.

The role of the sovereign in our constitutional monarchy is tightly prescribed. Although the last stage in the passage of our laws remains royal assent, most of the work of representing and defending citizens' interests is done in this place by its members.

*[English]*

Parliament is where the issues of the day should be debated and decided. The sovereign, the Governor General do not interfere in politics or these decisions. Yes, they can advise a prime minister, but they cannot reject the government's requests or undermine its position. This is the government, we are the Parliament, and they are separate. In our constitutional monarchy, the Crown's function in our government is to be a bedrock for our Constitution. It is more than a symbol, a sign; it is something we can put our hats on and our hands around to ensure that our Constitution is guaranteed, and it should transcend the political debates of the day.

The stability of our democratic institutions gives Canadians assurance and peace of mind from coast to coast to coast, so that we, as elected representatives, can focus on the issues that matter the most to Canadians. Those issues are clear, issues like the cost of living, dental care, housing affordability, the health of our economy, the health of our seniors and that of our planet.



Canada is free now and with all of our efforts will remain so. Wherever we sit in the House, I am confident that we all share that goal for a free and vibrant democracy. Let the sovereign, His Majesty King Charles III, King of Canada, be a symbol of that freedom and of our shared purpose as a country to remain free, to remain with dignity and liberty whatever the issues of the day upon which we have, and will continue to have, differences of opinion. Differences will exist in the House, they exist in Canada, but we share in common our goal of a united, passionate, just and free country.

The sovereign also acts as a symbol of what does unite our country. As you know, Madam Speaker, the actual presence of the Crown is often felt more immediately for Canadians through the sovereign's representatives in Canada, which are the Governor General and the lieutenant governors who perform most of the constitutional functions of the sovereign in his name.

The vice-regal representatives work tirelessly, whether awarding honours to Canadians and celebrating that which is best in our communities to performing their constitutional duties. They are a remarkable group of dedicated Canadians who, in their work, highlight the many people who contribute to our country day after day. We get honours sitting in the House, but the people who do that work are sometimes honoured by the Governor General or lieutenant governors of our provinces to ensure that they are honoured for what they do to keep Canada whole. They contribute to our great country. Our vice-regals, whether through formal awards in the arts, sciences, humanities, academic achievement in our high schools and universities or by recognizing the many volunteers who give their time to their communities, are fundamental to the way we live in Canada.

Canada's democracy and how Canadians govern themselves are important topics. It is absolutely clear that we should have discussions about our constitutional democracy, which is valid. One of the ways democracy has been resilient as a form of government is that it is best placed to deliver for its citizens, and that is what democracy does best, and doing so in a way that respects and helps fulfill their rights as human beings and as citizens. That is a bedrock part of democracy. This is the work we need to do together as elected representatives in this place to deliver on the needs of Canadians in uncertain times.

While many of the financial challenges we face are indeed global in nature, we experience them locally in our homes, on our streets and in our communities. That is why the government has taken on these issues of affordability, especially housing affordability but also the cost of living, extremely seriously. Housing affordability is a real and growing concern and should be a paramount issue for everyone in the House. It is the highest issue for young Canadians and people living in my riding. They are worried that they will not have the same opportunities as their parents and grandparents to own a home, to build a future.

● (1045)

[Translation]

Over the past two years, housing prices have become unaffordable for far too many people. Many people are being forced to live further and further away from their place of work and the place

### *Business of Supply*

they grew up, when, often, that is where they want to build their future. Housing affordability is a complex issue. There is no miracle solution. In the 2022 budget, the government presented a long-term plan to address housing affordability for Canadians. This plan has three pillars, which are to help Canadians save to buy a house, to curb speculation and to increase the supply of housing, something that we should all be working on together.

[English]

There is more to be done to address affordability in housing and the cost of living beyond home ownership. This past September, the government introduced Bill C-31, an act respecting cost of living relief measures related to dental care and rental housing.

Many Canadians have no access to a dental services plan. They do not use those services because of the cost, yet we know that a lack of access to dental care services not only causes harm to children but also has an impact on the whole health care system. It has to be addressed. It is one of those urgent matters that we need to share in the House. The government recognizes the need to provide interim dental benefits for children under 12 years old, while working toward the development of a long-term national dental care program.

Bill C-31 proposes a rental housing benefit act to provide a one-time payment to help low-income renters.

Together, these targeted measures will provide real benefits to Canadians who need them the most as we face global cost of living increases. This is a crisis that we need to address. We have been doing it for the last seven years as a government with the Canada child benefit and other measures that have attempted to reduce poverty and start to shrink the gap between the rich and the poor in our country. That work needs to continue and to be done day after day.

There are other issues on our government's agenda that also take priority over the motion that has been suggested today. The government is focused on delivering the needs of Canadians by taking action on climate change. The OECD trust—

● (1050)

[Translation]

**Mr. Mario Simard:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I am having difficulty following my colleague. We are supposed to be talking about the monarchy, not the Liberal Party platform. I am not sure where he is going with his speech, but I do not see the connection between the motion before us and what he is saying.

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**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** We know debate can range widely, but it must be focused on the bills or motions before the House.

I would therefore ask the parliamentary secretary to ensure that his speech relates to the motion. He may continue.

[*English*]

**Hon. Robert Oliphant:** Madam Speaker, there is a thread between what I have been saying throughout this speech and the motion being presented today, as well as in line with the questions from the last intervention.

Each of those questions talked about the legitimacy of a motion like this while the country has strong and very persistent problems. It takes up the time of the House, so it is absolutely critical that we look at the question of the day and wonder why the Bloc would bring the motion today. It is absolutely fair to do that.

It is also fair to talk about our more important issues. As I said, those more important issues relate to what is on the minds of Canadians. Yes, democracy is on their minds. Yes, constitutional monarchy may be a topic brought up once a year.

Fundamentally, people are worried about the cost of living. They are worried about peace in our world. They are worried about affordable housing. They are worried about issues such as ensuring we have good dental care. They want us to address the issue of climate change. Those are the kinds of things they want us to do.

The thread that draws it back to the question is that we have the privilege of doing that because we have a bedrock, fundamental constitutional monarchy that gives us the freedom to be in this place. It gives us the freedom to have this discussion. It gives us the freedom to have a government that is elected. A minority government needs to listen and it needs to be aware of the demands of all parties in the House in an attempt to devise an agenda that will meet the needs of Canadians. We do that because we have a dependable, fundamental, rock-solid constitutional monarchy.

We have confidence in the Crown, which is able to represent something well beyond us. It gets us out of the everyday discussions we have and puts us above politics to the things that matter the most in our society. We are able to do that because we have democratic institutions that we have fought to have for decades. For a century and a half, people have fought to keep this democracy alive and well.

Fundamentally, we gather today as people of privilege. We gather today honouring a past and building toward a future. That future is absolutely dependent upon people having the things they need to live their lives, like affordable housing and a climate that is not racking disaster on their neighbourhoods and communities. We need to ensure that we address the issue of climate change.

We absolutely need to do this and this government will continue to do that because we are bent on delivering for Canadians and Quebecers. We know what is also on the minds of Quebecers. We know that they are concerned about the cost of living. We know that Quebecers are concerned about housing prices. We know that Quebecers are concerned about climate change. Canadians and Quebecers share those absolute fundamental goals and desires in

society. That is why we address them everyday, and we do that in this place because we have a system of government that Canadians trust. Canadians trust our ability to gather here and do our work with the freedom, grace and dignity they give us.

• (1055)

[*Translation*]

We know that the economy and fighting climate change go hand in hand, and that is why the government continues to support green innovation in Canada and projects that create—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Order.

I am sorry to have to interrupt the member. The member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert on a point of order.

**Mr. Denis Trudel:** Madam Speaker, we have just been subjected to a 10-minute speech on housing, and now my colleague seems intent on talking about climate change for the next 10 minutes. The motion before us today is about the monarchy. That is what it is about. Certain tangents are acceptable, but members should spend at least a little time talking about the subject of the motion.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I was listening to the parliamentary secretary and I know that he made a reference to the monarchy less than two minutes ago. What is more, he does not have 10 minutes remaining in his speech, but rather one minute and 26 seconds. He will have the opportunity to participate in the period for questions and comments.

I would remind members, parliamentary secretaries and ministers that they are to ensure that the discussion is directly related to today's motion when they are making their speech.

The hon. parliamentary secretary has one minute and 30 seconds to conclude his speech.

[*English*]

**Hon. Robert Oliphant:** Madam Speaker, I will argue again that absolutely everything I have said is relevant to this motion, because we have a constitutional monarchy. We have had a constitutional monarchy in the past; I think for as long as I live we will have a constitutional monarchy, and I am glad for that.

Canada has a system of government that works for Canadians. It works to develop the appropriate responses, and it does not get sidetracked on issues that should not take all of our attention. The issues that should take our attention are issues of cost of living, of affordable housing, of human rights and of peace in our world. Those are the kinds of things we can discuss here because we have a constitutional monarchy. They are directly related. They are absolutely embedded in each other, and we will continue to do that.

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Canadians will have trust in us when they do not think we are playing games in this place. They will have trust in us when they think we absolutely value what they value and care about what they care about. I will continue to defend that with every member of this House who wants to be part of that very important process.

[Translation]

**Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ):** Madam Speaker, my colleague talked about the 1982 Constitution and its association with the Crown. He is trying to tell us that the symbols are unimportant, but there are symbols in a democracy. Anyway, we usually get rid of symbols when they outlive their usefulness.

I would remind my colleague that not a single premier of Quebec has ever signed the Constitution since its patriation in 1982, a process in which the Crown played an essential role.

What is more, I am unaware of any Acadian descendants, including myself, who are not deeply offended by the minister's comments and his complacency toward a Crown that is guilty of genocide against Acadians.

[English]

**Hon. Robert Oliphant:** Madam Speaker, it is absolutely important for me to reiterate that I did not say symbols were not important. Symbols are very important. The symbolic nature of the Crown continues to edify, continues to support and continues at times to challenge us to be better than ourselves.

My husband is also a descendant of Acadians. I know that story extremely well and I value that story very well. It is an important story. It is a story about the past, and as we move into the future, we want to value every single *Canadien et Canadienne*, absolutely. We need to do that and we will continue to do it.

● (1100)

**Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I can only imagine that Canadians who are tuning in to this debate this morning and watching us here in the House must be very confused and disappointed. Why? It is because they are worried about heating their homes this winter. They are worried about putting food on the table because of food inflation. They are worried about the housing crisis and so many other things.

I know the hon. member addressed this in some of his comments, but I wonder if he could reiterate how important it is that when people tune in to Parliament, in order to maintain the credibility of this place, they expect us to be talking about issues that are relevant to them in their everyday lives, and not about the monarchy.

**Hon. Robert Oliphant:** Madam Speaker, the fundamental basis of my speech was to ensure that we bring this House back to the matters that Canadians are concerned about. We will disagree on how to solve those problems. We will disagree on whether or not we should have certain taxes or not certain taxes, certain programs or not certain programs, but I do not doubt that anyone in this House is concerned about those.

We go back to our ridings every weekend and hear the stories. We hear people's worries and concerns, and our job is to bring them back to the House today. Not a single resident of Don Valley West

has raised the issue of the constitutional monarchy to me. I will be very willing to talk to them if they do, and I will be happy to raise the issue in the House, but right now, that is not what they are talking about. They are talking about bread-and-butter issues. They are also talking about world peace, about Canada's role in the world and about human rights, but not about that issue.

**Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague brought up two words, “freedom” and “privilege”.

Cassidy Caron, president of the Métis National Council, is calling on the Crown to apologize for its participation in residential schools. Paul Andrew, a residential school survivor, said the Queen was also a treaty member and had an obligation to live up to agreements that the Crown has never lived up to, such as the participation of the monarchy in slavery. Not everybody in this place we now call Canada has had that freedom and privilege we are talking about. In fact, many of us, in real time, are still fighting for freedom, still fighting for our rights, still fighting for our privilege, an erasure of genocide and colonial history that the Crown has participated in globally.

I would ask the hon. member if he agrees with me that the Crown has participated in the violent genocide of groups of peoples across the globe.

**Hon. Robert Oliphant:** Madam Speaker, as the Prime Minister has said repeatedly, there is no more important relationship than our relationship with indigenous Canadians. There is no more important work that we have to do than to get the hard work of reconciliation done. That will take the efforts of every single one of us, and it will take our work, day in and day out, not only to correct the tremendous historical injustices but also to make sure that the current events, the current inclusion, the current dignity and the current economic welfare needs of indigenous Canadians are absolutely met.

I take the challenge. I respect the question, and I will work with the member and everyone in the House who wants to make sure that Crown-indigenous relations are improved and that we continue to have reconciliation.

**Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP):** Madam Speaker, I would like to pick up on a previous question asked by our colleague from Cowichan—Malahat—Langford. If we are going to make progress on the priorities of all Canadians, as the parliamentary secretary spoke about in his speech, we need to fix the way we elect members to the House. The only consistent outcomes of our current voting system are distorted results and disillusioned voters. We need proportional representation in this country.

Can the parliamentary secretary comment on when the governing party will get serious about improving our democracy and following through on what it promised over 1,800 times, that the 2015 election would be the last under first past the post?

● (1105)

**Hon. Robert Oliphant:** Madam Speaker, I think my speech had more to do with the motion than the question does today. However, I think it is a valid question.

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The question of electoral reform should be on all our minds all the time. It was a debate that we had in the 2015-2017 period. It was a hard debate. I had three town halls on electoral reform, three large town halls. It came out that about 50% of my constituents wanted a change to the voting system and 50% did not. Among the 50% who wanted change, there were three different groups of people, and they did not come up with a common idea.

We need to have that discussion. Just like the motion today, I do not think it is on the top of the agenda for Canadians. The issues of cost of living, affordable housing, climate change and human rights really are more important to Canadians than that particular issue, but we will always be open to improving our democracy in a variety of ways.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I want to raise an issue that the hon. member made reference to, in terms of how he has not had any constituents raising the issue of the Crown with him.

In my 10-plus years as a parliamentarian, I cannot recall one incident when someone came to talk to me about our getting rid of the Crown. I just cannot recall any of that nature. When we talk about the constitutional changes, again, I have not had anyone approach me, not that I can recall offhand.

Given that as a background and the context of the communities that are having so many challenges, such as the pandemic, inflation and dealing with issues such as seniors, health care, long-term care and mental health, I am wondering if my colleague and friend can provide his thoughts with regard to why we are debating this today.

**Hon. Robert Oliphant:** Madam Speaker, I would agree with the parliamentary secretary. The issues I hear about in Don Valley West are issues of affordability. They can be about affordable housing or housing affordability. They can be about the inclusion of newcomers into the country. The people in Don Valley West, particularly in Thorncliffe Park, are newcomers to this country and looking for a future, yet they are not able to get the kinds of jobs they need to get ahead.

They are still fighting to get accreditation in professions in which they want to work. They are still fighting to get engagement in society, because we still have persistent and systemic racism in our society. I recognize that.

We need to address these issues day in and day out: economic equality, gender equality and the rights of newcomers to make sure that they have every opportunity and possibility to have a better life in this country. Those are the issues I hear about, not about opening the constitution, not about the monarchy and not about the issues that are on the agenda today.

I want to get the House back to the issues, despite the fact that we sometimes have questions from the opposition that are difficult or hard to answer on those issues. We will continue to do it.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I will begin by saying that I will be sharing my time with my colleague from Mégantic—L'Érable.

The subject today on opposition day is the motion moved by the Bloc Québécois. Is the issue raised in the motion relevant?

I could say yes, the same way Canada's intervention in support of Ukraine is relevant, or the treatment of the Uighurs by the Chinese Communist regime is relevant. There is no shortage of important topics in the House of Commons. Everyone has their own opinion on various topics, and the relationship with the monarchy is no different.

The real question is, is it essential that this issue be debated at a time when Quebecers are more concerned about the impact of inflation on their lives?

Inflation and interest rates keep going up and up, even though the Prime Minister and the Governor of the Bank of Canada said not so long ago that there was no need to worry. I wonder how many people and young families decided to buy a house or a new car because interest rates were really low and they had been reassured by their Prime Minister, who was spending taxpayer money recklessly while saying that it was the right time to do it, that interest rates were low and would remain low for a long time. This was an extremely dangerous attitude that is now being confirmed as a disaster.

Let me get back to the Bloc Québécois.

What are the Bloc members doing today? They want to talk about the monarchy and changing the Constitution that has governed the country for over 150 years. The Bloc used to be the farm team for the Parti Québécois, but it has found a new vocation as the Parti Québécois's big brother. After throwing themselves wholeheartedly into the last Quebec election, the Bloc troops returned to Ottawa disappointed, having only succeeded in getting three Parti Québécois candidates elected. The leader of the Bloc threw his full political weight behind his separatist friends, but the result was very disappointing. That too was a disaster. In a sign of the times, Quebec chose a government that is prioritizing the economy and growth, rather than division.

Quite simply, the Bloc claims to speak for Quebec's National Assembly. In the recent election campaign, the Bloc went up against the Coalition Avenir Québec, the party now forming government. Now, the Bloc members are claiming to be the political arm of the National Assembly, whereas in truth, they represent three members of the third or fourth opposition party, which does not even have official status. They do not represent the CAQ government. Is there anyone left who believes in the Bloc Québécois's strategy?

When a party is searching for a purpose, a reason to exist, what could be better than talking about the Canadian Constitution?

If we pay attention, we see that the Bloc Québécois is proposing that we sever ties with the monarchy. However, what are they proposing instead? Are they suggesting that we swear allegiance to a president of the republic of Canada? In that case, the Bloc's next motion would be about severing ties with the republic.

As we can see, the Bloc Québécois is searching for a purpose. The Bloc members are looking for an excuse to justify their presence in the House, which they call a foreign parliament.

**An hon. member:** That is true.

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** Madam Speaker, one of my Bloc colleagues just said that it is true. He considers himself to be in a foreign parliament. That is the background for our speeches. I am not making it up. This form of belligerent rhetoric is the Bloc Québécois's standard discourse.

The fact remains that today's motion is part of a long tradition of political spinning by the Bloc. The Bloc members get up in the morning and wonder what could get people talking today, what would make a good headline. They find an issue they can spin in a way that will make the news and be fun for them. They try to figure out how they can make the federal parties look bad, meaning the Liberals, the Conservatives and the NDP.

As I always say, the easiest job in Ottawa is being the leader of the Bloc Québécois. They just have to spin issues and will never have to shape the country's destiny. Today, the Bloc Québécois chose to spin an issue so as to help their Parti Québécois friends in the National Assembly.

My priority is to influence the Liberal government so it looks after Quebecers' future properly. The current economic situation and the imminent recession require that federal elected representatives who believe in economic success from coast to coast work together for that common goal.

The rhetoric from the leader of the Bloc Québécois is not going to impress anyone whose mortgage is getting so big that the only option is to give the keys to the bank.

• (1110)

No one is interested in that rhetoric when groceries cost 11.4% more, when families have to cut back on their meals and when food banks are struggling to meet demand. To use a very Québécois expression, we wonder, "What planet are they living on?"

Did the people who voted for the Bloc expect their members of Parliament to be this disconnected? In the last provincial election in Quebec, I expected to see several Bloc members take up the baton of sovereignty and jump into the fray. If they want a country, they need to work from Quebec City. Instead, they chose to stay on the bench and pray hard for the junior team to win. It was a wasted effort, however, as only three members of the Parti Québécois managed to get elected. The dream of a country called Quebec is just that: a dream.

As a result, they needed to find a purpose. What better way than wasting an important day in the House of Commons proposing that we create a republic of Canada so they can come back later with another motion to abolish the republic? The Bloc strategy is very easy to understand, and I have just lost 10 minutes of my time explaining it. I would have preferred to find ways to help Quebecers pay their mortgage and put food on the table for their children.

**Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ):** Madam Speaker, in his speech, my colleague said that he did not understand why it was important to have this debate today. I would simply remind him

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that, during the worst of the pandemic, there was an opposition day in which the Conservative Party told us that oil was irreplaceable and that we needed a day to celebrate oil.

It is clear to me that oil is what excites and motivates the Conservative Party. For us, it is the future of Quebec. My colleague said earlier that the junior team had unfortunately not been elected. What I hear from the Conservative Party in Quebec is that they will not stand up for Bill 21 nor for Bill 96. If there is a party that is out of touch with the interests of Quebec, it is the Conservative Party, as my colleague showed in his speech today.

• (1115)

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Jonquière for the question.

First, I would remind him that in Quebec, there are still millions of cars on the road, so people need fuel, and that is quite natural until other modes of transportation are established. We know that electric cars generate a lot of pollution at the battery design stage. Once we have hydrogen cars, as we are currently seeing in Australia, that will be wonderful, but for now, we will still need oil for a few years until the transition is complete.

These attacks on the oil industry need to stop. In Alberta, this industry has taken extremely strong measures to improve how oil is extracted. If we are talking about gas, which is very important, just look at what is currently happening in Europe. The Russians have tightened the grip on Europe by reducing their gas exports, meaning that countries such as Germany are going to freeze this winter. Talking about oil and gas only makes sense. It is normal.

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I was here during the leader of the Bloc Québécois's speech. If I am not mistaken, he said or suggested that the Canadian Constitution is some kind of irrelevant foreign beast.

However, the Constitution includes the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which Quebecers use every day to defend their rights.

Does the member opposite agree that the Constitution and the charter are irrelevant to Quebecers?

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his excellent question.

This is the issue with having Bloc Québécois members working as federal MPs in the federal Parliament. MPs should consider and focus on the common good in Canada, which obviously includes Quebec.

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Quebec has twice decided to remain part of the Canadian federation. Our duty is therefore to ensure that Quebeckers are happy in their country. As members from the province of Quebec, we work on issues that affect Quebeckers.

However, the issue raised by the Bloc today is of no interest to the people. What the people need is a stronger, more stable economy and lower inflation. That is what is important, and that is what I am working toward.

[English]

**Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech, which was in response to an earlier speech by the leader of the Bloc Québécois.

In his speech, the leader of the Bloc Québécois asked this open-ended question: Who are Canadians and who are Quebeckers? I thought he was going to talk about moms and dads who are worried about their mortgages, university students who are worried about their future and grandparents who are worried about their retirement fund, but instead he launched into a very interesting historical and philosophical discussion about the differences between people from Quebec and people from the rest of the country. I do not speak for them; I speak for my own province, of course, but I suspect that the differences are much smaller than the similarities among people from coast to coast.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:** Madam Speaker, as a matter of fact, when we consider the country from coast to coast to coast, we notice that every community and every region has its own distinct character. Obviously, Quebec is very different because our main language, our only language, is French. Consequently, our way of being and our way of life are very different from other parts of Canada.

However, aside from the language component, our daily lives are much the same. When people get up in the morning, they have to pay the bills, buy food and pay for housing. It is the same situation everywhere in Canada, and that is why we must all work together to combat this inflation that is hurting all Canadians, including Quebeckers.

• (1120)

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles for his speech.

We are here because our colleagues from the Bloc Québécois decided to present an opposition motion in the House of Commons from which I will read the preamble, which I find interesting. It states that “Canada is a democratic state” and that the “House believes in the principle of equality for all”.

I will focus on those two points from the Bloc motion day because I do believe that “Canada is a democratic state” and that the “House believes in the principle of equality for all”. That is why I prefer today to talk about the fact that 100% of Canadians are suffering every day from the cost of inflation caused by the costly New Democrat-Liberal coalition.

When we look at the numbers, we realize that 80% of Canadians, including Quebeckers, are worried about their finances and wonder

if they will be able to make ends meet at the end of the month and pay their bills and groceries each week, while 72% of Canadians feel they pay too much in taxes.

On January 1, 2023, the Liberals are preparing to further increase what they will be taking from the paycheques of Canadians and Quebeckers. They are about to further raise the carbon tax, which will create even more inflation and make absolutely everything cost more. The cost of food alone has risen by more than 11%, something that has not been seen in the last 40 years.

In addition, inflation remains at about 7%. There were reports that inflation had come down slightly, but it only came down by 0.1%, primarily because of a drop in the price of gas, but that did not happen everywhere. Unfortunately, people will not benefit from it for long because, very soon, the Liberals will turn that drop into an increase for all Canadians.

Let me also quote a few figures from Statistics Canada. Last month, the price of meat was up 7.6% compared to last year, dairy was up nearly 10%, baked goods were up 14.8% and vegetables, 11.8%. These figures do not paint a complete picture, however.

It is clear something is going on when you go to the grocery store and see how people have been acting over the past few months. People are looking for products, they cannot find what they are looking for, or they are leaving products on the shelves because they simply cannot afford it. Another change is that people are going to grocery stores as soon as the flyers come out so they can take advantage of the discounts as quickly as possible. That way, they can save money on products that inflation would otherwise prevent them from buying. That is the reality.

What is in store for us tomorrow? The Bank of Canada is going to raise its key interest rate again, making housing even more expensive and making home ownership even less likely for young families and young people entering the workforce. That is the reality. We do not know by how much the rate will go up, but it will definitely go up.

The Liberals keep saying that they are not responsible for inflation because it is caused by the global economy and all sorts of other reasons and people. However, that is not what the head of the Bank of Canada thinks. According to Mr. Macklem, inflation is the result of many factors that are becoming purely domestic. In other words, inflation in Canada is created by Canada.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The hon. member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert on a point of order.

**Mr. Denis Trudel:** Madam Speaker, I think there must be a conspiracy between the Liberals and the Conservatives because the whole lot of them are completely off topic. My colleague is talking about inflation when the topic of the motion is the monarchy. Where is the connection?

There may be one because the monarchy costs us dearly and we could, in abolishing it, solve some of the problems we have in Quebec. However, my colleague is still completely off topic.

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**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I would like to once again remind members to make sure their speeches make some reference to the motion that is before the House today. I know members have a bit of latitude in their speeches, but they need to reference the motion often.

The hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable may continue.

• (1125)

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Madam Speaker, I refer to the motion.

What is driving inflation to this point? Our national debt. The national debt has increased by \$100 billion, despite Liberal promises. We remember the promise they made in 2015 to run small deficits for three years and then return to a balanced budget. That was forgotten and there is now a deficit of \$100 billion.

Before the crisis in Ukraine, the Liberals increased our national debt by \$500 billion, \$200 billion of which was in no way related to COVID-19 expenditures. The Prime Minister's mindset was plain to see when he said in his inaugural speech that it was time to borrow because interest rates would remain low for decades to come. I again refer to the motion, which states at point (ii) that the "House believes in the principle of equality for all".

Unfortunately for the poor, the price of inflation means that they cannot buy and acquire goods. That is the reality and I thank the Bloc Québécois for giving me that opening and this opportunity to talk about equality for all, here in Canada, because it is important. Unfortunately, due to the costly NDP-Liberal coalition, that is no longer a reality; the poorest are finding it increasingly difficult to buy most things.

Let us talk a bit about the Bloc Québécois. If there is one good thing about their motion today, it is that it shows Quebeckers what the Bloc Québécois's main priority is. Contrary to what I have just said and the concerns of Quebeckers each day, the Bloc Québécois has shown today what its priority is. The Bloc Québécois supports a general federal carbon tax for all Canadians because they refuse to vote in favour of our motion to not increase the carbon tax for all Canadians. How ironic that the Bloc Québécois should support a federal tax on all the provinces.

The Bloc Québécois and its leader have always claimed they want to be the voice of Quebec's National Assembly in Ottawa. Unfortunately, what we have just seen proves that the Bloc Québécois talks a good game, but when the time comes to act, it cannot deliver.

Quebec just held an election to which the Bloc Québécois devoted all its energy. All the Bloc Québécois members worked really hard. They invested resources, and the leader gave speeches in support of one political party in Quebec's National Assembly, the Parti Québécois. Did the Bloc Québécois, the Bloc members and the party staffers who claim to represent Quebec's National Assembly remain neutral in the recent provincial campaign? The answer is obviously no. They dedicated their hearts, their energy, their resources and their speeches to supporting the candidates from a single political party, Quebec's separatist political party. It is the only party whose ultimate goal is Quebec independence, which is far from the goal shared by all the members of Quebec's National Assembly. I

think if we did a quick survey of the National Assembly, we would see that most do not want Quebec independence.

In the election, only three Parti Québécois candidates won seats, despite all the resources that the Bloc Québécois had put into campaigning in Quebec. After campaigning against all the other parties represented in the National Assembly, and after Quebeckers only elected three Parti Québécois members, the Bloc Québécois still claims to be the voice of Quebec's National Assembly in Ottawa. That is not true, and the motion is clear proof of that. Rather than talk about Quebeckers who cannot make ends meet, rather than condemn the Liberal government's encroachment on areas of provincial jurisdiction, the Bloc Québécois chose to ask the House of Commons to debate an issue that only got three members elected to the National Assembly.

In closing, I just want to state that I speak for many Quebeckers when I say that people do not really care whose face is on the \$20 bill. What they care about is having enough \$20 bills in their pockets to pay for their groceries at the end of the month.

• (1130)

**Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Mégantic—L'Érable for that display of contempt. I feel compelled today to repeat, repeat, repeat that we can do more than one thing at a time, like discuss inflation as well as other topics.

I also feel the need to clarify, clarify, clarify that not all anti-monarchists vote for the Bloc. There are also Liberal and Conservative anti-monarchists.

My colleague is trying to put all the blame on the Bloc, but I would like to know what he thinks about the fact that there are monarchists on his side who currently agree more with us about abolishing the monarchy.

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Madam Speaker, I listened carefully to my hon. colleague's question, and even though he repeated it over and over and over again, I found it difficult to follow his train of thought because, at the very end, he said that we support the monarchy, but that we do not support it.

I wish my colleague had listened more carefully to my speech, because what I said is that Quebeckers are currently more concerned about whether they can afford their groceries at the end of each month, not whose face appears on the \$20 bill.

The Bloc Québécois chose to take a debate that started in the Quebec National Assembly and try to turn it into a debate in the House of Commons today, because the Bloc members still see themselves as white knights and they want to save their little brothers in the Quebec National Assembly. I sadly feel the need to repeat that there are three PQ members in the Quebec National Assembly.

*Speaker's Ruling**[English]*

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is not too often I find myself in agreement with members of the Conservative Party on some of these points, so I do not think I will say this too often. I wonder why the Bloc would bring this forward. I think it has a lot more to do with internal politics within the Bloc caucus than it does the reality of life beyond the Bloc caucus here in Ottawa.

The reality of life, whether in Quebec, Manitoba or anywhere else in Canada, is that there are issues related to the pandemic. We can talk about inflation or health care. Health care is a major issue in the province of Quebec. They want to see a higher sense of co-operation between the national government and the province on a wide spectrum of issues, if there is any reflection in terms of constituents I represent.

Based on the motion brought forward by the Bloc, I wonder if my colleague would agree that it is completely out of touch not only with the people of Quebec but with issues related to Canada—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The hon. member is making a speech as opposed to just asking a question, and there are other people who want to ask questions.

The hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Madam Speaker, I am a little surprised that my colleague from Winnipeg North said that he agrees with part of my speech. I hope it is the part where I was speaking about the costly Liberal-NDP coalition, which will result in Canadians receiving a smaller paycheck on January 1.

Does my colleague agree with the part where I said that the Liberal Party will soon increase the carbon tax, which will make everything more expensive across the country? I really want to know if he does. I gather that it is that part of my speech and I am very honoured that my colleague has taken that position.

*[English]*

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, no one in my riding of Cowichan—Malahat—Langford is talking about this issue, so I agree with the member on that point.

The Bloc motion also fails to mention that any amendment to our relationship with the Crown would also require the unanimous consent of the 10 provinces of Canada. Look at the problems the provinces are dealing with. In British Columbia we have an opioid crisis and a health care crisis. There are all kinds of things.

I do not think the provincial governments of Canada would look too favourably on having this interrupt their schedules looking after their constituents' needs.

• (1135)

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Mr. Speaker, to have unanimous consent, it would take the consent of at least one province. To have the consent of one province, it would take a province with a separatist gov-

ernment in power. Unfortunately for the Bloc, in the last election the Parti Québécois elected three members to the National Assembly of Quebec.

\* \* \*

*[English]***AMENDMENTS AT COMMITTEE STAGE TO BILL C-31**

**The Speaker:** Following the presentation earlier today of the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Health on Bill C-31, an act respecting cost of living relief measures related to dental care and rental housing, the Chair wishes to draw the attention of members to a procedural issue related to amendments adopted by the committee during clause-by-clause consideration of the bill.

*[Translation]*

As the House knows, the Speaker does not normally intervene in committee matters. However, in cases where a committee has exceeded its authority, particularly in relation to bills, the Speaker has a responsibility to ensure that certain fundamental rules and practices are properly observed. As Speaker Fraser explained on April 28, 1992, at page 9801 of the Debates:

When a bill is referred to a standing or legislative committee of the House, that committee is only empowered to adopt, amend or negative the clauses found in that piece of legislation and to report the bill to the House with or without amendments. The committee is restricted in its examination in a number of ways. It cannot infringe on the financial initiative of the Crown...no matter how tempting this may be.

*[English]*

The two amendments in question relate to part 2 of Bill C-31, which would enact the rental housing benefit act and provide the establishment of a one-time rental housing benefit for eligible persons who have paid rent in 2022 for their principal residence and who apply for the benefit.

The first amendment would modify clause 3 of the bill, which proposes to modify, in subsection 4(2) of the rental housing benefit act, the calculation of the 30% rent-to-income threshold set out in paragraph 4(1)(g), by increasing the percentage of the payment to be taken into account for rent payments that include board or other services from 75% to 90%.

The second amendment seeks to amend the same clause and proposes to eliminate, in subsection 4(3) of the rental housing benefit act, the rule that would reduce the amount of rent taken into account in the calculation of the 30% rent-to-income threshold. This is set out in paragraph 4(1)(g), paid in 2022 by cohabiting spouses or common-law partners living separately on the reference day.

The chair of the committee ruled each amendment inadmissible because they lacked the required royal recommendation. Both decisions were challenged and overturned. The committee then debated each amendment and adopted them.

The committee chair was correct in the assessment of both amendments relaxing the eligibility criteria for the rental housing benefit. This would result in a greater charge on the treasury than is provided for in the bill since more people could have access to the benefit.



• (1140)

[Translation]

Page 772 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, reminds us that:

Since an amendment may not infringe upon the financial initiative of the Crown, it is inadmissible if it imposes a charge on the public treasury, or if it extends the objects or purposes or relaxes the conditions and qualifications specified in the royal recommendation.

Consequently, these amendments need to be accompanied by a royal recommendation.

[English]

While the Chair appreciates the difficulties that can arise when examining a bill in committee, it is important to remember that a committee must carry out its mandate without exceeding its powers. By adopting an amendment that infringes on the financial initiatives of the Crown, a committee exceeds its powers.

[Translation]

Consequently, the Chair must declare null and void the two aforementioned amendments to clause 3 of Bill C-31, adopted by the Standing Committee on Health, and direct that the amendments no longer form part of the bill as reported to the House.

[English]

In addition, I am ordering that a reprint of Bill C-31 be published as early as possible for use by the House at report stage to replace the reprint ordered by the committee.

I thank members for their attention.

\* \* \*

### BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

#### OPPOSITION MOTION—TIES BETWEEN THE CANADIAN STATE AND THE MONARCHY

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

**Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with my colleague, the member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford.

I am pleased to speak in Parliament today in support of this motion. I believe that it is time for us to take the next step in asserting and strengthening our democracy, in part by ending our ties with the monarchy.

We are living in an important time. We are seeing attacks against democratic institutions and processes around the world. We here in Canada need to look at what we can do to strengthen and reinforce our own democracy. We cannot sit idly by. It is time for us in Canada to reflect on our own institutions and our own processes. It is time to ask, how democratic are we in reality?

[Translation]

It is 2022, and we have a king. We have been independent since 1867. We have had our own foreign policy since the 1930s. We repatriated the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982. In 2022, we still have a king.

### *Business of Supply*

I think it is legitimate to debate this question, about whether we should keep moving toward a more democratic system.

[English]

I recognize that there are people in this country who do support the monarchy and there are people with emotional connection. My own grandmother, who was born in England, camped out to witness the coronation of the Queen in 1953. My grandmother felt a direct connection going back to World War II, when during the Nazi bombardments the Queen and the monarchy were a symbol for many in England of the resistance at that time.

For many indigenous peoples, the relationship with the Crown is of significance. That is with whom the treaties were signed. It is a relationship going back in history and we must acknowledge this.

However, the question is this. Here, in 2022, are we not at the point where we can elect or select our head of state, rather than having the head of state represented by the British Crown?

[Translation]

The answer should be yes. We need to view this question through a modern lens in 2022.

[English]

We must acknowledge the second-ever National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, which has built on the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, making it clear that we must recognize the truth when it comes to Canada's ugly history of colonization. That colonization is rooted in the Crown's control, to its benefit. With the Indian Act, the reserve system, the residential school system, the pillaging of indigenous resources and the genocide of indigenous peoples, the devastating impacts of colonization are still evident today.

Reconciliation means carrying on a journey of decolonization and this must include ending our ties with the British monarchy. The monarchy is a symbol of colonialism for many indigenous peoples and for many people who have come to Canada from around the world. Many people left countries for a better life because of the conflict, impoverishment and repression waged by the British Crown. Many left from countries that had struggles for independence and where resistance was brutally quashed by Britain and those who served the British Crown, including India, Malaysia and Cyprus. The list of countries goes on.

• (1145)

[Translation]

Reconciliation also means embarking on the path to decolonization. It means severing ties with the monarchy. I am thinking about all the people who left their countries in search of a better future because of the wars, economic hardships and repressive measures inflicted on them in the name of the British Crown.

*Business of Supply**[English]*

We must be clear. The monarchy is a symbol of colonialism, a symbol of slavery, a symbol of oppression, a symbol of repression and a symbol of conflict.

We know that in recent years the monarchy has engaged in a fair bit of public relations. It has said sorry for some things, but sorry will not cut it. Countries like Jamaica are demanding reparations from Britain. Countries like Barbados have done away with the monarchy entirely.

*[Translation]*

It is time for Canada to boldly take a step forward on the path to decolonization and away from the monarchy. There are steps we can take right now. Elected members of Parliament are asked to swear allegiance to the King. This is an anachronism that we can get rid of. I would like to point out that Sol Mamakwa, an NDP colleague in Ontario, and many Québec Solidaire and Parti Québécois members in the Quebec National Assembly have refused to swear allegiance to the King. We should be swearing an oath to the Canadians who sent us here.

I have long had many people asking me why Canada is not an independent country and why we do not swear allegiance to Canadians instead of to the Queen or the King. However, we need to do more. How democratic is it to have an elected House of Commons and an unelected Senate, a Senate modelled on the House of Lords, whose duty is to check our democratic excesses?

*[English]*

While there are good people in the Senate, it is profoundly undemocratic. We have to recognize that. I believe the logical thing to do is abolish the Senate, and I am proud that the NDP has always stood for the abolition of the Senate.

*[Translation]*

Canada lectures other countries around the world on the importance of being a democratic country, of having a democracy. Of course we have an elected House of Commons, but we cannot lecture other countries because we are far from having a perfect system. We have a king, we have a Senate where senators are appointed and we have a Parliament that is elected through a first-past-the-post system, where parties like the Liberal Party form a government with less than 33% of the popular vote.

*[English]*

We must strengthen our democracy. We must bring in electoral reform to ensure that the voices of Canadians and the will of the Canadian people are truly reflected in their houses of government across our country. We have made some small steps to bring our House into the modern era, including bringing in a hybrid Parliament, but the reality is that the foundations of our Canadian democracy, and certainly our institutions, have a long way to go to be able to strengthen the democracy we claim to believe in.

*[Translation]*

With all due credit to Quebec parliamentarians, we should pay tribute to the leaders of the Quiet Revolution and finally become masters in our own house.

● (1150)

*[English]*

It is time for Canada to move into the modern era, one that is rooted in reconciliation and committed to decolonization and strengthening our democracy. This ought to include ending our ties with the British monarchy.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech.

It is interesting to see someone who has decided to actually participate in the debate. The Bloc Québécois has opened the door and invited the members of the House to take part in a debate capable of generating comments as intelligent as the ones made by my colleague.

How would she characterize the attitude of the Conservatives and Liberals who simply want to ignore the debate, despite the fact that people have been talking about the public's dissatisfaction with institutions? That dissatisfaction is often the result of institutions being maintained even though they are outdated.

Should their attitude be characterized as: (a) lack of courage; (b) crass complacency inherent in a colonial attitude; (c) total ignorance of history; (d) all of the above?

**Ms. Niki Ashton:** Madam Speaker, I would have to go with (d) all of the above.

I am concerned about the fact that very few members are willing to talk about the important matter before the House today. Let us be clear. The King is a symbol that is part of our history and the reality of colonization. If we truly believe in democracy and decolonization, we will take steps that include our ties with the monarchy. As I said, there are a lot of other things we should do to strengthen our democracy. We must have the courage to do them.

*[English]*

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the hon. member has put interesting comments on the record today. I suspect this is just about putting them on the record, unless the member is prepared to indicate that at the end of the day, Senate reform and changing our system of head of state require a constitutional change.

Does the member believe the NDP would like to have a constitutional debate imposed upon Canadians and parliamentarians at all levels? Is this what she believes we should be focusing our attention on? I do not.

**Ms. Niki Ashton:** Madam Speaker, I think it is incumbent upon us as parliamentarians to respect the debate in the House today and track with the reality that many Canadians are sharing: Why do we have a head of state who is a British monarch? Certainly, a growing number of Canadians are incredibly disaffected by our political system, in part because of the fact that our first-past-the-post system is not as democratic as it should be.

I think these are important debates, and I would hope the Liberal government takes them seriously and actually commits to action. However, as I pointed out, the Liberals are in power with only 33% of the popular vote. That result has served them well, and I hope their lack of interest in pursuing this is not rooted in their own self-serving reality. The reality is that Canadians expect better from their democracy and we should be acting on that.

**Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP):** Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Churchill—Keewatinook Aski for bringing some important commentary to today's conversation.

I wonder, as other members have reflected, if the member would like to share more comments on the constitutional implications of how the motion before us would move forward if passed in this place.

**Ms. Niki Ashton:** Madam Speaker, I think we are a mature enough democracy to handle next steps. I spoke of other countries, such as the Barbados, that have moved forward, and Jamaica is considering severing its ties. However, here we are in Canada too scared to deal with this debate in the House of Commons it seems.

I think we can handle what lies ahead. Really, what Canadians expect is parliamentarians who are going to reinforce democracy, which is what we are talking about today.

• (1155)

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Madam Speaker, allow me to present a slightly different view on today's motion brought forward by the Bloc Québécois.

For the constituents of Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, today in the House of Commons we are going to be debating a motion from the Bloc Québécois that acknowledges, in its preamble, that Canada is a democratic state and that the House of Commons believes in the principle of equality for all. Therefore, the motion calls on the House to express a desire to sever ties between the Canadian state and the British monarchy.

When I was approaching today's debate and figuring out how I would speak on it, I thought about what my constituents in Cowichan—Malahat—Langford were coming to my office for and what they were emailing and phoning me about. It is definitely not about the monarchy. People in my riding are very concerned about the rising cost in food. They are very concerned about housing unaffordability and availability. My community is going through an opioids crisis. So many immediate needs are being presented to my constituents. The monarchy is far down the list.

With all the problems we are facing in Canada today, including in the province of Quebec, why has the Bloc Québécois chosen to bring this motion before the House?

### *Business of Supply*

I serve on three committees with members of the Bloc Québécois. I serve on the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security with the member for Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia. She has been a fantastic member to work with, and I often hear her in the House raise the issue of firearms violence in Quebec and illegal firearms. That matters to many Quebecers and many Canadians. Why is the Bloc Québécois not bringing forward a motion centring on that?

I serve on the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food with the member for Berthier—Maskinongé. We have worked together on improving the lot of our farmers, recognizing the link between agriculture and climate change. I know the member has spoken in the House in support of supply management. Again, this is an opportunity that the Bloc could have used today to talk about Canadian farmers and what more we should be doing.

Bloc Québécois members have frequently stood in the House and talked about the environment, climate change and unfair tax policy, all of which could have better been served today instead of the monarchy, and issues about which I think their constituents are very concerned. How do I know this? Because they spend a lot of their time in the House talking about those issues, not the monarchy.

If we were truly concerned with the preamble of the motion today, namely that we are a democratic state and that we believe in the principle of equality for all, it could have dealt with things like the election results we see too often in our first past the post system, where there is such a disconnect between the number of seats a party wins compared to the percentage of the vote it receives. One needs to look only at the recent results in the provincial election of Quebec, where four parties in opposition received between 12% and 15% of the vote but wildly different seat counts.

In House of Commons, the New Democrats received almost double the number of votes of the Bloc Québécois, but we have less seats. The Conservatives received more votes than the Liberals, but they sit in the opposition because of the efficiency of the vote. If we are truly talking about democratic reform, the monarchy is so far down the list. We should be talking about how we elect members, how we tackle the strength and powers of the Prime Minister's Office and the decision-making powers it has in all aspects of governing; and how we can improve more parliamentary oversight over our institutions, the watchdogs we, as a legislative assembly, are supposed to be over executive power and privilege. Those things would have better been served by today's motion instead of talking about the monarchy.

*Business of Supply*

When we talk about today's motion, it is important to realize that if we go into our Constitution, namely, section 41, on any amendment to Canada's relationship with the Crown, it not only requires a resolution from the House and the Senate, but we need to also have all 10 legislative assemblies of the provinces on board. Right now, the provinces are united in trying to get more health care dollars, and that is great to see, but we would never ever see the provinces unanimously support getting rid of the monarchy. They are dealing with far more pressing issues. They are dealing with a health care crisis. They are trying to reform their housing policy. They are trying to deal with an opioid crisis, a toxic drug supply.

• (1200)

There are far more pressing concerns, and I do not think that with all the things my constituents are worried about, my fellow British Columbians and Canadians from coast to coast are worried about that we need to put ourselves into the middle of a constitutional amendment. Other parts of the Constitution would be far more worthy of amending, but not our relationship with the monarchy.

I do not consider myself to be a rabid monarchist. I am pretty laissez-faire about our relationship with the monarchy. It does not bother me in my day-to-day workings, not only as a citizen of our country but also as a member of Parliament. In my humble opinion, monarchs can truly be above politics. They do not have any political affiliations. In fact, if the King were to meddle in domestic politics, that would be seen as highly inappropriate and would probably result in a constitutional crisis.

It is important to realize that our oath to the King, to the heirs and successors of the King, is not to an individual person; it is rather to that person as an embodiment of the Crown as an institution. It is a symbol of the Canadian state, a ship that continues to sail on despite the occasional changing of its captains. The monarch's continual rule provides legislative and policy consistency over long periods of time. Governments come and go but the Crown remains.

Canada is not alone in this. Constitutional monarchies in western Europe include the United Kingdom, Denmark, Spain, Norway, the Netherlands, Monaco, Belgium, Luxembourg and Sweden, countries we would all uphold as successful, with strong social foundations, strong democratic participation and, in many cases, serving as models for what Canada could aspire to be. Asia, Japan and Thailand are also constitutional monarchies as well.

When we are talking about the institution of Parliament, and this is what I like to talk to my students in my riding about, because we often talk about Parliament and the House of Commons interchangeability, Parliament means the House, the Senate and the Crown, which is represented by our Governor General, all three constituent parts that are required to pass a bill into law. No bill could become a law without any of those bodies playing an important role.

I also want to address the need for the monarchy to address past injustices. I may be saying that the monarchy is okay to stay in Canada, but that does not mean it cannot and must not change with the times in which we find ourselves. Many people around the world have a very troubled history and relationship with the British

Crown. It has to confront and deal with legacies of colonialism, of slavery and, particularly in Canada, the treatment of indigenous people and residential schools.

His Majesty King Charles III has an unparalleled opportunity to move the monarchy forward in a way that is acceptable and more relevant to today's generation. As a king, he has the opportunity to go further than his predecessors, to truly understand the 21st century in which we find ourselves. It is my sincere hope that in his first visit to Canada, he takes the time to meet with indigenous elders to truly understand the Crown's role in the residential school system and in colonialism. He owes that to Canada's indigenous peoples, he owes that to the wider public here to fully address those past wrongs and to set a path forward.

I will not be supporting this motion today. I will continue to stand in the House and represent my constituents and their far more pressing needs.

• (1205)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):**

Mr. Speaker, I entirely and completely agree with the first bit of the speech of the member when he talked about much more pressing needs and that people were not coming into his office to talk about the monarch. However, he then went on to talk about electoral reform and tried to convince me that people were coming into his office to talk about that. I will leave that aside for a second.

Let us assume that this motion were to pass and in some way we could, as of tomorrow morning, be free of the monarch, how would life change for any average ordinary Canadian on a day-to-day basis?

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** That is the crux of the matter, Mr. Speaker. How would it change? People are far more concerned with their immediate needs right now, with how they are going to make it through the month on their paycheques, trying to balance the rent, the food and other household expenses.

To take my answer to the member's question a bit further, if we were to look at other countries that have politicized heads of state, an elected president, such as France and the United States, that can come with its own set of problems, where that office is highly politicized and, in some cases, even has negative consequences for the elected legislatures of those countries.

It is about priorities. There are more pressing priorities and that is why I will stay focused on those for my constituents.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am very curious about something my colleague said at the end of his speech when he talked about modernizing the monarchy. I have to say I find that very intriguing.

What is a monarch? At some point in time, God gave power to someone and said that person's descendants would continue to hold power until the end of time. That person and their descendants would govern until the end of time.

*Business of Supply*

We now live in a democracy. I am genuinely curious about how this wacky idea from the Middle Ages can be modernized.

[*English*]

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** Mr. Speaker, if my hon. colleague is going to borrow from history, he need only look at the Magna Carta or the English Bill of Rights. The struggle in British history, and even in Canadian history, has been between the executive power lodged in the form of the Crown and the will of the people, and we have evolved. It started back in the 1200s in England when the barons demanded the king share more power. That spread more. Now England has a fully modern democratic state where power is entirely vested in the elected government, the same as it is in Canada.

These two things can exist. We can have a modern Crown that acknowledges past injustices, while we continue to take steps to strengthen democratic accountability and the power of the people in electing members to this place.

**Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that the member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford again mentioned electoral reform in his speech. Some have inferred that electoral reform is separate from the pressing priorities of Canadians.

I put it forward that for those who want meaningful action on climate, for example, it will be far more difficult to do so if we do not have the views of all Canadians represented in this place. Could the member comment on that?

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** Mr. Speaker, I could not agree more. The way we elect members to the House has a very real consequence for what is debated and the types of policies that are enacted. Instead of seeing regional power blocks that all political parties have, we have to realize that every province has a variety of views and those are not always honoured in how their provinces vote.

Saskatchewan is entirely Conservative based on this vote, but we know that not all people in Saskatchewan are Conservative voters. The New Democrats and Liberals there do not have a voice in this Parliament, and that is an important part of the province of Saskatchewan that is not getting a voice in the House of Commons.

I absolutely agree with the member that if we were to tackle and improve electoral reform, it would have much better positive consequences for how policy is enacted in this place and would be much more representative of the true will of the Canadian people.

• (1210)

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my hon. colleague from Longueuil—Saint-Hubert.

What we are discussing today centres around our principles and our ideals, so I do not think this debate is unwarranted. I would like to thank everyone who is taking part in it, including those who just spoke before me.

As a matter of principle, I often look back at my roots. Everything we have experienced has helped shape the elected officials we are today. I was born to a working-class father and a mother who

was a nurse. I was born female and that is the way it is. I was born a Quebecker and that is also the way it is.

Because of what we are discussing today, like all Quebeckers and Canadians, I cannot even aspire to become the head of the Canadian state, even if I wanted to.

I have barely spoken three sentences, and we are already deeply entangled in something that makes absolutely no sense to someone like me with democratic ideals. After all, what kind of state deprives its entire population of the possibility of becoming head of state? It is certainly not a democracy. At most, I would say that it is masquerading as a democracy and trying to imitate its form. It is a bit of smoke and mirrors.

As some of my colleagues have done, I often like to recall the past and dwell on the meaning of words we use ad nauseam that sometimes might escape us. The word “democracy” derives from *demos*, the people, and *kratos*, to rule. Democracy is sharing power between the people. Democracy is the power of the people.

Canada, as we know, and that is what we are talking about today, embraces a constitutional monarchy. That means that the true head of state cannot be an MP, not me or anyone in the House, but a monarch such as an Elizabeth or a Charles, someone who through fate or arbitrary alliances and births, inherited a crown. That bears repeating because it is important, not only symbolically, but because it also has tangible and potential implications.

The word “monarch” derives from *monos*, one, and *archon*, ruler, and therefore refers to a single ruler, a single person who rules. Literally and absolutely antithetically, Canadian democracy does not rest in the hands of everyone, but in the hands of a single person, namely the monarch. I say this with all due respect, but, to me, this is a ceremonial democracy.

I spoke just a moment ago about appearances and form. Appearances are not the only reason why the Bloc Québécois wants to sever ties once and for all with the British monarchy. In fact, this situation goes against Quebeckers' very values.

I spoke of the people earlier because I work for them. Indeed, we need to think about values such as equality. In the Bloc Québécois, we affirm that all citizens are equal; we promote and we defend equality. There needs to be equal rights, as well as equality in fact. Not only is the monarchy hereditary by nature, the order of succession attributes preference to male heirs and to Protestants above all others.

*Business of Supply*

• (1215)

We can therefore infer that the primary role in the Canadian state is preferably, and we truly are talking about a preference or arbitrary choice, assigned to an individual on the basis of their sex and religion, not to mention bloodline.

A democracy that has preferences and that excludes half of humankind is not a democracy and is practising discrimination. The monarchy discriminates both literally and figuratively and takes away the very sovereignty of its people because the monarch is not a Quebecker or a Canadian. The monarch is British, only British.

As a legislator, it is my job to create laws. As a member of Parliament elected by the people, I and the people I represent are supposed to accept a monarch from overseas, whose legitimacy is arbitrary, and who has the power to make or unmake laws that we vote on in the House of Commons and also in my own National Assembly in Quebec.

The public proposes, Great Britain disposes. The potential British—and patriarchal, I might add—veto belies any claims of sovereignty by the people. The sovereignty of the people is a value that is important to the Bloc Québécois. It requires another element that is important to the Bloc, another value that we have had the opportunity to debate, the separation of state and religion.

We are talking about the leader of another country not only being subject to a foreign state, but also, as I mentioned earlier, to a church, the Anglican Church. The Canadian head of state is also the head of the Anglican Church. For those of us in Quebec who decided a few decades ago to separate church and state, this is a relic of an idea that is completely outdated in terms of the sovereignty of peoples, the sovereignty of ideas and the matter of the state itself.

I do not have much time left, so I would like to very quickly talk about the status of women, colonialism and accountability, which is also important to me. Of course, the status of women is an issue that is particularly close to my heart. I will let my colleagues talk more about colonialism because that is what the monarchy's wealth is built on. We too have a story to tell here. With regard to accountability, we hope that elected representatives will no longer be subject to anyone above them or look to anyone else to save or decide for them. We are fully responsible for our own decisions.

As I was pondering what to say today, I smiled to myself because I remembered thinking about these same things back when I was a young teenager. That is when people begin to think critically, question conventional thinking, question authority and throw off the shackles of beliefs that do not stand up to reason. I went through my own quiet revolution as a young woman.

For me and for Quebeckers, our desire to cut ties with the British monarchy goes back a long way. It is centuries-old. It is an intense desire to sever a connection, seek emancipation and empowerment for our society as a whole and affirm the deeply held values I mentioned earlier: democracy, equality and separation of church and state. The majority of Quebeckers want to cast off the trappings of another world and a long-ago time so alien to who we are. I am one of them.

As a democratic woman of no religious affiliation, I reject this inequitable, arbitrary and colonialist form of power. My faith and my loyalty lie with Quebeckers.

• (1220)

[*English*]

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I cannot help but wonder why this is the most important issue for the Bloc Québécois. There are so many other things going on right now, and it has very limited number of opposition days. Between now and last spring, it has had a total of three, and it has consumed two of those supply motions on, one, a motion that we remove the prayer from the beginning of our daily proceedings and, two, that we somehow override the Constitution and abolish the monarchy.

Is life that good in Quebec that this is the most important thing to be focused on? Could the member provide some insight as to why this is deemed to be more important than some of the other pressing issues Canadians are facing today?

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Marilène Gill:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the member that he does not need to put words in my mouth. I am perfectly capable of saying what I think. In a sense, that is a form of patriarchy.

I never said anything was more important or less important. I should hope the government is able to walk and chew gum at the same time.

We are talking about principles, values and democracy. The fact that the head of state is a man and that men are given preference over women in this democracy is an important and crucial issue to me, and most likely to half the population.

**Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, since this morning, we have been hearing the Conservatives and Liberals basically singing the same tune, one after the other. They are wondering how the Bloc Québécois could have chosen such an unimportant subject when there are so many more important things to talk about than the monarchy.

However, the monarchy is the head of state, the person at the very top of the pyramid. Is that not important? We are talking about the person under whose authority we vote on all of our laws. Is that not important?

I would like to know what my colleague thinks about what those two parties are saying on this subject and, more importantly, what that means.

Does this not mean that that they are unable to defend their position because it is not really defensible?

**Mrs. Marilène Gill:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to tell my colleague that I absolutely agree with him.

I think we have an opportunity here to talk about this. Rather than repeating over and over that we could have come up with more important things to talk about, my Liberal colleague could stand up and state, once and for all, where he stands on the prayer, for example, or on severing ties with the monarchy. It would be very simple. I would not tell him what to say, but it would take two minutes and it would be done.

I think that we can talk about any subject in the House, and my Liberal colleague could definitely do that. I hope he will use his time to answer that question.

[*English*]

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Mr. Speaker, I have no problem telling the Bloc my position. I have no issue with the prayer. We can continue doing it because it does not affect anything, other than using up about 15 seconds of the House's time. I have no problem with the current form of our parliamentary system, which includes a monarch in it. Quite frankly, I do not see life being any different.

Let me ask my previous question, which the member did not answer, in another way. Could she explain to the House, if the monarch were suddenly abolished at midnight tonight, when Quebeckers and Canadians woke up tomorrow morning, how would their lives be so different from what they are right now?

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Marilène Gill:** Mr. Speaker, I must say that praying to a god, the Christian God, and having a head of state who is a man, and ideally a man, are significant concerns for me.

I would point out that not everyone in the House prays to the Christian God, and some people do not pray at all. I would also point out to my colleague that I am a woman, not a man, like him.

I am not saying that everything is going to change tomorrow morning, but this is about taking a stance. Keeping these medieval holdovers is a choice, as my colleague said, and it impacts me as a woman who chooses not to be religious.

• (1225)

**Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, Quebeckers and Canadians now have a historic opportunity. I am choosing my words carefully. With the recent death of Queen Elizabeth II, the British crown will be placed upon a new head.

The last time this took place was 70 years ago. It is as rare as a comet. This makes it the ideal opportunity to reconsider our symbolic tie to this foreign Crown. It is a tie that is problematic for Quebeckers like myself, despite what my colleague says. Just maintaining archaic institutions like the Governor General and the lieutenant governors costs millions of dollars that we could use to fulfill other, more essential government duties. We could trade a crown for social housing, a sceptre to finally provide drinking water to reserves that do not currently have any, but no, that is not happening.

We even have to provide more resources than usual for this transition of royal power. We must change Canada's official letterhead and change the die for stamping coins that bear the portrait of our monarch. The portrait of Elizabeth II must be replaced with that of

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her son, Charles III, at considerable expense, especially because additional zinc is required to depict his ears.

Furthermore, this transition comes at a time when the tide of public opinion is increasingly turning against these archaic ceremonial trappings, if I may talk like my colleague from Trois-Rivières for a moment. Every poll confirms it. It is especially true in Quebec, but even in Canada, a majority of respondents agree with ending all ties with the monarchy in our political institutions. In the days of Elizabeth II, at least, we could understand. She was an old woman. No one wanted to hurt her feelings. It might have done her in to be told that we no longer wanted her as head of our country. It was nothing personal.

Now that the crown is sort of suspended between her and Charles III, it is the best time to say enough is enough, we are leaving. There needs to be a modicum of consistency. Canada cannot support truth and reconciliation with the first nations while continuing to require each MP to swear an oath to the Crown that endorsed the worst lawful violence against them. Canada cannot claim to recognize the Quebec nation while continuing to require each MP from Quebec to swear that same oath to the same Crown that hanged patriots and sanctioned the violent repression of villages that supported them. Ten thousand people died. That happened here.

Throughout history, the British Empire has been responsible for untold atrocities. It is estimated that, in India alone, the British Crown is directly responsible for between 12 million and 30 million deaths, and yet we continue to invoke its name. That is crazy. There is an old expression in Quebec that is not heard much anymore but that always intrigued me. When someone was disturbing everyone in a group by yelling or trying to boss them around, he or she was taken to task by someone else yelling, "Hey, leave the people alone".

In this case, "the people" means everyone who happens to be around, but this could also be read through a nationalist lens. It is important to leave "The People" alone, which means not humiliating them, badgering them, bugging them, insulting them or hassling them.

Communities deserve respect just as much as individuals. Leaving the people alone means not adopting common symbols containing images that remind them of historical traumas. Leaving the people alone means not asking the representatives of a secular society to swear allegiance to a king who is also the head of a church. Leaving the people, my people, alone means not making us watch a Crown corporation spend astronomical amounts of our own money force-feeding us the funeral of a queen who agreed, without batting an eye, to sign a Constitution that Quebec did not want.

• (1230)

To top it off, my hockey team, the Montreal Canadiens, the closest thing French Canadians have to a national team, must now sport a jersey sullied by a reference to the monarchy, "Royal Bank of Canada", in English only. What more could they possibly do to make me thoroughly sick of it all?

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I have no problem with the word “king”. Quebeckers have their french fry kings, their hot dog emperors and their frozen sub princes. When my daughter was little, she loved princes and princesses, just like millions of little girls around the world. Not once in her entire childhood did I try to take that away from her because the monarchy is dirty. However, every stamp and every quarter bearing the image of the English crown is a reminder that I am still subject to a political regime that neither I nor my ancestors ever chose.

That is a loaded symbol for a Quebecker like me to swear an oath to, never mind for first nations and Acadians, as others said earlier.

I do not recognize this Parliament, which reminds me of a defeat and symbolizes 260 years of oppression and attempts to assimilate my people. Although I do not recognize it, I agree with what is happening here. I accept the idea that people who represent different schools of thought and who have had the courage to face the electorate are meeting here and spending their days together debating and trying to come up with bills that will improve the lives of their constituents. That is what we call democracy, and I accept that.

I would like to confess to members, however, that there is one thing I do not understand and do not accept. I would even say that it fills me with shame every time I think about it. This mandate that I am trying to fulfill with honour and conviction is based on a vile lie.

Mr. Speaker, I am talking about a serious matter, but my colleagues are chatting about cooking and TV shows.

In order to fulfill the mandate given to me by the people, I had to meet an unavoidable condition when I arrived here. I was asked to pledge allegiance to a queen I do not recognize, to power by divine right. It is a power that supposedly comes from God himself, whereas I do not believe in God. It is an immense fraud.

We have a responsibility to abolish the monarchy, if only to prove to ourselves and to the world that democracy can work, that sometimes things can change without violence, and that democracy, through parliamentary dialogue, can deliver what the people want.

People want to break ties with the monarchy. This is especially true in Quebec, but it is true across Canada. Barbados did it two years ago, so why not us? Is it because Quebec truly wants it to happen and because the Bloc Québécois proposed it? Is the secret to Canadian unity to simply hold on to everything that upsets Quebec for as long as possible?

I vote for representatives who take an oath in accordance with their true convictions, in my case, to the people of Quebec. I vote so that members can work under symbols that reflect their values and true beliefs. I vote for a democracy based on a true will of heart and soul. I vote for sincerity and truth in political commitment. I vote for the abolition of the monarchy, its oaths and its symbols. I vote for Quebec independence.

• (1235)

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if I just heaved a big sigh, it is because the Bloc Québécois seems to live in a somewhat theoretical reality. They were talking

earlier as if the monarchy held all that power. However, it has no executive power and no legislative power. For example, looking at the United Kingdom, one could say that the monarchy protects democracy. If a government loses the confidence of the House, the monarch can insist that the public be consulted and that an election be held, unlike in the United States, where the President holds office for four years, whether or not he is a good president.

Does the member prefer the Westminster model or the American one?

**Mr. Denis Trudel:** Mr. Speaker, the monarchical model may not be the one my colleague is referring to, but it is still a rather sickening model.

I find that a bit sad. There has not really been any debate all day. People were chatting on the other side. Still, the monarchy is important. We are talking about the head of state.

I said earlier that when I took the oath, it was bullshit. I was not telling the truth.

When we come here, we are asked to be truthful, to speak. We are told that it is important to tell the truth in the House, to not make things up. We do research, we work hard to create bills that help people. However, the day I came here, the first thing I was asked to do was to talk nonsense, to tell lies, to be silly, to act out, as my colleagues have been accusing me of doing since then. All of this is theatrics. Me coming to Parliament is theatre. My colleagues are laughing. I cannot believe it.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I want to make a little point about words that are parliamentary and unparliamentary. I think the member used something that is unparliamentary. The next time he stands up, I would love for him to take back his words and say something else. There are other words that are similar to what he said that are parliamentary.

[*English*]

**Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I did listen with great interest to the theatrics coming from the member from the Bloc.

The question that kept going through my mind was this: Are any of my constituents really concerned about this issue today? The answer is no. The issues my constituents are concerned about today are the cost of living, the huge inflation and the tripling of the carbon tax. Those are the tabletop issues that are first and foremost in my constituents' minds, and I am wondering if the member's constituents do not feel the same way.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Denis Trudel:** Mr. Speaker, I am laughing my head off. Our colleagues have gone on and on all day about how there are more important things in life and we need to work on solving problems. They seem to think this is a place where problems get solved. That is the joke of the year for sure.



Bill C-31 gives renters \$500. There are 87,000 people in Quebec who will not benefit from that. Organizations in Quebec tell us that inadequately housed renters do not need \$500; they need bricks and mortar. That is what will fix the problem.

Bill C-31 will not fix climate change. Canada is one of the worst countries in the world. This morning, members said we should be talking about climate change. That would be fine if we actually fixed problems, but we never fix anything here.

My Conservative friend knows all about wasting time. I remember one evening when the Conservatives wasted a whole hour of the House's time on a vote and on figuring out which of two conservative members would do the talking. That was an incredible waste of time. The Conservatives are in no position to lecture us.

**Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert for his passionate speech, above all a speech full of conviction. It is good to be shaken up once in a while, to have someone who speaks their mind, lays it all out on the table and tells it like it is.

Some members seem to be promoting the status quo, the old British Crown colonialism, with its symbols and history that is fraught with horror stories. Those members pretend that nothing is the matter, that there is no problem. They behave as if everything is fine. After all, they do not think about the monarchy every morning as they get up.

We have a historic opportunity to change that and we are not doing it. Does my colleague not think that there is something that members are not aware of, something that is perhaps in their subconscious? One of the big differences between Canada and the United States is that the very foundation of Canada is the attachment to the monarchy. At the end of the day, is there not a little bit of that in the fact that they do not want to get rid of it? I wonder, because I cannot think of any other reason.

● (1240)

**Mr. Denis Trudel:** Mr. Speaker, I could talk about this issue for quite some time.

It is true that in Quebec we often say that Canada has no culture. That is also what my friends from the cultural sector say. If not for Quebec, there would not be a Canadian culture. The proof is that many people in Canada watch English-language media, American shows and the news from the United States. Indeed, I agree with my colleague that there may be something to that.

What we are talking about today is fundamental. The issue of the oath troubled me deeply. I consider my mandate to be important, but it began with a lie and a farce. That really bothers me. Every time I think about it, it troubles me. I try to be sincere in my commitment to this place, to the constituents back home and to my colleagues in the House. Having begun my mandate with a lie still troubles me and it will trouble me for the rest of my days. I would like for us to settle this issue.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Before we continue, I would like to say a few words.

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Members may at times become passionate during their interventions, but they have to follow the Standing Orders and usual practice of the House during their speeches and questions and comments. Standing Order 18 stipulates, “No member shall speak disrespectfully of the Sovereign, nor of any of the royal family, nor of the Governor General or the person administering the Government of Canada.” *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, at page 621 states that “any reference to these persons which appears intended to influence the work of the House is also prohibited”.

Although some latitude may be given by the Speaker, I ask everyone to show a bit of restraint in their comments in order to respect this important rule, and avoid using unparliamentary language such as the word “bullshit”.

I would like the member to take back what he said at some point today.

[*English*]

Continuing debate, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport.

**Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, before I begin, it is a pleasure to say that I will be sharing my time with the member for Winnipeg North.

I am grateful for the opportunity to speak today to respond to this motion brought by the opposition. The demise of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II has raised questions about the relevance of constitutional monarchies in the 21st century, and a number of western democracies remain constitutional monarchies. Nevertheless, I understand why, for some, the idea of having a British monarch as head of the Canadian state no longer seems relevant.

Personally, I have debated this issue. I do not consider myself a monarchist. I like to keep an open mind and consider why we have a head of state. Over the past couple of months I have had the occasion to reflect on exactly why, so I am thrilled today to deepen that degree of understanding with conversation and debate here in the House of Commons.

Our system of democratic constitutional monarchy is not just about one person. The King and Crown personify our system of government. They are stand-ins for the Canadian state and all that it represents: federalism, democracy, the rule of law and constitutionalism. Changing the monarch is not mere window dressing or symbolic change; rather, it would involve fundamentally rethinking all of our institutions and how they relate to one another. It is no simple task.

There are two main themes that I would like to explore today. The first is that the Crown is ubiquitous. It is the cornerstone of the Canadian state, and it is involved in all branches of government.

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The second is that the Crown's authority, which appears broad in a reading of our constitutional instruments, is tempered by other constitutional values. Though unwritten rules and norms, they are equally important. Our Constitution comprises legal written rules enforceable by the courts. It also comprises unwritten constitutional conventions permeated by values, including democracy, the separation of powers and responsible government, which all breathe life into the constitutional text. Understanding our Constitution requires understanding both of those sources.

Those are two themes that I hope show that the legal system is significant and that abolishing the monarchy would cause quite a lot of chaos in our system of government. Therefore, I also hope to show how modern values infuse our, admittedly ancient, constitutional institutions.

[*Translation*]

The Crown, in particular His Majesty the King of Canada and his representatives the Governor General and the lieutenant governors of the provinces, occupies a central place in the architecture of the Constitution of Canada. Indeed, it may be easy to forget that the creation of the Canadian Confederation, although authorized by the Imperial Parliament, was made by proclamation of Her Majesty Queen Victoria, who by that order created a new power under the Crown of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, as it was then called. The very legal existence of Canada is in this sense derived from the monarchy.

• (1245)

[*English*]

His Majesty the King is our head of state. Section 9 of the Constitution Act, 1867, formally known under its imperial name, the British North America Act, vests in him the “Executive Government and Authority of and over Canada”. The King's Privy Council for Canada was established to aid and advise the Government of Canada, and the King also has the command-in-chief of the Canadian Armed Forces. However, the executive government of Canada was to be monarchical and, in the context of the Constitution, similar in principle to that of the United Kingdom. The constitutional conventions of responsible government have meant that only those privy councillors summoned by the Governor General serving as ministers and forming cabinet can exercise or recommend the exercise of executive authority by the Governor General or the Governor in Council. Canada, like the United Kingdom, after all, is a constitutional, not an absolute, monarchy.

I have had the opportunity to reflect a bit on what the value of that is for my constituents and for people in Canada, and I have come up with a couple of reasons I feel the monarchy and the Commonwealth are important to Canada and Canadians.

First is our collective identity. In some countries around the world, when a government is elected, that government then is the head of state, or the prime minister or the president is the head of state. Oftentimes that means the identity of a nation is on the shoulders of that individual. I think that creates turbulence and it creates change that people are not necessarily comfortable with. I understand why some Canadians do not want a political party to represent their nation's identity.

Indeed, we have seen Canadians over the last year, unfortunately, use our flag, the national symbol of Canada, in inappropriate ways during protests to indicate they feel un-Canadian, and that is their right, I suppose. I disagree with using the flag in that manner, but I would say that the individuals in many cases who are using the flag in that way do not disagree with the country of Canada. They disagree with the political party. Therefore, I think that divide is one of some utility.

Second, I had the opportunity to go to the Commonwealth Games this past summer. It is called the “friendly games”. I have been to lots of games. I have been to the Pan-Am Games and the winter and summer Olympics. I see now why the Commonwealth Games are called the “friendly games”. It is a place to go and share some values, discuss important issues and compete in sports we all love and enjoy. That opportunity to go and enjoy the Commonwealth Games in a different context from when I was an athlete was an eye-opening one, and it caused me to reflect on the value of that partnership and camaraderie.

Following the Commonwealth Games, I was invited to the Victoria Forum, which is a conversation around sports' role in truth and reconciliation. It was a really good gathering in the capital of British Columbia, and it was an opportunity to discuss how our country can participate and collaborate with peer nations and countries with similar challenges and offer advice and recommendations for progress on various issues, from climate change to truth and reconciliation and creating an economy that works for everyone.

Last, but certainly not least, this morning I had coffee with the high commissioners of New Zealand and Australia to talk about agriculture, rural issues, climate change, resilience and adaptation, as well as how we can work more closely together. I think there is quite a lot of value in the Commonwealth, and beyond that there is value in having a monarch and head of state who is not elected and continues to be, in part, the identity of our country.

On the legislative side, His Majesty the King is one of the three essential elements of the Parliament of Canada. Section 17 of the Constitution Act, 1867, states that “There shall be One Parliament for Canada, consisting of the Queen, an Upper House styled the Senate, and the House of Commons.” Royal assent, signified by the Governor General in the name of His Majesty the King, is the spark that gives life to bills, making them legally binding and enforceable. Royal assent acts as a bridge between the sovereign expression of the will of Parliament and the execution of that will. Also, royal recommendation is required every time the House wishes to adopt a money bill.

[*Translation*]

A similar situation prevails in each of the provinces. The provincial legislatures now consist of a legislative assembly, or the National Assembly in Quebec, and the lieutenant governor, the representative of His Majesty the King.

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• (1250)

[English]

However, here too the constitutional conventions infused in the United Kingdom borrow from the preamble of the Constitution Act, 1867, and that permeates every aspect of constitutional parliamentary life. Royal assent is not a discretionary power exercised by a capricious sovereign whose power is absolute. It is a constitutional convention, and it is practically unthinkable for a Governor General to reserve royal assent in modern times. Likewise, ministerial responsibility means that royal recommendation is granted by the Governor General on the advice of cabinet and not at the discretion of the Governor General.

In short, I believe the monarchy, the King and the Crown are everywhere in our constitutional order. His Majesty King Charles III, as King of Canada, personifies the Canadian state and the constitutional system of government that underlies it. Also, because the Crown is divisible, the Crown also personifies the state of the provinces.

[Translation]

In any event, since our system of government has monarchy as its premise, any constitutional change affecting the office of the King, the Governor General or the lieutenant governors requires the unanimous consent of the House, the Senate and all provincial legislatures.

A change to these institutions would involve a significant alteration to the Canadian federal compromise, thereby justifying a veto right for all state stakeholders.

The relative importance given to the symbols of the monarchy can be debated today, but the abolition of the monarchy is not a decision for the House alone, however important.

[English]

In any event, since the central premise of our system of government is that it shall be a monarchy, it is a conversation that I welcome today. I think there are other issues that our constituents would rather us be debating today, but I appreciate the debate and welcome some questions.

[Translation]

**Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to thank the parliamentary secretary for approaching this issue with a seriousness that has been lacking in the House since the debate started this morning. I see that he recognizes the value of dialogue, and I appreciate that.

In a Parliament where there is a great deal of room for many sensitivities, why not recognize the sensitivities of Quebeckers, the majority of whom consider it an affront when they see the monarchy being maintained in the current system?

[English]

**Mr. Adam van Koeverden:** Mr. Speaker, the word “diversity” brings about a different sense or meaning for a lot of people. This place contains a lot of diversity in terms of our backgrounds, beliefs and systems. However, we are in a country called Canada with many distinct nations and distinct identities, and they are all wel-

come here. I do not see any reason why we cannot work together despite some of the differences. Conversations like this, civil discourse on an important subject, are important.

Earlier I heard a member from the Bloc Québécois mention colonialism. I know it is a challenge for many of us to consider how we are a nation that was built on colonialism, but the Commonwealth is not the only nation responsible for colonialism. France also participated in acts of colonialism. My father's family came from the Netherlands, which had some of the most brutal colonialists, as well as the Belgians and Portuguese.

Colonialism is a global phenomenon. Here in Canada, because we have a British head of state in the monarchy, we refer to colonialism as a British thing, but many other countries and nations had an impact on colonialism in Canada as well.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I had a chance to give remarks on today's a motion about an hour ago, and I commented on the fact that many peoples around the world have a troubled relationship with the British Crown. My hon. friend just talked about colonialism.

Before he became king, the then Prince of Wales, on a previous visit to Canada, made some very public remarks about the legacy of residential schools in this country. Now that he is king, His Majesty King Charles III, I am wondering if my hon. friend would comment on what he would like to see King Charles do on his first visit to Canada.

The British Crown has evolved over the centuries. It used to be the divine right of kings and now we have a constitutional monarchy. In what ways could the Canadian Crown evolve in the 21st century to take into account those past injustices, specifically here in Canada?

• (1255)

**Mr. Adam van Koeverden:** Mr. Speaker, as the member was speaking, I was just reflecting about the opportunities we have had to play soccer with staff from some of the high commissions here in Canada, and that represents the kind of fraternity that I was referring to, which I do not think is a frivolous thing. It is unfortunate to use a term like “fraternity”, which is steeped in sexism, but we agree that those occasions are good.

On the topic of what the King could do on his first trip to Canada, acknowledging the wrongdoings is, first and foremost, the most important thing a king needs to do as a leader. As a head of state, it is responsible to accept some culpability. There is no question that the British Crown should assume more culpability for the harms that were done through the residential school system and colonialism.

I would also say that I have admired King Charles for his forward thinking on climate change, which he has had since far before it was in vogue to have the conversation we are all having now. King Charles, prior to his new title, has been a climate change activist.

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I hope that, when he does arrive on Canadian soil, he makes mention of wrongdoings that were done in the past, how the monarchy and the British Crown could participate in truth and reconciliation, and how to right some of those wrongs, and I sincerely hope that he continues his fight against climate change. Leaders around the world are needed to stand up for positive action on that front.

**The Deputy Speaker:** This is just a reminder to the folks who are participating in the debate that, the shorter the question, the shorter the answer, and the more people who will get to participate in this great debate. I want to thank everybody for their interventions.

Continuing debate, the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader has the floor.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to a very interesting motion, if I am going to say something kind about it. I am totally amazed. If we stop to think about it, the Bloc party typically gets three opposition days a year. That means in 2022, they have three opposition days.

I want members to reflect on the issues that are facing the people of Quebec and the country. Canada is a wonderful nation made up of all sorts of regions, but I think there are consistent threads going through. With three opposition day motions, the Bloc has decided that it wants to spend a day talking about the monarchy.

For the last 30 plus years, I have gone, on a weekly basis, to the local McDonald's. I cannot recall anyone ever coming up to me and saying, "Kevin, what is happening with the monarchy?" I do not hear anyone saying that.

People are talking about issues surrounding immigration. They are talking about issues surrounding the economy. They are talking about a wide variety of issues. No one is talking about constitutional change.

Surely, the Bloc understands that it does not matter what region or province one is from. No one is talking about this issue—

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

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I stand corrected. No one is talking about this issue except for the Bloc. We have to ask ourselves why the Bloc party, just the Bloc, the people who want to see Canada fall part, wants to talk about this issue. I will not speculate on that.

Suffice it to say, it is not because of the people of Quebec, the people of Manitoba or any other province. If it were, there would be a better reflection of the issues that we are hearing every day in our communities from coast to coast to coast.

This motion, in essence, just shows how irrelevant the Bloc is when it comes to contributing in a positive way to what is actually being debated and brought to the House. Today is its day. This is the day it gets to pick the issue.

We have a good number of members of Parliament here on the government benches, in the Liberals caucus, who are from the province of Quebec. I do not necessarily need to consult with them because I follow the national news. I have a good sense of what is

happening in the province of Quebec. I understand the unique nature of Quebec.

It is one of the reasons I often advocate for important issues, such as the aerospace industry, the agri industries and hydro development in the province of Quebec. These are all issues that Manitoba has in common. It even has in common the issue of the French language because that is such an important issue. Even in the province of Manitoba, where it is doing relatively well as it continues to grow.

These are the issues which people, whether they are in Manitoba, Quebec or any other province, would like to see some dialogue on, let alone the issues of the day. We are still not out of the pandemic, and the Bloc wants to talk about royalty.

When we talk to Canadians, they are concerned about their economic well-being and the cost of living, but the Bloc wants to talk about royalty. I invite them to talk to some of the seniors in the province of Quebec and listen to what they have to say about the cost of living, health care and long-term care, or talk to some of the industries there that we need to continue to support, such as the aerospace industry.

• (1300)

Talk about missing the mark. I think that I, if they would have given me their date, could have come up with a dozen things off-hand that would allow us the opportunity to have a more creative and positive debate, which would be of benefit to not only people in Quebec, but also people in Manitoba and, in fact, all regions. That is something which, as a government, we have been focused on virtually from day one.

I understand the monarchy. It is interesting that Bloc members are coming to the chamber to say they want to open up the Constitution and have Canadians from coast to coast to coast to talk about whether we should have a monarchy, elect a head of state or appoint a head of state, but they are not saying what they believe. They just want to open up the Constitution. There is no recommendation, but that is what they want us to talk about.

We are just out of the pandemic, and with the cost of living, we are bringing forward first-time legislation on things such as the creation of a dental plan for children under the age of 12. We are bringing forward legislation to assist people with disabilities. Both of those pieces of legislation are historic, in the sense that it is the first time a national government is moving into those areas. We are listening to what people in our communities are saying and bringing that to the House of Commons, whether to the floor of the House, our respective caucuses, the standing committees or the many different stakeholders we meet with.

The Prime Minister constantly tells Liberal MPs to gauge what is happening in our constituencies and bring those ideas and thoughts here to Ottawa. Obviously, that concept or principle is not being followed by the Bloc party. If it were, it would definitely not be bringing forward a motion of this nature.

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In Winnipeg North, my seniors are concerned about their future. They want to know that there is going to be quality long-term health care. They want to know that the federal government will continue to support health care, as it has been. There have been historic amounts of money invested by this government in health care in every region of our country. We have achieved accord with every province.

These are the types of issues that are important to our constituents. They are concerned about the issue of the cost of living. That is why we brought in legislation to enhance the GST rebate, so that there would be more money in their pockets in dealing with the issue of inflation. That is the reason why we have the dental program for children. We want to make sure that children are in fact getting the dental care they need, which will prevent many of those children from having to go into the hospital. These are the types of measures that are making a difference.

The Bloc earlier blocked the idea of a rental subsidy. That rental subsidy would help people across Canada in every region. It is going a long way in providing tangible supporting by putting money in the pockets of Canadians. If the Bloc were genuinely listening and responding by bringing those ideas and thoughts from their constituents, I think they would have a better understanding why individuals, such as myself and others, are questioning why the Bloc would bring forward such a motion in 2022, given that typically they will get three days in any given year. I know the member for Kingston and the Islands will talk a little bit more about those three days in his speech later on this afternoon.

• (1305)

Suffice it to say, given the environment we are in today, I would suggest the Bloc members start talking beyond their inner caucus, the Bloc caucus, with less focus on separation and more focus on the things that matter most to Canadians, no matter where they live in Canada.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I think the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader should focus less on partisanship, which seems to be blinding him.

In yesterday's debate on the Uighur genocide, he spent 20 minutes attacking the Conservative Party because he did not think it was the time to talk about that.

I just want to say to the parliamentary secretary that not a blessed day goes by that we do not talk about health care funding or the gun problem during question period. His government, on the other hand, is doing absolutely nothing.

If he does not care about tossing \$67 million out the window, then why is he on the government benches?

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, the member makes reference to seeing less of my being so partisan. I will consistently advocate for national unity and the importance of Canada as a nation. There is only one political party inside this chamber that ultimately wants to see the demise of Canada as we know it today.

I would never apologize to the separatists who want to see Canada divided, because I believe Canada is the best country in the world to live in. One of the ways in which we can contribute to ensuring that into the future is by reflecting the true understanding and interests of Canadians here on the floor of the House. I can assure the member opposite that the issue of the Crown and the issue of Senate reform are not being debated in our communities in any real and tangible way in comparison to the types of issues I have talked about.

• (1310)

**Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, very seldom will I agree with the gentleman on most issues, but when he says Canada is the best country in the world to live in, I am 100% behind that, and I appreciate that.

With that said, in Souris—Moose Mountain, throughout my whole riding, I have not had anyone come and talk to me about the monarchy. I appreciate the member's comments on that. What we have heard about is basically the economy, inflation rates and the big cost to individuals in a rural community.

The member touched a bit on how he is hearing similar things, and I am wondering if he could expand upon that for us today.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the issue being brought forward, it is very rare for me to be giving compliments to the Conservative Party, but the question has captured the essence. We may disagree in many ways on many policies, but we understand that what we should be debating is in fact issues that are somewhat relevant, at the very least, to what Canadians want us to be talking about.

I guess I would take the proposal a little differently if the Bloc were to approach it in a different way. Is it suggesting we have an elected president in the future? Is it talking about us appointing a president? There is absolutely nothing more with this particular motion than just being mischievous.

**Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on the whole idea of the monarchy, I will give an example. My mother-in-law turned 90 recently. She has lived through three monarchs: King George, Queen Elizabeth and now King Charles. Throughout my riding, when one goes door to door or visits people, people still have pictures of the Queen and her father up on the wall in their houses. The connection to the monarchy in Newfoundland and Labrador is probably stronger than in any other province. I wonder if the member would comment on the fact that Quebec is a province within Canada. It is a part of Canada, and as such—

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

**Mr. Ken McDonald:** The member can heckle all he likes about what he thinks he is or what he thinks he is not, but he is a Canadian citizen even though he lives in Quebec. He is a Canadian, a Canadian, a Canadian.

Would the parliamentary secretary agree with that perspective and agree that this is the way Canada is right now?

*Business of Supply*

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I am from Manitoba, yet I am a Canadian. People are from all sorts of provinces and territories, but we can see that there is a high sense of pride in being a Canadian. That is probably the best way. We have a system that is in place, and I am not hearing arguments that we should switch this to X or Y. At this point in the game, I do not want to open up the constitutional debate. I do not think Canadians want that. I think we need to get through this period of difficulty, and hopefully, in the future, who knows what might happen?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Montarville, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I will note at the outset that I will be sharing my time with my wonderful colleague from Beauport—Limoilou.

I have been listening to my colleagues in the federalist political parties speak since this morning, except maybe our friends in the NDP, who like to make a big show of their Canadian pride by trying to protect a foreign institution at all costs. What is so typically Canadian about the British monarchy?

I hear the Conservatives and Liberals telling us how proud they are of Canada, telling us that it is the best and most beautiful country in the world, and telling us that they want to protect British institutions like the British monarchy. They keep saying that this debate is not important, that no one in their respective ridings wants to talk about the monarchy.

What is the point, then, of spending \$67 million a year on an institution that no one in their ridings cares about? That is the real question.

If the monarchy is not important to their constituents, why take that money from them every year and spend it on that, when the \$67 million could be spent on essential government services like housing or EI supports, for example? Why continue this wasteful public spending for the benefit of a privileged few?

Some citizens of this country that our colleagues are so proud of will never have the opportunity to go to Rideau Hall to have cake with Her Excellency the Governor General of Canada. They are struggling every day to cover the cost of inflation.

We are talking about the very heart of our democratic institutions, which are founded on the equality of citizens and the rule of law, not the bloodline of a handful of people who, simply by birth, would have the right to rule an entire country.

The monarchy goes against so many principles at the heart of our institutions, from, as I was just saying, the equality of citizens, to sovereignty of the people, to democracy, which is the corollary, and the separation of church and state.

We are told what people in this country think about this. According to a poll conducted by the Angus Reid Institute in April, 71% of Quebecers are against maintaining the monarchy and want it to disappear from Canada. A majority of my colleagues' constituents, 51%, want the monarchy to be abolished.

The poll also indicates that there is not a single province in Canada where the percentage of people who want to maintain the

monarchy is greater than the percentage of those who want us to get rid of it.

Those members who say that their constituents do not talk about this should take note of it. My colleagues must take note of what people think, and the majority of their constituents believe that we should abolish this useless institution.

Another poll conducted in June by Leger indicates that 56% of Canadians oppose the oath of allegiance. In Quebec, that number is as high as 75%. Australia, whose head of state is still His Majesty the King, decided to do away with the oath of allegiance. Why does Canada not do the same?

I would like to share with my colleagues a few words I spoke when I swore the oath for the very first time, in 2005, as a member of the National Assembly of Quebec. I referred to the oaths I had sworn here, in the House of Commons, and said:

Previously, I swore oaths in a very private manner, and in complete anonymity. I never invited anyone to attend, not even my closest colleagues, not even my spouse.... I did so, as they say back home, "on the sly".

● (1315)

I did not see any reason to celebrate. For me, the swearing-in was just a formality, something I had to do to be able to fulfill my responsibilities. In fact, I found this ritual very difficult because my common sense and my conscience were engaged in a bitter struggle. As I was swearing the oath, I was thinking of our Canadian ancestors who, under British rule, were forced to swear the oath of allegiance to be able to serve in public office. I was thinking of my Acadian ancestors who were stripped of their property and deported in wretched conditions under the false pretext that they supposedly refused to swear unconditional allegiance to prove that they were British subjects, a totally futile endeavour. I was overcome by a deep sense of helplessness and shame at the idea of betraying their memory in that way by performing this official act that was the source of such misfortune for them.

I am once again hearing our colleagues bragging about how proud they are to be Canadian. The parliamentary secretary even said that the Bloc Québécois initiated this debate because it wants to break up this beautiful country. However, some quintessential federalists share our position, not the least of which is John Manley. John Manley, who served as deputy prime minister and minister of finance under Jean Chrétien, made some statements that I would like to share.

● (1320)

[*English*]

I do believe when most people think about it and realize our head of state is foreign when she travels she doesn't represent Canada, she represents Great Britain. I think they kind of realize this is really an institution that is a bit out of date for Canada to continue with.

He went on to say that Prince Charles should not be allowed to become the country's king:

Having the oldest son inherit the responsibility of being head of state, that's just not something in the 21st century we ought to be entertaining. That's why it ought to be a person who is Canadian, who reflects Canadian diversity, and who is chosen by Canadians.

He also said this:

Personally, I would prefer an institution after Queen Elizabeth that is just Canadian. It might be as simple as continuing with just the Governor General as the head of state in Canada. But I don't think it's necessary for Canada to continue with the monarchy.

[Translation]

Here, we are not talking about an evil separatist and someone with ties to the Bloc Québécois, we are talking about a Liberal minister. We are not talking about a junior minister, we are talking about the former deputy prime minister and minister of finance under the Jean Chrétien government.

The Young Liberals, who cannot be suspected of being sovereigntist supporters, even tabled a motion in 2012—not in 2002, as was the case in the John Manley era—at the Liberal Party convention to abolish the monarchy in Canada.

We can see that this has absolutely nothing to do with being a sovereigntist or not, since the majority of my colleagues' constituents across Canada are also opposed to the monarchy.

When they say that their constituents never talk about the topic, I think that this in fact speaks volumes about the \$67 million a year we spend on this institution rather than investing it in social housing, for example. There could be 670 new social housing units built each year if that money were invested in social housing rather than in maintaining Rideau Hall and the person who resides there at our expense.

I am not going to mention all the lavish spending that has been reported in the media for far too long in relation to the governors general of Canada and the lieutenant governors throughout the provinces. I will spare the House from having to listen to the list of all such people.

We have been told repeatedly that monarchy provides stability to Canadian democracy, so I will simply conclude my remarks by respectfully reminding the House that many, many democracies in the rest of the world are not monarchies but are nevertheless very stable and work very well.

[English]

**Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member across the way gave us some food for thought. However, as the representative of the riding that is also known as the “Royal City”, Guelph has very strong ties to the royal family and has for many generations. The House also has those same ties.

I am thinking that the hon. member might be in the wrong room to think we could change our relationship with the monarchy, particularly with the Governor General. He made passing reference to her, but I wonder if he could he talk about the importance of the Governor General being a Canadian representative who also represents the monarchy.

• (1325)

[Translation]

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron:** Mr. Speaker, I would like my colleague from Guelph to explain to me, just for fun, exactly how the special ties between his community and the British monarchy have changed anything in the life of his constituents. How many times

### *Business of Supply*

has the monarch bothered to knock on his door and reaffirm the special ties between Guelph and Buckingham Palace?

It is nothing but window dressing. The same goes for the Governor General. Of course, the Governor General is Canadian because we have finally broken with the tradition of having British governor generals. If we managed to break with this tradition, there remains one step to be taken, which is to break with this British institution that has nothing to do with 21st century Canada.

**Mr. Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I think that the Bloc Québécois motion is designed to distract attention from what they just did.

Yesterday, they voted in favour of a stronger, tougher federal government that is going to triple the carbon tax for Quebeckers.

However, right now, inflation is the highest it has been in 41 years and the cost of living is rising. I am therefore wondering why the Bloc Québécois moved this motion. Do they not see that their motion does not really affect the daily lives of Quebeckers?

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron:** Actually, Mr. Speaker, this motion does affect the daily lives of Quebeckers and even those of my colleague's constituents.

The government is taking money out of the pockets of his constituents and Quebeckers' pockets to maintain this institution. While the Governor General is organizing parties and travelling by plane with fancy dinners for her and her guests on board, the people in my colleague's riding are struggling to make ends meet because the cost of living is too high.

Meanwhile, the privileged are living large on the taxes his constituents pay, as though it were still the 12th century. We need to move into the 21st century. As I just said, we managed to do away with the tradition of British governors general, so let us follow that course of action through to its logical conclusion and abolish the monarchy.

**Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, all day long, both the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party have been trying to dodge the issue. They say it is not the right time to talk about this and we should talk about inflation and fighting the pandemic instead.

Over the past few weeks, however, we have talked about bills C-3, C-5, C-9, C-20 and S-4, none of which have anything to do with inflation or fighting the pandemic.

Does my colleague think we waste our time in the House every day? Should we talk about nothing but inflation and the pandemic? Can we not walk and chew gum at the same time?

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron:** Mr. Speaker, one of the advantages of having served in the House for a long time is that I can make connections with different eras. I remember that during one era that began in 1993, the Liberal prime minister of the time, Jean Chrétien, told us that we needed to talk about the real issues, about what matters to our constituents on a daily basis.

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It took me some time, but I finally realized—another advantage of being in the House for so long—that the real issues are the ones the government does not want to talk about. When the government talks about “real issues”, it is to distract the House from a certain number of subjects that it would prefer not to discuss. However, it just so happens that there are members in the House whose mission it is to discuss the very issues the government wants to avoid, such as the monarchy.

**Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoulu, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, when I was asked to give a speech on this opposition day, naturally I agreed. In fact, I was honoured.

Who am I? I have been sitting in the House for three years and I am still thinking about why people voted for me. The difference is that they voted for me, while no one has ever voted for a monarch or for a governor general.

We live in a democracy. People chose us. I was born in a mining town, and here I am today. I am incredibly lucky because we live in a democracy. If Quebec were to become independent tomorrow, I could be the head of state.

I can assure members that the Bloc Québécois does not aspire to be in power. However, if that were the case, the Bloc Québécois leader would not be head of state, and the same goes for the current Prime Minister, and future or past prime ministers. In reality, the head of the Canadian state is the British monarch, not a person chosen by the people. There is more. This even affects our own laws, the ones we pass together, work on, reflect on and fortunately reach a consensus on.

These bills actually reflect the voices of our constituents, those who elected us and whom we represent. However, laws cannot come into force without royal assent. An individual who is not elected and does not actually represent the choice of the people must give his or her assent. There is a bit of a discrepancy between our deeply democratic values and what we actually do.

It goes beyond that. If a bill does not have complete unanimity among the population and an election is called, something could be done to delay royal assent. However, if a bill does receive royal assent, it is because a majority has voted in favour of it. Even though the people have spoken through us, royal assent might not be given, it might be delayed because political strategists think that the time is not right.

Doing that, however, is like saying that the voices of 338 members are less important than that of one person. It is as though the voices of 338 representatives of 38 million people are less important, less considered and less insightful than that of one person. I have been reflecting carefully on what the monarchy means to me, beyond what I have just explained.

Monarchy is an intellectual curiosity for me. I am a history teacher by trade. Monarchy is a curiosity for me, because I do not know that world. I will never live in that world, and I was not born with a silver spoon in my mouth. When I was born, my path was not yet set. My parents and the education system helped me, and I helped myself, get to where I am. I feel sorry for the princes and princesses of this world who, from the moment they are born, are

told what path they must take and what they must become. I find that sad.

I, for one, was fortunate enough to be able to choose the path I wanted to take, so monarchy is a curiosity for me. I wonder why, at some point, human beings needed to gather behind a monarch who would be there for the rest of his life before giving way to his children, his grandchildren, his great-grandchildren, and so on until the end of time. I would have to consult anthropologists and just about every library in the world to find out why we reached that point in our history, or even in our prehistory.

• (1330)

Then, I wondered why people in the House, in Canada and around the world are so attached to the monarchy. It is important to me to see both sides. Why are there people in the House who are so attached monarchy? It is kind of a mystery.

Then, I dove into my own history books and learned that many anglophones today are close or distant relatives of American loyalists who left what is now the United States because it was separating from the British Crown. It is worth noting that the United States functions fairly well without the Crown. It is fair to say that the United States is a mature country, a little like France, capable of functioning without a monarch. In general, things are going well. That system is worth thinking about. Those people were royalists, loyal to the Crown. They came here, bringing with them their values system as it pertained to the monarchy. I can see how the tradition was passed down from one generation to the next. I do wonder why the Scots and the Irish, who suffered so much under the monarchy, are so attached to it. I do not have an answer yet, but I may get one eventually.

It is important to understand that all of the statements I make and questions I ask today are meant as delicately as possible. I do not mean to offend anyone for the values they espouse. I am simply trying to explain the other side of the argument, knowing that 56% of Canadians and over 70% of Quebecers are against the oath of allegiance to the Queen and King of England, although now it is a king, and those percentages are increasing all the time.

As my colleague mentioned earlier, no one can say that this idea came from us sovereignists, or as some call us, separatists. This did not come from sovereignists. If that were the case, then 56% of the Canadian population and 70% of the Quebec population are separatists. With 70% of the Quebec population, we would have a new country in North America, and Canada would have a new neighbour. This is not about independence. It is about democratic evolution, about political maturity. We are capable of making our own laws, deciding for ourselves and being reasonable. Once laws have gone through all the necessary procedures, and there are many, we can then say that we approve and enforce them, although it could end up being a judge who enforces them.



We are talking about a symbolic function that costs us \$67 million a year, every year.

Earlier, I listened to my colleagues asking if there were other issues we should be discussing instead. Is there nothing else as urgent as the monarchy? Yes, there are more urgent issues, such as the fact that \$67 million represents over three times the amount of money we need for infrastructure. From an economic standpoint, this has a real impact. It costs three times as much as an infrastructure program that we want to implement. It costs as much as 670 housing units. That is the reality and those are urgent needs right now. By having access to this money, we would really help people, and our laws would represent us.

Let us be mature, let us move forward with this, and let us think big.

• (1335)

**Mr. Joël Lightbound (Louis-Hébert, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech. I think this is a rather interesting debate we are having in the House this morning.

I share many of the sentiments of my colleagues across the way. To me, swearing an oath to the British Crown after every election is not a fond memory. It is something that I would certainly forego. I think my attachment to the British Crown is likely as strong as theirs.

However, I also understand the argument of my colleagues on this side of the House who say that if we decide to abolish the monarchy in Canada, that involves reopening the Constitution and that is not necessarily a priority.

I would like to know how my colleague reconciles these two things especially given the challenges we are facing as a country with, as members know, the economic situation in Canada and around the world.

• (1340)

**Mrs. Julie Vignola:** Mr. Speaker, as everyone here today knows, Quebec did not ratify the Constitution. Despite that, the monarchy said that was not a problem and that the Constitution would apply against Quebec's will.

I am going to make a religious reference that everyone will understand. Correct me if I am wrong, but the Constitution is not like Moses' 10 commandments, carved in stone. We are able to amend it and it makes sense to do so in order to make the Constitution an accurate portrait of society. It can and must be amended for the good of the people, the advancement of values and to represent what we truly are now and what we aspire to become.

**Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, since arriving in the House, I have often heard my colleagues opposite give speeches of contrition for violations of human rights.

Since this morning, we have heard all sorts of things and it seems that due to ignorance, complacency or lack of courage, they are content to defend the status quo without feeling any embarrassment about what the Crown did to the Acadians, which is literally a genocide.

### *Business of Supply*

Can my colleague explain why the members opposite are not embarrassed with respect to Acadian descendants when they swear allegiance to the Crown?

**Mrs. Julie Vignola:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his very pertinent question.

This is not just about Acadian descendants but also about the Métis of Alberta and the first nations in general, who have been cast aside, crushed and reduced to silence. I could also talk about conscription in Quebec, which resulted in deaths because people simply did not want to go to war. I could talk about the 1832 election in Montreal, when the army charged and killed francophones who were defending themselves. We could make a list of these representatives of the Crown who attacked minorities.

How then can we defend minorities today while ignoring those who suffered for decades, centuries, even, without ever acknowledging their suffering or apologizing?

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to know why today's discussion is on this issue.

Canada is facing a lot of problems, such as inflation, immigration, and the war between Ukraine and Russia. Why did the Bloc Québécois choose to talk about this issue today when there are so many more important issues to talk about?

**Mrs. Julie Vignola:** Mr. Speaker, I already answered that question.

In practical terms, \$67 million, the amount I was trying to think of earlier, is more than the budget of the National Research Council Canada, an organization whose research helps all our citizens.

[*English*]

**Ms. Joanne Thompson (St. John's East, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time today with the member for Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill.

Canada is unique in our status as a parliamentary democracy and constitutional monarchy, with His Majesty King Charles III as sovereign. As a constitutional monarch, the King is Canada's head of state but must still abide by the decisions of the Canadian government. This element of our Constitution ensures that it is the Canadian people who determine the laws that govern us.

The Canadian Crown is a reminder that the power to govern our country is shared. Our democratic system allows us to push for the change desired by our people, while the presence of the Canadian Crown offers stability and respect for due process.

Over the years, the Canadian Crown has brought prestige and tradition to our celebrations. Royal tours have enhanced milestones in Canadian history, such as Canada's centennial anniversary, celebrated by Queen Elizabeth II, or the 75th anniversary of the Canadian Rangers, celebrated by the then Prince of Wales. Even our Canadian honours system, officially created by our last sovereign, enables us to recognize extraordinary people for their tremendous contributions to our country in a merit-based, apolitical and accessible way.

*Business of Supply*

The year 2022 marked Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee. As of February 6, Canada's longest-reigning sovereign was the first to celebrate this historic milestone marking a 70th anniversary on the throne. Canadians across the nation used this momentous occasion to celebrate Canada's achievements over the past seven decades and participate in initiatives organized by the government, a true partnership among federal departments and agencies, Crown corporations, viceregal offices, provincial and territorial governments and non-governmental organizations.

The Department of Canadian Heritage received hundreds of applications from communities and organizations wishing to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee, and in turn provided \$2.14 million in funding for 363 projects, many of which gave Canadians the opportunity to learn about the history and role of the Crown in Canada. They highlighted how Canada has evolved over the last seven decades and made special efforts to engage youth and indigenous peoples. Many Canadians also took advantage of national programs offered by the Platinum Jubilee. For example, about 26,000 teachers and four million viewers took part in the education program developed by the Royal Canadian Geographical Society that taught students about the constitutional role of the Crown, with environmental and indigenous connections.

The Rideau Hall Foundation held a symposium of Queen Elizabeth scholars and high-profile Canadians, which consisted of about 2,000 speakers and participants who discussed topics of significance that shaped Canada and the Commonwealth. A Canadian Platinum Jubilee website was created, with information on the historic milestone, celebratory initiatives throughout the year and a newly developed Canadian Platinum Jubilee emblem. The website garnered well over one million views and social media posts in both official languages and received over 113,000 impressions on the Crown in Canadian platforms.

The Royal Canadian Mint issued four commemorative coins for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, all of which received tremendous response. Likewise, Canada Post issued commemorative stamps for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, which saw very successful sales.

Each country has symbols and peoples that establish its identity and culture and represent its history and priorities. The Canadian Crown, especially in the context of the royal tours, is a means of promoting those Canadian symbols and people at the national level, helping Canadians get a better understanding of and sense of attachment to their shared values and, on an international level, showing what it is that sets Canada apart from other nations. Royal visits give us the opportunity to highlight Canadian issues, people, places and institutions of importance, and add special significance to the way we honour Canadians and their achievements.

• (1345)

During their most recent tour, the King and Queen Consort engaged with small businesses and discussed innovative solutions and the impacts of the pandemic. They met with youth groups and discussed the importance of literacy. They discussed sustainable financial measures in combatting climate change and learned about the impacts that climate change has had on northern Canada and its cultures. They met many indigenous people of Canada, including in my riding of St. John's East, visiting the Heart Garden, participating

in national and traditional ceremonies, meeting with indigenous leaders across the Northwest Territories and learning about efforts made to preserve indigenous languages.

Through media coverage on the tour, Canadians were given the opportunity to learn about current events in their own country, as well as the nation's history. The organizations and people whom the King and Queen Consort met also benefited from the publicity, raising awareness of Canadians' work.

Finally, upon Queen Elizabeth II's passing, a series of commemorative initiatives over a 10-day mourning period were held, ending with a national commemorative ceremony on September 19. Initiatives included a half-masting of the national flag of Canada on all federal buildings and establishments in Canada and abroad, the illumination of several key Canadian landmarks in royal blue and the launch of a commemorative website, which included resources for Canadians to learn about and celebrate the Queen's life and her years of service to Canada.

Among those resources was an online book of condolences, where all Canadians were invited to share their personal stories of the Queen, send messages of condolence to her family and thank her for seven decades of service to Canada. Almost 60,000 Canadians signed the online book of condolences and thousands more signed the physical books of condolences that were available for in-person signing at Rideau Hall in Ottawa, the Citadelle of Quebec in Quebec City and multiple community institutions across the country. This was a remarkable demonstration of collective mourning and gratitude by Canadians across the nation.

The Prime Minister proclaimed a national day of mourning on September 19, 2022, the day the national commemorative ceremony for the Queen took place in Ottawa, which coincided with her state funeral in London. This designated holiday was an opportunity for Canadians to honour the Queen's life and service. The national ceremony took place at Christ Church Cathedral in Ottawa and highlighted key moments of the Queen's life related to Canada and Canadians, featuring prayers and readings, an indigenous tribute, addresses by prominent Canadians, musical interludes by a wide variety of Canadian artists and a video montage of her 22 official tours in Canada.

Attendees reflected a broad selection of Canadian society, including former prime ministers and governors general, representatives at each level of government, multi-faith representatives and notable Canadians and individuals who hold special ties with the Queen or the Crown. The ceremony was broadcast live across the nation and garnered millions in viewership.

The Canadian Crown is an institution whose grandeur and dignity clearly contribute to our collective identity, and it has stood the test of time despite the challenges and changes that Canada and the world have faced in recent years. It has overseen our nation's growth and guided us through our evolution as we have learned from past mistakes and looked to a brighter future.

• (1350)

**The Deputy Speaker:** I just want to remind folks that as people are starting to come in, the noise outside the chamber seems to be a lot noisier than normal. Every time the door from the lobby opened, we could hear it bleed into the microphone. Let us make sure we keep the volume down as people are coming into the chamber to participate in question period.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Sarnia—Lambton.

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member opposite for her tribute. I also had a book of condolences in my office and the response from the community was overwhelming. The Queen certainly was very revered.

All of us in this House were the Queen's reps and now we are the King's reps. I was very surprised when I called the Governor General's office to try to get pictures of the King for the airport and my office. I was told they were not going to do that.

Would the member agree that with the new King in place, we should be making sure his presence is spread throughout the land?

**Ms. Joanne Thompson:** Mr. Speaker, it is still early days in King Charles III reign, so there is much work that still needs to happen. However, we are a country of diversity, a country that is made up of so many different places with different cultures. We are able to come together to share ideals, but also to celebrate our differences. I look forward to that continuing in the future.

• (1355)

[Translation]

**Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, during our esteemed colleague's speech, I heard words like “celebration”, “jubilee”, “recognize” “commemorative coin”, “stamp” “participating”, “visits” and so on. For me, that is just a smoke-screen. It is deliberately turning a blind eye and denying our reality. The member should look back at our history, the history of French Canadians, and at what happened two or three centuries ago.

Perhaps kowtowing and being subject to the monarchy and this completely archaic institution works for them, but I am letting them know that it does not work for most Quebecers. We want nothing to do with that.

[English]

**Ms. Joanne Thompson:** Mr. Speaker, it is very interesting. Newfoundland and Labrador, as members know, joined Canada in 1949. Prior to that, we were under British rule. Our ability to still maintain a unique culture that is quite diverse and interesting along very different opinions and ways of being has come about because of our past. We grow stronger as we move forward when we understand who we are and we take the best of who we are, move into the future and learn from mistakes in the past.

**Mr. Kevin Vuong (Spadina—Fort York, Ind.):** Mr. Speaker, I agree a lot with what my colleague has said. When I first swore an oath of allegiance to what was then Her Majesty's Royal Canadian Navy, it was such a huge part in becoming part of my identity, being the first in my family to grow up in this country. Was I Chinese Canadian? Was I Canadian? What was I?

### Statements by Members

I am hoping my colleague could speak a bit about the royal family's connection to what Canadian identity is.

**Ms. Joanne Thompson:** Mr. Speaker, each province in Canada is incredibly unique. As I said a few moments ago, we carry our own cultures forward. What is really interesting about our shared past, with the monarchy as part of our Constitution, is that we also have shared space where we can come together and celebrate who we are as individual provinces, and then also lean into what we have in common. It is that shared value that really creates the strong Canada we know and love.

[Translation]

**Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, for me, being a royal subject is not part of my identity that I am proud of. In fact, I would say that it is almost shameful. I might add that, unlike others here, I did not have a book of condolences for the Queen on my desk for people to sign, although anyone who wanted to was quite free to do so. That said, I listened to the monarchical plea of my colleague across the way. I strongly disagree with her, as members might have guessed.

Perhaps this particular thought might elicit an interesting response from her. Monarchy is imposed. However, we live in a democracy. As people elected by the public, we have the power to decide to free ourselves from the monarchy and emancipate ourselves. A majority of the population, both in Quebec and in Canada, would like to see us cut ties with the monarchy.

I would like to know if my colleague across the way, whose feelings for democracy must be quite strong, thinks it is important that the will of the people be reflected in the decisions of their elected representatives.

[English]

**Ms. Joanne Thompson:** Mr. Speaker, I can certainly tell the House that the constituents in my riding are very concerned with the cost of living, with the need to expand dental care and to work toward climate action.

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

### MAYOR OF TORONTO

**Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Scarborough—Rouge Park, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate His Worship John Tory, the mayor of the city of Toronto, on his decisive re-election last night.

Mayor Tory has been instrumental in bringing all the people of the city of Toronto together. He brilliantly manoeuvred the COVID-19 pandemic and ensured that the most vulnerable were supported.

*Statements by Members*

Under Mayor Tory's leadership, the City of Toronto is building an unprecedented level of transit, including the Scarborough subway extension. He is also committed to affordable housing and, in particular, transitional housing that has the proper supports for all.

Our government is fortunate to work with such a dynamic and accessible mayor, and we look forward to working to make Toronto an even better place to live, work and raise a family.

My heartfelt congratulations to the 25 city of Toronto councillors who were elected, including my municipal counterpart, Dr. Jennifer McKelvie, on her resounding re-election. I also want to welcome Jamaal Myers, the new councillor for Scarborough North.

Finally, I want to thank all those who put their names forward to serve their communities.

\* \* \*

● (1400)

**NUTRITION INTERNATIONAL**

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today, marks three decades of Canadian global nutrition leadership. That is 30 years of Nutrition International being Canada's flagship nutrition organization, whose work to eliminate malnutrition worldwide has saved over seven million lives.

Ensuring people have not only food but the right nutrition to allow them to survive and then thrive is more important than ever now. In this challenging global context, nutrition must continue to be a central pillar of Canada's efforts to tackle the food security crisis especially with the combined shocks of war, supply chain disruptions and droughts threaten our lives.

Nutrition International continues to work hand in hand with governments to support the most vulnerable communities and Canadians can be proud of this work. I wish Nutrition International a happy 30 years.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**MARINE INDUSTRY**

**Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, today is the 21st Quebec Marine Day, a day to recognize and celebrate the marine industry's many contributions to our collective well-being.

The marine industry is a true economic engine, directly and indirectly employing nearly 25,000 workers in Quebec. They work tirelessly from one end of the mighty St. Lawrence Seaway to the other, transporting the goods consumed by millions of North American households.

My riding is in the Lower St. Lawrence region, and the marine industry is a huge part of our daily lives and our culture. The seaway and its ships have shaped life in the Lower St. Lawrence for hundreds of years. Downtown Rimouski is also home to the Institut maritime du Québec, the largest marine training centre in the country, and the only francophone one.

Training the superior marine industry workforce of the future right in the heart of our region is a tremendous source of pride. May

the marine industry continue to flourish, and I wish everyone an enjoyable Quebec Marine Day.

\* \* \*

**CANADA-FRANCE INTERPARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION**

**Ms. Lena Metlege Diab (Halifax West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the friendship between Canada and France is stronger than ever.

As a member of the Canada-France Interparliamentary Association, I helped strengthen our bilateral relations during our 48<sup>th</sup> annual meeting earlier this month. I would like to thank my colleagues from the association, our French counterparts, as well as the French senators and all those who welcomed us.

The week of exchange highlighted our common interests to protect the environment and promote cultural diversity. I learned a lot about the state of the francophonie in British Columbia, as well as about our relations with First Nations communities.

I also participated in the unveiling of the *Amicitia France-Canada* monument at Beechwood Cemetery in Ottawa, which commemorates our shared principles and the lasting historic connection between our countries. *Vive le Canada! Vive la France!*

\* \* \*

[*English*]

**THE ECONOMY**

**Mrs. Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, activist policies drive the NDP-Liberal agenda, while economic management, transparency and basic government services fall by the wayside. Canadians still cannot get a passport. Arrive-CAN contracts are being fabricated. Political interference is once again being covered up. The disappointments just keep coming.

Canadians are facing soaring costs, inflation at a 40-year high and a looming recession. They are watching the costs of everything go up and seeing the value of the dollar in their pockets shrink.

The cost of living is top of mind for my constituents and Canadians across the country, yet the NDP-Liberal coalition continues to tax, spend and pour fuel on the affordability crisis.

While the Prime Minister might go to great lengths to tell Canadians that he has their backs, the reality is that the NDP-Liberal costly coalition costs them the shirt off their backs.

• (1405)

### DIWALI AND BANDI CHHOR DIVAS

**Mrs. Rechie Valdez (Mississauga—Streetsville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, October 24 is an important day of celebration for the Sikh, Hindu, Jain and Buddhist communities across Canada and all around the world. These communities will gather with friends and family to celebrate Diwali and Bandi Chhor Divas.

The core values of Diwali celebrate that spiritual victory, knowledge, light and good will triumph over ignorance, evil and darkness.

Throughout this month, I had the honour of celebrating Diwali and Bandi Chhor Divas with a multitude of groups and constituents in my riding. These celebrations remind us that diversity is our strength and they recognize the significant contributions that the Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist and Jain faiths make in Canada.

I would like to wish everyone who is celebrating, a happy Diwali and Bandi Chhor Divas.

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### MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

**Ms. Jenna Sudds (Kanata—Carleton, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday was an exciting day in Ottawa, municipal election day. Today, we woke up with a new mayor-elect and new city council, including 11 new councillors.

I am incredibly proud of my friend Mark Sutcliffe, who is our new mayor for Ottawa, with his vision, his campaign and his dedication to making our city the best possible place. The energy of countless volunteers who rallied around Mark and his vision was contagious. Our city came out in large numbers, showing their confidence in his leadership and his vision.

For the three west Ottawa city councillors who serve in my riding of Kanata—Carleton, Cathy, Allan and Clarke, I look forward to working alongside them in our amazing community. For all the candidates who stepped up and had the courage to put their name on the ballot, our city is better because of them.

Lastly, I offer a special thanks to outgoing mayor Jim Watson for his steadfast leadership over the years. He has served us incredibly well and I hope he gets a much-deserved vacation.

\* \* \*

### CAPITAL EXPERIENCE

**Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, each year, two students from each of my riding's seven secondary schools are selected to participate in a program called the "Capital Experience". During their three-day trip to Ottawa, they will learn about various career opportunities that await them following their graduation from post-secondary education.

I would like to introduce this year's participants: Brody Bolger and Veronica Beynon from Haliburton Highlands Secondary; Ella Voliotis and Jacob Partridge from Crestwood Secondary School; Logan MacInnis and Sophie Kaloudas from Fenelon Falls Secondary School; Olivia Rodd and Kayla Ryan from LCVI; Olivia Kylau and Jocelyn Kennedy from I.E. Weldon Secondary; Brodi

### Statements by Members

Gorrill and Zoe Hannah from Brock High School; and, of course, Megan Rodd and Sarah Hawkins from St. Thomas Aquinas Secondary School.

This trip is only possible because of the generosity and kindness of local sponsors, such as Lions and Rotary clubs, Royal Canadian Legions and small businesses.

It is my hope that these students will be inspired as they consider future opportunities. I would like to invite my colleagues to welcome these students to Ottawa.

\* \* \*

### HOUSING

**Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians cannot afford the costly coalition between the Liberal Party and the NDP. While the government acknowledges that there is a housing affordability crisis, it has done nothing to address it. Instead, its massive chaotic spending drives ownership costs to record high levels.

Since the beginning of this year, the Bank of Canada's rate hikes have added hundreds of dollars to mortgage payments every single month. This is in addition to record high taxes, grocery prices and "just inflation".

RBC's national aggregate housing affordability measure surpassed the previous worst-ever point in 1990. This is the verdict on the Prime Minister, who prioritizes his own political interests over the well-being of millions of Canadians and the future of our next generations.

In contrast, our new Conservative leader has a plan to restore the hope of home ownership in Canada. A Conservative government would stop this never-ending random spending by the NDP-Liberal—

• (1410)

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Nepean.

\* \* \*

### PRIME MINISTER OF THE UNITED KINGDOM

**Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of all Canadians, in particular Indo-Canadians, I wish to congratulate Rishi Sunak on becoming the first person of colour and the first Hindu to become the prime minister of the United Kingdom.

His achievement is a proud moment for over 1.2 billion people of Indian heritage all across the world, including in Canada. It is a Diwali gift to about 700,000 Hindu Canadians. For me, another matter of interest is that his wife, Akshata Murty, comes from Bangalore, the same place I come from, and speaks the same language, Kannada.

I hope Rishi Sunak will be an inspiration for the next generation of Hindu Canadians and will motivate them to step forward for a more active role in public service.

*Statements by Members*

[Translation]

**THE ECONOMY**

**Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to share my pessimism about the economic future of our country. The people of Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, like all citizens of Canada, are worried about inflation on a daily basis, which tells us that we are heading full speed into a recession.

Everything costs more. The cost of food is going up. Every week, the grocery bill goes up. The cost of transportation cannot be circumvented as it affects all consumer goods. Winter is coming. Workers and their families will have to choose between putting food on the table and heating their homes, both of which are vital.

Meanwhile, the Liberals, along with their NDP accomplices want to raise taxes. With a recession approaching, now is not the time to raise taxes. Other countries have figured that out. Why is this Liberal-NDP coalition so out of touch? It is just basic common sense.

Will the government come to its senses and cancel all tax increases to bring hope and breathing space to all Canadians?

\* \* \*

[English]

**AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD**

**Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians have had enough of this government's reckless, punitive tax scheme. Farmers across Saskatchewan and the country feel ignored and mistreated by this government, and it just keeps getting worse. As we learned recently, the government will be tripling its carbon tax. The "Ottawa knows best" approach from Liberals keeps hamstringing our farmers as they try to dry their grain, heat their barns and export their first-class agriculture products around the world to help feed it.

A government led by our leader will respect farmers, listen to their concerns and work together to remove the gatekeepers in our country. Most importantly, we will scrap the carbon tax and finally give the respect to Canadian farmers that they have been missing for the past seven years.

Canadians and our farmers cannot afford the costly coalition between the NDP and the Liberals. A Canadian government should value and promote our agriculture sector, not try to tax it out of existence.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**OBSTACLE COURSE RACING WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS**

**Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Longueuil—Charles-LeMoine, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to highlight the achievements of four Longueuil residents, members of the Warriors, who reached the podium at the obstacle course racing world championships held in Vermont in September. The team representing Canada at the competition won three medals, including a gold medal.

Léa Latour won the silver medal in the women's 13 to 19 age group in the 15-kilometre race. Chantal Castonguay, Émilie

Chagnon and Léa Latour finished third with a bronze medal in the women's team race. Shawn Michel won the gold medal in the 3-kilometre race for men aged 20 to 29.

In all, 29 Warriors athletes participated in this event. The Warriors train every weekend at the Gérard-Filion school in Longueuil, in my riding.

Congratulations to all the participants and the winners.

\* \* \*

[English]

**AFFORDABILITY**

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, winter is coming, Canadians are feeling the pressure of rising heating bills, and New Democrats are calling on this government to take the GST off home heating in order to give people some relief. Taking the GST off heating has been a long-standing policy of New Democrats, because it makes it easier for seniors and working-class families who are feeling the pressure of rising costs.

We attempted to work with the Conservatives on taking the GST off heating, but they refused, which is not surprising, because the Conservative Party is about the politics of division, while we are here about getting things done. We look at how they rail on about inflation while putting nothing on the table that is credible. We negotiated a doubling of the GST tax credit; we pushed for the investigation into gouging by grocery giants, and we are pushing forward with a national dental care strategy, while the Conservatives stand on the sidelines and howl in outrage.

When it comes to getting relief on heating bills, New Democrats will continue to put forward solutions that help the working class and seniors.

\* \* \*

● (1415)

[Translation]

**ELECTRIFICATION OF TRANSPORTATION**

**Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, every day, dozens of my constituents are working on developing the transportation of tomorrow. With the presence of players such as Lion Electric, the Innovative Vehicle Institute, and the Composites Development Center of Quebec, Rivière-du-Nord is en route to the future, an innovative, clean and profitable route.

This is possible because our community, first and foremost with Marc Bourcier, the mayor of Saint-Jérôme, is fully invested. Together, we will continue to position Rivière-du-Nord as the hub of innovation in transportation and the electrification of transportation.

Today, in fact, the Innovative Vehicle Institute is holding a major event in Mirabel tied to the electrification of heavy transport, which is responsible for 37% of Quebec's greenhouse gas emissions in the transportation sector. I commend the people at the Innovative Vehicle Institute for their work. The Bloc Québécois and I support them.

The electrification of transportation is good for Rivière-du-Nord, good for Quebec and good for the planet.

\* \* \*

[English]

### GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

**Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we recently learned the Liberal government spent \$54 million on the ArriveCAN app, an application experts say could have been created for \$200,000. In a document signed off by the government, we were given a list of companies that were contracted to do the work.

Last week, one of those companies came forward, saying it does not do this kind of work and did not receive a penny, proving the Liberals gave false information to Canadians. With two more companies coming forward, we now know millions of dollars are missing. Let us think about that: Millions of dollars over budget and millions of dollars unaccounted for. Canadians know the scandal-ridden Liberal government cannot be trusted. They also know Liberal insiders are the ones who benefit.

While transparency and accountability are not the government's strong suit, Canadians have a right to know how their tax dollars are being spent and who got rich.

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### MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi (Ottawa Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I join my Ottawa caucus colleagues to congratulate Mark Sutcliffe, the new mayor of our nation's capital. Mark is a community leader. He has an incredible capacity to bring people together, to listen and to be a mayor for all of Ottawa.

I also want to thank Catherine McKenney for running a strong campaign and really having a positive vision for our community. We thank Catherine for their public service. I also want to congratulate all councillors and school board trustees who have been elected to represent our community.

Lastly, big thanks to Jim Watson, the outgoing mayor of Ottawa, for his decades of public service. Our city is better because of members of our community getting out there and voting to make sure Ottawa is one of the best cities to live in our country.

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## ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

### THE ECONOMY

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after causing the highest rate of inflation in 40 years

### Oral questions

with \$500 billion in inflationary deficits, the Prime Minister is trying to blame the rest of the world. However, the future Liberal leader, Mark Carney said that inflation is principally a domestic story. Inflation is mostly caused by domestic factors.

Should the Liberals believe their current leader or their future leader?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we know very well that global pressures cause inflation. These consist mainly of supply chain disruptions, the cost of oil and pressure on food prices caused by Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine. That is why we have taken concrete steps to help Canadians by providing GST rebates, assistance for children's dental care and assistance for low-income renters.

However, we do not understand why Conservatives continue to oppose measures that will help Canadian households.

• (1420)

[English]

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister loves to blame the war by Russia against Ukraine, but less than 0.3% of our trade is with those countries. In fact, the things they make are things we already have here, energy and food, if the Prime Minister would get out of the way and let Canadians produce it.

Maybe that is why Mark Carney disagrees with him. He said of inflation, "It's quite broad, so it's not all imported inflation. In fact, most of it is now domestically generated inflation."

The Prime Minister is responsible for that inflation. Why will he not take responsibility?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we know Canadians are struggling with the ability to pay their bills and support their families, and that they have concerns regarding the months ahead. That is why we have stepped up to help them. We are delivering help through the doubling of the GST rebate over six months, with a cheque that should arrive in the coming weeks in Canadians' bank accounts. At the same time, we are moving forward with support for low-income renters and with help for kids under 12, to send them to the dentist.

Unfortunately, despite the Conservative leader's rhetoric, he is not supporting dental and support for renters. Why is he not supporting them?

*Oral questions*

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is the half trillion dollars of inflationary deficits that have bid up the cost of the goods we buy and the interest we pay. Inflationary taxes are making it worse, including a tripling of the carbon tax, which will raise home heating prices.

Maybe that is why Mark Carney, the future leader of the Liberal Party, is saying, “Really, inflation is principally a domestic story.” He disagrees that it can all be blamed on the rest of the world. Who should the Liberals believe, their current leader or their future one?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House we listen to Canadians, who are talking about the fact they are having trouble paying for groceries and paying their bills and are worried about what the winter is going to look like. That is why we have stepped up as a government to deliver cheques to support them in the coming weeks, with a GST rebate that is going to help 11 million households and measures to help low-income families pay the rent and send their kids to the dentist. Why is the Conservative Party, which says it cares about affordability, not stepping up to support on rental and dental? Why will it not support Canadians?

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has built a house of debt. He doubled Canada's debt. He added more debt than all Canadian prime ministers combined. He flooded our financial and mortgage system with easy cash, which bid up house prices, forcing Canadians to pay over a million dollars for the average home in Toronto or Vancouver. Now the bill is coming due tomorrow, and interest rates are expected to go up half to three-quarters of a point. Those same Canadians who the Prime Minister forced to over-leverage themselves will be hit with an uppercut of surprise higher interest rates that his government said would never happen. How could he have been so irresponsible?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I know the Leader of the Opposition disagreed with us, but we chose to have Canadians' backs through the worst pandemic and economic crisis in generations. We were there with supports for workers and small businesses. We were there with supports for seniors and young people. We were there to support Canadians, not just because it was the right thing to do, but also because it was the smart thing to do to ensure that our economy would come back faster, which it has, faster than many of our peer countries.

This is why we know that supporting Canadians is the best way to build a strong future. Why are the Conservatives not supporting dental and rental for Canadians who need them?

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, he did not have Canadians' backs. He went behind their backs so he could give \$54 million for the disastrous ArriveCAN app, which we did not need. It did not work, and developers could have designed it in a single weekend.

The Prime Minister went behind Canadians' backs to give out half a billion dollars to the WE Charity organization. He went behind Canadians' backs to give out CERB cheques to prisoners and public servants who were actually on the payroll at the time.

These monstrous deficits would not be quite so bad if he had not wasted so much money. Why did the Prime Minister waste so much and leave Canadians with so little?

• (1425)

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the lesson for most Canadians from the pandemic we have all been going through is that Canadians are there for each other. We support each other through times of difficulty, and when we do that, we actually do better than if we had all tried to go our own way.

The reality is, being there for each other has gotten us to where we are today, with a strong economy. It has given us the ability to step up to directly support those who need it with GST rebates, and dental and rental supports. These are, again, the dental and rental supports Conservatives are opposed to.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

## DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, for the Prime Minister, submission to the monarchy is not important. However, as an intelligent man, the Prime Minister can think about more than one subject in a day. As an intelligent politician and, of course, a man of the theatre, he can pretend that he does not. It is a shame, but he is going to have to vote tomorrow.

Does he support Canada's status as a lackey state of the British Crown? In our neck of the woods, an insincere oath is said to count for nothing. When the Prime Minister takes an oath to the British Crown, is he sincere?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois has all day to talk about the concerns of Quebecers and Canadians. They could talk about the cost of living, inflation, the work we can do together in the House to meet Canadians' expectations.

No, the Bloc Québécois—surprise, surprise—wants to reopen the Constitution. God knows that is not what Quebecers or Canadians are concerned about these days.

We are going to stay grounded in the reality that Canadians are facing, in what they need. We will continue to be there for all Canadians.

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, we will give him the benefit of the doubt. We will assume he is sincere when he takes his oath to the King because who would want an MP, let alone a Prime Minister, who is insincere? What good would that do?

As such, we assume the Prime Minister, all MPs, the Conservatives, everyone, are all sincere when they take an oath of allegiance—allegiance, mind you—to the British Crown.



Torn between the Crown and the people, between allegiance and democracy, will they serve the foreign king?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I know nobody challenged the Bloc Québécois leader's sincerity when he took his oath to the British Crown.

The truth is, Canadians are more focused on the problems they are facing, problems like climate change, global instability and the cost of living. That is what we choose to talk about.

The Bloc Québécois wants to reopen the Constitution. We are going to stay focused on what matters to Canadians. That is what we will continue to do. Serving Canadians in one of the most stable democracies in the world is what is best for Canadians.

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### HEALTH

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, in Quebec as elsewhere in Canada, emergency rooms are overflowing. Many Quebecers have had to wait more than 20 hours to be taken care of. One person has died because of the delays. Health care workers are tired; they need help.

When will this Prime Minister stop hiding and protect our health care system?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in the last two years of this pandemic, we have invested an additional \$72 billion, on top of the \$40 billion we send to the provinces each year for health systems. That is an additional \$72 billion to help with health care across the country.

As per our commitment, we are discussing with the provinces and territories to continue investing more money in health. I know that all Canadians want real results, and that is what we all expect.

\* \* \*

• (1430)

[English]

### TAXATION

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, big oil and gas are profiteering from inflation. They are making record profits, all the while Canadians are faced with energy prices that will increase, on average, between 50% and 100%. Home heating in Canada is essential.

If the Prime Minister wanted to, he could today make a difference in the lives of Canadians this upcoming winter. Will he remove GST from home heating and provide support to Canadians, yes or no?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are directly helping 11 million households with a doubling of the GST rebate, which is going to help them with hundreds of dollars as they approach this winter to be able to cover the costs of various bills. We are also stepping up with support for Canadians who need dental care for their kids under 12. We are stepping up with support for low-income renters.

We are going to continue to be there for Canadians, including with a price on pollution that puts more money back in Canadians'

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pockets in the provinces where it is being imposed. This is how we stick up for Canadians.

\* \* \*

### FINANCE

**Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the finance minister would have people believe she had a financial epiphany recently. We are not sure the Prime Minister has started thinking about monetary policy just yet, but this is a start. She finally admits the fiscal disaster her government created is not working, and the only way to fix Liberal inflation is to rein in spending.

Canadians are skeptical, though, given the Liberals are the ones who caused this inflation in the first place. Did the finance minister really wake up to reality, or was this peer pressure?

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canada has the lowest net debt-to-GDP ratio among G7 countries, and Canada has the lowest deficit among G7 countries. Our deficit is hovering around 1%. That is nearly deficit zero.

We have been fiscally responsible since well before the new Conservative leader was elected. In fact, we have been fiscally responsible to ensure that Canada would weather this inflationary storm better than most other countries.

The inflation numbers we are seeing among our peers are much higher than we are seeing here in Canada, and in Canada, we have an affordability plan that will help Canadians.

**Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians are paying the price for her government's fiscal mismanagement and Liberal inflation. There was \$110 billion spent before COVID and half a trillion dollars spent over the last few years, \$200 billion of which was not even COVID related.

Canadians' kitchen cabinets are bare, while the Liberal cabinet keeps spending more money and filling the cabinets of Liberal friends, but now, all of a sudden, the finance minister is telling her government to finally think about its inflationary spending habits. How can Canadians trust arsonists to put out the fire they started in the first place?

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, many of our allies are seeing inflation at a rate above 10%. We here in Canada are faring relatively better, but we are still seeing prices rise, which is why we put forward a comprehensive affordability plan.

*Oral questions*

However, I would like to get back to something the Conservative leader said in the House. He said, “It is true that dumb governments...all have inflation problems.” That statement is dangerous for many reasons.

Canada is a trading nation. We export more than we import. To say that our closest trading partners are led by dumb governments is to risk harm to the economy and to millions upon millions of Canadian jobs.

These are serious times. Serious times deserve—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Lakeland.

\* \* \*

**TAXATION**

**Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the NDP-Liberal costly coalition voted against removing its carbon tax from home heating. The carbon tax cost Albertans over \$1,500 this year, and they do not get anywhere near that back. The fact is that the Liberals are punishing Canadians for the basic need of heating our homes, and they are going to triple their take.

Canadians are already choosing between heating and eating, and they are forced to wear winter coats inside just to afford groceries. Why will the Liberals not cancel their triple tax hikes on home heating?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, right now in British Columbia, parts of the province have been without water for more than 100 days. In Port aux Basques, more than 100 families will not be able to go back to their homes, and that is just the beginning. In fact, some people are saying they do not want to go back because it has become too dangerous.

What does the Conservative Party have to say about what it would do to fight climate change and protect Canadians? It would do nothing. In fact, they want to make pollution free again in Canada. That is unacceptable. We have to work to protect Canadians from the impacts of climate change.

• (1435)

**Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians have to heat their homes. It is not a choice. Liberals are calling them polluters, while Conservatives are the only ones fighting to make life more affordable.

They say bad news comes in threes, and there is more. Next year, the Liberals will hit everyone with a new carbon tax: the Liberal fuel standard. The carbon tax already costs Canadians up to \$2,300 more than they get back. The new one will be another \$1,300. Struggling Canadians just cannot afford almost \$4,000 in new taxes a year.

Why will the Liberals not stop their plan to triple taxes on gas, groceries and home heating?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in the lead-up to the last election campaign, every single member opposite was in favour—

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

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault:** Well, you said so to Canadians.

Mr. Speaker, they told Canadians they were going to put a price on carbon. Were they lying to Canadians then, or are they lying now? That is the question I have for them.

**The Speaker:** I would like to remind the hon. members, and I know it gets passionate sometimes, to please place their questions and comments through the Speaker. I want to assure the minister I did not do or say a thing.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles.

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is no secret that there is some bickering going on within the Liberal cabinet. The first public indication of this friction was in 2020, when former finance minister Bill Morneau walked away from the job because he opposed his Prime Minister's spending spree.

That friction reached a breaking point last week when the Minister of Finance publicly contradicted her boss by saying that her government would have to tighten its belt. It is clear to us that the government must stop these inflationary measures immediately.

Will the Prime Minister commit to cancelling his plan to triple the carbon tax?

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, being there for Canadians during the pandemic was the right thing to do.

In fact, it is because of our support for Canadians that the economy has rebounded so quickly. We are seeing the results today. In a time of global economic instability, Canada has the best growth rate among our G7 peers, with the lowest deficit among them.

We were fiscally responsible, while being there for each other.

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the former finance minister left because he said that it was not working. The current Minister of Finance says one thing and the Prime Minister says another. No one in this cabinet agrees, and that is the problem.

In the meantime, when we look across the way, we see long faces. People are realizing that what the government is doing is not working.

When will the Liberals show some compassion, cancel the carbon tax and promise not to increase taxes for Quebeckers and Canadians?

*Oral questions*

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would remind my colleague that in Quebec, we use a carbon pricing system that is different than the federal system.

In an effort to collaborate with the provinces, we have allowed those who wanted to keep their own system to do so. In Quebec, the federal carbon pricing system does not apply; the cap-and-trade system does.

I would be pleased to explain to my colleague the difference between the two.

\* \* \*

**DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS**

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I want to set the record straight. My oath of allegiance to the British Crown was insincere.

An oath made under duress—

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

**The Speaker:** Order.

From the top, the hon. member for Beloeil—Chambly.

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet:** Mr. Speaker, an oath made under duress when one's heart is not in it is meaningless.

My only allegiance is to the people of Quebec and the Quebec nation, not to the foreign king.

People can tell that to the Prime Minister and the King.

• (1440)

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have one question. If the member was insincere in that case, how many times was he insincere in the House?

However, I do want to commend my Bloc Québécois colleague for his almost unconditional love for the Constitution of Canada, his keen interest in it, and his willingness to open it and improve it. However, at the risk of disappointing him and perhaps even hurting his feelings, I have to say that that is not a priority for Quebeckers. If he talked to Quebeckers, perhaps he would learn that their priorities are the cost of living, access to housing and help for families, young people and seniors. Those are Quebeckers' priorities.

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**DENTAL CARE**

**Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Parliamentary Budget Officer has confirmed that the government's and the NDP's dental care plan discriminates against Quebeckers.

Parents of children 12 and under in Quebec will receive half as much as parents in Canada. Only 50% of Quebec children will be eligible, whereas 100% of Quebec taxpayers will contribute. That is discrimination courtesy of the NDP and the Liberal Party. However, discrimination can be addressed.

What will the government do to stop it?

**Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we very much appreciate this question, which allows me to speak of the importance of dental care for our children.

If Parliament agrees, of course, 500,000 children in Canada will have access to a dental benefit. For Quebec children in particular, there will be additional support for preventative dental care.

We know that prevention is key to good health, and the Canadian government will be there to help families and children across Canada, and definitely in Quebec.

**Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I will give members another reason why their dental care cheque discriminates against Quebeckers.

It is because a greater number of us have group insurance that covers dental care. In Quebec, both workers and employers make contributions to provide this service for our children. Today, the federal government is taking tax money from those same workers, who are making an effort, to write cheques to other people, who are not making that same effort.

Do the Liberals and the NDP realize that they are discriminating against thousands of Quebeckers, mainly unionized workers?

**Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member is absolutely right. Many of us in Canada and Quebec know that dental care is important. That obviously includes businesses and Canadians who already have access to dental insurance. About 4% of dental care expenses are paid by the provinces and territories, and 40% of dental care is unfortunately paid by people who do not have access to dental insurance.

That is why all Canadians, including Quebeckers, will be able to benefit from the insurance program provided by the Canadian government.

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[English]

**PUBLIC SAFETY**

**Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, new evidence has surfaced with respect to the political interference in the investigation of the mass shooting in Nova Scotia in 2020. Sadly, 22 people and an unborn child died in this incredibly tragic event. It is exceedingly clear that the former minister of public safety politically interfered in the investigation of Canada's worst mass shooting. Nova Scotians want answers, not cover-ups. Such interference may be expected in a banana republic but not in Canada.

Will the minister resign?

**Hon. Bill Blair (President of the King's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as we have said a number of times in this House, the independence of police operations underpins the rule of law. This is a principle that I have not only always respected but one which I have defended vigorously for decades.

*Oral questions*

To be clear and explicit to everyone in this House, as I have been many times, I did not direct the commissioner of the RCMP in any operational matter, including in the release of information pertaining to the firearms used in this tragedy. Further, the commissioner herself has testified a number of times that there was no interference.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the former minister of public safety said yesterday that his testimony at committee was entirely accurate, but the commissioner of the RCMP not only directly contradicted his remarks at committee but also in the newly released audio recording of the commissioner during the infamous April 28, 2020, meeting where she reprimanded her deputies. It stands to reason then that the minister is implying that the commissioner lied to her deputies at the April 28 meeting, and she lied to parliamentarians at committee. If that is the case, she should resign.

Did the commissioner lie?

• (1445)

**Hon. Bill Blair (President of the King's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is free to engage in any speculation and even fabrication that she wishes, although I would suggest that she might be somewhat more circumspect when she steps out of the House and makes such spurious allegations.

Let me repeat: I did not direct the commissioner of the RCMP in any operational matter. The commissioner has confirmed that in her testimony before committee and under oath before the Mass Casualty Commission. The matter is settled.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the minister is expecting us to believe that the commissioner acted solely on her own and that she politicized the tragic deaths of 22 Canadians. She reprimanded her deputies for failing to share the models of the firearms used in those deaths and directly tied this to the Liberals' gun control policy. Then she told her deputies that it was the minister's office that asked her to do this. We are supposed to believe that she did this all on her own.

It is ridiculous. If that was true, she would be fired, at least by a government with any common decency or integrity.

Someone is lying. Who is it?

**Hon. Bill Blair (President of the King's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have been clear, explicit and unequivocal that at no time did I give direction to the RCMP to interfere with operations. I will simply quote the commissioner's testimony before committee and the Mass Casualty Commission, in which she said, "I did not receive direction and I was not influenced by government officials regarding the public release of information [or] on the direction of the investigation."

That is the commissioner's testimony, and it coincides precisely with my statement that no direction was given.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, let us examine the facts as they are. When the RCMP commissioner

had a conversation with her acolytes, she said, and I quote, "[I flew] it up the flagpole because it was a request that I got from the minister's office. And I shared with the minister that in fact it was going to be in the news release, and it wasn't."

It could not be any clearer. The RCMP commissioner directly implicates the current minister. Could she act with the dignity befitting her rank and resign?

[*English*]

**Hon. Bill Blair (President of the King's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, again, what is very clear is that the RCMP commissioner, in her testimony before the public safety committee and in front of the Mass Casualty Commission under oath, was very clear that there was no interference, and that I did not give her direction. In fact, she did clarify for the committee that I have always been meticulously careful in not providing her with direction.

That is her testimony. My statement to the House and my testimony previously is that I did not give her any direction on any operational matter.

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## INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

**Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP):** *Uqaqtittiji*, Inuit elders have endured many atrocities in their lifetimes and deserve to age with dignity. These atrocities include residential schools, forced religious conversion and the slaughter of sled dogs.

Due to failures from this government, Inuit are exiled down south in long-term care facilities. It is unacceptable that elders in Nunavut fear dying alone, away from home.

When will the government start properly funding home care so that elders can remain home with their loved ones?

**Hon. Dan Vandal (Minister of Northern Affairs, Minister responsible for Prairies Economic Development Canada and Minister responsible for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this is one of many priorities that we are working on in partnership with the Government of Nunavut and with Inuit rights holders in Inuit Nunangat. We have adopted the Inuit Nunangat policy and, just this morning, I had a very good discussion with the Minister of Health of Nunavut to talk precisely about these issues. We will make progress in partnership with the Government of Nunavut.

## HEALTH

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, emergency rooms across Canada are closing, because there is not enough staff to keep them open. Canadians are dying while waiting for care. Just this week, a man passed away in Quebec after waiting 16 hours in the ER. This situation is occurring in every corner of our country. It is an outrageous situation for a G7 nation. We need national leadership.

When will the Prime Minister sit down with the premiers to negotiate stable, sufficient and long-term federal health care funding and save Canadians' lives?

• (1450)

**Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are all grateful for the member's question. We all feel and fear the consequences of the crisis that health care workers throughout the country are going through. That is true everywhere in Canada, as we heard. People are having difficulty accessing appropriate emergency care, but, more than that, difficulty getting access to a family health team, to a safe and quality long-term care home, to home care, to palliative care and to dental care.

That is why we are investing many billions of dollars and we are going to continue doing that, because we promised we would do so—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Hamilton Mountain.

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## WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY

**Ms. Lisa Hefner (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this year marks the 30th anniversary of Women's History Month. With the theme "She Did, So Now I Can," we recognize the actions of strong women who have had a positive impact on our lives and who have been pushing boundaries so others can have more opportunities today. With misogyny on the rise, including in this House, our government recognizes the importance of uplifting and celebrating women's voices.

Can the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth speak about Women's History Month and share what we can do to support women now and in the future?

**Hon. Marci Ien (Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her empathetic leadership. As we close out Women's History Month, I have some thoughts on how women hold up their communities and make them stronger.

From the women working on the front lines, selflessly, simply because they want to serve, to women carving out careers and simultaneously caring for kids and senior parents, and to women marching in the streets for the right to choose, they are not invisible. We hear them and we stand with them.

\* \* \*

## FINANCE

**Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, \$54 million was wasted on the arrive scam with millions of dollars missing, \$680 million

## Oral questions

spent on vaccines that were thrown in the garbage after a reckless procurement process and now \$400,000 spent on luxuries and hotel rooms for a weekend in London. The Liberal government has no problem wasting the hard-earned tax dollars that it takes from everyday Canadians.

When will the Liberals cap spending, cut taxes and give Canadians a break?

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, one of the measures in our affordability plan is to provide a direct payment to low-income Canadians who are having trouble paying the rent.

What was the response of the new Conservative leader? It was to say no way and let us not give anything to low-income Canadians, certainly not those peanuts. While that might be fine for the Conservative leader who does not have rent to pay and who, in fact, lives in a big mansion paid for by the Canadian taxpayer, for low-income Canadians, \$500 will help them get to Christmas. For low-income Canadians, that is real money, and we are there to support those Canadians.

**Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, what this side of the House and the Conservative leader said was to not give a half-billion dollars to the Kielburgers. This side of the House has said not to do insider deals with people like Frank Baylis or the government's buddies at SNC-Lavalin.

We are hearing the same old, tired talking points from the Liberals while they are wasting hundreds of millions of dollars of Canadians' hard-earned money, when they can barely afford to heat their homes. Liberals are out of touch and Canadians are out of money. When will Liberals give Canadians a break?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we will take no lessons from the Conservatives. Canadians who are watching at home remember that the last advice they gave to Canadians was about crypto. We will continue to invest in skills and people. We will continue to invest in our ecosystem. We will continue to invest in our critical minerals. We will continue to build an economy that works for everyone and for all Canadians watching at home.

*Oral questions**[Translation]*

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is acting like a child who has been handed a credit card with no limit, who makes only the minimum payments and who knows full well his children will be on the hook for what he spent. Want to go to London and stay in a luxurious \$400,000 suite? Put it on the card. Want to send money to friends? Why pay \$250,000 when you can spend \$54 million on ArriveCAN? Put it on the card. There is no limit. Need to toss \$680 million worth of vaccines in the trash? No problem. Just put it on the card.

Is there an adult among the Liberals who will step up and take the Prime Minister's credit card away?

• (1455)

**Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are forgetting what happened during the pandemic. The government was there for Canadians. The Government of Canada sent payments to support nine million Canadians who lost their jobs. We were there during the pandemic, and we are here now with the Canada child benefit, child care and support for people who have lost their jobs. We are here for Canadians, and we will not apologize for that.

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it was a slip of the tongue, but no, we will not forgive them for adding \$500 billion to the debt during COVID-19, including \$200 billion that had absolutely nothing to do with COVID-19. That is the reality.

Let us talk about “ArriveSCANDAL”, the \$54-million app that should have cost \$250,000. It cost \$8 million to do the updates on an app that never worked.

The government even claims to have paid millions of dollars to businesses that say they never received a penny. That is the reality.

The costly coalition is costing Canadians dearly. Can we have the list of Liberal lottery winners who won millions?

**Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am certain that many people here in the House were troubled by the member's previous question, when he criticized Canada's vaccine supply.

According to recent figures from the Public Health Agency of Canada, which were validated by other experts, the exceptional vaccine supply that Canadians had access to probably saved about 400,000 lives in Canada over the past year. That is 400,000 people whose lives were saved.

We must also take into account the millions of people who would have lost a loved one if Canadians had not made every effort to get vaccinated and to protect themselves, as well as their loved ones.

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**EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**

**Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, this is going to be a tough winter for seasonal workers in the regions. They have been abandoned by EI since the recent increase in the eligibility threshold to 700 hours. They are not facing a black hole anymore, they are facing a total vacuum.

That is why the interprovincial alliance of the unemployed is in Ottawa today. We're talking about 20 unions and worker advocacy groups from eastern Quebec and the Maritimes. They have come to tell the government that the comprehensive EI reform it promised cannot wait.

When will the government finally introduce its reform? What is the date? We want a date.

*[English]*

**Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we know Canada needs an EI system for the 21st century. That is why we have been consulting widely with Canadians to build a system that works for everyone, including seasonal workers.

Although our temporary COVID support measures are winding down, regular EI benefits will continue to be available for workers, just as they were before the pandemic. With budget 2022, we are investing \$110 million to extend the seasonal pilot until October 2023.

We know there is more work to do, and that is why we are committed to fully modernizing Canada's EI system. We look forward to launching our long-term plan.

*[Translation]*

**Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, this kind of answer is no longer acceptable.

The government promised EI reform last summer. We are still waiting for it. In fact, it is a commitment that goes back to 2015. The government has been making promises for seven years all the while telling us that the reform is coming. The workers are fed up. They no longer have time to be patient only to end up being abandoned.

They are here today on Parliament Hill because they do not even qualify for EI anymore. They are in a vacuum. Will the minister's office at least meet with them?

**Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for her question and her work. I know that she is really tireless when it comes to employment insurance.

I know there are a lot of great ideas on both sides of the aisle when it comes to EI reform.

On our side, we know it is important to do it. Our government is doing its consultations to ensure that employers and employees have access to a quality EI system for Canadians today and in the future.

• (1500)

[English]

### THE ECONOMY

**Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, for seven years the government's mantra has been spend, spend, spend. It added \$100 billion in debt before COVID and \$500 billion of debt during COVID. It told us not to worry.

The Deputy Prime Minister said just over one year ago, "In today's low interest rate environment, not only can we afford these investments, it would be short-sighted of us not to make them." However, now, in a leadership launch speech, the Deputy Prime Minister is distancing herself even from her own record, saying that now is the time for restraint.

How can Canadians trust the arsonist to put out the fire?

**Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what the member opposite is talking about is CERB, the Canada emergency response benefit, which supported nine million Canadians in one of the most difficult periods of time that our country has faced. What he is talking about is the Canada emergency wage supports that supported millions of Canadians and prevented organizations and businesses from closing their doors.

Do members know what those supports did? They ensured that when the economy was ready to open up, when we were able to do that because public health measures worked and Canadians did what they needed to do to get this pandemic under control, people could go back to work, businesses could reopen and our economy could come back just as strong as before.

**Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, even the Parliamentary Budget Officer said half of the COVID spending was not even spent on COVID. The government said interest rates would remain low. It said there would be no inflation and then it said inflation would be temporary. Now inflation is out of control and the government is going to spend more on interest on the debt than we do on national defence.

The government's plan has not worked. How can Canadians afford any more of the government?

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let me simply correct the record by saying, as I have said before, that we actually have the lowest deficit among G7 countries. It is hovering around 1%. That is almost zero deficit.

Let me also come back to the importance of the measures we put in place and the importance of supporting Canadians when they needed it most. It ensured not only that Canadians continued to take home a paycheque and continued to be able to pay their rent and their mortgages, but that our economy came roaring back even stronger than it was prior to the pandemic thanks to the smart investments we made and the fiscal responsibility we still maintain today.

### Oral questions

### TAXATION

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member is in deficit fantasy land.

Our leader and our party have been calling for weeks for the Liberals to cancel taxes on Canadians, yet the Liberals are still planning to triple the carbon tax. I am going to ask this again today: Will they stop their punishing plans to increase the carbon tax and drive up the cost of gas, groceries and home heating, yes or no?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to quote the member for Durham, who said, "We recognize that the most efficient way to reduce our emissions is to use pricing mechanisms." We agree, and I will also quote the member for New Brunswick Southwest, who said, "The backstop will kick in, the feds will take it over, and...cheques will begin to roll out to New Brunswick".

That is exactly what we are doing. We are fighting climate change and supporting Canadians.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### SPORT

**Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Sport recently announced the renewal of \$25.3 million in funding over three years for gender equity in sport. This investment will help recruit and retain women and girls, and will support ongoing efforts to achieve gender equity in sport at all levels by 2035.

Can the minister explain how this new contribution will help women in sport?

**Hon. Pascale St-Onge (Minister of Sport and Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from Châteauguay—Lacolle for the great work she does. We want to see more girls and women participating in sports, but we also want to see more women coaches, women officials and women in leadership positions.

This investment is about making all levels of sport in Canada more inclusive and accessible. We know this will make a big difference in the Canadian sport system. As we have seen recently, women's place in sport is still being undermined, but we are here to change that.

*Oral questions***TAXATION**

**Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have mismanaged our national debt. They counted on low interest rates to continue spending. Now they will have to tax people and tax them again to make it all work. After undermining our energy sector, the government was unable to adequately prepare for the global economic shock. Inflation is devastating families, and people have no money and no breathing room.

Will the Liberals promise to show some compassion and cancel the carbon tax increase?

• (1505)

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives have an extremely short memory. The programs that were brought in during COVID-19 required unanimous support. We did not have time to debate it in the House. Every party needed to approve every program. The Conservatives could have blocked each program every time, but they did not. We talked about it, we negotiated and they approved each program that we introduced, unless they too were not being sincere then either.

[*English*]

**Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, people in my part of Alberta were just hit with five inches of snow, and more is on the way. Winter is coming, and Canadians will need to heat their homes to keep out of the cold.

Why is the Prime Minister taxing home heating fuel like it is some kind of luxury? Has he forgotten we live in Canada? When will he do the right thing and cancel his plan to triple the taxes on gas, groceries and home heating?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the only way to eliminate energy poverty is to reduce household costs in energy by fighting climate change.

With the volatility of oil prices and the record profits of oil companies, the Conservatives are proposing that Canadians be chained to the oil and gas markets and be completely vulnerable to foreign wars and cartels. Our plan is to give Canadians autonomy and sovereignty in their energy needs and finances.

**Mrs. Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, honestly, the Liberals need to start listening to Canadians. They cannot afford to put food on their tables, put gas in their tanks or to heat their homes. The Prime Minister insists on punishing Canadians for the crime of just heating their homes or putting food on their tables. He thinks it is a crime. It is just ludicrous.

While the Prime Minister can afford to jet set around the world on the taxpayers' dime, Canadians are just trying to afford basic necessities. Will the NDP-Liberal government have some decency and cancel its plans to triple the carbon tax?

**Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we are listening to Canadians. In fact, we have measures on the floor of the House right now that would support low-income Canadians, such as rental supports for low-income Canadians and dental supports for low-income children.

The Conservatives continue to have an opportunity to support those. They did not and I do not know why they did not, but if they did care about Canadians' household income and did care about making sure that Canadians had those dollars in their pockets, they would have supported rental and dental support.

\* \* \*

**DISASTER ASSISTANCE**

**Mr. Churence Rogers (Bonavista—Burin—Trinity, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, a month ago, one of the strongest storms hit this country and destroyed homes and forever altered the lives of thousands of people in Atlantic Canada. In the first days after the storm, we saw neighbours go above and beyond to help their neighbours. Local charities, non-profits and even the Canadian Armed Forces stepped up to help our communities. I offer them my deepest thanks.

However, while the immediate danger is passed, there are many people who still need help. Can the Minister of Emergency Preparedness tell this House how the federal government will continue to support my constituents and the people of Atlantic Canada in the months ahead?

**Hon. Bill Blair (President of the King's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let me first say that I believe what it is in the thoughts of every member of this House and remains in our hearts is the member's constituents and all those who were impacted by hurricane Fiona. I would like to take this opportunity to extend my thanks to the many people and organizations who stepped up when the storm struck and who were there to help when people needed it most.

In true Canadian spirit, people from coast to coast have chipped in to support ongoing relief efforts. Over \$22 million has been fundraised so far for the Red Cross's work, and our government is matching every dollar raised. In recognition of Canadians' generous spirit, we recently extended this donation matching program to October 31. I want to assure my colleagues that we will be there for people throughout this recovery.

\* \* \*

**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians are experiencing the devastation of the climate emergency. Natural disasters, like hurricane Fiona, are leaving entire communities reeling. Local governments want leadership from the Liberals on climate-resilient infrastructure. It is past due for infrastructure funding to live up to the times.



The government would rather give billions in subsidies to big oil and gas instead of helping people fight the climate crisis. When are the Liberals going to stop dragging their feet and fund the resilient infrastructure that communities need?

• (1510)

**Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, according to an independent international report, we are now investing in Canada twice as much in clean technologies and renewable energy than we are in fossil fuels, but that is just the beginning. We have already invested \$4 billion in adaptation measures, and we will be announcing in the coming months our national adaptation strategy to work with provinces, territories, indigenous leadership and municipalities to better prepare Canadians for climate change.

\* \* \*

#### IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

**Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, over 600 students, including 80 Ukrainian refugees, at the University of Alberta were not able to go to school this September because they could not get a study permit. Because of IRCC delays and backlogs, students are choosing to study elsewhere and it is costing Canadian universities millions of dollars.

The minister needs to be held accountable for ruining the lives of students who just want to study in Canada. When will the government fix the shameful problems at IRCC for students and for all those wanting to come to Canada?

**Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, with enormous respect to my colleague who posed the question, I point out that we have actually processed the largest number of study permits this year compared to any year on record. We have had 30% this year over last year, which represents a 30% increase over the record-setting year prior.

In addition, we know we need to do more to continue to support international students. I am pleased to remind the House we recently have made a change to lift the cap on the number of hours international students can work and have adopted new measures to make it more flexible so students can continue to pursue their studies online before they arrive in Canada. We will look under every stone, we will turn them over to find solutions to support international students, because it is good for Canada.

\* \* \*

#### PRESENCE IN GALLERY

**The Speaker:** I wish to draw the attention of members to the presence in the gallery of the 2022 Gerhard Herzberg Canada Gold Medal for Science and Engineering prize winner, Lenore Fahrig.

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

**The Speaker:** Also with us are the winners of the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council's John C. Polanyi Award, Brockhouse Canada Prize for Interdisciplinary Research in Science and Engineering, Synergy Awards for Innovation and the Arthur B. McDonald Fellowships.

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

#### Points of Order

**The Speaker:** I would also like to draw the attention of members to the presence in the gallery of Louise Bernice Halfe — Sky Dancer, the ninth parliamentary poet laureate.

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

\* \* \*

#### POINTS OF ORDER

##### OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a very serious matter. The member for Beloeil—Chambly today made a very disturbing statement when he clearly stated that his oath of allegiance to the Crown was not sincere. If it was not sincere, it is as if he never took it.

As such, I believe the Speaker should look into the appropriateness of the member continuing to sit in this place. We all know the Constitution states that each member must take an oath or make a solemn affirmation and that breaching this would be a very serious offence.

I would ask you, Mr. Speaker, to reflect on this and come back to the House with a ruling.

• (1515)

##### SPEAKER'S RULING

**The Speaker:** If I can have members' attention, it is a very serious item and each and every member does take an oath. However, we do have a precedent set here on page 209, chapter 4 of the 3rd edition of Bosc and Gagnon. Let me quote it.

...the Speaker was asked in 1990 to rule on the sincerity of a Member's solemn affirmation. Speaker Fraser ruled that the Chair was "not empowered to make a judgement on the circumstances or the sincerity with which a duly-elected Member takes the oath of allegiance. The significance of the oath to each Member is a matter of conscience and so it must remain".

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, given what was raised by the parliamentary secretary plus your contribution to that, I would strongly encourage you to go back and review this given that you are not being asked to interpret the member's intention. He made his intention very clear. You should go back and consider that and come back to the House at a later time, perhaps, with a ruling on that.

**The Speaker:** I am not going to stand here and argue back and forth. What I will do is look at it deeper, look at different options and come back to the House should I see fit.

*Routine Proceedings***ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

[English]

**COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

## CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

The House resumed from October 24 consideration of the motion.

**The Speaker:** It being 3:16 p.m., pursuant to order made on Thursday, June 23, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded on the motion to concur in the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration.

Call in the members.

• (1530)

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

*(Division No. 198)***YEAS**

## Members

Aboultarif	Aitchison	Gaheer	Gallant
Albas	Ali	Garneau	Garon
Allison	Anandasangaree	Garrison	Gaudreau
Angus	Arnold	Gazan	Généreux
Ashton	Atwin	Genius	Gerretsen
Bachrach	Badawey	Gill	Gladu
Bains	Baker	Godin	Goodridge
Baldinelli	Barlow	Gourde	Gray
Barrett	Barron	Green	Hallan
Barsalou-Duval	Battiste	Hanley	Hardie
Beaulieu	Bendayan	Hepfner	Hoback
Benzen	Bergeron	Housefather	Hughes
Berthold	Bérubé	Iacono	Idlout
Bezan	Bittle	Johns	Julian
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas	Kayabaga	Kelloway
Blaney	Block	Kelly	Khalid
Boulerice	Bradford	Kitchen	Kmic
Bragdon	Brassard	Kram	Kramp-Neuman
Brière	Brock	Kurek	Kusie
Brunelle-Duceppe	Calkins	Kusmierczyk	Kwan
Caputo	Carrie	Lantsman	Lapointe
Casey	Chabot	Larouche	Lattanzio
Chagger	Chahal	Lawrence	Lehoux
Chambers	Champoux	Lemire	Lewis (Essex)
Chong	Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Liepert
Collins (Victoria)	Cormier	Lightbound	Lloyd
Coteau	Dabrusin	Lobb	Long
Dalton	Damoff	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacDonald (Malpeque)
Dancho	Davidson	MacGregor	MacKenzie
Davies	DeBellefeuille	Maguire	Martel
Deltell	d'Entremont	Martinez Ferrada	Masse
Desbiens	Desilets	Mathysen	May (Cambridge)
Desjarlais	Dhaliwal	May (Saanch—Gulf Islands)	Mazier
Dhillon	Diab	McCauley (Edmonton West)	McDonald (Avalon)
Doherty	Dowdall	McGuinty	McKay
Dreeshen	Duguid	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLean
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Duncan (Etobicoke North)	McPherson	Melillo
Dzerowicz	Ehsassi	Mendès	Michaud
El-Khoury	Ellis	Moore	Morantz
Epp	Erskine-Smith	Morrice	Morrison
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)	Morrissey	Motz
Fast	Fergus	Muys	Naqvi
Ferreri	Fillmore	Nater	Ng
Findlay	Fisher	Noormohamed	Normandin
Fonseca	Fortin	O'Connell	Oliphant
Fragiskatos	Fry	Patzer	Paul-Hus
		Pauzé	Perkins
		Plamondon	Poilievre
		Powlowski	Rayes
		Redekopp	Reid
		Rempel Garner	Richards
		Roberts	Robillard
		Rogers	Romanado
		Ruff	Sahota
		Saks	Sarai
		Savard-Tremblay	Scarpaleggia
		Scheer	Schmale
		Seeback	Serré
		Sgro	Shanahan
		Shields	Shiple
		Sidhu (Brampton South)	Simard
		Sinclair-Desgagné	Singh
		Small	Sorbara
		Soroka	Steinley
		Ste-Marie	Stewart
		Strahl	Stubbs
		Sudds	Taylor Roy
		Thériault	Therrien
		Thomas	Thompson
		Tolmie	Trudel
		Turnbull	Uppal
		Valdez	Van Bynen
		van Koeverden	Van Popta

*Business of Supply*

Vandenbeld	Vecchio
Vidal	Viersen
Vignola	Villemure
Virani	Vis
Vuong	Wagantall
Warkentin	Waugh
Webber	Weiler
Williams	Williamson
Zahid	Zarrillo
Zimmer	Zuberi — 258

NAYS

Nil

PAIRED

Members

Blois	Cooper
Dong	Jeneroux
Lake	Maloney
Rood	Sheehan
Tochor	Wilkinson — 10

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[Translation]

**BUSINESS OF SUPPLY**

OPPOSITION MOTION—TIES BETWEEN THE CANADIAN STATE AND THE MONARCHY

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** I wish to inform the House that because of the deferred recorded division, Government Orders will be extended by 11 minutes.

**Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I want to start by saying that I will be splitting my time with my colleague from Shefford, who is second to none.

Here we are discussing the British monarchy, or, rather, the Canadian monarchy, because that is what has our interest today. I am going to rephrase that: That is our “concern” today.

All day long, we have heard from the Conservatives and the Liberals—

[English]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Order. I would ask hon. members to please take their discussions to the lobby.

[Translation]

We want to hear the debate.

The hon. member for Drummond may continue.

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** Madam Speaker, I was saying that we have been hearing, all day long, from Conservatives, Liberals and even NDP members that there other priorities to be dealt with today besides talking about the monarchy. That is true, they are quite right and we have never denied it. There are many other topics and there will always be many others.

I have two comments to make to that. First, if a party that governs or a party that aspires to govern a country such as Canada is unable to simultaneously deal with different files of varying degrees of importance, for goodness' sake, keep them away from power. That is nothing but a sign of incompetence. We have already had enough of that.

We must deal with files of varying degrees of importance. We must deal with inflation. We must deal with the housing crisis. We must deal with the treatment of seniors and the fact that they are being treated unfairly based on their age. We know that the government is not concerned with seniors between the ages of 65 and 74. We must also talk about what Quebeckers and Canadians are concerned about.

If we look at the recent polls conducted by reputable firms, we see that the monarchy is an important issue for people. It is something they are concerned about and something they talk about. By way of evidence, let us look at today's news. Is there one media outlet that is not talking about the Bloc Québécois's motion today? Interestingly enough, people are talking about the motion being debated today by the Bloc Québécois. Members cannot tell us that this is not worthwhile. Some may say that the issue does not interest them, but it is untrue to say that it is of no interest to the people we represent.

Yes, we can deal with more than one issue at a time. People who are seriously ill still manage to brush their teeth. Yesterday evening I was helping my kids do their homework, but I still took the time to take the garbage out. I therefore do not see why, every once in a while, we cannot talk about something different from the subjects we debate every day, other issues that are also of interest and important to our constituents.

The second answer, which is probably a bit more down-to-earth, is that if we really want to help Canadians get through the difficult period they are dealing with right now, with the rise of the cost of living and inflation, what must we do? What would we do if such a situation occurred at home? We would do exactly what the government should do, which is to re-evaluate our spending and get rid of what we do not need and what we cannot afford.

Over the last three years, countless Quebec and Canadian families have seen their purchasing power diminish because of the pandemic and because of other circumstances, such as inflation. These families made difficult choices. They had to cut down on the luxuries they could no longer afford.

When I look at our public finances, I cannot help seeing certain questionable, less essential expenditures. I must say that the monarchy is a difficult expenditure to defend. We spend between \$60 million and \$70 million on it annually, according to various estimates.

I hear my Conservative colleagues say that they want Canadians to have more money in their pockets, so instead of them questioning the relevance of our debate today, I would like to hear them explain how spending \$67 million annually on the monarchy is an appropriate use of money. Really, what is in it for us? What do we get out of it other than maintaining a tradition that fewer and fewer people are committed to?

*Business of Supply*

According to a recent Angus Reid poll, 71% of Quebecers want to cut ties with the monarchy and 56% of Canadians oppose swearing an oath to the Crown. According to various estimates, including one recently published in the *Journal de Montréal*, the monarchy costs us \$67 million. That is a lot of money. We could build 670 new social housing units per year. We could put it towards cancer research. We could use it to replenish the employment insurance fund. We could use it simply to reduce the tax burden on the less fortunate.

By the way, I would also like to point out a few inconsistencies in the arguments put forward by my Canadian colleagues while defending the monarchy. First, I assume we are all strong defenders of democracy. Let us see where this democracy comes from. My colleague from Trois-Rivières would be proud of me because I am going to give the etymology, and I know he is very fond of etymology, of the word "democracy".

● (1535)

It is no secret. It comes from the ancient Greek *demokratia* which is a combination of the words *demos*, the people, and *kratein*, to command. "Democracy" is therefore a term that refers to a political system in which all citizens make decisions and participate in public decisions and political life.

Here I would say we are more in a bureaucratic system. Let me digress for a moment. The word "bureaucratic" comes etymologically from the Quebec word "bureau", the place where one works, and from "cratique", which comes from "crasse", another Quebec word meaning gunk, the gunk which clogs everything. "Bureaucracy", the system we are in, is more of a clogged system that is not working well. I am getting a bit off topic here.

Going back to the word "democracy", let us reflect a bit more. When analyzing the origin and real meaning of this word, it is easy to see that one of its antonyms is precisely the word "monarchy", a political system which is the exact opposite of democracy.

These are two systems that cannot logically coexist. One is a system that gives power to one person. If you're not happy with that person, you wait for her or him to die and their eldest to take over. So we are a bit stuck. On the other hand, in a democracy, if you are not happy, you wait for an election to be called, and a new government can be elected.

Let us look at the inconsistencies I mentioned earlier, such as the values that this government so passionately defends, like multiculturalism and social justice. I will not go so far as to talk about a slight tendency toward wokeism because that could be seen as an insult, and I want to avoid that sort of tone. However, the fact remains that when we see the kowtowing this government does to promote inclusion in pretty much every sphere of public, social and university life, as well as in federal institutions, we feel that perhaps there is a little something it can learn about the monarchy.

Let us not forget the role that the British Crown played in the exploitation and trafficking of slaves in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. It is estimated that the trafficking of over six million people from the African continent was conducted under the benevolent eye of the British Crown and the British Parliament.

I would be remiss if I failed to point out and remind the House of the events of 1755, when the British deported 12,500 of our Acadian brothers and sisters because they refused to submit to the Crown. Two-thirds of them died as a result. The British Crown never apologized to Acadians in any way for that shameful deportation.

Today we are talking about the monarchy and tomorrow we will vote on the Bloc's motion. I cannot imagine members for Acadian ridings, for whom I have the greatest respect, expressing support for the monarchy by voting against this motion. If my colleagues from Madawaska—Restigouche, Acadie—Bathurst, Beauséjour and Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe do plan to vote against the Bloc's motion, I have a hard time picturing them going back to their ridings afterward and telling their constituents of Acadian descent that they voted to maintain the monarchy and put an end to this debate. That troubles me. We will be watching.

Many countries are reconsidering their ties to the British monarchy. Barbados did so recently. Charles, who was a prince then and is now King, was in attendance and appeared to support Barbados's decision. Why would he do otherwise if Canada were to make that same decision?

I am not holding out much hope for the fate of our motion, but, nevertheless, I invite members to be open and, perhaps, as a result of this day of discussion, to start a public debate to talk about this issue honestly and openly with Quebecers and Canadians, to listen to them and ask them what they think about it. That is what I intend to do, along with my colleagues. Let us do it.

Let us start a discussion so we can see that Quebecers and Canadians are not as attached to this archaic symbol as some people would have us believe. Maybe we could discuss this issue further, more openly, in the near future.

● (1540)

**Mr. Anthony Housefather (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for his speech. He is a good friend, and I find that he always has relevant things to say. I completely agree that we should not block the motion by saying that it is not an important issue. We can indeed chew gum and walk at the same time.

For me, this is a constitutional issue, which makes it very complicated. Even if I agree that we should be asking ourselves some questions about the future of the monarchy and even if the member suggested we hold a national debate on this, I would note that the constitutional process is a very arduous one.

The motion mentions taking necessary actions. How does the member see this process unfolding? Does he believe we should engage in a constitutional process that would involve the federal government and all of the provinces?

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Mount Royal for his question. I also thank him for asking a real question that allows for discussion and dialogue. I think that is very important.

*Business of Supply*

Besides, if one believes that the House will overwhelmingly support the Bloc Québécois motion and allow this split with the British Crown, that is just wishful thinking. However, I must candidly admit that it was after discussing with my colleague from Mount Royal that I added to my speech today the possibility of reaching out to our fellow citizens to take part in this dialogue.

I do not think we are going to solve this issue in the House, but we are nonetheless triggering something. We are initiating a discussion which could generate more interest in the public space. I fully agree with my colleague and we can talk about it again as soon as possible after consulting the citizens, the provinces and everyone involved. Maybe we can have a debate that will lead us somewhere.

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

As a left-leaning man or woman or as a socialist, you fight against inequality and privilege. No system gives more privileges to a family than the monarchical system. It is an absurd, archaic and undemocratic system. We agree on that.

However, when we participate in debates in the House, we must use time wisely and set priorities. Still, the Bloc Québécois chose to speak on this topic, which has little impact on ordinary people.

Earlier today we welcomed representatives of the interprovincial alliance of the unemployed, who are concerned about the lifting of temporary employment insurance measures. Some people will be left out in the cold in January and February. They will not get a cheque and will fall into poverty.

I personally would have preferred such a topic rather than one that, while important and symbolic, is still pretty far from the immediate concerns of the people.

• (1545)

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** Madam Speaker, my colleague from Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie has enough weight within his caucus to be able to contribute to the choice of topic for his party's next opposition day.

In the meantime, in the Bloc Québécois, we saw that there was a debate on this topic in Quebec. I am sure that my colleague from Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie read about it in one of our many newspapers or heard about it from one of our many broadcasters. There is a lot of discussion on the issue of swearing an oath to the King at the National Assembly of Quebec and the monarchy's place in our political system in general.

I think this is a topic that affects, concerns and interests Quebecers, which absolutely does not stop us from talking about other things that are more urgent. In fact, we asked two questions about it today during question period. That is what I had to say about it.

**Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his presentation.

Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Jamaica and Saint Kitts and Nevis have undertaken steps to cut ties with the monarchy, or at least distance themselves from it.

I have a question for my colleague.

New Zealand and Australia set aside the monarchy through a referendum. Is that not the path the Canadian government should take?

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Rivière-des-Mille-Îles for his question.

Australia opened the debate. People are being heard at present and they are mainly talking about the place that first nations must have in those discussions. I completely agree that we must listen to what is being done elsewhere, to what is already starting to be done elsewhere and we must follow suit.

As my colleague from Rivière-des-Mille-Îles said, we could hold a referendum, however we could also move motions to be adopted by the House of Commons.

I also want to say that the Bloc Québécois ensured that the House of Commons unanimously passed a motion to increase EI sickness benefits to 52 weeks. There was unanimous consent of the House, but nothing was done afterwards. Thus—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Resuming debate. The hon. member for Shefford.

**Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ):** Madam Speaker, it is with great humility that I rise to speak on this Bloc Québécois opposition day.

To begin, I would like to reread the motion:

That, given that, (i) Canada is a democratic state, (ii) this House believes in the principle of equality for all, the House express its desire to sever ties between the Canadian State and the British monarchy, and call on the government to take the actions necessary to do so.

I may not be a constitutionalist, but I am deeply democratic. All over the world, people are condemning the fact that democracy is ailing. I have just returned from a week in Kigali, where the Inter-Parliamentary Union expressed concerns about the rise of authoritarianism and the loss of interest in democracy. If we want more representative parliaments, we must certainly avoid having heads of state who are disconnected from their people.

I will approach my speech from three angles: the cost of governors general, the wastefulness of lieutenant governors, and the symbolism of the British monarchy. Current events are bringing this issue back into the spotlight with the accession of Charles III. Our opposition day is part of our desire to modernize and democratize our institutions.

First of all, what is that \$70 million used for? That money may not be enough to change the world, but it shows that it is expensive to remain a British subject. On average, the government spends just over \$67 million a year on honours and awards, ceremonial events and travel. That is almost as much as some of the measures set out in the most recent federal budget.

*Business of Supply*

For example, the budget provides for \$75 million in 2022-23 and \$75 million in 2023-24 to support affordable housing and related infrastructure in the north. More might be required given how needs are growing. It is also a lot more than the \$26 million a year over seven years as of 2022-23 for the National Research Council Canada so that it can conduct research and development on innovative construction materials, such as wood, and revitalize national housing and building standards to encourage low-carbon construction solutions. It is also more than the \$20.7 million per year over three years as of 2024-25 for Infrastructure Canada to launch a new veteran homelessness program. I send my regards to my colleague from Rivière-des-Mille-Îles.

By way of comparison, we could build 670 new housing units per year with \$67 million. While we have been told since this morning that we are far out in left field with our motion, these figures bring us back to the day-to-day struggles of our constituents. Furthermore, the Liberal-Conservative Deputy Prime Minister recently announced that the next few months would be difficult, with austerity measures, but not for the monarchy. There is a double standard there. The population will be asked by the government to tighten their belts. Who will pay for that? I am not telling colleagues anything they do not already know when I say that it is the federal government, and by extension, us, that will pick up most of the tab. This includes costs associated with the position of governor general and with visits from members of the royal family.

Second, it should be noted that governors general receive a very generous pension for life when they retire, as set out in the Governor General's Act. They receive almost \$150,000 a year indexed to the cost of living. For example, Michaëlle Jean, who was governor general from 2005 to 2010, has already received \$1.5 million. What about Julie Payette, who voluntarily left her position and will still pocket an annual amount of \$150,000 for life as the Queen's former representative in Canada? Former governors general are also entitled to the reimbursement of expenses related to their former position of up to \$206,000 a year. However, the federal government does not disclose the exact amounts paid out. There is a glaring lack of transparency.

It does not stop there. The provinces and Quebec are responsible for the expenses associated with the lieutenant governors, of which there are ten. In 2020, total compensation amounted to \$1.48 million. In 2019-20, the Quebec government paid \$717,000 for the expenses of the lieutenant governor's office. Based on the premise that governors general never really retire, in addition to their pensions, they receive lifetime government funding for office and travel expenses through a program that has been in existence since 1979.

Third, there is the whole symbolism behind the monarchy. Let us not forget that the British Crown derived its wealth from centuries of plundering and slavery. Let us not forget that the involvement of the Crown goes back to Elizabeth I's support of Sir John Hawkins, a navigator who in 1560 led three expeditions that would set the stage for the famous triangular trade. She was so impressed that she gave him a ship as a reward for the 300 slaves he had brought back from his first voyage. The Crown became more involved during the reign of Charles II, from 1660 to 1685. The Crown as well as members of the royal family were heavily involved in human trafficking

in Africa for the express purpose of enriching and consolidating the power of the royal family.

• (1550)

In short, while it is impossible to estimate how much the monarchy owes its fortune to the slave trade, the fact remains that it was the plundering of gold, ivory, pelts and slaves on the African coast that was the source of its fortune.

For the Bloc Québécois, it is contrary to our values that a handful of individuals continue to live off these past exactions.

Here is a rundown of more historical facts. The British Crown was responsible for deporting over 12,000 Acadians, nearly 80% of the population. In 1755, between 7,500 and 9,000 Acadians died as a result of this genocide. To this day, the Crown refuses to apologize. It mercilessly crushed the Patriotes' resistance movement in 1837-38, hanging many of its leaders. The Crown annexed Métis territory and hanged their leader, Louis Riel, to ensure western Canada would be English speaking. It united Lower Canada and Upper Canada in 1840 to accelerate Upper Canada's development using Lower Canada's resources and to make francophones a minority in order to assimilate them. The Crown also banned public instruction in French in all provinces with anglophone majorities for over 100 years. It was not until 1968 that French public high schools opened in Ontario. The Crown oversaw the repatriation of the Canadian Constitution in 1982 against Quebec's wishes, stabbing us in the back. The Crown lay low when the federal government did a number on the 1995 referendum process. It said nothing when the federal government set out to destroy our Bill 101 by giving millions of dollars to the Quebec Community Groups Network, which has hacked away at this critical piece of our legislation over 200 times since 1977. The royal family has never officially apologized for any of this.

The British monarchy in the Americas represents 260 years of anti-French hostility, while Quebec's values of secularism and neutrality are in direct conflict with those of the monarchy, since, let us not forget, the King of England is also the head of the Church of England.

Quebeckers believe strongly in the separation of church and state. In other words, the neutrality of the Quebec state and keeping the monarchy here in Canada are completely at odds with this foundation of the state. The Bloc Québécois supports the need to separate religion and government. That is why we recently proposed doing away with the prayer and replacing it with a moment of personal reflection.

Quebeckers do not identify with Canada as a constitutional monarchy. The monarchy simply has no place in a democracy, which must be held to a high standard in terms of respect for the principle of the separation of church and state. When it comes to openness and secularism, the federal government would do well to follow the example set by Quebec, which is well ahead of the curve.

In conclusion, we are not the only ones who are reflecting on this issue. In the past, as my colleagues have said, there was the Republic of South Africa, which was founded in May 1961. Afterward, Barbados also removed the Queen as its head of state. Other countries could follow suit. We could talk about Australia, which is considering the question.

In closing, severing ties with the monarchy is justified not only by its utter uselessness, but, mostly, by the realization of the real power the monarchy wields in our institutions. Not a single bill from the National Assembly of Quebec or the House of Commons is valid without royal assent. Therefore, through his representatives, King Charles III participates in the exercise of legislative power.

The monarchy goes against several principles that are at the heart of our institutions, such as equality among citizens, the sovereignty of the people, democracy and the separation of the government and religion. In fact, no matter how deserving, no Canadian and no Quebecker can ever hope to become head of state. No one is democratically elected to that high office. The title is inherited.

The polls are also clear about Quebeckers wanting to get rid of the monarchy that is collectively costing millions of dollars a year. The Bloc Québécois thinks that this is a good opportunity to stop wasting public money on a completely archaic institution.

The Bloc Québécois stands with Quebeckers and has been concerned about the cost of living for a long time. Our election platform attests to that.

One last thing: the Conservative leader seemed out of touch when he began his victory speech after the leadership race by praising the Queen, as though outside the monarchy there is no salvation. If we were that disconnected from the will of Quebeckers, they would not be talking to us about it so much.

It is not opportunistic to have this debate today about our ties to the monarchy. It is a natural part of the context where Canadians and Quebeckers have been disinterested in and questioning this for many years.

Finally, to hear the exchanges today, does that not confirm that we are a nation that aspires to what is most natural for a people, its liberty and independence?

• (1555)

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I believe the members of the Bloc are completely out of touch with the communities they represent. When I look at the things we have been talking about, whether in Winnipeg North or throughout all regions in Canada, they are things such as the cost of living, health care and long-term care. People want to talk about a wide variety of issues. Then the Bloc brings forward a motion that does not talk about what it would replace it with, just that it does not want the Crown.

This is my question for the member. Could she indicate to the House what she would replace the monarchy with? Would she say that the Prime Minister should become more powerful? Would she

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say that we should have an election to elect a president? Is she saying that we should appoint one? What would the Bloc do?

[Translation]

**Ms. Andréanne Larouche:** Madam Speaker, I will not give my colleague from Winnipeg North a lesson in democracy. There are other republican systems that we could study, and it is clear that these systems would cost less than what is in place at present. People would not be paying \$1,000 for lemons.

Putting that aside, I cannot speak for the people of Winnipeg North, but, in my riding, a reeve in a regional county municipality recently told me that it is an important issue because it is costly. He knows what is happening in our area. Back home, we are fed up with seeing half of our seniors being ignored by the Liberal government because it does not want to invest due to the cost. Those are political choices.

So many women are beaten and raped, so many women have mental health problems, but they cannot receive adequate treatment from community groups because the government is not making the health transfers that are required. That is a political choice.

At some point, choices have to be made. The government has to find the money somewhere and reinvest it in our communities.

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech and her passion.

With regard to the monarchy, I will simply quote the very famous Indiana Jones who said, “That belongs in a museum”.

The Bloc Québécois has talked a lot about the money that could be saved, and it is true that \$67 million is a lot of money. We could build a lot of social housing and help community groups with that money. Every little bit counts when it comes to helping people.

Recently, the group Canadians for Tax Fairness reminded us that, for last year alone, tax loopholes cost us \$30 billion, so that is \$30 billion that was lost.

Why did the Bloc Québécois take all day today in the House to talk about approximately \$67 million in savings, when we could have talked about tax evasion and the \$30 billion that could potentially be collected?

• (1600)

**Ms. Andréanne Larouche:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie for his question, which gives me the opportunity to talk about other sources of revenue.

Why did we not talk about tax evasion today? The reason is that we have already spoken about it at length with my colleague from Joliette, whom I commend. He is waging a massive battle against tax avoidance and tax evasion. Unfortunately, the numbers show that the Liberals opposite are inept when it comes to fighting tax avoidance and tax evasion. That being said, I completely agree with my colleague that this is indeed another source of revenue. When we talk about tax avoidance and tax evasion, it is radio silence from the members opposite, but we are not going to give up, believe me.

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We could also get money from web giants like GAFAM, who avoid having to pay taxes much too easily.

**Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech.

From what I gather, my colleagues in the other parties disagree with Quebec's modern, forward-looking values, and they prefer to live in the past. I respect their choice, but there is something that I do not understand and I would like to hear my colleague's opinion.

How can they claim that the issues we want to discuss today are irrelevant and do not warrant the slightest debate in the House of Commons? That type of judgment and thinking they know what is best for Quebecers is beyond me. Still, we have a concern, which we raised today. Would it be possible to express it without having to face an outcry like we did today?

**Ms. Andr anne Larouche:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Riv ere-des-Mille- les for his question.

I believe the Bloc Qu b cois is also concerned about other issues. Today, on Parliament Hill, the Bloc once again defended employment insurance reform, which is long overdue. It is seasonal workers who are penalized right now, and the Bloc spoke out about it.

We did not talk about the monarchy. Today is our opposition day, during which we raised an important issue. I really like the expression "talk and chew gum at the same time". We can talk today, here in the House, about how much the monarchy everyone is talking about is costing us and about the fact that we do not talk about it—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mend s):** Order. Resuming debate.

[English]

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader, Senate.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, today, I will be sharing my time with the member for Hochelaga.

I want to start off today's discussion by reflecting on exactly what we are doing here today. Those who are watching, perhaps who do not tune in regularly and may have happened across the channel today displaying the parliamentary proceedings, might wonder what is going on.

In a calendar year, based on the composition of the House of Commons, the Bloc Qu b cois gets three sitting days of the House to bring forward issues that are important to the individuals and communities it represents. Today is one of those days, and today is not unique, unfortunately. This is not the first time the Bloc Qu b cois has done something like this. Today, it has decided to bring forward a motion that we somehow start this constitutional process of removing the monarch from the framework that sets up our parliamentary democratic system. However, the Bloc did something very similar with respect to being completely out in left field just last spring when it brought forward a motion to remove the 15-second prayer at the beginning of the proceedings every day in the House of Commons

I mention this not because I do not think these two issues might be important to Bloc members, but I bring these up because I wonder how, when the Bloc Qu b cois gets three days in a calendar year to bring issues forward, it uses two of those days to talk about the 15-second prayer we have at the beginning of the day and this motion about the monarchy and the current framework of our parliamentary system. This is important to Bloc members, but I cannot believe for one second that it is the most important thing about which their constituents care.

I have been the member of Parliament for Kingston and the Islands for seven years, and I have never once had somebody come up to me and tell me that I need to do something about the state of our democratic institution, that the head of state needs to be removed. It has never happened, but maybe it is a Quebec thing, and that is fine.

My wife and I, and our kids spend a lot of time an hour north of here in Lac-Sainte-Marie, Quebec. I got to know a lot of the locals around there. After a bit of time of interacting with them and some of them finding out I am a member of Parliament, they quite often bring up issues with me. To be fair, they are not always complimentary of the government. They bring up things that the government is up to and they ask me questions about them, but never once have they brought up the issue of the head of state.

The Bloc Qu b cois members will come in here and trumpet on about how it is important that they are able to represent their constituents and whatnot, but they are not representing their constituents. This is a personal and political agenda of the Bloc Qu b cois. That is why we are doing this today. We are not doing it because they want to represent their constituents and they feel it is very important for them. They are doing it because they feel it is important for their political agenda. For that, the Bloc Qu b cois members should be absolutely ashamed of themselves. They have wasted two supply days allotted to them in any given year to talk about absolutely irrelevant issues as they relate to what is on the minds of Canadians and Quebecers.

I am not saying people do not have opinions on the head of state or how our parliamentary system and our government should function. All I am saying is that there is no way those members can tell me this is even among the top 20 issues. We just came out of a global pandemic.

I criticize the Bloc members quite a bit for the issue around health care transfers and how they always bring it up, but at least it is an issue that has substance to it with respect to what the Quebec provincial government would like to see. However, I cannot accept the idea that somehow this particular issue is one of the priorities of the constituencies represented by Bloc members.



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• (1605)

Let us just say that Bloc members are fully doing their responsibility to represent those people. I cannot help but ask myself, if they were successful in this, and let us say we could instantaneously, without all the constitutional nightmare around it, be rid of the monarchy, how would this change the lives of Canadians tomorrow morning? How would their lives be any different than they are right now today?

Our head of state does not have supreme power. Our head of state, by and large, is a symbolic figure who is there to help guide the manner in which our parliamentary democracy, and our democracy generally speaking, works in our country. The lives of Canadians and Quebecers, for that matter, would not be different tomorrow morning if the head of state were suddenly not there.

I am asking myself why. I cannot help but continue to go back to the same thing. This is not about the constituencies that the Bloc represent. This is about a political wedge issue. It is using one of its three supply days as an opportunity to drive a political wedge in constituencies in Quebec. It should be ashamed because it had an opportunity to actually come here and bring forward ideas, hold government to account, set up and initiate policy that could genuinely improve the lives of Canadians.

We heard something quite astounding earlier today in question period. It actually happened twice today. The time that really resonated with people was when the leader of the Bloc Québécois rose in the House and said that he did not mean it. He was, I guess, crossing his fingers. His fingers were crossed behind his back when he swore allegiance to Her Majesty when he was elected.

Can members imagine if this were a court of law. He would literally have been committing perjury. He would have perjured himself. That happened earlier as well. The member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert earlier said the exact same thing. His words were even more egregious.

If members of the Bloc Québécois have now finally come to a position where they are willing to admit that they did not mean it, why do the rest of the members not stand up to say the same thing? Did they mean it when they swore allegiance, or were they just pretending too? I would love to hear some of the other members, when they get up to ask me a question, to let me know if they meant it or if they were crossing their fingers too. What a system we live in where it is so expedient for their leader to just get up and say that as though he suddenly can now wipe his hands clean of the responsibilities that he swore allegiance to not even one year ago.

It goes without saying, but I certainly will not be voting in favour of this. I think that the Bloc Québécois has done an extreme disservice to the constituents it represents to try to politicize an issue that might play well in Quebec, but it does not anywhere else. I realize that it is only focused on Quebec.

I get that it might play well there, but I think the fact that the Bloc Québécois has three days in a year to bring forward very important issues should not be lost on anybody. Rather than bringing forward an important issue, it has used this as an opportunity for political advantage for its own party, which should single out to the

constituencies it represents how it actually feels about representing them.

• (1610)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ):** Madam Speaker, the member for Kingston and the Islands just demonstrated that he is incapable of debating an issue that he seems to be passionate about. He seems to be a staunch defender of the monarchy.

I would have liked to hear his arguments in favour of the monarchy instead of listening to his arguments on the relevance of having this debate in the House. He stated his opinion clearly. I would be curious to hear the members in his party from the Acadian region in New Brunswick, for example. Did he ask those members, who represent Acadian populations whose ancestors were deported by the British Crown, how they feel about the monarchy?

I would like to hear the member for Kingston and the Islands do something other than say that we are politicizing an issue. News flash, politics is what we do here. I am glad that he realizes that because that is a win for today.

I would like him to tell us what we gain from spending \$70 million a year to maintain a system that, in his own words, is nothing more than a symbol.

[*English*]

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Madam Speaker, no, I have not brought it up with any of my colleagues, nor have they, in seven years, brought it up with me, because every time we get together to talk about issues, there are many issues that are so much more important than this.

There are issues so much more important than this that we get together to talk about. Forgive me and my colleagues for not having stood up and asked, “By the way, I know we are dealing with all of this other stuff, and there is a global pandemic, along with everything else that is going on, including inflation, which is all a big deal, but by the way, how do we happen to feel about the monarchy? Is that something we are still good with?”

No, I am sorry. I have not brought that question to their attention.

**Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP):** Madam Speaker, to start off, I am a bit taken aback by the tone of the member. First of all, as parliamentarians, I think we all should respect important debates, whether we agree with them or not, but, second of all, there are many people, including many in indigenous communities, who have been clear that reconciliation involves decolonization and we should be looking at severing ties with the monarchy.

I would encourage the member to actually talk with some folks, perhaps outside of his riding, who have some direct, very horrific experiences with the impacts of colonialism.

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The Liberals are the ones who promised electoral reform and promised strengthening our democracy, yet we have seen them renege on all of these promises. Is this not an opportunity to stand up and take a look at our democracy and all the ways we can strengthen it, including severing our ties with the monarchy?

• (1615)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Madam Speaker, the NDP are now using the politicization of this issue to politicize its own issue of electoral reform. There is an irony in that.

Just for the record, I am not saying that there are no good arguments. I am pretty much indifferent to the position of the monarchy and how that continues on. However, it is not going to be resolved with a supply day motion presented to the House. The supply day motion that has been presented to the House is only coming from a place of politics.

I apologize to the member if my tone does not seem to be in line with what she thinks is respectful, but I do admit that I am extremely frustrated by the fact that the Bloc Québécois, although this might be a very important political issue for them, are using this opportunity just to try to create division and wedge issues within the province their own members are from.

That is the reality of the situation, but I certainly agree with her that there are a lot of problems associated with colonization and what that led to. Let us have real, honest discussions about that. If that means moving away from the monarchy, let us talk about that in a productive and constructive way, not in a supply day motion like this. We all know that it is not going to produce the result that they are looking for.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I just have one question for my colleague from Kingston and the Islands.

What is more important and more of a priority than not being subject to another country and another nation?

[*English*]

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Madam Speaker, it is making sure that we can properly take care of Canadians in their time of need and making sure that, when we have inflation at the rates that we do now, we can do everything to support those who are struggling the most. The impacts of inflation right now and the impacts of the pandemic, generally speaking, certainly drove the division between the haves and the have-nots—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** We have to resume debate.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion (Housing), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is my turn to speak to the motion that was introduced by the Bloc Québécois today.

I thought it was a bit funny last week, because when I found out that it was indeed an opposition day for the Bloc Québécois, I was sure that we would be talking about monarchy. The leader of the Parti Québécois had just made another media appearance in Quebec on his being sworn in after being elected and, given the relationship between the Bloc Québécois and the PQ, it was obvious that the subject of the monarchy would be addressed.

**Ms. Andréanne Larouche:** It did not bother you before.

**Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada:** Nothing escapes the member, Madam Speaker. That said, we are not hiding anything.

One of the opposition members recently said that the parliamentary secretary was not advocating for housing in Quebec. Well, the parliamentary secretary has been touring Quebec talking about housing. I have been in constituency offices of Bloc Québécois ridings, and the people were not aware of housing projects and housing programs. Why are the elected officials representing those citizens not telling them about the programs they can benefit from?

I actually would have preferred that the Bloc Québécois members use their opposition day to discuss any current programs that they believe are not working. It is true that many people in Quebec are questioning the monarchy. Symbols can indeed be costly, but they also provide stability, and in today's world, we sure could use some stability. After a pandemic and a war, do we not have anything more important to talk about than the monarchy?

Can we talk about the 15,000 people in Quebec alone who are on waiting lists for psychological and mental health support? Can we talk about health transfers or about our common goals for a better quality of life in Quebec?

I have been the member for Hochelaga for three years. The Bloc members know that, because I beat their candidate twice. To do that, I knocked on 15,000 doors in my riding. No one in Hochelaga wanted to talk to me about the monarchy. Is it important these days? People talked to me about food security. They talked to me about finding a job, a better job. They talked to me about immigrants who arrive here and cannot have their credentials recognized in Quebec. Can we talk about the issues that affect people every day?

The problem with the Bloc Québécois's motion is that it takes for granted that the solution would be the one they advocate. Okay, we get rid of the monarchy, but what do we do next? Sorry, but we are going to cause instability. Some are very upset about the cost of \$70 million. As far as I am concerned, I would like to know more about all the money that is sent and not used as it should be, including the money sent to the Quebec government.

Regarding the monarchy, we take an oath to a structure, a government, a constitutional monarchy. No one in my constituency wants to reopen the Constitution right now.

Can we, in this nation, assert ourselves as francophones? Can we debate cultural issues related to the web, talk about the investments we need to make in social housing? The Bloc's opposition day was so predictable that it is actually disappointing. It is just another media stunt. One wonders if even the Bloc's statement today in the House is another media stunt to double down on the topic being presented. The Bloc could raise so many other issues. It is so predictable that it is disappointing. The Bloc could raise so many other issues in the House that are relevant. We can debate and discuss them. Their role across the aisle is to be a government watchdog.

The Bloc Québécois should not presume to speak on behalf of all Quebecers. It should get out there and talk to people. I was at the Maisonneuve market in my riding on the weekend and not one person talked to me about the monarchy.

• (1620)

A Bloc Québécois member jokingly suggested that we spend a day talking about the price of fruits and vegetables, but it is because fruits and vegetables have become so expensive at the Maisonneuve market that we are implementing the GST/HST credit and providing support to farmers.

There are so many issues that the Bloc Québécois could have talked about today. I find it disappointing and I prefer to be part of a government where I can say that I am a nationalist, francophone and immigrant. When I arrived in Canada, I did not speak French, something that I know is an important issue for the Bloc Québécois.

Today, I am a proud francophone Quebecer who thinks that, instead of talking about the monarchy, it is better to talk about the concerns of people in my riding who, every day, are struggling to keep food on the table and a roof over their heads and to integrate into a francophone community. That is what I want to talk about, the needs of real people who do not care about the monarchy today. Can we talk about something other than old historical debates? Why not talk about the present and the future?

I am disappointed that the subject proposed by the Bloc today was so predictable.

**Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ):** Madam Speaker, my colleague repeated herself a lot in her speech. That is fine because she wanted to emphasize her point.

When it is your turn, you can choose the topic of debate. The Bloc Québécois usually does not pass judgment, as you have been doing all day long. If you do not like this subject, that is your problem. This subject pertains to our values—

• (1625)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Order. I would remind the hon. member for Rivière-des-Milles-Îles to address the Chair.

**Mr. Luc Desilets:** Madam Speaker, the topic of the monarchy relates to our identity as Quebecers, but it does not reflect who we are and we want nothing to do with it.

The member alluded to the fact that the monarchy represents stability. Can she tell me what catastrophe will befall us the day that we get rid of it? Because that day will come.

### *Business of Supply*

**Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada:** Madam Speaker, I think this is simply not the right time to have a debate about the monarchy. There are people in Quebec who are absolutely committed to it, as we can see from what is happening in the National Assembly. However, this is neither the right time nor the right way.

This is simply a political gambit, and I do not believe the Bloc Québécois's intentions. Could this not have been discussed in committee instead, or could we even create a committee to discuss it?

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Hochelaga for her speech.

As a proud democrat and a proud socialist, I do not mind talking about the monarchy, because I can settle the matter rather quickly and move on to another subject.

In talking about other topics, she focused a bit on the fact that our health care system is being strangled, emergency rooms are overflowing and people are really struggling after two years of living with a pandemic. Federal government transfers for health care are at an all-time low, at 22% or 23% of total system costs. All provincial premiers, including the Premier of Quebec, are calling on the federal government to do more and to quickly and permanently increase health transfers to the provinces.

Does she not think that would have been a good topic of conversation for today?

**Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

That is exactly what I was saying. There are so many topics. In mental health alone, there are currently 15,000 people on waiting lists in Quebec to see a psychologist. In the current context, after a pandemic, it seems to me that it would have been worthwhile to talk about the mental health of our citizens in Quebec.

**Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleague from Hochelaga on her heartfelt speech. However, I would have liked more substance on the topic.

Indeed, other than criticism of the editorial choice, shall we say, for our opposition day, I have not heard an argument about the value of maintaining the monarchy. I would be interested in that because, even when we are not particularly interested in a certain subject, which is fine, we should at the very least debate it.

What I feel is that people just do not have the guts or the arguments to advocate for something that costs 70 million. My colleague across the aisle would have every reason to want us to get rid of the monarchy, since that would free up another \$70 million for, say, social housing, an issue I know she feels strongly about.

Then, there is the fact that the Bloc Québécois proposes subjects such as health transfers, housing, immigration or others, which it raises in the House during debates or oral question period, but to which the government's response sounds like a broken record.

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My point is that I would have liked a little more substance in my colleague's speech. My question to her would be to name just one benefit of keeping our ties to the monarchy in place, with its yearly \$70-million price tag.

**Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada:** Madam Speaker, I am not the one questioning democracy in Canada. Democracy in Canada is doing just fine.

My colleague and I were elected to represent people in our respective ridings on important issues. On my ballot it did not say vote for me if you want to get rid of the monarchy. What people want is more housing, better health care, more food on their table, and a full fridge. We could be debating something other than the monarchy right now.

**Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I will share my time with the member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot.

It always surprises me when the people who are elected to govern tell us, the opposition members, that it is a shame we do not tell them what to do. They should know what to do. For one thing, they could give us transfers for health care and seniors. There are all kinds of things we could talk about, but I think that if they do not know these things already, we have a serious problem.

That said, I want to start by confessing that I am a romantic. I spent my youth of princes, knights, kings and other champions who raced to the aid of princesses held captive by evil characters in the out-of-reach towers of magnificent castles.

I have also done some travelling, and I have marvelled at some grand castles. I will also admit that I was delighted to visit the Schönbrunn Palace in Vienna, the famous Princess Sisi's summer residence. Attending the Christmas concert at the Orangery was an absolute thrill. Being emperor of Austria would have suited me well. As I said, I am a romantic.

I also dreamed of valiant knights from Quebec, who came to the rescue of our great and glorious nation, ensuring its survival and vitality. I dreamed of epic battles where the greatest orators faced off against one another to convince their political opponents not to give up and not to give in to a challenge that initially might seem too daunting, too difficult to face.

Other people before us have met these challenges, and they met them successfully. We have seen examples around the globe of colonies cutting ties with monarchies. However, we are not there yet. The Bloc Québécois is using this opportunity today to propose that we do away with this archaic British institution to which we bow, day after day. We propose that we trade our dependence on the monarch for a simple but noble dependence on democracy, on the will of the people. This is by no means a personal attack on the current King of England, Charles III, or his predecessor, Queen Elizabeth II. I am merely proposing that we make a full, unambiguous and unreserved commitment to our fellow citizens. How about it?

Do we not all believe in the virtues of equality among citizens? Do we not all believe in the sovereignty of the people, in their right to decide their future, their institutions, the laws that govern them, in the inalienable sovereignty of the people?

Do we not also believe in the separation of church and state? No, it is true that this Parliament has already decided to continue saying a Christian prayer before each sitting of Parliament, before pleading before this same Parliament for equality between religions and faiths, and apologizing for having ostracized, even persecuted them in the past. Let us move on.

Of course we should address the housing problem, balancing the budget, controlling our borders, gun trafficking, the challenges that come with immigration, which we in fact need so much, funding to give all our seniors a decent life, other issues of national and international interest, and so on.

We also need to address this government's troubling reluctance to transfer the necessary funding so that Quebec and the provinces can fund health care services, where costs are increasing while the federal government seems to think it is a joke.

Should we not also be concerned about our position and the state of our institutions? Are we really incapable of managing the nation's affairs and democracy at the same time?

Each one of our challenges needs to be met full on, but none should prevent us from dealing with our institutions. How can we ignore this huge stain on our democracy and claim to serve democratically? Could we not set our sights higher this time and do something honourable that makes Quebecers and Canadians proud?

When you ask people if they would like to get rid of this subordination to the British monarchy, many answer that they would. In fact, 71% of Quebecers and 51% of Canadians answer yes. Moreover, 56% of Canadians and 75% of Quebecers want their elected officials to stop swearing allegiance to the British sovereign.

• (1630)

Certain members of the royal family themselves have dared to question their belonging to this outdated and overly restrictive regime. Is it not time for this Parliament to join the 21st century, the third millennium?

It is outrageous that tens of millions of dollars are spent every year to maintain this useless and outdated body of protocol. Could this money not be better spent? Are we so wealthy that we no longer need to watch our spending?

Without going into the sometimes scandalous details, we know that the office of the Governor General alone spends more than \$55 million a year. Let us set aside the issue of cost and ask ourselves what the monarchy has done for us since its conquest of our territory. My colleague put this question to my colleague opposite earlier and she was unable to answer or to name a single benefit that we gain from the monarchy.

*Business of Supply*

There was the infamous bloody war against the rebellion of our patriot ancestors, the deportation of 80% of the Acadian population, the forced annexation of the Métis territories and the hanging of their leader, Louis Riel. What can one say about the ban on speaking French in the predominantly English provinces for more than a 100 years or about the ratification of the agreement on the repatriation of the Canadian Constitution? That agreement was ratified in secret in a hotel kitchen while the Quebec premier was away.

Over the past century, many states have decided to cut ties with the British monarchy. Is it not time that Canada did the same?

Of course, Quebec can always dream of freeing itself from the Canadian yoke. Of course, a referendum, a solemn declaration or other mechanism developed for Quebec sovereignty could also break that rather embarrassing, expensive and restrictive tie. However, could we not think today about a more effective, more cohesive and less embarrassing federation?

Every member of the House had to swear allegiance and loyalty to the British Crown before they could take their seat here and fulfill the mandate given to them by their constituents.

Like everyone else, I swore the oath by thinking of the interpretation we must make of it, that is, that the occupants of the British throne are not its true recipients, but rather that it is sworn to the institutions that govern us. Therefore, is it not high time we honoured our real allegiances? Is there anyone here who would be prepared to ignore the interests and values of the constituents who elected them in favour of the interests and values of the king or the queen? I am not prepared to do that, for my part.

Today, the Bloc Québécois proposes to free us from the monarchy and, thus, from this flawed oath. That would allow us to fully assume, unapologetically and unfettered, our rightful elected mandate to represent our constituents, who are relying on us, our allegiance to their ideals, our courage and our loyalty. Let us be worthy of that trust.

• (1635)

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, a few years back, the Bloc, the NDP and the Liberals boldly went to the Governor General. Reflecting the will of their constituents collectively, the Bloc supported going to the Governor General to replace the Stephen Harper government. At that time, the Bloc recognized the value of the monarchy. Does the member see any irony there? It seems to me that when Bloc members feel it is to their advantage, the monarchy or the Governor General is a good thing. However, now when they seem to feel it is not, they are against the monarchy.

What would they replace it with? Would they give more power to the Prime Minister? Would they elect a president? Would they appoint a head of state? What is the alternative? I would really appreciate an answer to that. What is the alternative to the monarchy? Will the member answer that simple question?

[Translation]

**Mr. Rhéal Fortin:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

I would point out to him that we are here to play a game that is not really a game. We have to play by the rules, which is what all members of the Bloc Québécois do. We have done just that since the Bloc Québécois was founded. Yes, we once went to the Governor General's office to request that the Harper government be replaced.

As we all know, these are the rules of the game. I have sworn allegiance here to the rules that govern us, and I do not intend to break them. I will continue to abide by them, but when I am asked whether I prefer to have a monarch or an elected head of state, I will instantly say that I want an elected head of state. That is the answer I want to give to my colleague.

• (1640)

[English]

**Mr. Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is not often I agree with my colleagues across the way, but on this issue I do.

The hon. member was asked what he would replace our constitutional monarchy with. The U.S. News, and the last time I checked the U.S. was a republic, combined with a UN world report, surveyed countries with 76 attributes and determined that seven out of the 10 top-lived countries in the world had constitutional monarchies.

If a constitutional monarchy is good for seven of the top 10, why would my hon. colleague from the Bloc want to go away from that system, which seems to work not only in Canada but in other places?

[Translation]

**Mr. Rhéal Fortin:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

It may be that seven out of 10 countries are run by constitutional monarchies, but that number is of no importance, in my opinion. It does not matter to me if the other seven out of 10 countries are right or wrong, nor does it matter if nine or 10 countries are right or wrong. What bothers me is that we are here to represent peoples and nations that operate within a federation that is itself subject to a foreign monarch. I cannot stand that.

That is what the Bloc Québécois wants to abolish, regardless of how things are done elsewhere. We are capable of governing ourselves, and I am sure all Canadians can do that. I guarantee that Quebeckers can. We can get along well enough to manage all kinds of issues. The one thing we do not need is a foreign monarch's stamp of approval on our laws.

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I have been listening to the speeches from my Bloc Québécois colleagues since the day began, and I am surprised that no one has made a single particularly compelling argument, in my opinion. As parliamentarians, we have to take an oath. It can be quite unpleasant, I agree. However, people who were born in Quebec and in Canada do not have to take that oath.

*Business of Supply*

There is a lot of talk about what we, as members of Parliament, have to do. However, those who must take this oath of allegiance, apart from members of the House, are immigrants. Still, the Bloc never talks about them. Someone from the United States, India, France or Germany who wants to come here is obliged to swear allegiance to the King or Queen of England. That must hurt them even more than it does us.

**Mr. Rhéal Fortin:** Madam Speaker, I agree with my NDP colleague on this point.

We believe that members of Parliament, newcomers and everyone else should only swear an oath to the English monarch when they are in England. I am sorry, but if you have to swear an oath in Canada, it should be sworn to the people of Quebec and Canada, not to a foreign monarch. My colleague is right.

**Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Madam Speaker, the great journalist and pamphleteer Arthur Buies made the following forceful statement in 1869: “A republic is the government for men; a monarchy is the government for children”.

A government for children indeed, or a system of governance that fully acknowledges it has never reached maturity in the democratic sense. It is a system of government that states loudly, clearly and shamelessly that it holds power not because of the polls but because of divine right. This power derives its legitimacy solely from the transmission of privilege from one generation to the next. This system is openly opposed to the sovereignty of the people and in favour of royal sovereignty, which is hereditary and, to top it off, religious.

Many people do not realize that the House of Commons, despite purporting to be the seat of “Canadian” democracy, begins its daily work with a prayer in honour of the current monarch, who is also, lest we forget, head of the Anglican Church.

Even now, in 2022, many people do not realize that elected representatives must take an oath not to those who bestowed upon them the honour of representing them in Parliament, but to His Majesty, to whom they must swear allegiance.

Many people do not realize that the British monarch is also Canada's head of state, or that the bills that we vote on in the House have to be approved by the Governor General, who represents the monarchy. In fact, it is this same Governor General who presents the new policy directions in what is known as the “Speech from the Throne”, and who must be consulted before the Prime Minister can call an election.

I would add, as the member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie suggested, that many people do not realize that new Canadians must pledge allegiance to the King.

The well-publicized antics of some of those who have held the position of Governor General are an apt reminder of the hubris of the royal lifestyle. I am also reminded of the words of the Marquis de Sade: “The end of this so very sublime reign was perhaps one of the periods in the history of the...empire when one saw the emergence of the greatest number of these mysterious fortunes whose origins are as obscure as the lust and debauchery that accompany them.”

Monarchism is an undemocratic regime that systematically separates the state from the community, strips the people of their decision-making levers, and removes their collective rights. It also establishes opacity as a political system, a system that is based on centuries of plundering and slavery. The British monarchy is embodied by Elizabeth I's support of John Hawkins, a navigator who was given a ship as a reward for the 300 slaves he brought back from his first voyage.

The British monarchy is also synonymous with the intensification of human trafficking in Africa in the name of the power and wealth of the royal family under Charles II, through the Company of Royal Adventurers Trading into Africa which was granted a 1,000-year monopoly on the African coast. In 1663, this monopoly was extended to trading slaves captured in Africa.

The British monarchy is synonymous with the Royal African Company of England, which, between 1672 and 1731, transported more than 187,000 slaves, all for gold, ivory, and pelts.

The Prime Minister, despite being a champion of maudlin political apology ceremonies, does not mention this often. Worse, he tells us it is not a real issue. The British monarchy in reality has never been anything but a vampiric system where a clique of rich and greedy privileged people have been able to fuel many disasters, for the strict purpose of enjoying even more benefits and privileges.

The monarchy in Canada meant the deportation of 12,500 Acadians, nearly 80% of the population, in 1755, without the slightest apology from the Crown to this day.

The monarchy in Canada meant the suppression of the Patriotes rebellion, resulting in many hangings.

The monarchy in Canada meant the hanging of Louis Riel following the annexation of the Métis territories.

The monarchy in Canada meant the forcible annexation of Lower Canada, with the explicit aim of assimilating francophones and developing Upper Canada at the expense of Lower Canada.

The monarchy in Canada meant the abolition of French-language instruction in all provinces for over 100 years.

The monarchy in Canada means astronomical costs over which its loyal subjects have no power and no opportunity or right to refuse to pay. We are shelling out an average of \$67 million a year for purely symbolic activities, ceremonies and trips.

As several of my colleagues have pointed out today, \$67 million is roughly the amount allocated to affordable housing in the last federal budget.

● (1645)

Furthermore, \$67 million is more than twice the budget allocated for seven years to the National Research Council of Canada. The monarchy is an unjust, archaic and expensive system. It is also a regime that is irrelevant to the values and political culture of Quebec and the Quebec nation.

The Quebec nation believes in a political system where the head of state does not inherit their power, but shares it with other authorities within a balanced and transparent system in which the people have a say and religious authorities are relegated to private life.

A republic implies equality for citizens, who are fully recognized as such, with their own rights and duties, before secular institutions. In other words, it is the antithesis of Canada.

The Quebec nation boasts a republican tradition firmly rooted in its history. It is with pleasure that the Bloc Québécois honours that tradition today. In a remarkable 2012 book, political scientist Marc Chevrier even believed he had detected in New France a fascinating seed of the modern republic. It is interesting. I recommend that everyone here read it.

In the 19th century, our republican heritage was that of pamphleteer Louis-Honoré Fréchette and that of patriots such as Louis-Joseph Papineau and Robert Nelson, who courageously fought against the Crown. This was also the struggle of author Clément Dumesnil in his fight to abolish seigneurial and feudal rights, the struggle of Montreal mayor Honoré Beaugrand and the struggle of the great premier and great statesman Honoré Mercier, who was also an MNA from Saint-Hyacinthe. This struggle is also that of Louis-Antoine Dessaulles, from Saint-Hyacinthe, and his fight against the excesses of clericalism, and that of Maurice Laframboise, former mayor of Saint-Hyacinthe and member from Bagot.

I am very proud to remind this House that the republican struggle has deep roots in Saint-Hyacinthe.

During the talks that were to result in the misnamed Confederation, this republican heritage was also that of the members belonging to what was then known as the “Red Party”, who warned against the fundamentally reactionary nature of the regime that was being established. In 1866, Red member Jean-Baptiste-Éric Dorion made a comment that deserves to be remembered: “They want to create a monarchy, an aristocracy, a viceroy and a shiny replica; I am alarmed at the position they want to put us in, as all these ridiculous and absurd plans will be extravagant folly.”

This reminds us how completely the Liberal Party of Canada has forgotten its roots, or if it does remember them, how it has betrayed them. In the 20th century, our republican heritage was that of journalists and writers like Godfroy Langlois, Ève Circé-Côté, Olivier Asselin, Jules Fournier and André Laurendeau.

Today, we must pick up the torch of this republican struggle once more. Let us choose the sovereignty of the people rather than royal sovereignty. Let us abolish the monarchy. Long live the republic.

• (1650)

[*English*]

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, we heard in the preceding question and answer period that the Bloc's preferred model in Canada is not to have a monarch but, instead, to have another elected head of state. In essence, the member before this member was suggesting that we

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should be electing a president, so we would have a prime minister and a president.

Could this Bloc member confirm that is indeed the position of the Bloc Québécois? Could he explain why they did not include that in the motion today?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay:** Madam Speaker, it is because that is not what the motion says. The motion calls on the House to mandate the government to initiate the process. It is as simple as that. Deciding what form this will take will come later.

I know that the very idea of a republic is a bit foreign to a Canadian government that is proud of its monarchy, that it is a rather alien concept that may be hard to understand. There is also the idea of consulting the public, deferring to the sovereignty of the people, where the people get to write their own Constitution, make their own choices and decide which institutions they want.

However, I guess that can be hard for a descendant of British colonialism to understand.

[*English*]

**Ms. Lindsay Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the conversation today, although I may not agree with it or with having it at this time. This is not necessarily the time.

One thing that I keep questioning myself about as we debate this motion, which we will be voting on at some point, is what a lot of the people in my riding will think about this. I think about the veterans whom I talk to on numerous occasions. In the next few weeks, we are going to be commemorating and remembering what they provided to this country in fighting for freedom. I think of how incredibly proud they are as part of our democracy in fighting for that within the institutions, whether one agrees with them or not, and how they link that to the monarchy.

How would the member have me explain that to veterans who put so much emphasis and pride into fighting for what Canada represents, including the monarchy?

• (1655)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay:** Madam Speaker, it is very simple.

Honestly, I think that most veterans did not go to war ready to die for royalty. I do not think that was the main motivation. That being said, I personally know some veterans who are proud of their past service but who do not think that this institution is still relevant in 2022. I am not trying to tell them that they need to renounce their past oaths or military service. As of now, we no longer consider the monarchy to be part of our political system. It is as simple as that.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Madam Speaker, it is an honour to participate in this debate. My question for my colleague from Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot is almost the same as the one the parliamentary secretary asked.

*Business of Supply*

Early in the debate, this morning, I asked the leader of the Bloc Québécois the same question: What alternative is the Bloc proposing? I did not get an answer. I guess the Bloc did not have an alternative in mind when they wrote today's motion. I am surprised. I should mention that the member for Rivière-du-Nord at least went to the effort of responding that the Bloc Québécois would rather have a president.

I want to ask my colleague if that is true. Is that what is now advocated by the Bloc Québécois, instead of this morning's position?

**Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay:** Madam Speaker, I think what the member for Rivière-du-Nord said and what all the Bloc Québécois members would say is that an elected president is better than a king. That is undeniable. That part is settled, everyone agrees on that. The Canadian members of Parliament are pretty much the only ones who disagree.

That said, as my colleague was saying, she was picking up on the question from the Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, so I will give her the same answer I gave him: the whole reason the sovereignty of the people exists is to define—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Order. Before resuming debate, 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 Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, Public Safety; the hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, Taxation; the hon. member for Nunavut, Indigenous Affairs.

[English]

**Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is a great pleasure to rise today in this House to debate this opposition day motion.

When it is a Bloc Québécois or NDP opposition day motion, the Conservative Party gets remarkably few speaking spots. This is only our second speaking slot today on this motion and, as luck would have it, I get a full 20 minutes. I think colleagues may regret allowing me to have the floor for the full 20 minutes as I do have a lot to say on the motion at hand.

I think it is a happy coincidence and convergence that today's debate is what we call an opposition day or supply day debate. If we look at the chyron on the screen right now it says "Business of Supply", which is somewhat of an antiquated way of speaking. I believe most Canadians probably do not understand what supply may mean in the context of Parliament, but it means money. It means granting the government the ability to spend money.

In our Canadian parliamentary context, each opposition party has the opportunity to raise debates during the business of supply through opposition day motions before we, in December, grant the government the cold, hard cash. Before December 10 we have the opportunity to debate things. It is like the airing of grievances. We, as opposition parties, get the chance to air our grievances in this House. Why I say this is a happy convergence and coincidence is that the ancient roots of the business of supply rest with the monarchy, so here today we have a fun coincidence where we can talk

about the cold, hard cash, about the business of supply and also about the monarchical roots of this process.

I would like to draw the attention of the House to the concept of grievance before supply and its ancient roots. I will quote from the late eminent scholar C.E.S. (Ned) Franks, formerly of Queen's University in Kingston, who wrote, "Parliament demanded and obtained the right to set its own agenda and it placed the expressions of grievance before the King's business. Only in this way could the Commons be assured of a sympathetic and attentive ear. Grievance before supply became one of the key principles of parliamentary government. The Commons also insisted that it could discuss the King's business as long as, and in such a manner as, it wished. From this comes the principle the House is alone responsible for its own proceedings and its own rules and procedures. These are not the King's business, but the Commons'."

When it comes to the question of supply and the questions we ought to speak of, here we are debating the monarchy.

I am very proud to be part of an opposition party with a leader who believes in putting the people first, their families, their homes, their paycheques, their country. I want to read the preamble to the motion before us.

It states, "(i) Canada is a democratic state". That is correct. It goes on to state, "(ii) this House believes in the principle of equality for all". That is agreed.

Let us talk about economic equality and where we are right now in this country where families are struggling to make ends meet and finding it challenging to put food on the table.

I received an email from a senior citizen from near Arthur, Ontario, which of course is Canada's most patriotic village. She wrote that balancing a budget was incredibly difficult before COVID, but now it is beyond her. Speaking for herself, she said that basic essential groceries absorb at least half of her income.

Here we are debating the monarchy, something the Bloc knows full well will not change, is unable to change, based on our constitutional system. That is the issue that it sees fit to debate, not the families in Perth—Wellington, not the families who are struggling right now across the country, not the families who each and every day are sitting down at the kitchen table, often late at night or early in the morning, going through their numbers and wondering how they are going to make ends meet. People are wondering how they are going to make sure that the end of the month does not come before they have enough of their paycheque left to pay those final bills.

● (1700)

I want to talk very briefly about Perth—Wellington. Perth—Wellington is one of the great agricultural places in the country. We are very proud of our agricultural heritage. One of the things we could be talking about right now is the impact the Liberal government is having on Canadian farm families and on the challenges that are facing them, one of which is the carbon tax, which is driving up the cost on Canadian farmers.



*Business of Supply*

This is Business of Supply, and this is an opposition day motion that is just ripe for the taking. We could be talking about how farm families in Perth—Wellington or in any of the Quebec ridings are being impacted by the government's mishandling of the carbon tax or the government's mishandling of the tariff issue on fertilizer. No one in the House would disagree that we need to take strong action against Vladimir Putin and his thugs, but when the government slapped a tariff on fertilizer which was purchased before March 2, it impacted no one except Canadian farmers.

An individual came into my Harriston office recently and gave me a copy of his bill from one of the local farm supply stores. The impact alone on fertilizer purchased prior to March 2 for a relatively small amount was \$1,376.20. That is \$1,300 that has been taken out of our rural economy for no good purpose, no benefit whatsoever and no impact on the Russian regime, yet it has been taken out of the local economy.

If we are looking at what could be discussed in an opposition day motion when we are talking about the Business of Supply, I think that colleagues in our party and most parties would choose the impact of the housing crisis. The housing crisis is preventing young families from moving into their first home and young university graduates from moving out of their parents' basement. Families are looking for a place to rent. The rental housing crisis is a challenge, and people can no longer afford to actually buy a house.

I have an email from a local councillor in the town of St. Marys. She wrote that there are little to no options. In her small town, she knows of families with four kids that are in jeopardy of being homeless, and also a single dad with children, and young adults that cannot move away from their parents' home, because there is simply nothing available to rent. She said that some families are being displaced, because the owners of homes they now rent want to sell them for profit in a hot market.

These are the issues that are impacting Canadians. These are the issues that are impacting us every single day. These are the issues that we hear of in our ridings across the country, yet we are debating this issue for political and partisan means rather than focusing on a number of the issues that matter. There are issues such as the cost of Internet and the availability of rural broadband.

I see my friend from Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa is in the House today, and one of his challenges now as our shadow minister for rural economic development and connectivity is the fact that across Canada, there are massive amounts of our country that are in dead zones and do not have access to reliable high-speed Internet. Even in my area of rural southern Ontario, which is not that far in the grand scheme of things from places like London, Kitchener and Guelph, we have massive areas of our community that cannot access rural high-speed Internet, and those who can are paying through the nose. I have heard stories of families and farm businesses having to pay tens of thousands of dollars to get fibre down a quarter-mile stretch of a concession road.

These are the types of issues that resonate with Canadians. These are the types of issues that each and every day we as Canadians are hearing about and that we want to focus on. Those are the issues we were sent to this place to focus on, but again, here we are discussing this issue.

There are two final issues that have been brought to my attention by my constituents which should merit discussion. One is food insecurity.

I have the great benefit of having amazing organizations in my riding that go above and beyond the call of duty in ensuring that families, community members and persons living with disabilities have food on their table each and every day. I think of the Stratford House of Blessing. I think of the local community food centre. I think of the Salvation Army. All of them go above and beyond the call of duty.

• (1705)

I get emails like this: “One critical challenge is food insecurity. The shocking reality is in Canada, one of the richest countries in the world, over 4.4 million people can't afford the food they need. In communities across Canada, one in eight households and one in six children are affected by food insecurity.”

The fact of the matter is that with the rising cost of groceries and the impact inflation is having on groceries, these numbers are going to rise. These numbers are going to rise and have that impact on families, on folks in my riding and across the country. They simply can no longer afford to put food on the table.

This leads me to another email I have had, about the family doctor shortage. We all know that when people are food insecure, it causes other challenges in the health care system. The fact of the matter is there are far too many Canadians living in Canada without access to a family doctor.

I have received a number of emails bringing this issue to my attention and urging me to act on the health care workforce issue, specifically on the inability for families to have a primary care physician. They need an individual who can help care for their family and ensure that there are measures in place to prevent the need for urgent care in an emergency department or other matters, to prevent it from ever happening. We all know, going back to food insecurity, that when someone is food insecure, it has an impact on their overall livelihood and health.

I raise these issues because that is where we are today. We are having this debate in the House, discussing the business of supply, and no debate is ever wasted when we can raise the issues that affect our constituents. It is unfortunate that in this specific example we are not specifically debating and eventually voting on food insecurity, on rural broadband, on support for families, on support for cutting the cost of living, or on support for ensuring that every Canadian has a family doctor.

To the issue at hand in this debate, and I promise I will not speak at too much length, I have some thoughts on this motion, not the least of which is the error in the motion itself. The motion refers to the British monarchy, but as members will know, we pledge allegiance to the Crown in Canada.

*Business of Supply*

We can reflect on what is said in what we refer to as “the green book”, Bosc and Gagnon, about the oath of allegiance. Let us be clear on where this motion is coming from. This motion is coming from the Parti Québécois in Quebec. This motion is coming from the PQ, the cousins of the Bloc Québécois. I should point out that despite the efforts of the 32 Bloc Québécois MPs, they helped elect only three PQ MNAs in Quebec, so I question, frankly, the motivation there.

This is all driven by the oath of allegiance that we all take when we are sworn in as parliamentarians. In Bosc and Gagnon, it says the following:

When Members swear or solemnly affirm allegiance to the Sovereign, they are also swearing or solemnly affirming allegiance to the institutions the Sovereign represents, including the concept of democracy. Thus, Members are making a pledge to conduct themselves in the best interests of the country. The oath or solemn affirmation reminds Members of the serious obligations and responsibilities they are assuming.

That is what we are talking about. That is what we need to be focusing on: our duties as parliamentarians and our devotion to our country, our commitment to our country. That is what the oath of allegiance is talking about. That is what the oath of allegiance is focusing on. It is not focusing on the British monarchy. It is focusing on our duties as parliamentarians.

Frankly, I find it somewhat troubling when parliamentarians from a certain party keep referring to the British monarchy. In fact, if we go as far back as 1947, in a classic Corry and Hodgetts text, they wrote:

The British Government and Parliament no longer have any control over its members. The Dominions are autonomous and independent. They are bound to Britain and to one another only by the invisible ties of a common tradition....

• (1710)

We do have a common tradition with our British counterparts, but we also have a common tradition with the first French monarch of 1534, when what is now considered Canada was in fact a French royal province, so we do have a history that is reflected in this place and in this concept.

I want to focus once again on the concept of the Crown in right of Canada, a distinct and separate entity from the British monarchy, and I would quote from Philippe Lagassé and James Bowden, who talk about the Canadian Crown as a corporation sole:

However antiquated or abstract it may appear, it remains that the Crown is the concept of the state in Canada, and that the state is a legal person known as Her Majesty in Right of Canada by virtue of the Crown's status as a non-statutory corporation sole. Claims that the laws governing this Canadian corporation fall under the authority of the British Parliament, or that the legal personality of the Canadian state is still the same as the legal personality of the British state, undermine the independence and sovereignty that Canada began to enjoy after 1926 and could fully claim after 1982.

There we have it. The Canadian Crown, His Majesty in right of Canada, is a separate and distinct legal entity from that of the British monarchy. In fact, if we want to have a more lengthy conversation on where we go as a Parliament and where other Commonwealth countries may go, we will find that it is indeed possible that other countries, including the United Kingdom itself, could do away with their monarchy, but Canada itself, as a distinct corporation sole, the monarchy of Canada, the Crown of Canada as a cor-

poration sole, is a separate and independent institution beyond that of the British monarchy.

My friend from Chatham-Kent—Leamington earlier referenced some of the benefits and some of the added specificity of the Canadian Commonwealth tradition and the parliamentary democracy we have here in Canada, and one of the great scholars, Walter Bagehot, talked about the beauty of a constitutional monarchy. He talked about how it worked and how it has benefited not only the United Kingdom, but in our case our tradition. Bagehot talked about both the efficient and the dignified parts. The dignified parts are the monarchy, the Crown and the august nature of that part. The efficient part is that of the cabinet. We may from time to time debate how efficient a particular cabinet or a particular government may be, but the important part is recognizing the distinction between the two.

The benefit of a constitutional monarchy is that the embodiment of the Crown and head of state does not rest with the partisan deliberations of the day-to-day political struggles of the House of Commons or of other legislatures. That is the benefit: dividing the efficient and the dignified parts and thus allowing us to have a head of state, represented in Canada by Her Excellency the Governor General, but also a separate and distinct efficient part that focuses on the day-to-day running. I know for a fact that other countries where those two are merged, where the head of state and the head of government are one and the same, are not ones we would like to emulate.

As my time is running out, I want to make one final point. Parliament consists of three parts. We often think of Parliament as two houses, which is correct, but it is three parts. It is the House of Commons; it is the Senate, and it is the Crown. Those are the three parts of Parliament, and those are the three processes through which bills become law: through first reading, second reading and third reading in both houses, and finally through royal assent. Those three elements were combined once together in the Speech from the Throne in 1957, when Her late Majesty The Queen delivered the Speech from the Throne from the Senate chamber during her visit to Canada.

• (1715)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Madam Speaker, there are some things that my colleague said in his speech that I want to understand. That is the message that we have been hearing since this morning, that this is not a real issue and that there are so many more important issues.

Let us say that I understood that criticism earlier this morning, but at this point in the day, I see it as a sign that nobody really has any real arguments against what we are saying.

Also, why was this considered to be important and a real issue when the Conservative government was bragging about putting portraits of the Queen and the word “royal” everywhere?

**Mr. John Nater:** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot for his question.

*Business of Supply*

I believe that I spoke about the monarchy in Canada in my speech. I spoke about the two parts of cabinet and the monarchy in Canada. That is important.

Yes, I am proud to be a Conservative who sees the importance of our traditions, like the monarchy, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, and now King Charles III. Of course, it is important that we recognize the challenges of the monarchy.

In the House, we heard stories and negative things about the monarchy and past kings. That is important, especially for indigenous people and for reconciliation with first nations.

• (1720)

[English]

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, wow, it is always nice to hear and see people come in here carrying the receipts. The member from the Bloc Québécois who just made the comment that the member for Perth—Wellington was not actually addressing the motion should really review the Hansard. In the second half of his speech, he literally shut down every argument for this motion.

It is incredible. Sometimes, the stars align perfectly and I am in perfect sync with Conservative members and their position on things, and this is certainly one of those times.

I know he hinted at it earlier in his speech, with the motive of this being to be in line with the provincial party, but I am wondering if the member can reflect on why he thinks the Bloc Québécois would waste an entire supply day, when it gets only three a year. Why would it waste it on this? What is the motive behind this, in his opinion?

**Mr. John Nater:** Madam Speaker, it is an odd day when I agree entirely with the member for Kingston and the Islands, but he is absolutely right. When there are so few opportunities to air grievances in this place and when we have so many issues affecting our constituents, our ridings and the people across the country, to see this debate taking this angle rather than being on the cost of living is truly unfortunate.

I think we know the impetus. We know the motivation, and it is unfortunately trying to bring a provincial legislative debate into the House of Commons. If we were to survey Canadians from coast to coast to coast, I think their number one issue would be the cost of living, probably followed closely by the cost of housing. Those are the issues that we, as Canadians, need to be focusing on.

**Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP):** *Uqaqtittiji*, I agree very much with both the Conservatives and the Liberals that the arguments have been made not to have this motion go forward. I also really appreciated the member of Parliament for Perth—Wellington's indicating all of the social indicators that we could have discussed and tried to address in this motion.

I wonder if the member agrees that maybe the party could have done better to advocate for its indigenous communities. For example, we do not hear very much about the 14 Inuit communities in Nunavut, and maybe the party could have done better to make sure

the Inuit in northern Quebec could have been better represented by this party.

**Mr. John Nater:** Madam Speaker, it is an exceptionally important question. There are so many things we could be focusing on. The member mentioned the 14 indigenous communities in northern Quebec. I am sure there are issues that are affecting her communities in Nunavut as well.

Frankly, the fact that there are still indigenous communities across the country without clean drinking water is a crying shame, and we, as Canadians, should be incredibly disappointed in ourselves, in the government and in all sides of things that this is still happening. In a country as rich and as bountiful as Canada, the fact that communities do not have clean drinking water is a crying shame and completely unacceptable.

**Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is a shame that it seems my colleague is required to deliver such an eloquent education on some of the basics of the Constitution of Canada, including the Canadian monarchy. I am glad that he did so and had a chance to wax Walter Bagehot. I felt he did not quite get to the end of where he wanted to go with that part of his speech, so I will give him a few moments to expand on any point that might have been lacking for lack of time.

**Mr. John Nater:** Madam Speaker, I think of the phrase “be careful what you wish for” because it might actually happen.

The member for Calgary Rocky Ridge raised Walter Bagehot, and I think all Canadians would be well served to read about the traditions of our parliamentary system. I think too often the House is seen as a museum, but this is an active place of discussion. It is an active place of debate.

If we look at our Canadian traditions and where they came from, we should never see this place as a museum of democracy. This place ought to be an active debating chamber, an active place to debate issues of the day. When we talk about defining and differentiating those two parts, as Bagehot talked about, that is one of the points I want to focus on and make sure we raise all the time. This place will never be a museum of democracy.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Madam Speaker, it really is a pleasure to put a question to the hon. member for Perth—Wellington, who is, as ever, knowledgeable and thoughtful in putting forward his views.

I am very grateful to him for stressing that when we take our oath as members of Parliament to His Majesty, we are taking an oath to Canada, not to any one person. In the past, I took my oath to Her Majesty the Queen. I was not making an oath to one individual but to Canada, and that oath is important.

I also think it was very helpful to canvass what it would mean if we changed our system of government, which is what this motion proposes. Briefly, I will say that I grew up in the United States and watched what I think is human nature to elevate even elected people to royal status and to venerate not just the elected president but his wife as the first lady and even the whole family and the royal dogs. I note that it has always been to this point the pronoun “his”.

*Points of Order*

Would the hon. member agree that human nature is better served by having a monarchy that is ceremonial rather than venerating average human beings who are elected?

• (1725)

**Mr. John Nater:** Madam Speaker, there is the ceremonial element of the monarchy that allows it to be separate and apart from the political day-to-day hustling we see in this place and across the country. I think it is important that we have a distinction between the head of state and the head of government. It allows political actors to do their jobs while remaining a dignified part of the monarchy, represented here in Canada by the Governor General.

[*Translation*]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** It being 5:26 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the business of supply.

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 Drummond.

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** Madam Speaker, we request a recorded vote.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Pursuant to order made Thursday, June 23, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, October 26, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons on a point of order.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

**POINTS OF ORDER****REQUIREMENT OF ROYAL RECOMMENDATION FOR BILL C-290**

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I will be responding to a point of order and a question of privilege. One of them will take longer than the other.

I am rising on a point of order in response to the Speaker's statement on September 26, 2022, respecting the need for a royal recommendation for Bill C-290, an act to amend the Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act, standing in the name of the member for Mirabel. I will not comment on the substance of the proposal, but I would like to put forward a submission that the bill would seek to authorize spending for a purpose that is being significantly altered.

In 2005, when the Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act was promulgated, it was accompanied by a royal recommendation. The royal recommendation was required because it set the mandate, purpose, objects and qualifications for a procedure for the disclosure of wrongdoing in the public sector.

In 2006, Parliament adopted a bill that amended the Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act to strengthen protection for whistle-blowers, including through the creation of the Public Servants Disclosure Protection Tribunal. The creation of the tribunal and its mandate was seen as a new and distinct charge upon the consolidated revenue fund and was accompanied by a royal recommendation.

Bill C-290 seeks to significantly alter the mandate of the public servants disclosure protection regime. The first change relates to whom the regime applies. Section 2 of the Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act defines "public servant" as:

public servant means every person employed in the public sector, every member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and every chief executive.

Bill C-290 would add an entire new class of persons who would be subject to the regime. Subclause 3(3) of the bill states:

public servant means every person employed in the public sector, every person retained under contract to perform services for the public sector, every member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and every chief executive.

Even the factual summary of the bill acknowledges that this proposed change represents an expansion of the mandate. The summary states:

This enactment amends the Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act to, among other things, expand the application of the Act to additional categories of public servants

Allow me to highlight other changes proposed in Bill C-290 that would alter the mandate of the regime and the duties and functions of the commissioner and the tribunal.

Clause 6 would extend the protections provided under the regime to former public servants, which is not contemplated in the act.

Clause 4 of the bill seeks to expand the types of wrongdoings to include new elements, namely the abuse of authority and political interference, and removes requirements such as the individual applying in good faith.

Clause 30 would remove the definition of "investigation", which is set out in section 34 of the act. It states:

If the Commissioner is of the opinion that a matter under investigation would involve obtaining information that is outside the public sector, he or she must cease that part of the investigation and he or she may refer the matter to any authority that he or she considers competent to deal with it.

By proposing to remove section 34 of the act, the bill seeks to expand the mandate of the commissioner to obtain information that is outside the public sector, which, under the act, is clearly outside the scope of the commissioner's duties and functions.

Bill C-290 also seeks to amend subsection 19.3(1) of the act to remove the ability of the commissioner to refuse to deal with a complaint if the complaint has been adequately dealt with or could be more appropriately dealt with according to the procedure provided for under an act of Parliament other than this act or a collective agreement, or if it was not made in good faith.

Clause 24 would add a new responsibility for the commissioner to assess internal disclosure procedures in organizations and to review disclosure procedures upon request or on his or her own initiative.

Clause 19 of the bill would also add a new function for the tribunal by removing a power conferred upon the commissioner in the act. Clause 19 states:

• (1730)

A complainant whose complaint is dismissed by the Commissioner under section 20.5 may apply to the Tribunal for a determination of whether or not a reprisal was taken against him or her and, if the Tribunal determines that a reprisal was taken, the complainant may apply for an order respecting a remedy in his or her favour and an order respecting disciplinary action against any person or persons...who took the reprisal.

Bill C-290 seeks to significantly alter the mandate of the public servants disclosure protection scheme and the duties and functions of not only the commissioner but the tribunal in a manner not authorized under the act or any other act of Parliament.

Page 834 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* states:

A royal recommendation not only fixes the allowable charge, but also its objects, purposes, conditions and qualifications. For this reason, a royal recommendation is required not only in the case where money is being appropriated, but also in the case where the authorization to spend for a specific purpose is significantly altered. Without a royal recommendation, a bill that either increases the amount of an appropriation or extends its objects, purposes, conditions and qualifications is inadmissible on the grounds that it infringes on the Crown's financial initiative.

I believe this is the case with Bill C-290. The amendments proposed would significantly alter the objects and purposes of the public servants disclosure protection regime in a way that exceeds the royal recommendation originally obtained when the statute was enacted and the royal recommendation attached to amending legislation.

\* \* \*

• (1735)

**PRIVILEGE**

ALLEGED MISLEADING OF HOUSE BY MINISTER OF EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am responding to the question of privilege raised on Friday, October 21, by the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle respecting comments made by RCMP Commissioner Brenda Lucki.

There is a long and important tradition of the House to take members at their word. The Minister of Public Safety has consistently stated that neither he nor his staff ever directed RCMP Commissioner Brenda Lucki to ensure the release of the models of firearms that were used in the mass casualty incident that took place in Nova Scotia.

The weight of the member opposite's argument is that the RCMP commissioner noted she had a text message from the Minister of Public Safety that he would like to speak with her and that she knew exactly what the minister wanted to discuss with her. This is simply conjecture. The RCMP commissioner is a highly qualified individual but she is not a mind reader.

*Private Members' Business*

This clearly demonstrates the weakness of the argument put forward by the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle. The Minister of Public Safety has confirmed in this House that neither he nor his staff directed the RCMP commissioner to do anything. The RCMP commissioner has testified that she was never directed to do anything by the minister or his staff.

What the member has brought to this House is nothing more than conjecture and innuendo. There are no facts that contradict statements made by the minister or by the RCMP commissioner.

As a result, I submit that conjecture should never be a sufficient ground to find a prima facie question of privilege. I believe that is the case in this situation. I therefore submit that this matter is a question of debate not supported by facts and that it does not reach the high bar required to find a question of privilege.

Madam Speaker, I appreciate your time, and that is it with regard to my points. The only thing I would add is that I suspect you might find it is the will of the House to call it 5:41 p.m. so we can begin private members' hour.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I want to thank the hon. member for the information provided. We will certainly take it into consideration.

Does the hon. member have unanimous consent to see the clock at 5:41 p.m.?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** We have a point of order from the Minister of International Trade.

**Hon. Mary Ng:** Madam Speaker, during the vote to concur in the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, I inadvertently voted in favour. I had intended to abstain, and I wanted to inform the House of this information. I would ask for unanimous consent to change my vote to an abstention.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** We have heard the hon. minister. All those opposed to the hon. minister's moving the motion will please say nay.

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** It being 5:41 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

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**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

[English]

**CRIMINAL CODE**

**Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC)** moved that Bill C-283, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Corrections and Conditional Release Act (addiction treatment in penitentiaries), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

*Private Members' Business*

She said: Madam Speaker, as this is my first time making a speech in the House since a tragic incident in British Columbia, I would like to first take a moment to pay tribute to the RCMP constable whose life was sadly taken while serving in Burnaby in the line of duty. The late constable was a member of the detachment's mental health and homeless outreach team, and she served in the role for three years. I have no doubt of the immense impact she had in her community.

I am here today to rise and speak to my first private member's bill, Bill C-283, the "end the revolving door" act. This legislation proposes to amend the Criminal Code of Canada and the Corrections and Conditional Release Act to expand the sentencing options available in our justice system and to assist those whose lives have been ravaged by addiction.

When I was first elected, I knew I wanted to do something for those suffering from mental health challenges and/or addiction. My team and I researched this topic, looking for possibilities within federal jurisdiction to make a difference. Thanks to the member for Kootenay—Columbia, I was able to pick up his work and research where he left off at the end of the previous Parliament. I thank him for his prior work on this legislation and for speaking to it today as well.

The effects of the revolving door in our justice system for those with mental health and addiction issues are felt in communities across Canada. There is surely not one member in the House who would not consider this an issue in their community.

In Kelowna—Lake Country, desperate people suffering from severe addictions and mental health challenges are entering and exiting our justice system without the proper curative treatment they need to heal. As a result, they return to my community, and others across the country, only to repeat the same cycle of behaviour that, for many, will see them re-entering the justice system and those same penitentiaries again and again. The effects of this have been widespread. Residents have valid safety concerns, businesses deal with crime and safety issues and first responder resources are strained.

Crime numbers show law enforcement spends a lot of their time focusing resources on those with mental health and addiction. Courts are backlogged with reoffender cases. Small businesses have to foot the bill for damage. People are injured, or worse, and families are torn apart.

We do not know if my private member's bill, Bill C-283, would have made a difference in each situation, but we need to do something. If we get the actions proposed in this legislation implemented and there are differences being made in people's lives and in communities, surely this could be expanded in other ways.

The need for legislative action is imperative. A 2015 study by Correctional Service Canada showed that, at admission to federal custody, 70% of men and 77% of women offenders had a substance use issue. Similarly, a review of the National Parole Board files revealed that about 73% of offenders who were returned to custody had abused substances while on release. They also revealed that substance use had contributed to the termination of their release.

Municipal leaders are calling for action, including the BC Urban Mayors' Caucus. They state that their cities' businesses are "facing break-ins and other challenges, as a result of increasing social disorder and challenging behaviour from people in crisis." We need to do something, and we need to take action.

This need for legislative action on mental health and addiction for those in the justice system is clear. Parliament has already taken action to focus on recidivism, in other words, the revolving door. The House of Commons came together to unanimously pass legislation from my colleague, the member for Tobique—Mactaquac, to establish a framework to reduce recidivism in Canada. Bill C-283 seeks to continue this work by assisting addiction treatment in federal penitentiaries where people in need can receive the curative treatment they desperately need.

We know that the heroic work of addiction professionals already within penitentiaries operating under existing programs is vital, but the results show more focus and additional action is needed to heal those suffering from mental health and addiction problems. The ability to sentence offenders into a dedicated addiction treatment facility operating inside an existing Correctional Service of Canada facility would help support their work.

No one piece of legislation can serve as the panacea for those with addiction who enter the criminal justice system. I believe this legislation can offer an important tool to help reduce recidivism, address our mental health and addiction crisis and improve the public safety of our communities.

• (1740)

In that effort, my bill would first empower the commissioner of the Correctional Service of Canada to designate all or part of a facility as an addiction treatment facility. Such a facility would need to come together with the government's support and with input from experts in addiction and recovery. I do not seek to prescribe the shape of how this facility should operate, as this would be up to the experts who work in this field.

Second, this legislation would amend the Criminal Code of Canada to support a two-stream sentencing process. While both would have the same sentence time, certain convicted individuals who demonstrate a pattern of problematic substance use and meet certain parameters at the time of sentencing could have the judge offer them the choice to be sentenced to participate in a mental health assessment and an addictions treatment inside a federal penitentiary while they serve their sentence. Through this sentencing process, offenders would still receive meaningful consequences for their actions but would also receive curative treatment, leading to a path of reducing the risk of reoffending; in other words, ending the revolving door.

This year I have had the pleasure of speaking with many stakeholders who work in addiction treatment and criminal justice reform. I want to take a moment here to thank them for those eye-opening meetings and for the important work they undertake every day. Some work directly with addicts on the streets; some work inside in the prisons; some are affected by the actions of those being incarcerated, and some are trying to help others simply because of their own lived experience.

There is a lot of support to move this end the revolving door act forward to be studied at the Standing Committee on Public Safety. I want to share just a few comments.

Marlene Orr, the chief executive officer of Native Counselling Services of Alberta, which works to heal the disproportionate number of indigenous Canadians in our justice system, states that the introduction of Bill C-283 is important, as it is a firm step forward in addressing the issue of addiction and its relationship to crime and recidivism. She says equipping Correctional Service Canada with the legislative authority to address the drug crisis in an institutional setting provides the service with meaningful tools to help Canadians address addiction and its relationship to crime.

Anita Desai, president of the National Associations Active in Criminal Justice, an alliance of Canadian groups dedicated to the work of criminal justice reforms, said that substance misuse, dependence and criminal justice are quite linked and Canada is in serious need of more tools in the tool box. She went on to say she believes Bill C-283, the end the revolving door act, has the potential to create some of those tools.

Teri Smith, president of the Business Improvement Areas of B.C., says that as the organization that represents more than 70 downtown and main street districts across B.C., collectively comprising hundreds of thousands of businesses and tens of thousands of employees, they are supportive of Bill C-283, and that this private member's bill serves to address one component of the broader issue of safety, crime and vandalism by supporting critical addiction treatment supports and services for individuals in need within federal correctional institutions.

These are businesses in the ridings of members of Parliament from all over British Columbia, including from downtown Vancouver and on Vancouver Island, who have federal elected representatives across political party lines in the House. Let us all work together to address the complex mental health and addiction crisis here in Canada by reforming sentencing, improving addiction treatment in penitentiaries and offering a message of hope to communi-

ties, families and those suffering. I ask for support from all members of Parliament for my private member's bill, Bill C-283, the end the revolving door act.

• (1745)

**Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her speech and for her work on this issue. I know that she is coming at this from a genuine place of concern for those with addictions and substance abuse issues.

I wonder if the member could explain to the House why she chose to exclude certain individuals from being included in what she sees as treatment options when they enter prison.

**Mrs. Tracy Gray:** Madam Speaker, I am not sure, specifically, what the member is referring to. Maybe we could talk at a later date.

Basically, the way the legislation works is that it would be up to the judge at the time of sentencing to determine, based on someone's past track record, if they would be eligible for this type of option.

I also just want to point out that it would be up to the individual who is being sentenced to approve of that. This is something the person would have to agree to in order to go down that path. The feedback I have had from many people who work in the criminal justice system is that they say quite often there are a lot of individuals who want to go down this path, but as of right now there is just not the opportunity.

• (1750)

**Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for trying to bring forward solutions to the crisis we are facing, the mental health care and substance use crisis the country is facing.

We know the United Nations' Nelson Mandela rules provide that the quality of health care provided to incarcerated persons must be equivalent to that available to the general population. That is not happening right now. That is clear.

I am also concerned, as my Liberal colleague was, about the fact that this bill might prevent people who want help from accessing it. In its current form right now, the bill proposes to exclude individuals convicted of certain offences, including drug trafficking offences, from its scope. This ignores individuals who have substance use disorders who become involved in substance trafficking.

Maybe my colleague could explain why they are excluded in the current form of this bill, because it excludes a lot of people who need help.

**Mrs. Tracy Gray:** Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his concern on this important issue.

*Private Members' Business*

I think that comment is really important for the committee. That is why it is really important to get this legislation to committee. That is something that certainly could be looked at in more detail, as to what we have in here so far and perhaps what other opportunities there are. I look forward to those further conversations.

**Mr. Rob Morrison (Kootenay—Columbia, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I thank the member for the great speech and an awesome bill.

I am just wondering about small businesses and whether you did some outreach on the effect this would have on small businesses and what they are encountering today with the challenges we are having with the opioid crisis, the damages and things like that.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I just want to remind the member that he is to address questions and comments through the Chair, not directly to the member.

**Mrs. Tracy Gray:** Madam Speaker, absolutely, that was part of the premise when this came up. We have a lot of issues in our communities that are more prevalent than they were even five years ago. We have these situations that are playing out in our communities. We need to take a step back and look at potentially why and what we can do to make a difference. As I have said, we have done a fair amount of research at the federal level. There are only certain areas that we could go down. This is one area that is very concrete and is within federal jurisdiction.

Hopefully it could make a difference to those individuals, and then also the communities that they go back to. As I mentioned with some of the statistics in my intervention, there really is a revolving door. That is also why we chose to call it this. There is a lot of recidivism. If we could help those people, it would also help the communities they go back to.

**Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is a privilege to join the second reading debate of Bill C-283 regarding addiction treatment in our prison system. Let me begin by thanking the hon. member for bringing this legislation forward and for recognizing the role that addictions play in crime.

I want to start by letting the member know that the government will not be supporting her legislation, but I will go into details of that now. Having met with the hon. member, I know that she is extremely well intentioned in bringing this legislation forward, and I do give her my personal commitment that I will work with her to ensure the ideas that she wants to bring forward are looked at.

Substance abuse must absolutely be treated as a health and social issue. Any Canadian who uses substances should be able to access the services and supports that they need. Anyone incarcerated in Canada's federal institutions should have access to quality, safe, person-centred and holistic care, regardless of institutional placement or type of offence. Indeed, these programs exist, and they are comprehensive and available to all offenders. They exist as part of the Government of Canada's broad and concrete approach to strengthen public health support for all Canadians.

Included in the 2021 Speech from the Throne was:

To build a healthy future, we must also strengthen our healthcare system and public health supports for all Canadians, especially seniors, veterans, persons with

disabilities, vulnerable members of our communities, and those who have faced discrimination by the very system that is meant to heal.

This is a key part of the mandate letters of the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, and the Minister of Public Safety.

The December 2021 mandate letter asked the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions to:

Advance a comprehensive strategy to address problematic substance use in Canada, supporting efforts to improve public education to reduce stigma, and supporting provinces and territories and working with Indigenous communities to provide access to a full range of evidence-based treatment and harm reduction, as well as to create standards for substance use treatment programs.

The mandate letter asked the Minister of Justice to “Secure support for the swift passage of Bill C-5 to reduce reliance on mandatory minimum penalties and promote non-criminal approaches to drug possession”.

The mandate letter to the Minister of Public Safety requires the minister to:

Develop a Federal Framework to Reduce Recidivism in consultation with provinces, territories, Indigenous communities, Black communities and other stakeholders. As part of this work, [the government] consider how to ensure that federal correctional institutions are safe and humane environments, free from violence and sexual harassment, and promote rehabilitation and public safety.

As mentioned, in keeping with its public health-centred approach to addiction and the opioid epidemic that has affected families and communities across the country, the government introduced Bill C-5, an act to amend the Criminal Code and the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, in December 2021. The bill proposes specific amendments that would repeal all mandatory minimum penalties in the CDSA and require police and prosecutors to consider alternatives, including diverting individuals to treatment programs instead of laying charges or prosecuting individuals for simple drug possession. It would also require that all past and future convictions for the simple possession of controlled drugs be kept separate and apart two years after the bill received royal assent.

Our efforts have also been focused on addressing the opioid crisis. Budget 2022 proposed to provide \$100 million over three years, starting in 2022-23 to Health Canada for the substance use and addictions program. The program supports harm reduction, treatment and prevention at the community level, and it builds on the \$116 million provided in budget 2021 and the additional \$66 million in the 2020 fall economic statement for the program.



I would also like to highlight that in June 2022, the government published its federal framework to reduce recidivism. The framework outlines the strategy that Canada will take working to address the barriers identified under each of the thematic priorities of housing, education, employment, health and positive support networks.

● (1755)

The framework identifies harms related to substance use among offenders as an urgent issue and states that more programming inside and outside of the institution to aid offenders in managing addiction will be beneficial. It highlights that the gains made during in-prison treatment programs can only be maintained if an offender is provided with sufficient aftercare supports and community treatment upon release.

Given all of these actions, let us look at what the bill proposes.

It proposes to isolate substance use treatments from existing integrated services and to enact them on their own at designated treatment facilities. It proposes an amendment to the Criminal Code to provide that a court, on request by a person sentenced to imprisonment in a penitentiary, may make a recommendation that they serve part or all of their sentence in a penitentiary or any area in a penitentiary that has been designated as an addiction treatment facility, provided that they meet certain conditions.

These conditions are, more specifically, where there is evidence of a pattern of repetitive behaviour indicating that substance use has contributed to the offender's involvement in the criminal justice system; that the offender consents to treatment; the court is satisfied that such an order would be consistent with the fundamental purpose and principles of sentencing; that the offence was not prosecuted by indictment for which the maximum penalty is 14 years' imprisonment or life; and, finally, that the offence was not prosecuted by indictment for which the maximum penalty is 10 years' imprisonment and the offence resulted in bodily harm or involved the use of a weapon, or involved the import, export, trafficking or production of drugs.

The Correctional Service of Canada would be required to fulfill such recommendations and adjust their rehabilitation model, which currently provides addiction treatment to all offenders who demonstrate substance use and addiction treatment needs.

Additionally, the bill proposes that the Corrections and Conditional Release Act be amended to provide authority for the commissioner of the Correctional Service of Canada to designate a penitentiary or area of a penitentiary to be an addiction treatment facility.

The bill would also amend the definition of "health care" in the Corrections and Conditional Release Act to include "care that is provided as part of an addiction treatment program in a designated facility".

It would authorize the Minister of Public Safety to enter into an agreement with a province "for the provision of addiction treatment programs to offenders in a designated facility and for payment by the minister, or by a person authorized by the minister, in respect of the provision of those programs".

### *Private Members' Business*

Under this bill, offenders that serve part or all of their sentences in a designated addiction treatment facility would still serve their required penalty of imprisonment.

I would point out that currently, these facilities do not exist.

The court-ordered penalty would still be served but with a focus on addiction treatment within a designated treatment facility.

At this point, I would like to outline our objections to the bill.

First, isolating those treatment services could create negative outcomes for offenders. People living with substance use disorders are not necessarily ready for active treatment. A spectrum of supports, which is not limited to active addiction treatment, must be explored and available to offenders living with substance use disorders.

The government also opposes the proposed bill because it would introduce amendments that could have a number of unintended negative consequences, including for overrepresented populations in the federal correctional system, such as indigenous and Black offenders. Further, the government recognizes that more needs to be done to support people experiencing harms from substance use.

That is why our government will continue to work with provincial and territorial governments, partners, indigenous communities, stakeholders, people with lived experience with substance use, and organizations in communities across the country to work toward reducing substance use harms.

My sense is that the federal framework to reduce recidivism is the place where the hon. member's ideas can be explored. I thank her again for bringing this bill forward and for meeting with me to discuss the issues that she is concerned about. As I said earlier, I commit to working with the hon. member on this issue.

\* \* \*

● (1800)

[*Translation*]

### JUDGES ACT

BILL C-9—NOTICE OF TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

**Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, an agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Orders 78(1) or 78(2) with respect to the second reading stage of Bill C-9, an act to amend the Judges Act.

Under the provisions of Standing Order 78(3), I give notice that a minister of the Crown will propose at the next sitting a motion to allot a specific number of days or hours for the consideration and disposal of proceedings at the said stage.

*Private Members' Business***CRIMINAL CODE**

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-283, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Corrections and Conditional Release Act (addiction treatment in penitentiaries), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I am glad that we are here to discuss Bill C-283 today. This bill reminds me of Bill C-216, which was introduced by our colleague from Courtenay—Alberni not so long ago. We supported that bill, but unfortunately it was not supported by the majority of the House. I hope this bill will go a little further this time around.

Bill C-283 makes certain amendments to the Criminal Code, including, for example, a provision that would allow a federal inmate to be sent to an addiction treatment facility if the court finds the inmate eligible.

The bill also amends the Corrections and Conditional Release Act to allow a penitentiary to be designated as an addiction treatment facility. When a court recommends that a person serve his or her sentence there, Correctional Service Canada will be required to ensure that the inmate is placed there as soon as possible.

In Quebec, we have long decided to favour rehabilitation. However, in 2014, 50% of prisoners in federal penitentiaries had a drug addiction problem. According to experts, drug addiction is what drives most of those people into committing a crime, which brings them back to prison, where drugs are very easy to get, despite what people might think.

In 2021, Frédérick Lebeau, president of the Union of Canadian Correctional Officers for the Quebec region, said, “There’s a major issue, a problem of delivery [of drugs and other prohibited items] inside the penitentiaries. It’s too easy. It’s got to get harder.”

With the advent of drones, it will be easier than ever to deliver drugs into prisons. By 2020, officers at Donnacona’s 451-inmate maximum-security penitentiary had detected 60 drones, but they estimated that was just the tip of the iceberg.

penitentiaries will have to implement new drone detection technology in November, but the union is under no illusions. Drugs will continue to come into prisons. In short, incarceration does not solve drug abuse problems, quite the opposite.

We must also take into consideration that recidivism rates among drug addicts is very high. When they get out of prison, many immediately try to obtain drugs and often turn to crime to finance their purchases.

Federal penitentiaries do a poor job of rehabilitating inmates, so this bill could be the step in the right direction that we have been waiting for.

According to a study by the Center for Interuniversity Research and Analysis of Organizations published in 2019, Quebec is an example to the world when it comes to rehabilitating inmates. According to the study, Quebec’s reintegration programs for inmates in Quebec-run prisons reduce the risk of recidivism and perform significantly better than elsewhere in the world. These reintegration programs, which are not only aimed at drug addicts, reduce the recidivism rate from 50% to 10% among participating prisoners.

Quebec’s drug treatment courts have existed since 2012 and have been so successful that they served as a model for a pilot project to address recidivism among drug addicts in France. By comparison, federal penitentiaries are failing miserably at the rehabilitation of inmates. According to the 2020 annual report of the Correctional Investigator of Canada, inmates in federal institutions do not receive useful training or work experience during their incarceration and do not have access to necessary care. In short, they are very poorly equipped to reintegrate into civil society.

Another fact to note is that indigenous people are overrepresented in federal penitentiaries. They represent less than 5% of Canada’s population, but 32% of the prison population.

● (1805)

Worse still, according to the Office of the Correctional Investigator of Canada, women represent 50% of this prison population. Addiction issues and the absence of effective programs to treat them probably go a long way to explaining why indigenous peoples are overrepresented in our prisons.

In committee, during the study of the various bills that were passed previously, including on the issue of mandatory minimums, we saw that the need to curb the overrepresentation of indigenous peoples among inmates is a major concern for the government.

We did not agree that abolishing mandatory minimums would help reduce the percentage of indigenous people in prison populations. In my view, there is no logical corollary. The existence of mandatory minimums does not lead to more indigenous inmates.

The problem lies elsewhere, and this may be our chance to correct it. Bill C-283 would allow for an addict to be placed in custody and receive follow-up care in a place that specializes in treating addictions, which could reduce the risk of recidivism for the inmate and improve their chances of successfully reintegrating society.

Under this legislation, the onus would be on inmates to ask the court to put them in an addiction treatment facility. Inmates would thereby acknowledge their addiction, which we all agree is the first step toward healing. The court would then determine whether the inmates could serve part or all of their sentence in such a facility. The Bloc Québécois sees only benefits to this.

The Bloc will therefore vote in favour of Bill C-283, just as we did last spring for Bill C-216, which was introduced by the member for Courtenay—Alberni.

The bill, as it is worded, is not perfect, of course, so it needs amending. I am sure that the members of the committee tasked with studying it will be very eager to improve it.

• (1810)

[English]

**Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague who tabled this bill for bringing it forward and for recognizing that we must do more to support people dealing with substance use disorders.

As we know, Canada is experiencing multiple crises: a mental health crisis, a toxic drug crisis, a housing crisis and a worsening affordability crisis. There are links between these crises, and they are impacting the quality of life for Canadians in communities across the country. It is incumbent upon us, as parliamentarians, to present and debate solutions so we can move forward in the best interests of Canadians.

In developing possible solutions, I believe it is critical to listen to both experts and those with lived or living experience. Last year, I was honoured to be named the NDP critic for mental health and harm reduction. I promptly tabled Bill C-216, the health-based approach to substance use act. This bill was aligned with the recommendations of the expert task force on substance use that was commissioned by Health Canada to make recommendations on federal drug policy.

Earlier this year, as I travelled across the country to speak to Canadians about Bill C-216, I had the opportunity to meet with many individuals directly affected by the toxic drug crisis, either personally, through someone they love, or because they were working on the front lines. I consistently heard that we need more supports for people struggling with mental illness, trauma, problematic substance use and housing precarity.

I also heard that there is no silver bullet. We know these are complex issues that require multi-faceted solutions, such as investing in the social determinants of health like housing and income security, increasing the focus on prevention and early prevention, and making a full range of mental health and substance use supports available on demand.

While Canada is facing an intersecting crisis, we are not making adequate investments into urgently needed solutions. Relative to the disease burden caused by mental illness, and compared to some of our G7 peers, Canada is underspending on mental health. France spends 15% of its health care budget on mental health, whereas the U.K. spends 13%. By comparison, mental health spending makes up between 5% to 7% of health care budgets in Canada, depending on the province or territory, so underinvestment in prevention and evidence-based care has come at a tragic cost to our communities.

Canada has now lost more 30,000 lives since 2016 because of drug poisonings, in addition to more than 44,000 hospitalizations. This public health emergency has been escalating for seven years, yet the government has only committed \$800 million to date for its substance use and addictions program. Meanwhile, the expert task force on substance use found that current ineffective policies are costing us billions every year in health care, policing and criminal justice expenses.

I appreciate the bill's intent. It seems to provide a route of access to treatment for those with substance use disorders and reduces the impacts of problematic substance use on individuals and their com-

### *Private Members' Business*

munities. However, I have some concerns about some of the assumptions that may have been made in formulating the bill, and I cited some of them earlier, as well as how it may play out in practice if passed.

In doing research and consultation on this bill, a theme that has come up consistently is that prisons are currently places of punishment and not care. The United Nations Nelson Mandela rules provide that the quality of health care provided to incarcerated persons must be equivalent to that available to the general population. However, concerns have long been raised about the quality of care in Canadian prisons and inherent conflicts that arise when correctional authorities are responsible for delivering health care.

Catherine Latimer, the executive director of the John Howard Society of Canada, has explained this conflict as follows, “Whenever you have correctional authorities delivering health care, there’s going to be irreconcilable conflict between the institution and the health-care needs of the individual”. She continues, “Security issues will always trump the health needs of the individuals.”

Emilie Coyle, the executive director of the Canadian Association of the Elizabeth Fry Societies, echoed that perspective in conversation in my office and commented that, if we try to insert care into prisons, people will continue to be harmed by our overly punitive prison systems.

• (1815)

Today, my office spoke with an individual with lived experience of opioid use disorder and criminal justice involvement. This individual is now doing advocacy work in recovery and shared the perspective, “Prisons do not breed success.” Indeed, the shortcomings of mental health care in federal penitentiaries has been well documented, such as reports by the correctional investigator and the final report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

Before establishing a regime of designated addictions treatment facilities in penitentiaries that will necessarily require significant investments, it is important to pause and ask: Where can someone get the best care? Where will they receive care that is evidence-based, trauma informed and culturally appropriate? Where are they most likely to achieve their treatment or recovery goals?

*Private Members' Business*

The answer we have heard consistently from those working with incarcerated individuals or with lived experience is that people are better served by accessing mental health and substance use care in their communities. Unfortunately, across Canada, there are barriers to accessing community-based mental health and substance use services, such as stigma, out-of-pocket costs, lengthy wait-lists, admission criteria and lack of detox facilities. Last year, the Expert Task Force on Substance Use recommended that the government make significant new investments to provide supports to people who use drugs, but that call has not been heeded, and the level of funding committed to date remains inadequate to meet the needs in communities across the country.

I welcome the opportunity to work with the member on initiatives that will remove barriers to substance use treatment and recovery services so that all Canadians can get the support they need in their communities. No one should have to go to jail to get help. That is just a fact.

I am also concerned that the bill may prevent people who want help from accessing it. In its current form, the bill proposes to exclude individuals convicted of certain offences, including drug trafficking offences, from its scope. This seems to ignore the fact that some individuals with substance use disorders become involved in subsistence trafficking. Exclusions in the bill could create barriers to accessing treatment in federal prisons.

Indeed, the individual with lived experience I spoke of earlier would not have benefited from the bill, having been convicted of trafficking. He was, fortunately, able to access treatment prior to sentencing and while in recovery, he has remained gainfully employed and involved in community service. After reviewing the bill, he asked how many people serving federal sentences might benefit from the bill, given the excluded offences. It is a good question, and a question that needs to be answered.

While I appreciate the bill's intent to create pathways to treatment, I think we must be careful to avoid introducing new barriers. We must also think about where we can make criminal justice reforms and investments in substance use services that will increase the likelihood of successful outcomes.

I really want to thank the member for prompting this debate. I look forward to further dialogue with my colleague and other colleagues in the House. We have to work together. This is a parallel crisis right now, which we have been dealing with throughout COVID, and the government has not paid enough attention to it. It has not acted with a sense of urgency. People's lives are at stake. This is impacting our communities, our health care system, penitentiaries, policing and the judicial system. Most of all, it is impacting people's lives and those of their families.

Again, I look forward to working with all members in the House to try to provide solutions so that we can tackle this crisis. It does require a sense of urgency and immediacy.

• (1820)

**Mr. Rob Morrison (Kootenay—Columbia, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Kelowna—Lake Country for her work on this important legislation.

At its core, Bill C-283 is about ensuring those with addictions are provided the help they need. It is also about providing their loved ones with peace of mind. Those addicted to drugs are someone's mother, father, sister, brother, son, daughter or friend.

I will be reading this speech not only as a parliamentarian but also as a dad. Heather and I are proud parents to five adult children. There is nothing we would not do to ensure their well-being, peace of mind and security. I am so proud of each of them.

My family has struggled with opioid addiction for 20 years. We empathize with all Canadian families who have suffered at the hands of addiction. Heather and I are not alone. Canadian families are not alone. Those listening right now who are struggling with addiction are not alone. In fact, I do not believe there is a single individual in this chamber who has not been touched, in some way, by cocaine, crystal meth, heroin, fentanyl or other opioids.

It has been said that having a child is like having one's heart walk around outside one's body. There are mothers and fathers across this country who are startled awake in the middle of the night by the sound of a jacket zipper, a floor creaking or a door opening. They are all sounds familiar to parents of a son or daughter who is leaving to use drugs.

These moments give way to sleepless nights wondering if that child will make it home safely. These fears last a lifetime. My heart goes out to those who suffer from addictions and their families who bear the weight of the stress and worry that comes with caring for loved ones suffering from addiction. The road to recovery, of which I have both professional and personal experience, is a very difficult and long commitment.

Before I go any further, I would like to make an important distinction for all colleagues in the House.

Those who suffer from drug addiction deserve our compassion and care. Those who repeatedly break the law or have no regard for the safety of those around them deserve to be arrested and dealt with through our court system. Those found guilty of crimes should go to prison where they can seek out and be provided the help they need. This is precisely where our system is not working, and it is where the bill can make an enormous difference in the lives of Canadians.

Sending an addicted individual to prison without providing them with dedicated access to the programs and services they need to recover is futile. Addressing the core cause of their crime, addiction, in meaningful ways is what will put an end to recidivism and allow many Canadian families to heal. Addressing addiction when an individual is convicted of a crime or when the addiction is the cause is precisely where this legislation can make an extraordinary difference.

Canada's approach to addressing drug use, addiction and associated crime has not been successful, and my constituents are concerned the government is out of touch with what is happening on the ground in communities across Canada. Canadians are concerned about legislative decisions being made on matters pertaining to prostitution, guns and drug-related crime. My colleagues on the justice committee know this all too well.

We do not need to look very far in my riding of Kootenay—Columbia to see this in real time. The city of Cranbrook was once a quiet, mountain town. Today, it is the home of a tent city, with an exploding homeless population and rising crime. Criminals are wreaking havoc on other homeless individuals, our youth, families and businesses. Stories of paying it forward have been replaced in the news by stories of intimidation, theft, vandalism, physical assaults and shootings. Young people are afraid to go to work for fear of physical harm and children are no longer free to explore their sense of adventure in certain areas of the city.

This is a problem born out of the current provincial and federal policies, and there is not a single city council in Canada that would be able to solve this problem. Municipal leaders across British Columbia, such as Vancouver, have called on the government to act on addictions and the associated revolving door of crime caused by convicted criminals being released without action, or worse, being released without addressing their addiction during sentencing.

B.C.'s Urban Mayors' Caucus identified mental health and substance treatment as a priority for the federal government to address. Earlier this year, the B.C. attorney general acknowledged there was an increase in the number of no-charge decisions from his office and blamed the federal government for his actions. He referred to Bill C-75, which talks about using the principle of restraint for police and courts to ensure that release at the earliest opportunity is favoured over detention. What this equates to on the ground is prioritization of the offender over the victim.

- (1825)

While there are some who are uncomfortable with labelling prolific offenders, let me help clarify. Individuals who are convicted of 50, 75 or 100 or more offences have a prolific record, and they have been through the revolving door of our catch and release justice system too many times. This has to stop.

Our laws are meant to protect law-abiding citizens as well as those who protect and serve. To send an offender back on the streets to cause harm or break the law for the 78th time is not a solution that is working and, to be frank, it is a slap in the face to victims. However, if the offender, instead of being released to cause further harm or sent to prison to become more hardened, was sent to a designated treatment facility, we would have an opportunity to address the root of the crime.

Canadians are asking for help. We are here today offering real solutions to real problems that will make a difference in helping addicted individuals deal with real pain. Mental health and addiction may be the single largest challenge of our time, and I know all members of this House want to do more for those struggling with these issues.

### *Private Members' Business*

Bill C-283 is an opportunity to do just that. The bill proposes a different program for addiction treatment while incarcerated, and this means the necessity for rehabilitation while serving a sentence. At the core, this is about treating addiction in an effort to stem the crime, or in other words, addressing the root cause of the issue. The approach is a positive solution for rehabilitation, resulting in individuals being able to make a positive contribution within our communities.

The bill would amend the Criminal Code of Canada to support two-stream sentencing, both of which would have the same sentence time. However, the individual would be called upon, being provided a choice by a judge, to choose between the current system or a designated treatment facility. The bill would not provide criminals with a pass on prison, but rather bridges correction and treatment for those who have entered the system because of drug addiction and are choosing to participate in recovery.

Addiction numbers in B.C. and across the country are growing, with many individuals entering the correctional system who may be better served with the opportunity to address the cause of their criminal activity. The purpose of an addiction treatment facility is to provide the individual access to the program for treatment in relation to the substance use, as well as to other related services that will address specific needs. Individuals may be sentenced to serve in a designated facility if there is evidence establishing a pattern of repetitive behaviour by the individual that indicates problematic substance abuse.

This brings us to the tragic and preventable loss of Constable Shaelyn Yang, who was sadly murdered while courageously helping those who suffer from mental health and addiction. Mayors from cities across B.C., including Burnaby, have complained publicly about the catch and release justice system.

Last week, the leader of the official opposition asked what policy changes the Prime Minister would be willing to make to put this crime wave to an end. I suggest to all members this bill is an important part of that suite of tools needed to address addictions. We cannot turn back time and prevent the senseless loss of Constable Shaelyn Yang, but we can act to prevent future murders. I invite all colleagues to join me in supporting this legislation.

The bill would validate and begin to repair the legitimate ongoing concerns of families, communities and indigenous communities. Further, it would serve as an important tool to address the general mental health and welfare of those who participate, with an aim to help make a better future for young Canadians struggling with addictions. Those struggling with addiction deserve treatment and recovery.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

Successful crime prevention starts with our youth and must continue throughout their lives. Education programs can be successful if delivered at the right times.

As we consider Bill C-283, I would ask each of us to look through the eyes of Constable Shaelyn Yang and do right by the victims, the victims of addictions, the victims of crime and the victims, the family, of those who have lost a loved one. Finally, may we see this through the lens of a mother, father, sister, brother and friend who are desperate for their loved ones to get help before it is too late.

• (1830)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is really quite nice to be able to stand and talk about an important issue. I am reflecting as I am listening to many of the comments, and kind of wish that maybe we could have had a little more time to have the debate, as there seems to be a very high level of interest in an issue that has had an impact in every region of our country.

What I want to do, in recognizing how important our judicial system is and the way in which incarceration works, is to try to bring a slightly different perspective. For many years I served as chair of the Keewatin youth justice committee. I had the opportunity to work with the community and with young people dealing with a wide spectrum of issues. I bring that, along with the fact that I was the justice critic for a short period of time in the province of Manitoba.

I would suggest that in dealing with the magnitude and severity of the issue, we need to look at it in a very holistic fashion, to recognize that there is provincial jurisdiction, federal jurisdiction and even municipal jurisdiction, not to mention the many different stakeholders out there, all of which want to be able to contribute to making life in our communities better and safer. A part of that is recognizing that there are things that take place in society that we should all be concerned about, and that we all have a role to play. The private member's bill provides us the opportunity to share some of that.

I want to pick up on a couple of things. Over the last number of years, we have seen many different initiatives brought forward by the government, whether it is national legislation or budgetary measures, that are actually having an impact. I do not say that lightly. I often get grants across my desk that have been approved that are going to support non-profit organizations. I see legislation dealing with issues such as minimum sentencing, trying to deal with the high percentage of indigenous and Black members of our communities. These are the types of issues that make a difference.

I look at the individual. I have had an opportunity to walk with the Bear Clan in the north end of Winnipeg. I know others in this House have also walked with the Bear Clan in the north end of Winnipeg. I always find it interesting when we really look into who the people are who make up the Bear Clan. There are some absolutely incredible volunteers. There are people who come from the community itself, from in and around Winnipeg and from many different professions.

The ones who interested me the most on the walk I took in particular were some of the drug addicts, who were having a difficult time. It made me reflect on a program I had taken many years ago on the impact of crack. It was truly amazing what an addiction could do, particularly to a young person. Crack does not discriminate. There was this relatively young lady who, as a result of being fed into an addiction, ultimately compromised her opportunities in life and lost a lot.

• (1835)

In many situations like that, what we will find is that there are people breaking the law to deal with the addiction they have. I would like to believe that it is somewhat controllable, but just the sheer size and magnitude of the problem dictates that no one level of government or community stakeholder will be able to deal with the severity of the problem. It is just too big.

If members want to get a better sense of its magnitude, I invite them to take a walk with the Bear Clan. Members will get a better sense of the magnitude if they visit some of the youth to sit down and have that conversation about the barriers in place. It is hard to talk to someone who thinks there is no reason to have hope because of the environment they are growing up in, where addictions and crime are prevalent far too often. As well, there is an impact on their community.

When we talk about treatment, the very best we can do is to develop programs that will prevent individuals from going into our jails. Next to that, we must ensure that programs are developed and supported the best way we can, which will prevent people from returning to be incarcerated. There are many things we could actually do.

I am a big fan of community-based efforts where the community itself gets directly involved. That is important for us to continue to look at. Whenever we talk about treatment programs, in my opinion, we need to put a lens of community involvement in what and how they can be engaged, along with the many stakeholders.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The hon. member's time is up.

[*Translation*]

The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

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## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

• (1840)

[English]

PUBLIC SAFETY

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the current Liberal government is desperate to justify their dishonest and unjustified use of the Emergencies Act. We have seen a series of misleading statements and outright fabrications about these protests, and it is part of the pattern of dishonest behaviour we have seen by the Minister of Public Safety and by the Minister of Emergency Preparedness.

The Emergencies Act is an extreme piece of legislation that, when invoked, allows the suspension of normal protections for civil liberties. The Emergencies Act is therefore for genuine public emergencies and not for the government to invoke arbitrarily. Even when laws are being broken, the government should not use the Emergencies Act unless it has no other alternative.

Conservatives have always encouraged protesters to make their voices heard through lawful means, but the fact is that the border blockades were all cleared by law enforcement without and prior to the invocation of the Emergencies Act. The Liberal government knew all this. It knew that law enforcement agencies had not yet exhausted their options, yet it suspended civil liberties and proceeded to threaten the bank accounts and financial security of Canadians, even Canadians who were far away from the national capital.

Incredibly, the Emergencies Act has never been used before in Canadian history, despite the various events that have taken place since it was created. Its predecessor, the War Measures Act, was only used during the First World War, the Second World War and the FLQ crisis. It has not been used in response to a myriad of other protests and challenges, including a couple of years ago when our national rail network was shut down by protesters.

There is a big difference between enforcing the law and falsely declaring a national emergency to give oneself the tools to punish those one disagrees with. Many people who did not agree with the protest that took place have still spoken out against the government's arbitrary use of the Emergencies Act to suspend civil liberties and the negative precedent that this sets.

As part of the Liberals' efforts to justify this, in April of this year the Minister of Public Safety claimed, before a committee, that law enforcement had asked for the Emergencies Act. He said the advice received was to invoke the Emergencies Act. That is what the Minister of Public Safety said. However, later, the RCMP commissioner and Ottawa's police chief both confirmed that they actually did not ask for the Emergencies Act. The deputy minister later sought to offer some clarification and, maybe making the situation more fuzzy, said that the minister had been misunderstood. However, it was clear then and it is clear now that the Minister of Public Safety misled the House and he should resign. He should have resigned, but he is still here.

There are many other claims advanced by members of the government. For instance, different members of the House claimed repeatedly that protesters who were here as part of events in January had tried to burn down a building. It was subsequently clarified that the attempted arson had nothing whatsoever to do with that protest,

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yet that was a claim that was repeated over and over again. We saw claims that these protests were Russian funded, that they were government funded and that there were guns at the protest, all of which has been shown to be totally false.

We have a Minister of Public Safety who has misled the House and now, to update things to where we are today, we have information about the Minister of Emergency Preparedness misleading the House about interfering in an investigation and contradicting the RCMP commissioner.

The fact is that Canadians cannot trust the current government when the two ministers responsible for emergency preparedness and public safety have clearly shown a lack of regard for the truth. These ministers should resign. When will they resign?

**Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak in response to the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan on the Government of Canada's engagement with law enforcement and other partners leading up to the use of the Emergencies Act. While the hon. member may wish to stand on the side of the “freedom convoy”, we will stand with Canadians and with law enforcement, ensuring that the safety of Canadians is always our number one priority.

In January and February we saw illegal blockades at the borders and vital trade corridors that impacted our communities' safety, our economy and Canadians' jobs and livelihoods. The illegal protests shut down streets and businesses across Canada.

We recognized that these unprecedented simultaneous illegal blockades constituted a public order emergency, and we have carefully documented this. We also recognized that a safe, peaceful outcome would require the full engagement of provinces, territories and law enforcement. From the beginning, we brought these partners to the table to share situational intelligence, explore possible strategies to achieve a quick and peaceful resolution to the blockades, and discuss the resources needed.

To meet the requirements of the Emergencies Act, a public report describing the consultations we undertook before invoking the act has been tabled in both houses of Parliament. I would encourage all Canadians to read these two public reports. They illuminate the crisis facing Canada and the many discussions we had with partners to find a peaceful path forward. Through these discussions with law enforcement and others, it became clear that the police needed more tools to enforce the law and protect Canadians.

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Given the size, number and entrenched nature of the blockades, it became clear that emergency measures were needed. Law enforcement needed the additional tools provided by the Emergencies Act. These tools allowed police to take quick, time-limited action and remove the blockade threat decisively.

Testifying before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security on March 24, 2022, the former interim chief of the Ottawa Police Service, Steve Bell, confirmed, “From a policing perspective, the legislation provided the OPS with the ability to prevent people from participating in this unlawful protest”. He referred to the invocation of the act as “a critical piece” of these efforts.

The Emergencies Act was a measure of last resort, but it was a necessary one that was crucial in ending the illegal blockades. The act allowed the exceptional and temporary measures to prohibit public assembly leading to a breach of the peace. This was immensely helpful in dispersing the crowds blockading border crossings and city centres. The act also clearly designated protected areas around our critical infrastructure, like border crossings and key government buildings. Once the Emergencies Act was in force, engagement with law enforcement and our partners continued. We were determined that these tools should only be in place as long as absolutely necessary.

Testifying before the Special Joint Committee on the Declaration of Emergency on May 10, 2022, the commissioner of the RCMP, Brenda Lucki, said, “the measures enacted under the Emergencies Act provided all police officers across the country—not just the RCMP—with the ability to deal with blockades and unlawful public assemblies.” She testified it was her belief that the act “provided [law enforcement agencies] with the tools to resolve the crisis swiftly and peacefully”. Once it was clear the situation was no longer an emergency, we revoked the Emergencies Act.

This situation came to a peaceful conclusion because of our engagement with law enforcement, as well as our close collaboration with provinces, territories and municipalities.

• (1845)

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Madam Speaker, the implication of the parliamentary secretary's remarks is that any means are justified and we are either on the side of the protesters or on the side of using the Emergencies Act. Many Canadians might not have agreed with things that were done in the protest but also do not agree with the suspension of civil liberties.

In particular, the parliamentary secretary danced around the core question here. The Minister of Public Safety claimed that the advice he received from law enforcement was to invoke the Emergencies Act. That was explicitly contradicted by every law enforcement agency and, in effect, by the deputy minister. That contradiction is not being acknowledged. That dishonest statement is not being acknowledged.

Can the parliamentary secretary answer the basic question? Does she still believe law enforcement asked for the Emergencies Act?

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** Madam Speaker, let us be clear. To the assertion the hon. member made that there was an infringement of civil liberties under the Emergencies Act, in fact, the act is quite clear

that there was no infringement on civil liberties whatsoever, and that the Charter of Rights and Freedoms continues to apply even during the Emergencies Act. I do wish the hon. member would not imply such.

I will reiterate what I said during my remarks. Invoking the Emergencies Act was a measure of last resort, and it was supported by law enforcement. It gave them the additional tools they needed to end the illegal blockades peacefully.

TAXATION

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC):** Madam Speaker, as the member of Parliament for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, I begin my comments by recognizing those constituents struggling with grocery bills, fuel bills and tax bills from an out-of-touch federal government that has declared war on the average Canadian.

When I asked my question on taxation, Canadians took note it was the natural resources minister responding, not the Minister of Finance. He did so by confirming raising taxes to make life unaffordable was Liberal carbon tax policy. We can now refer to the natural resources minister as the acting minister of finance. This confirms what Conservatives have been saying all along: the carbon policy is a tax policy. Carbon taxes are no substitute for environmental policy.

This also raises the question: Is the hidden agenda behind the carbon taxes to abolish capitalism? Capitalism is undeniably the most successful form of wealth creation and distribution that has ever been devised. The key to that system's huge success is individual and corporate freedom with government getting out of the way to unleash human potential. Capitalism has done more to raise the standard of living, lifting more people out of poverty than all socialist government handouts combined.

As a free market Conservative, I know my Conservative Party believes in freedom and free enterprise. We need an environmental policy that focuses on science-based and human ingenuity solutions to pollution. The Liberals are forcing seniors and other Canadians on fixed incomes to have to choose between heating and eating. Emerging economies will not sacrifice poverty eradication and economic development to follow Canada's crushing carbon tax approach that brings so much pain for so little results.



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In Canada today, the Liberals' carbon tax policy designed to make fossil fuels expensive is now doing exactly what it was intended to do: making everything more expensive. This means a very bleak winter is ahead. We should be taking the pathway of innovation. As fossil fuel prices climb, the Prime Minister and his acting finance minister believe people will shift painlessly to renewable energy sources. The Liberal Party ignores the science.

Renewables are far from ready to power the world. Solar and wind can only work with massive amounts of backup power, mostly fossil fuels, to keep the world running when the wind dies down, it is cloudy or at night. Renewables mostly generate electricity, which is just one-fifth of our total energy use. The vast majority is non-electric, like transport, industrial processes and heat. That is why the world still gets 80% of its energy from fossil fuels. Even though private investment in clean-energy technology is increasing, the Prime Minister and his handlers see the weather as an opportunity to remake society, the so-called "great reset".

Decarbonizing the Canadian economy with crushing carbon taxes means replacing in a few years fossil fuel infrastructure that was built up over decades. This will require hundreds of thousands of square miles of wind and solar farms, enough battery storage to keep the power flowing and at least doubling Canada's transmission line capability. The same laws that Liberal-sponsored environmental groups have used to block fossil fuel projects are being exploited to slow down the transition to clean energy like hydro and nuclear. The only credible environmental plans include nuclear and hydro power generation.

The carbon tax policy goal of achieving net-zero CO<sub>2</sub> emissions brings crippling economic pain. Fossil fuel costs have shot up and will keep rising every time the acting minister of finance increases the carbon tax burden on Canadians.

While it may be convenient for the Prime Minister and his acting finance minister to blame Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the Prime Minister added \$100 billion to our national debt before COVID and \$500 billion to it before Russia even opened fire. All that borrowed money is driving up the cost of goods that we buy and the interest charged to service that debt.

• (1850)

**Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, there are a lot of points in that speech that I would like to address, but perhaps I can invite people who are listening today, if they want to get the story on exactly what we are doing with our plan for the economy and the plan for the environment to visit my website at Terrybeech.mp.ca. I draft very fulsome reports, and anybody who is interested can go to those and follow up with me.

Our government does understand that Canadians are having trouble making ends meet. However, inflation is a global phenomenon. It is a lingering result of the COVID pandemic, which has been exacerbated by the war in Ukraine and by snarled supply chains that are affecting people and businesses right around the world, not just in Canada.

While Canada's inflation rate is less severe at 6.9% than that of many of our peers, like the United States at 8.2% and the United

Kingdom, the euro area and the OECD all at above 10%, Canadians continue to experience a higher cost of living when they go to the grocery store, fill up their tanks and pay their rent. This is why we are moving forward with our affordability plan, which includes measures worth \$12.1 billion to support the Canadians who need it the most, particularly those with lower incomes and those who are most exposed to inflation.

Our plan includes an enhanced Canada workers benefit for low- and modest-income workers, which will put up to \$2,400 more into their pockets; cutting regulated child care fees by an average of 50% by the end of this year and to \$10 a day by 2025; a 10% increase in old age security for seniors over the age of 75; dental care for Canadians with family incomes under \$90,000 per year; a \$500 payment, coming this year, to help people who have low incomes, are renting and are struggling with the cost of housing; doubling the GST credit for six months, which was supported by the member opposite and will go to 11 million households and over 50% of seniors; and, of course, our main support programs, including the Canada child benefit, OAS, GIS and others, which are indexed to inflation. That means those benefit will actually increase as the cost of living increases.

We are supporting Canadians while controlling our spending. The International Monetary Fund expects Canada to have the lowest federal government deficit as a percentage of GDP in the G7 this year, a track our country is forecasted to maintain for at least the next three years, and the lowest net-debt burden as a share of GDP in the G7. In fact, we have strengthened those advantages over the course of the pandemic.

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Now, when it comes to pollution pricing, I would like to say that climate action is no longer a theoretical, political debate, it is an economic necessity, and a national price on pollution is the most effective market-based system for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It is actually designed to work in a capitalistic society. In 2022-23, in the four provinces where the federal system price applies, climate incentive payments mean that life is more affordable for eight out of 10 Canadian families. In addition, families in rural and small communities are eligible to receive an extra 10%. In areas like B.C., my home province, where the price of gas has gone up by more than a dollar a litre over the last three years, the carbon price has gone up by only two cents.

This highlights the fact that Conservatives continue to mislead Canadians by ignoring 98% of the real problem when it comes to inflation and high energy prices. The reality is that most households are getting back more than they pay as a result of the federal pollution pricing system. We have a plan to grow the economy while lowering emissions and making life more affordable for Canadians.

• (1855)

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** Madam Speaker, in the absence of affordable, effective fossil fuel replacements, the carbon tax policy espoused by the Liberal Party just means costlier power bills and lower growth rates to achieve unmeasurable changes in the earth's temperature.

The best long-term strategy would be to dramatically increase investment in energy research and development. This Conservative approach would be much more effective while likely being 10 times cheaper than the Liberal's approach of making life unaffordable. It is much more plausible developing countries around the world, including China and India where the bulk of pollution comes from, will implement it.

It is time for the Liberals to actually take responsibility for the carbon tax policy failure. A trillion-dollar debt is bone-crushing for our consumers. When will the Liberal Party reverse its inflationary policies and axe their tax increases?

**Mr. Terry Beech:** Madam Speaker, our government understands quite well that Canadians are feeling the effects of elevated inflation, which, as I outlined in my previous speech, is a global phenomenon. They can count on our government to continue supporting them through this cost of living crisis while remaining prudent fiscal managers.

However, the Conservatives, under their new leader, have presented basically a three-point affordability plan. First, they are suggesting that they would destroy the independence of our institutions that have been built up over generations, institutions like the Bank of Canada. Second, they would stop fighting climate change. Third, they are proposing to raid the pension benefits of our seniors by attacking agreements that we have made on the Canada pension plan. Their plan is not reasonable. It is not responsible and, really, it directly reflects their current leader.

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

**Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP):** *Uqaqtittiji*, residential school survivors continue to live abuses from the government. The government says it is acting. Out of the 106 applications for burial searches, 84 have been approved. This is not enough.

This week in Winnipeg, researchers, academics and first nations communities from all over the country are gathering to share what they have learned in their search for unmarked graves at former residential schools. This is important work. The federal government has a responsibility to make good on its promises and do its part.

The funding currently promised is critical and validates what indigenous peoples had been saying for decades. For too long, first nations, Métis and Inuit were ignored when they shared their stories about the loved ones they lost to the residential school system. All these decades of being ignored have stifled the path to healing. It is outrageous that indigenous communities must beg and plead for funding. Delays on delivering the promises made must stop. Inuit, Métis and first nations have been given far too many promises that have not been acted on.

The Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations said, "Some have said it could take up to 10 years, and the worst thing to see would be for any government to step away from that commitment. We will keep doing it, but at their pace."

In budget 2022, there was one curious line item. It said the budget would provide \$5.1 million to Public Safety Canada to ensure the Royal Canadian Mounted Police could support community-led responses to unmarked graves. By funding the RCMP instead of supporting indigenous-led organizations, such as Survivors' Secretariat, the government is supporting further practices of colonialism.

Why are these funds not directly funding indigenous peoples to heal from the shameful legacy of residential schools and colonialism?

• (1900)

**Mr. Jaime Battiste (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I acknowledge my hon. colleague from Nunavut for raising this very important question. I would like to start off by saying that I am speaking from my home in Eskasoni First Nation on unceded Mi'kmaq territory.

The member is right that this is an important issue, and our government certainly needs to do more. That is why, as part of our commitment to the many Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action that talk about justice, health and the need for us to do more on burial searches, we have made available the funding that coincides with them.

Further to that, my colleague and I share the same passion in making sure that we are following through on our calls to action. That is why Bill C-29, which we are currently moving forward with, would ensure that we have an independent oversight committee that is funded for years to come to ensure that it is not just the government holding itself accountable; it is the survivors themselves.

We owe this duty to the survivors. We owe this duty to indigenous communities across Canada. I come from a family that has been affected by residential schools. My oldest aunt went to those schools, as did my cousins and my uncle. We owe them healing. We know that our communities need more of it and we know there are important areas around healing.

Budget 2021 announced \$43.7 million over five years, starting last fiscal year, to move forward with this work. We are currently working with the Assembly of First Nations on not only making sure that there is healing but making sure that our communities are safe and that we put money, almost \$1 billion, toward indigenous justice and indigenous policing. We are beginning to meet with stakeholders. We are in the process of talking with stakeholders to make sure they are part of the process, because we do not want paternal, government-knows-best solutions. We want solutions that are brought by the indigenous communities themselves.

I would also like to talk about some of the achievements of our government. Before I end my time, I want to make sure to recognize that we are also moving forward on murdered and missing indigenous women. One of my proudest moments was a call I made to the Nova Scotia Native Women's Association to let them know they would get the funding they requested for a resilience centre in Nova Scotia, the first of its kind in this country, to keep indigenous women safe in the Atlantic provinces. I remember the tears on the other side. They were saying they had been waiting for this for 30 years. I would also like to acknowledge that our government just recently announced \$8.4 million for Velma's House, in Winnipeg, for a 24-7 safe space in emergency shelters and transition homes for indigenous women.

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Initiatives like these show the difference we can make when we work together on a common goal. Much more needs to be done, and I look forward to working with the member opposite to do that.

• (1905)

**Ms. Lori Idlout:** *Uqaqtittiji*, we are told there is no relationship more important than the one with indigenous peoples, yet the government is funding law enforcement that upholds the systemic racism that has existed for too long. To this day, these institutions have failed to adequately respond to important work led by indigenous peoples, including the MMIWG calls for justice.

If the federal government will not divert these funds from its colonial institutions, how will it ensure that such agencies discontinue the systemic racism it continues to perpetuate?

**Mr. Jaime Battiste:** Madam Speaker, I understand the question and I understand the intent of it. However, what we have seen in many of our indigenous communities as a result of intergenerational trauma is that indigenous communities are far more likely to be violent, far more likely to see abuses and far more likely to need indigenous policing and policing of all types.

We feel that the RCMP is part of that answer. In fact, many indigenous communities are asking for increased policing. We have various methods of doing that, the RCMP being one, but we also have our commitment of \$1 billion toward enhancing indigenous policing. It is something we are striving to do.

We know we are not there yet, so we have to work within the means we have and with the tool kit we have. That is why our government continues to be committed to this.

[*Translation*]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The motion that the House do now adjourn is deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:07 p.m.)



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