



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

44th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

House of Commons Debates

Official Report
(Hansard)

Volume 151 No. 121
Monday, October 31, 2022

Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



CONTENTS

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

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, October 31, 2022

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayer

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1105)

[*English*]

TELECOMMUNICATIONS ACT

Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC) moved that Bill C-288, An Act to amend the Telecommunications Act (transparent and accurate broadband services information), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise in the House to speak to my private member's bill, Bill C-288, an act to amend the Telecommunications Act.

Access to quality Internet is essential, and rural Canadians, in particular, understand the devastating impacts associated with poor Internet service across our nation. If members of the House were to speak with Canadians across our country, they would realize that many feel cheated, misled and ripped-off by Internet companies. This is because millions of Canadians are frustrated to learn that the Internet quality they are paying for is nowhere near what they expected.

Consumers make purchasing decisions based on information. When it comes to the Internet, Canadians expect the highest quality of service. Unfortunately, when consumers are making decisions on what Internet provider is best for them, they do not have access to the most accurate and realistic information.

Canadians are exposed to advertisements and offers that display a maximum theoretical speed. Misleading words such as “up to” are used in these ads to convince consumers that a service is better than it is. These theoretical speeds and performance metrics that consumers are provided with do not always reflect the actual speed delivered to them.

A constituent recently told me that she signed up for a high-speed wireless Internet plan that advertised download speeds of up to 50 megabits per second. Many speed tests later, she was not even getting 10% of that speed. If she knew what speed she was actually going to receive, she would never have signed a contract for such a high price.

The problem is that the current legislative landscape allows Internet service providers to advertise theoretical speeds without providing consumers with the speeds they can realistically expect. This confuses consumers, prevents competition and contributes to customer complaints.

Sure, the speeds that companies advertise have the potential to be reached, but the highest speeds are most likely reached during the hours when the consumer is not using the Internet. Some Canadians have called this practice “false advertising”, but it is not. Internet providers are following the law, which is why we need to change the law so it will benefit Canadians.

Data released by the Canadian Internet Registration Authority found that only one-third of Canadians believed their household received the “up to” speed included in their home Internet package all or most of the time. That is it. Only 33% of Canadians believe they fully receive the quality for which they pay. These numbers are even lower in my home province of Manitoba.

Canadians deserve to know what they are paying for, which is why I have introduced Bill C-288.

Bill C-288 would implement a simple change to ensure Canadians have access to accurate and transparent information. It would require Internet service providers to present a reliable indicator of the speeds and quality metrics that are in the public's best interest.

The first pillar of the legislation is the requirement for Internet service providers to provide Canadians with typical download and upload speeds, not maximum theoretical speed but typical speeds. Canadians want to know what they can consistently expect to receive, not what they can receive once in a blue moon.

When Canadians visit any car dealership to purchase a new vehicle, there is a standardized label on the windows displaying the fuel economy of that specific vehicle. That number does not reflect the fuel economy when driving down a hill; it is a number that reflects what a driver can realistically expect to consume in fuel on average. This information is even divided into two categories to provide Canadians with better information, city and highway consumption. This enables consumers to make more informed purchasing decisions on what product best fits their needs. Consumers expect to know what they are paying for, and rightfully so.

Private Members' Business

The second pillar of the legislation would provide Canadians with the quality metrics that they can expect during the time that they will most likely use the service. I refer to this as the “peak period”. Few Canadians care what their Internet speeds are at 3 o’clock in the morning, but they do care what they are during work hours or family movie night. This is why Bill C-288 would require Internet providers to display speeds during peak periods. Consumers should understand how their Internet will perform when they are most likely to use the service.

Finally, the third pillar of the legislation would initiate a consultation process that would empower Canadians to develop a framework that is in the public’s best interest.

Bill C-288 would empower consumers and industry to participate in public hearings that would contribute to a made-in-Canada model. Developing a model that works for Canada and clearly legislating the criteria is a better process than any policy directive led by the government.

We all know that access to accurate and transparent information is the bedrock of consumer decision-making and protection. Unfortunately, Canadians do not have access to it. As I mentioned earlier, this confuses consumers, prevents competition and contributes to customer complaints. Bill C-288 is a non-partisan pro-consumer bill.

The bill would not only enable Canadians to make informed purchasing decisions by providing them with accurate and transparent information, but it would also increase Internet quality within the industry. Competition is needed to ensure companies improve quality or decrease prices. When companies get too comfortable, they fail to innovate and improve.

Studies on Internet service across the world have proven that service quality increases with an increase in product transparency. Research conducted by Dr. Reza Rajabiun and Dr. Catherine Middleton from the Ted Rogers School of Information Technology Management published work on the correlation between information transparency and overall industry quality. Their research showed that a problem existed within the telecom industry because companies could not fairly compete based on quality due to the inability to signal their authentic service to potential consumers.

Imagine two Internet companies competing in Canada. I will refer to them as company X and company Y. They both advertise the same maximum theoretical speed of 50 megabits per second download and 10 megabits per second upload.

How do consumers know which service provider is better? They do not. On paper, both companies appear to offer high-quality Internet, however, we know they are advertising theoretical speeds rather than expected speeds. Although both companies advertise the same maximum theoretical speed, one provider may have much better service during the time when consumers are more likely to use the service.

For example, company X may be able to consistently deliver speeds 60% higher than company Y. This could be a result of multiple factors, including lower over-subscription ratios, improved operations or better equipment. However, company X cannot signal this quality due to the noise produced from the theoretical speed of

company Y. As a result, company Y has no reason to improve its service to compete based on quality.

The researchers I mentioned earlier called this concept the “Lemons Problem” and stated the following:

Even if there are a large number of buyers of high quality products and sellers willing to meet their demand, the existence of the so-called Lemons Problem can generate markets where low quality goods dominate since providers of high quality goods cannot credibly signal the quality of their products due to the noise from their low quality rivals.

They also stated:

In addition to usual concerns about consumer protection, these considerations indicate that the potential for misleading advertising by low quality players in the market can distort platform competition and reduce the pace of technological change in the market for Internet connectivity.

If the House wants to improve telecom competition, we must allow Canadians to compare accurate information. Consumers will take their money elsewhere if a company’s service quality is worse than its competitors.

Not all connectivity solutions require money; some require common sense. This legislation is truly a pro-consumer, common sense solution. That is why countries around the world are leading the way and have introduced similar policies that even go beyond the legislation we are debating today.

Australia is leading the way on this front. After consultation with the public and industry, the Aussies have implemented clear guidance and standards on advertising with typical speeds during peak periods, and consumers have benefited.

According to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission’s 2018 report on the effectiveness of broadband speed claims, these changes have promoted more competitive and efficient markets for the supply of broadband services. Overall, the effectiveness report concluded that increased transparency resulted in better quality services and better consumer understanding of performance.

● (1110)

After the industry guidance was implemented, Australian bandwidth congestion began decreasing.

Section 2.23 of the effectiveness report stated:

Overall we consider the Guidance has assisted in improving the information and support available to broadband consumers and promoting competition among RSPs.

That is a powerful statement for those looking to improve connectivity in Canada.

The United States proposed a broadband disclosure label for Internet service providers that resembled a nutrition label so consumers could easily understand and compare Internet packages.

In the U.K., the Internet service providers must state the average speed that at least 50% of their consumers receive during the high-usage hours.

Furthermore, the European Union's open Internet regulation requires Internet companies to provide information relating to their normally available minimum and maximum speeds. Clearly, this is a solution that protects consumers and increases competition through better information.

I should also note that in June 2021, the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology published report 7, and recommended the following:

That the [CRTC] require Internet service providers to make information available to consumers on the usual download and upload speeds they can expect during peak periods so they can make more informed purchasing decisions based on accurate and transparent information, thereby improving the industry's competitiveness overall.

Not one party dissented in that report.

I have been extremely appreciative of the industry experts and organizations that have supported this legislation. It confirms the importance of this issue and the impact it is having on Canadians.

I want to quote a statement released by OpenMedia, an organization that works to keep Internet open and affordable. The statement reads:

When you sign up for an Internet plan, you deserve to know what you're paying for... It's a simple matter of truth and transparency. If an Internet provider is advertising certain speeds, consumers have the right to know before they buy if those speeds accurately reflect average network performance. Other countries have handled this issue — Canada is falling behind. We hope to see every MP support and help pass Bill C-288.

This is not a partisan issue; this is a Canadian issue. I hope that every member of the House will join me in supporting this legislation that would provide Canadians with accurate and transparent broadband information.

• (1115)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, one issue that the member did not really address was the CRTC. CRTC plays a very strong role in our society and it deals with a lot of the telecommunications that the member references. I wonder if the member could provide his thoughts on how CRTC would be taken into consideration with respect to what he has proposed, especially if we take into consideration that it has already been given some instruction.

Mr. Dan Mazier: Madam Speaker, I think the member is talking about the policy directive that it has already been given. The bottom line is that the policy directive does not mention peak period or typical speeds, and that is the biggest hole in this whole thing. My whole speech evolved around that.

Once consumers realize what they are actually buying as a service, they will be able to make that decision of what service best fits them. Right now, it is a very “up to” or theoretical speed, so

Private Members' Business

they are basically supplying a service that can be smoke and mirrors at certain times, especially in rural Canada.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am particularly interested in this bill because I represent a rural region where Internet service is, unfortunately, not yet available to everyone, even in 2022. Where it is available, as my colleague explained very well in his speech, people are not necessarily given all of the information. Companies will say that users have access up to a certain speed, for example, when that is not always the case. It is not adapted to the needs of the service users.

I would like my colleague to explain, once again, how this bill will benefit rural areas in particular and whether it will promote competition among Internet service providers once they are more transparent.

[*English*]

Mr. Dan Mazier: Madam Speaker, this is what the whole bill gets at. Once consumers realize what kind of accurate information they would be getting, as I said in my speech, from company X and company Y, and they know what kind of service they are getting, they could decide what kind of service they need. With that information, they might decide not to need all that information or all that cost that goes with it. They might not need so many terabytes of downloadable information if they decide they can get it in a more accurate and timely period when they are actually using the Internet.

Part of all the time and cost that goes into using the Internet are all the delays that happen in buffering. We go to use the Internet and all of a sudden we do not have a connection and have to wait for that conversation to be complete. All those minutes and time that is lost in trying to get a connection could be used getting business done. We do not need an Internet service provider of poor quality standing in the middle of businesses and people trying to communicate to do business with Canadians and the rest of the world.

• (1120)

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa for this interesting bill. I look forward to hearing the debate today.

My question for him is around enforcement of the provisions in the bill. It would do something fairly simple, which is to require companies to clearly and transparently state what they are actually selling and what consumers can expect. For companies that are not doing that in accordance with the regulations, how would the enforcement process work? I can see two options in that regard. One is a complaints-based process, and the other one involves independent auditing by the CRTC.

Could the member talk about which he would find preferable?

Private Members' Business

Mr. Dan Mazier: Madam Speaker, section 72.01 of the Telecommunications Act addresses a breach within the act, so it is covered. I do believe if a telecommunications company is breaking the law it should be held to account. I have no problems with supporting that type of concept.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise and speak to this issue. I will start off by giving a very clear indication.

When we think of Internet or cell services, it is really important to recognize the fact that consumers do have rights. It is so important that we look at ways we can enhance competition. Nothing frustrates me or my colleagues more than when we get contacted by constituents, and we want to be able to send a very strong message that we are very much aware of the issues and concerns. We understand the importance of competition and the impact it has on prices and want to highlight the fact that consumers have rights.

We have seen through government actions, both present and past, that we have a government that is clearly there to support consumers. I will make reference to that for those who may be following the debate, as well as to how technology has advanced to the point where we are having these types of discussions here on the floor of the House and outside of the House in some of the arm's-length institutions that we have established to protect the rights of consumers.

It was not that long ago when, as a parliamentarian, the Internet was a new, wonderful thing. I was probably further ahead than most of my constituents back in 1988-89 when we required a telephone line. The first thing we heard was a dial tone followed by pushed buttons, and then these weird hook-up connections. Some might say I am a little older than others as I can still remember the era of the old-fashioned Apple computer. We just waited for the simplest of things to appear on the monitor. Today the expectation is far greater and we need to recognize that advancement.

Computers today are than more just something that we use to play games, watch a video or do a Google search. Over the summer, I had the opportunity to meet with a couple of businesses that are very much there today as a direct result of having access to the Internet. Its speed is absolutely critical in terms of their future growth.

Today more than ever, people will consult with the Internet on all sorts of how-to repairs for something in their home, or to take a look at symptoms in regard to a health-related issue. Suffice it to say that the role that the Internet plays today is virtually an essential service.

The current government and all members of the House, as the member opposite indicated, it does not matter what side of the House one sits on, are all concerned about the issue of price points and consumer awareness, and what we can do to ensure that we are serving Canadians well through the responsibilities we have.

We do that in many ways. We have a Minister of Rural Economic Development who, over the last number of years, has invested hundreds of millions of dollars in rural communities, from coast to coast to coast, to assist in building an infrastructure. Being in

downtown Toronto, Vancouver or my own city of Winnipeg, there is a high expectation of fast Internet service.

• (1125)

One thing we can do to enable economic growth, whether in a high-density urban centre or a remote rural setting, is to invest in the Internet. Part of doing that is recognizing the services that are being provided through the private companies.

That gets to the core of the issue that my friend across the way is raising. Like him, all Canadians have seen the ads. The ads are plentiful with the whole idea of "up to" a certain set speed. A consumer looking at that would think that sounds awfully fast. For many consumers like me, it is hard to get an appreciation of how fast that actually is, let alone after factoring in the different times of day or a peak period versus three o'clock in the morning, which has been highlighted.

It has been pointed out that there is a difference in demand during a peak period versus those non-usage hours or those hours when the number of people accessing the Internet is down. In fact, often when one sees those packages one will see five or six items in one household that use the Internet as a way to be able to watch TV, communicate with a family member, do business transactions or do random Google searches. Whether using a desktop computer, a high-resolution TV or an iPad, the demand even within one household can be fairly extensive. These are the types of issues that will be best served if we are prepared to step up.

The member across the way brought forward Bill C-288, which has some real substance to it. As I pointed out, there was policy direction given to the CRTC earlier this year, around April or May. How can we, through using the CRTC as an arm's-length organization, ensure that we protect consumers? We might at times have personal opinions and concerns in regard to the CRTC, but, all in all, it does a relatively good job for Canadians.

The CRTC has a mandate. It has been asked to look at the ways we can ensure we are protecting the interests of consumers, such as mandating broadband testing and performance reporting, which is absolutely critical. One does not need to read between the lines of what the member is proposing. That is the thing that would be required to provide the type of consumer awareness that many of us would advocate for.

I look forward to hearing from the CRTC and some of the recommendations that it will bring forward. For me, put quite simply, I like consumer labelling that is simplified so that the average person can truly understand it. I want to know what sort of speed is there during that prime time. Being able to do a comparison between companies is really important. It is very hard to do that given the current system. That is why we do need change. I acknowledge that.

I am anticipating that, in early 2023, we will be hearing something that is positive and encouraging from the CRTC. I look forward to that.

Private Members' Business

• (1130)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak today to the bill from the member for Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa.

The member and I have had the opportunity to discuss it and I told him this week that the Bloc Québécois agreed to allow this bill to be studied in committee. In fact, the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology already made a recommendation to the government in June 2021 in its report on the accessibility and affordability of telecommunications services in Canada.

This enactment amends the Telecommunications Act to require Canadian carriers to make tacitly available certain information in respect of the fixed broadband services that they offer. It also requires the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, or CRTC, to hold public hearings to determine the form and manner in which this information is to be provided to the public.

In 2016, the CRTC declared that broadband Internet was an essential service for all Canadians. This bill is part of the measures that will not only allow consumers to finally have a better experience on the Internet, but also ensure that actual speeds are closer to expected speeds, in other words, that people actually get what they pay for.

It also takes aim at competition between Internet services providers, or ISPs, which will now need to make more detailed and accurate descriptions of the services offered. The quality we are looking for, in addition to reliability, is the ability to recognize the actual browsing speed offered to consumers. Thus, consumers will be able to make informed purchasing decisions and will be able to appreciate the full value of their purchase.

For several years now, Internet service providers have been criticized for shortchanging the public. At least, that is the impression that consumers have of them. Consumers pay astronomical prices for Internet services, particularly in the regions, only to realize, in most cases, that the speeds they achieve are much lower than expected.

The experience with the Internet is very different for residents of rural areas. Internet service providers are well aware of it and I understand that they are working hard to ensure that this reliability can be achieved. However, it is time to do better. The public no longer want to settle just for the maximum theoretical speeds that the network can offer. As we know, this is due to the current legislative framework, which allows ISPs to only mention maximum theoretical speeds in their advertising.

The download speed in question here refers to the speed at which downloads take place, usually calculated in megabits per second. People are entitled to receive the download speed they signed up for. Internet service providers use words like “up to”, leading consumers to believe that their Internet access services are better than they really are.

Bill C-288 seeks to correct that practice and bring Internet service providers to sell the speed that consumers will receive during

the hours they are most likely to use those services. Bill C-288 will therefore provide order and have a significant impact on how Internet services are sold in Quebec and Canada.

Under section 37 of the Telecommunications Act, ISPs are already required to provide various data to the CRTC, including data on download and upload speeds. Since they already have that information, it will be easy for them to make some of it available to their customers.

Earlier, I mentioned that the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology had supported a Bloc Québécois recommendation in 2021 in its report entitled “Affordability and Accessibility of Telecommunications Services in Canada: Encouraging Competition to (Finally) Bridge the Digital Divide”. That recommendation is as follows:

That the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission require Internet service providers to make information available to consumers on the usual download and upload speeds they can expect during peak periods so they can make more informed purchasing decisions based on accurate and transparent information, thereby improving the industry's competitiveness overall.

All the parties agreed on this issue in 2021 because most of the witnesses and many society stakeholders agreed that consumers are entitled to have this information.

• (1135)

If they do not have the exact information when making a purchase decision, consumers may find themselves paying too much for a service or not purchasing the one that best meets their needs. The deployment of Internet in rural areas has caused its share of dissatisfaction and led to many complaints to the CRTC. There is no denying that all the barriers to competition in the telecommunications industry must be eliminated.

In the current context, it is impossible for an ISP that advertises the real quality of its service to compete with providers that advertise theoretically misleading speeds. ISPs therefore have little incentive to improve the quality of their service or reduce their price to attract customers. The bill gives the CRTC the flexibility to require that Internet service providers make other indicators of the quality of their service available to the public, such as wait times or the level of instability. Paragraph 24.2(2)(c) will also allow the CRTC to require disclosure of any other information that is in the public's interest.

The measures proposed in the bill are not new. They have been successfully implemented in other countries, including Australia, the United Kingdom and European Union member states. We see provisions in this bill that encourage competition between Internet service providers, which will bring prices down over time and improve the overall quality of the network. Consumers are entitled to have access when they need it most to the download speed to which they agreed.

Private Members' Business

I will digress for a moment because it is such an important issue in the regions. A service is provided, but the infrastructure is often outdated or lacking. Too many users can overload a given band, particularly during peak periods. As a result, the quality of the services is often lower in the regions. In large cities and urban areas, there is competition, and different providers can meet those needs. In rural areas, however, there is often only one provider and, if they are overloaded, the entire service cannot be offered. This has repercussions on all economic development measures in some villages, particularly in agriculture.

I am thinking of home education in rural areas, Facebook posts and the ability to stream videos, music or television shows. It is really an essential issue. If Internet service providers ensure that they give the right speed and invest in their network to make it more robust, stronger and more resilient, everyone will win. For too many years, we have seen lower quality Internet services in rural and regional areas due to a lack of investment.

Bill C-288 addresses many concerns from people in my riding, Abitibi—Témiscamingue, and will allow them to make informed decisions while improving service quality throughout the industry.

[*English*]

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise this morning and contribute to this debate on Bill C-288. I want to start by thanking my colleague, the member for Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa for bringing this forward. I understand that it has been brought forward in previous Parliaments, and perhaps this time we will have a chance to pass it.

This is a bill that does something that I think is fairly simple and that most Canadians probably take for granted or assume is already articulated somewhere in regulation or law. It requires companies to clearly and transparently and honestly depict the services they are selling, so that when consumers purchase those services, they know what they are buying. This is a basic tenet of consumer protection and one that I believe has broad support across our country.

The bill, as has been mentioned, amends the Telecommunications Act to do a couple of things. First, it requires carriers and Internet service providers to provide transparent, clear-to-understand information about the real-world performance of the Internet services they are selling. Second, it lays out a consultation process, a series of public hearings, that would be used to create and inform the framework by which this bill would be enacted and rolled out. These are things most people can get behind. They are pretty basic requirements and they have a number of benefits.

I mentioned the benefit in terms of consumer protection. This is particularly important for seniors, for people who may not have a detailed understanding of some of the nomenclature that is used when talking about Internet services, for people who did not grow up with access to digital services, and for people who are vulnerable to being taken for a ride by companies that are less than honest about the products they are selling.

This is also positive because, as many know, Canada does not stack up well when it comes to our telecommunications sector. When it comes to transparency, when it comes to competition and when it comes to pricing, Canada is among the worst countries in

the world. Any measures, in terms of regulation and reform, that tilt the scales in favour of consumers are, I think, warranted.

It is good to see that the Conservative Party supports reasonable regulations in the interests of consumers. I know, in many ways, it is more of a fan of deregulation, but this is certainly one area where we can find broad agreement across party lines.

Finally, it is always good to catch up with other countries around the world and, in this case, catch up to where Australia was over a decade ago. That is good to see. We can certainly look to their experience and their example to inform this process moving forward.

Of course, I would be remiss if I did not offer some of my concerns, the first of which is that this bill could go much further in terms of protecting Canadians, particularly in the area of affordability. Perhaps I will run through some of the areas I have questions about.

The first is enforcement. I raised this a few minutes ago in my question to the member. It is one thing to require companies to provide transparent and honest advertising about the services they provide. It is another thing to enforce that provision.

Thinking about how this could take place, we can envision either a complaint-driven process or an audit-driven process. I am trying to imagine how it would look for a consumer to lodge a complaint with the CRTC based on the provisions in this bill, particularly because this bill acknowledges that service delivery can vary depending on the time of day.

If we look at the Australian model, some of the advertising that is consistent with their regulations is pretty broad. It is hard to see how someone would prove an infraction when, for instance, consumers are promised a standard evening speed of between two and 23 megabits per second. That is a pretty broad range.

For a claim that around 50% of customers achieve download speeds greater than 50 megabits per second, I think it would be tough for an individual consumer to call up the CRTC and lodge a complaint, claiming they were in the 50% that was not served properly, and have the CRTC investigate that. Having some sort of independent verification of the real-world performance of these telecoms would be beneficial. Of course, that would require a system and some cost, so we need to understand how these rules, if they come into force, are actually going to protect consumers.

Private Members' Business

● (1140)

My biggest concern is that, while these regulations and this legislative change may benefit consumers in areas where there is competition for Internet services, there are vast areas of our country where there is simply no competition in purchasing Internet. This is something we need to turn our minds to. How do we deliver transparency in advertising, and how do we deliver choice, competition and affordability for rural and remote residents of our country?

I will tell members a bit about the part of the country I get to represent. It is a vast, rural area. Many of the communities are tiny, remote communities with limited services, particularly when it comes to Internet service. I cannot tell members the number of residents who have approached me with concerns about the lack of choice and service they have for access to Internet. This is a big deal when it comes to ensuring economic development in and attracting residents to remote communities, and when it comes to delivering a basic quality of life in an era when so many of the services that we rely on are moving online.

I was recently contacted by a fellow named Lee Marion. He is the postmaster in Telegraph Creek, which is a tiny and remote indigenous community hours away from the nearest neighbouring community. It is way up in northwest B.C., and it only has one Internet service option. The service speed and quality of that service is insufficient for him to conduct the basic operations of the post office.

This is an area of huge concern, and it is one that I do not believe this bill will address. It might help the residents of Telegraph Creek understand what speed they can expect, but if that speed is insufficient, knowing that fact is not going to help them very much. To put it a bit more simply, if one is in a position of “take it or leave it”, it is not terribly helpful to know more about what “it” is.

The residents of Findlay Lake, an area just north of Terrace, is not a particularly remote area, but it has similar challenges. When Telus built out its fibre optic infrastructure in the area, it stopped just a few kilometres north of the city, which left out dozens of households that are relatively close to a built-up urban area. They are not able to access proper Internet service. They rely on hubs and wireless service that is, frankly, at speeds that do not allow them to conduct the basic operations necessary to work from home or attend school from home, things that are and were, especially during the pandemic, so important to Canadians.

In rural areas, we really need to look at this issue of affordability. The Liberal government's approach to affordability when it comes to the telecom sector relies almost solely on competition. The fact is there are vast areas of this country where no competition exists in the sector, and folks in those areas are stuck with whatever price the companies want to charge them or feel they need to charge them. We need some assurance that, moving forward, we have a mechanism to drive affordability. I am not sure that greater transparency in advertising is going to achieve that.

The NDP has a policy proposal that would require all telecoms in Canada to provide a basic service that is comparable, affordability wise, with the basic services provided in other countries, and I think we are going to need that kind of regulation moving forward, especially for rural residents.

There are a bunch of related issues I could speak to, but I am excited to see this bill move forward. It is something we can get behind. I hope it gets strengthened, and I hope that when it gets to committee, some of these questions around enforcement and potential areas of improvement can be addressed.

● (1145)

Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today to debate Bill C-288, an act to amend the Telecommunications Act concerning transparent and accurate broadband services information.

I was originally planning to speak to the predecessor of this bill on June 23, 2021. There is nothing like 16 months of intervening time to allow me to really collect my thoughts on this matter, but I am pleased that my colleague and friend from Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa has revived his bill from the previous Parliament to provide Canadian consumers with the important information they need when it comes to rural broadband services across our country, so I thank him for raising this issue.

Something I have said many times in the House of Commons and in public to my constituents at events is that reliable high-speed Internet ceased being a luxury a long time ago. For Canadian families, businesses and communities, it is an absolute necessity. When members are given the opportunity to bring forward private member's bills, there are often a lot of competing priorities, which members see as being important to their communities and their ridings. When members win the lottery and have a high-up number in the private member's business lottery, like my friend from Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa did, it is great when they are able to pick a priority like this, which is important for folks not only in rural communities like Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, but also in places like Perth—Wellington and across the country.

In my community of Perth—Wellington, the issue of rural broadband is one I hear of time and again. On a nearly weekly basis, if not sometimes on a daily basis, I will receive an email from a constituent, a phone call from a family, sometimes even a printed letter in the mail because the Internet is so bad, asking when they might finally see rural broadband fibre optics coming to their communities. Just this morning I spoke with a business owner in Wellington North, in the north part of Wellington County, who was talking about how his business was affected by not having access to reliable high-speed Internet. The speeds he is able to get, based on his current Internet service provider, are simply not adequate for him to carry out his business.

Later today, after I have downloaded this video and upload it to my website, my Facebook page and YouTube, many of the constituents in my riding will not be able to watch it. They will not be able to watch it because their high-speed Internet is simply not adequate. They would spend most of the day watching it buffering rather than actually watching this, or any other video or business communication.

Private Members' Business

There are challenges affecting Internet across the country. I will be honest that it takes a lot of infrastructure investment in order to get reliable Internet and telecommunications services in a country as large, rural and remote as Canada. One of the challenges is that there are very few Internet service providers in Canada, and this market is dominated by a couple of large corporations.

I do not think it is a surprise to anyone in this chamber who those large corporations are that dominate the marketplace. This lack of competition leads to the lack of choice for Canadians. In many parts of my riding, my constituents have no choice and are stuck with one provider. In a lot of cases, that is old ma Bell herself.

There are several, often community-owned, Internet service providers that are trying to do the hard work to make sure that fibre is installed along every concession road. They are trying hard. They are working hard, and they are committed to providing reliable high-speed Internet, but they are often unable or struggling to compete with the large Internet service providers that often engage in marketing that, while legal, is really pushing the boundaries of what is believable and consistent.

In my riding, I am very proud of community businesses such as Quadro, Wightman and Mornington, which are working to connect rural subscribers and rural residents with fibre-optic Internet service that would have up to one gigabyte of download speeds. This is an amount that is simply unbelievable for so many in my community right now because they are dealing with speeds as low as 2.5 Mbps, megabytes per second, which is simply not sufficient to carry on a business, participate in community events or communicate with family members.

● (1150)

Canadians need accurate information about the speed of their Internet service, which is why I support this bill. The theoretical speeds, hypothetical service and best-case scenarios are all advertising mechanisms that some of these large corporations use. They hinder us and prevent us from making meaningful decisions when deciding what Internet service provider to go with.

What does help Canadian consumers is realistic expectations based on data regarding what the download and upload speeds are going to be with the specific Internet service provider in their community.

Let us step back just a little to look at what has been happening in the past number of years. Throughout the first 15 years of the 21st century, Internet access expanded dramatically. Service, quality and speeds increased during that period, albeit not always consistently across the country.

What we have seen in the last seven or so years is that progress has slowed and stalled. In fact, I would say that the progress of the government on expanding high-speed Internet across the country has been slower than dial-up. I have raised this issue of poor Internet service time and time again with different Liberal members of cabinet over these past seven years. Unfortunately, the responses we get are either disappointing or, quite frankly, misleading.

The Liberal government has pointed to the different federal funds and dollar totals that it claims to have invested, but in typical Liber-

al fashion, it measures success based on the amount of money it spends rather than on the actual results it achieves.

One small example of this is when, in November 2018, I raised a question during question period about a report that was criticizing the government's failed process to improve rural Internet. I raised this in question period, and the now Attorney General, who was the parliamentary secretary at the time, responded simply by telling me how much more money they were spending, how many more dollars were being put into it rather than focusing on results. Here we are, four years later, and people in rural and remote communities across Canada simply do not have access.

I will note that some other strategies have been promoted more broadly on the issue of spectrum. I would note that the government still has not followed up on the use it or lose it policy that would actually make sure that spectrum is actually used and not kept in corporate coffers as some kind of bargaining chip or future asset that they could sell or re-sell in the future.

Many of the projects being funded across the country have gone to some of these large telecom companies rather than going to the smaller telecoms. In fact, I would note that the so-called rapid response stream of the universal broadband fund gave \$7 million of taxpayer funding to Bell in November 2020, whereas a lot of small, local, often community-owned, Internet service providers in rural communities could have used that \$7 million to actually get fibre in the ground.

I would note as well, in terms of the failure of the Liberal government, that despite the fact that 10% of the underserved population lives in southern Ontario, the Liberal government's connect to innovate program did not invest a single dime in southern Ontario. Again, there was a big show, lots of announcements, the citing of big dollar figures, but 10% of the population is not being served in Ontario.

There is a program in southern Ontario, the SWIFT program, which is a collaboration among Internet service providers, municipalities, counties and private business. Hopefully, at some point there will be some further funding from different levels of government because they are ready to do the work necessary to make sure that fibre is in the home of all Canadians. However, when it comes to the program like the connect to innovate program, not a single dollar is being invested in southern Ontario.

I want to refocus on why this bill is important. As the member for Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa mentioned earlier, the phrase “up to speeds” and misleading types of advertising are simply not acceptable when Canadians are making important decisions about rural high-speed Internet. We need to do more. We need to act. I am very excited to support Bill C-288.

• (1155)

Mr. Chad Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise this morning to talk about the importance of affordable, high-quality Internet services and the need for consumer protection in the telecommunications industry.

To start, we all know how important access to the Internet is for Canadians as we work, learn and socialize online more and more every day. To make progress against our key goals for the telecom sector, the government continues, contrary to what we just heard, to introduce new policy measures to enhance the quality, coverage and affordability of telecom services.

One of the key parts of our forward agenda is a new policy direction to Canada's telecom regulator, the CRTC. The policy direction would provide the CRTC direction that aligns with the government's priorities, and one of our government's key priorities is to ensure that Internet service is affordable for all consumers. The policy direction would tackle this issue and help consumers. In particular, it targets improvements to strengthen competition in the telecom sector.

The proposed policy direction sets out a renewed approach to wholesale regulation. It would instruct the CRTC to take action to have more timely and improved wholesale rates available, and to consider external expertise for international best practices as it sets these new rates. Ultimately, these changes would encourage more sustainable competition, and this would lead to better prices and better outcomes for consumers.

Within the wholesale regime, the CRTC requires large telephone and cable companies to provide other service providers with access to their networks. The CRTC does this by mandating wholesale access and regulates the rates charged for these services. This allows other service providers to offer their own services to Canadians. I am glad that we have taken the action to strengthen the ability of these alternative Internet providers to compete, because I know it has meaningful impacts on prices in the marketplace.

The proposed policy direction also includes a range of measures to strengthen consumer rights. For example, our government understands that having competitive service providers in the telecom sector is important, but consumers also need to be able to easily switch providers when they find a better deal. That is why the policy direction would require the CRTC to make it easier for consumers to cancel their service or change their service provider so that Canadians can take advantage of better offers.

Another key part of the proposed policy direction would require the CRTC to take measures to promote the clarity and transparency of pricing information and service plan characteristics in marketing materials. This would allow consumers to better understand their choices in the Internet market.

I regularly hear from Canadians, including those in my riding of Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, who are having difficulty with their telecom service providers. I know that my colleagues hear about these issues as well. Questions about quality and a lack of satisfaction with how these issues are resolved can be very frustrating for our constituents. Poor quality service can lead to lagging Zoom calls for students in virtual classrooms, frustration for parents work-

Government Orders

ing from home and missed opportunities to connect with family and friends.

To deal with issues like this, the Government of Canada helped to establish the Commission for Complaints for Telecom-Television Services, or the CCTS. The CCTS is an independent organization that provides consumers with recourse when they are unable to resolve disagreements directly with their telecom service providers.

• (1200)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Unfortunately, I have to cut off the member at this point, but when this matter is next before the House, the hon. member will have a little over six minutes remaining.

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.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

STRENGTHENING ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION FOR A HEALTHIER CANADA ACT

The House resumed from October 24 consideration of the motion that Bill S-5, An Act to amend the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999, to make related amendments to the Food and Drugs Act and to repeal the Perfluorooctane Sulfonate Virtual Elimination Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, as always, it is an honour to enter into debate in this place and stand up for the people of Battle River—Crowfoot. In the short amount of time I have left, I have some further points to make on Bill S-5, but I will note something that I hope the Speaker will give me a slight amount of leave to discuss, which is Hayden's Hopeful Journey.

This is the story of a young man from a community not far from my own who, even though he is just in grade 12, is facing his second battle with cancer. I had the honour this past weekend to participate in a perogy supper fundraiser, where we heard some stories about Hayden and the strength and resilience of this young man. Although he is facing something many people never face in their lifetime, he is doing so with determination and grit and with the support of the community through the perogy dinner fundraiser, an online auction that took place over the course of the preceding weeks and a GoFundMe page, where the true generosity of rural Alberta has been demonstrated.

Government Orders

I will take this moment in the House of Commons, wearing a green ribbon, to recognize Hayden's Hopeful Journey and Hayden Buswell. I acknowledge him and wish him all the best. My family's thoughts and prayers are with him as he battles this terrible disease.

I will wrap up a few points on Bill S-5, the bill before the House.

I dealt with a number of the overall aspects of what Bill S-5 would accomplish, but some of the concerns I have heard about this bill have less to do with the original text of the bill. Rather, they are about some of the amendments that came forward during the study that took place in the Senate.

Everyone watching will know that I represent an area of the country that is proud to have what I call two legacy industries. One is agriculture. The 53,000 square kilometres of rural east central Alberta that I represent has a proud history of being incredibly productive for agriculture in its many forms. Further to that, the second legacy industry that I talk often about is the energy industry. Bills that have a direct and indirect impact on both of those fields certainly make a significant impact on how we approach many of these issues.

Having heard much of the debate that has taken place on Bill S-5, I think it needs to get before the committee so we can study the specifics. In the moment I have left, I will note how important it will be to examine the amendments that were made in the Senate. I have heard from constituents and a number of stakeholders who have expressed some concerns that the unintended consequences of some of the amendments made by the other place may have a negative effect on both our economy and the environment.

I look forward to being able to expand further on this in questions. I am thankful for this opportunity.

• (1205)

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his emotional tribute to Hayden. I know everyone in the House joins with him in wishing Hayden well and a speedy recovery.

I thought I heard the hon. member say that he was very interested in the amendments coming from the other place and looking at them more thoroughly. I wonder if he supports speedily getting this bill to our environment committee, which I serve on, by the way, with him, to look at these amendments more closely.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, I will certainly pass along the best wishes to Hayden and his family.

I am not sure I have had a chance to expound in this place on my new role as vice-chair of the committee on the environment. I am very excited to be able to stand up for the people of Battle River—Crowfoot in that role.

I find it interesting and ironic that whenever a bill comes before the House and seems to be debated at any length, not even an extended period of time, the automatic response of any member of the government is that the only path forward is that of no debate or that we are being obstructionists. I hear from constituents daily, and I am not exaggerating when I say “daily”, that they expect me, as their member of Parliament, to take a serious look at every aspect

of the legislation that comes before this place and to take the time necessary to do the job we were all elected to do: to study, consider and debate bills in the House of Commons. If the bill passes with the will of Parliament, I look forward to being able to look at it more in depth at the committee stage of the process.

Just because the government does not want to spend time doing a fundamental aspect of its job does not mean the Conservatives do not. I find it incredibly demeaning to the democratic process that they—

• (1210)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Questions and comments, the hon. member for Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Madam Speaker, the government widely promoted this bill as a modernization of the Canadian Environmental Protection Act that would finally grant people a right to a healthy environment. When the government gave a briefing on its bill, civil servants were asked if the bill would truly give a right to a healthy environment. Their response was simply “no”, that will not be the case. It might happen when legislation is implemented more than two years from now, but for the time being, it will not.

Does the member agree with me that it is unfortunate that the Liberal Party is engaging in political marketing with this right to a healthy environment when, in fact, that will not happen when the bill is passed?

[*English*]

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, I think the member highlights an important point. I have said often that the only thing the Liberals are good at is politics. They have shown time and time again that they are failures when it comes to policy, implementation and ultimately governing this country.

When it comes to their record on the environment, it is deplorable. They have never met a target. They have missed virtually every emissions target they have ever implemented. They have a tax plan, not an environment plan, and are quick to demonize anybody who points out the facts in this regard.

Canadians should have the right to a healthy environment, but that includes being able to ensure we have an industry and technology that allow for that to not only be the case here in Canada. Canada can and should be a leader in the world when it comes to ensuring that the entire planet has the tools, resources and ability to have a healthy environment.

Government Orders

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciate hearing my colleague speak today about some very important points to his constituents, particularly wishing Hayden the best.

This bill would take up what was a temporary trial experiment in regard to chemical management, put forward by the Hon. Rona Ambrose under Mr. Harper. There were a number of amendments made by the Senate without having any practical knowledge of it.

Does the member think the system that was developed has stood the test of time? Does he believe those changes require proper study before amending the bill?

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, I will pass along the best wishes to Hayden and his family from this place.

I think we have highlighted again that it is absolutely essential for us to do our jobs in this place. The member points out that Conservatives have a strong history and legacy of good environmental management and protection, and of acknowledging the complicated way that has to be accomplished. Certainly, when it comes to committee, we need to make sure we look at the amendments the Senate made and the full subject of the bill to ensure we get it right, because jobs and our environment depend on it.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): This brings us to the end of the 20-minute speeches. We are now down to the 10-minute speeches. Therefore, I would like to recognize for debate, the hon. member for Calgary Shepard.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, what a great privilege it is always to rise on behalf of my constituents. It is just too bad I missed my opportunity to be recognized to speak for a 20-minute slot now that we have moved past the first five hours of debate.

It is always a privilege to be speaking on behalf of my constituents and rising to share some of their views. On this legislation, it is a bit more difficult. It is an act to amend the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999, to make related amendments to the Food and Drugs Act and to repeal the Perfluorooctane Sulfonate Virtual Elimination Act, which then reminds me of a Yiddish proverb.

I will save members the Yiddish pronunciation, but it is that a man studies until he is 70 and he dies a fool. I am always gratified to learn of new things that I do not know. Oftentimes, as parliamentarians, we need to be reminded how much we do not know both by our constituents, but also by reviewing legislation such as this. If they had asked me before I was first elected back in 2015 if this type of legislation was on the books, I would have said I did not know.

Therefore, I want to offer up a bit of history on how we have come to this point where we are modernizing this act. From the outset, while I do have quite a bit of concern with the contents of the legislation, different parts of it and how we have come to this point, I will be supporting it. The Yiddish proverb is a reminder that there is always more to learn and I am always learning more about what the legislation says.

One key that I have heard from constituents in the past is about beauty products. I have a lot of constituents in my riding who are entrepreneurs and they run smaller, unique-product companies. They were specifically worried about toxic substances. Toxicity, of course, is primarily based around how much of the substance there actually is, and we should keep that in mind. This legislation would split the list of toxic substances into two schedules: one with the highest risk to health and environment; and two, lower risk but still regulated.

Some of the other things the legislation proposes to do is mostly to reduce red tape. A lot of different stakeholder organizations and industry sectors are quite supportive of this. They would have less paperwork to fill out. It would be a more streamlined process. Again, reducing redundancies and unnecessary red tape, or *paperaisse* as they call it in French, is necessary. Especially nowadays when people have so much opportunity to use digital methods of delivering services and informing government regulators, it is an opportunity to do that.

With respect to the process of how we got here, it has taken five years for the government to get to the point where it is offering up these modernizations in Bill S-5. This government legislation came through the Senate, which is the complete reverse of how this place is supposed to work. The House of Commons is supposed to consider legislation and send it to that other place, the Senate, to then do sober second thought. Now we are doing the complete reverse.

Bill S-5 should have come to us as government legislation from the government benches so we could consider it here first. Because that work was not done in the House of Commons, the senators did it. They passed 24 amendments, and I have concerns with many of those amendments. The legislation would be made worse through these amendments. If we amend Bill S-5, it would go back to the Senate for reconsideration, and it will go back and forth.

During this debate, I have heard several government caucus members say that they want to expedite this bill. They are worried that the bill is not going through the process fast enough. Of course, any one of us here is allowed to rise on behalf of our constituents and try to catch your eye, Madam Speaker, to speak to the legislation on behalf of our constituents. After five years of waiting to get to the point where the Liberals are and then claiming that it needs to be expedited, knowing full well that a single amendment passed at the environment committee or at report stage by the House would send the bill back to the Senate, is a dishonest way of going about the debate. With respect to claiming that opposition parties are delaying it, debate is not delaying. Debate is careful consideration of government legislation.

There are many amendments with which I have problems. Maybe I will spend just a bit of time on the preamble question, because it has been crowed about quite a bit by government caucus members that a right to the environment is being inserted into law. Some opposition members outside the Conservative Party have mentioned the fact that it is not an actual right to have a healthy environment.

Government Orders

• (1215)

In fact, that portion in the modernization of the act is being inserted in the preamble. During his intervention on this legislation, the member for Dufferin—Caledon reminded the House that when it is in the preamble, it is often not considered by justices, by judges, if a matter comes before the court. Placing it in the preamble essentially means that it is just something one reads ahead of time, but it is not the substance of the legislation.

The government's claim, after five years of this “consultocracy” that it has set up, is that we now we have to expedite it through the House of Commons and quickly get it to committee. Then at committee, I am sure the members will say the same thing, that they need to get it quickly through committee in order to get it back to the House to be considered, and probably with no amendments. We saw that the Senate had a substantial amount of amendments to the legislation. However, it has been moving at a glacial speed, and it is not the job of the House of Commons to act like a slot machine.

We do not just roll in government legislation, either from the Senate or the floor of the House, and then expect members to say yes to everything and pass it on to the next stage. There are members here who can weigh-in on the legislation. There are Conservatives members who are professional engineers, such as the member for Sarnia—Lambton. She has expertise in this material and she can share that with the House. There are members who were, in their previous lives, builders. There are members who, in their previous lives, worked for chemical companies. They can all make a contribution here. Also, we come from different ridings where we have major industrial energy projects, major mines being built or are operating, which can provide insight into how legislation like this should function, and that insight should come to the floor of the House of Commons.

I will also mention on this preamble component that the Liberals are adding for a healthy environment, which is something that is completely unenforceable. They say they cannot define it further and will need another two years to figure out what it means. Therefore, not only are we being told that we have to rush the legislation through, probably without amendment after the work of the Senate, but that they will take another two years to figure out the substance of the communication on the legislation. Essentially, it is a modernization and reduction of red tap and not actually an environmental piece of legislation.

We have seen this before. The carbon tax, for example, is not an environmental plan but a tax plan. Also, the cut on taxes for the middle class actually resulted in every member of Parliament earning a bigger tax cut than a Canadian who was not in a middle income bracket. Actually, anybody earning less than \$43,000 got nothing from the government in that tax cut. To get the full tax cut, one had to earn the full \$93,000 to be at the top end of that middle-income tax bracket.

The Liberals do this all the time. They claim one thing in legislation, which is actually something completely different, and then after many years of consulting, they say that things must be expedited through the House to have the legislation pass. I have seen it happen many times before.

I would rate this legislation as a C-, but it has given me an opportunity to go back to my Yiddish proverb. It has also given me an opportunity to look at legislation about which constituents of mine do care. They want a healthy environment. They want to know that toxic substances are being reviewed and considered, and that there is some type of goal post in place for different industries and entrepreneurs to look at before they decide what to put into their products and how they make their products.

At the same time, they do not want more years of consulting after the fact. They do not want framework legislation; they want legislation and enforcement that works, that is reasonable and that is not over the top. We are not trying to manage the economy, we are trying to be good stewards of the economy, and legislation like this is trying to reach that point. We always have an opportunity to learn something new, and that was the Yiddish proverb, that a man studies until he is 70 and dies a fool. It is a reminder to all of us that there is always something new to learn.

My offering to the Liberals is that they can learn something new through the legislation they are now trying to rush through the House. The 24 amendments they received from senators, and some of them made the legislation worse, is a reminder that legislation should start in this place. They should consult more with the House of Commons and members of Parliament before they bring forward legislation like this.

Despite that, I will be supporting the legislation to get it to committee so that, hopefully, we can fix it there and make further amendments, which will then further delay the bill. However, that is not our fault. We are here for the people to ensure we pass legislation that makes sense for them.

• (1220)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Madam Speaker, I enjoyed my colleague's speech.

Strengthening environmental protection is a good thing. We are not against virtue. However, based on what my colleague said earlier, I am wondering whether this is just wishful thinking. Is there not something else we could focus on to ensure a healthy environment after this bill is passed?

What commitments could the Conservatives make to improve the environment for all of their constituents?

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, as an MP from Alberta and as an Albertan, I would say that we have environmental regulations governing the largest industrial companies operating the biggest projects in our province. When it comes to legislating and regulating our province's biggest corporations, we are leading the way.

Government Orders

The rest of Canada could follow our lead on things like ethane and methane. For large industrial projects, we have very strict rules governing gas emissions. We have also had a price on greenhouse gas production for a very long time for our province's major oil industry producers.

Anyone can come to our province and ask us questions. Our public servants are excellent; their excellence is world-renowned. All this information is available online, and I encourage the member to come to Alberta and see it for herself if she wants.

• (1225)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is somewhat disappointing the way the Conservatives are looking at this legislation, legislation to protect and provide support to Canadians, that deals with the environment. Stakeholders from coast to coast are quite anxious to see the legislation move forward. The Conservatives are using the excuse of wanting more time to debate it. They will say that about anything in order to filibuster.

We are constantly having to look for partners to get bills through. We are not trying to say that debate should absolutely and completely end today. If the Conservatives are in support of the legislation, why not allow it to go to committee stage? Why do they have to talk out every bill in order to frustrate the legislative process?

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, that is a rich argument from the member for Winnipeg North, who has probably spoken more words in the House than any other member. I dare say that perhaps he has spoken more than his entire caucus combined possibly. Maybe we should add the member for Kingston and the Islands.

This is the place where consultation happens with the citizens of our country. The House of Commons, through its members of Parliament, are representatives of the people. We will do our job.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, that was an interesting speech by the member from Calgary, as always. I will have to add the word “consultocracy” to my vocabulary.

He mentioned how unenforceable the law would be. The CEPA, the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, has been on the books since 1999, and it has never been enforced in any way.

Could he perhaps give us some ideas on how we should make it enforceable? Canadians deserve to live in a clean and healthy environment and we need to be able to enforce that.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, just to be clear with the member, I said that the right to a healthy environment, as it is embedded and updated in the legislation, is unenforceable because it is in the preamble. It gives no force of law, essentially. Someone cannot go to court and make a claim before a judge that this is somehow an enforceable right. It is not in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It is not a right that someone can make a claim against.

In terms of enforceability, this is already enforced in the industry. The industry in Canada is already trying to meet these expectations. This legislation will impact hundreds of thousands of people who

work across the different sectors. All of them are trying to do the right thing by the environment and also by their community members. Nobody is out there with the goal of polluting unnecessarily or of dropping toxic chemicals into the environment. They know this legislation exists and they are trying to meet its expectations, but inserting it into the preamble is what makes it unenforceable.

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Madam Speaker, it has been interesting to hear the debate here so far today. Part of that is addressing an important new bill before Parliament, Bill S-5, an act to amend the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999, to make related amendments to the Food and Drugs Act and to repeal the Perfluorooctane Sulfonate Virtual Elimination Act.

These are important environmental considerations for Parliament to consider. It would be updating a bill that was initially passed, the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, back in 1999 and it is well past due. I understand from my colleague, although I did not know this before he spoke in the House today, that it has been five years since this bill has been under review. Five years is a long time.

The past five years were interrupted by two elections, one of which was completely unnecessary and changed the entire legislative agenda so that we could not address these things in ample time here in this place. We are supposed to be looking at legislation in Canada and how we can do better at what is on the agenda.

This bill, as my colleague pointed out, came over to us initially after it was passed at the Senate with many amendments. In this case, we seem to be the chamber of sober second thought on what has been brought to us as an amendment to the Canadian Environmental Protection Act.

All Canadians want a strong Canadian Environmental Protection Act to make sure that the substances that are transmitted in society have some very clear guidelines around how they are going to be approved by the regulatory process.

Make no mistake: There are good things about this bill that I support. I hope to get into some committee work and go through the detail here on some changes that are required. Some of the changes would be undoing some of the amendments that were put in place in the Senate, which actually served to move this legislation backward as opposed to forward.

Government Orders

What does work in this bill is getting rid of some of the redundancy in regulations. In the House, I have spoken many times about the weight of government and the weight of regulations. There is overlap not only between different levels of government, as in provinces, municipalities and the federal government, but also within the government itself. We have a combination of looking at the same regulations through various departments.

It is a waste of time, a waste of money and a waste of effort for the companies that have to go through that process. Dealing with those in one fell swoop, as this legislation seems to propose, is a better way of getting past regulations that industry has to go through in order to move things forward.

I will point out that I have been involved in bills in the House of Commons where we did expedite things very clearly. I remember my work with the previous minister of natural resources in the 43rd Parliament when we moved forward on the regulatory advancements required for offshore work to regulate workers and make sure they stayed safe.

This was work that had been delayed for years. As a result, for the offshore workers in Canada, primarily in Newfoundland but also Nova Scotia, the regulations were not on top of each other anymore, and there was a legal void as to what would happen in an accident.

The minister at that time, who was a very good minister, worked together with me behind the scenes and made sure that we advanced that as quickly as possible. We got it through the House and over to the other place. I stand corrected; it actually came from the other place. We got it through the House as quickly as possible, through committee, because we had addressed everything that needed to be addressed in that legislation. Not having that legislation available at that time was putting workers at risk.

When things need to move quickly in the House, we move them quickly. Our job is to make sure we look at what is best for Canadians and address what needs to be changed in legislation brought before us.

I am going to talk about this legislation a bit because there are some clear deficiencies. There are some good things, as I have noted, in this bill, and we do need an updated Canadian Environmental Protection Act. This also brings changes to other legislation. There are some things I have questions about. I question a lot of the bureaucratise that we address here in the House of Commons.

• (1230)

The language in the bill identifies certain things that I know are going to require further definition down the road. Those are things like “vulnerable populations”. Can we define what a vulnerable population is? I have not seen it prescribed anywhere in legalese.

It talks about “the principle of non-regression and the principle of intergenerational equity”. All of these things are nice concepts on paper. As yet, they have no standing in any court of law, because they have not been in front of any court of law. That is one of the problems here.

We can put these things on paper and then, all of a sudden, somebody will actually challenge them and they will be in front of a

judge. As my colleague said earlier, a judge does not get to look at the preamble of a bill. He only looks at the bill. He says, “This intergenerational equity thing is something profound, and here is the ruling I have.”

That, of course, will layer its way up to every court in Canada. Then we will have a ruling by the Supreme Court of Canada on what is meant by intergenerational equity, to say nothing of the intergenerational inequity that the current government has visited upon Canadians repeatedly over the last seven years. The amount of deficit that we have incurred with the government foisting taxes upon future generations of Canadians is the definition of intergenerational inequity. Our kids, our grandkids and our great-grandkids are going to be looking after bills that the government refuses to pay today.

Those are things that are going to have to find their way through in the wash. It is better that we find those things in the wash here than 10 years later after several court iterations and several millions of dollars through our court system. We would have to reverse everything that has been done over that time.

We talked about toxicity in this bill. I recall, not so long ago, that they talked about plastics being toxic. I know that the plastics industry was very upset about that. I used Tupperware last night. I used a baggy this morning.

Is that toxic? Am I using toxic goods? I think that we really have to get toward what toxicity actually means for the communities that we are acting on behalf of. A watch-list for these substances becomes capable of being overused and misunderstood by the bureaucrats and the legalists who might get involved with it.

There are other definitions in here, like “the right to a healthy environment”. I am all for a healthy environment. Everyone knows that. How we put that into a right, as far as Canada’s Charter of Rights and Freedoms, is a mystery to me.

I know that a lot of my colleagues think a healthy environment looks like a golf course and that is not at all the case. A healthy environment is actually something where we have a whole bunch of bugs, if we will. We start at the very basic level here, and things move their way through the ecosystem. Sometimes nature, in its healthy environment phase, is not pretty.

If we take a look at the agriculture we produce in Canada, that agriculture, quite frankly, is a manipulation of nature. If we look at this, somebody could challenge it and could say that is making the environment unhealthy. We are plowing fields and that is killing a whole bunch of moles, voles, insects, birds, nests and everything else in order to feed the world, which Canada does very well.

I am challenged by some of the terminology that is in here. We need to balance all of this against social and economic factors. We need to make sure that we have risk assessments and risk management profiles that show exactly what we are trying to accomplish and balance it with what is good for all of society.

One of the other issues in here that we have seen in regulatory overreach, which we have seen in many government bills in their regulatory approach, is the ability for anybody to request that a minister look to see if a substance is toxic.

There are all kinds of nuances going on in our court system currently in Canada where that is being abused by many organizations that are trying to stall developments in Canada. This opens the door to more of the same.

Once we start opening the door to more of the same in every measure of society, we are going to have nothing but litigation from self-interested entities all the way through our legal system. That is what has to stop. That is what has to move forward a little better here to make sure that we get better legislation for all Canadians. Those are my main points.

I am looking forward to the government considering how we can make some good recommendations and good amendments so that this bill, the terms around it and the definitions that we are talking about are addressed clearly, so that we can address good legislation for Canadians going forward.

• (1235)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is interesting. The Conservatives are criticizing the government because the Senate is assisting us on some very important legislation. However, Stephen Harper had no problem doing the same thing. In fact, he even brought forward environmental legislation through the Senate. When Conservatives talk about the use of the Senate being incorporated into our legislative agenda, they need to reflect while looking in the mirror.

The legislation we have before us has been here since February, through the Senate. It passed through the Senate in June. We introduced it long ago. If every member speaks on the legislation, it would never pass. When would the Conservative Party want to see legislation such as this pass? Why not allow it to pass into committee where stakeholders and other MPs could contribute to the debate and discussion?

• (1240)

Mr. Greg McLean: Madam Speaker, I do not recall criticizing the government for moving this agenda through the Senate.

First, I said that this time we in the House of Commons are the body of sober second thought. I know that, for my colleague on that side, it might be second thought. We are trying to be sober here and to make sure we actually put some analysis into this, and not just ram it through like my colleague on the other side would like us to do.

I am a member of the environment committee. I know where this is going to end up. It is going to be on my desk. I have already put some effort into looking at this bill and how we could address the

Government Orders

changes that would be required going forward. We are going to make sure that we get this bill. I would challenge the member: If it took five years to get here, why does he think jamming it through here in 10 minutes would be appropriate? I think we need to address these things.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I just want to add some comments to the member's concerns around how this idea of the right for Canadians to live in a healthy and clean environment would be approached.

In this bill that we are debating today, Bill S-5, the new Canadian Environmental Protection Act would only extend those rights as far as the bill goes. It would basically be around toxins, air pollution and water pollution. The federal government has a wider mandate than that. We have a lot of environmental legislation on the books, including the Fisheries Act and the Species at Risk Act.

Would the member agree that we need to extend that right to the entire federal mandate?

Mr. Greg McLean: Madam Speaker, I really appreciate the question from my colleague with whom I sat on committee in the last Parliament. He always has some excellent input into the manner in which we need to move legislation forward.

Let me say that this whole issue around a clean and healthy environment is a great concept, and I fully subscribe to it. At the same time, I look at this nonsense that I hear in the House from members in the House, and not the member in question here, and I need to make sure that we have clarity on what we are trying to accomplish. I have heard many times, at committee and in the House, about how emissions from oil and gas, for instance, are actually limiting people's lifespans. However, when we look at the increasing lifespan of Canadians, it is significant.

We have actually done very well with the lower cost of energy and lower emissions in this country. I want to make sure we continue on that, and that as Canadians' lifespans continue to increase we get better and expect more from our legislation around how we treat Canadians. That is what I am after here.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I am certainly very concerned that this bill not be rushed through. I agree with him insofar as that comment. This is a very complex bill. The Canadian Environmental Protection Act is a very long act in six parts. The government has chosen not to review or update part 6 at all, which deals with marine dumping and genetically modified organisms. That section needs attention but will be outside the scope of the act for parliamentarians to review, unless the government steps up and says we need to modernize this section as well.

I am also concerned about protecting this bill from court challenges. We need to put back in the list of toxic substances, schedule 1.

Mr. Greg McLean: Madam Speaker, I share my colleague's concerns about how we get things done in the House and about making sure we address legislation quickly.

Government Orders

One of the issues in this bill of course is that the Canadian Environmental Protection Act is a criminal act, so we are moving a lot of redresses here toward a criminal approach to things, with a lower bar, a more civil law bar, for how those are approached, so we are impacting two sets of laws here that might not serve Canadian society well. These are some of the things we have to consider in this, and I am open to everything my colleague has to say about how we can make this better.

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a real pleasure to rise on Bill S-5.

Five years ago, at the environment committee, as a parliamentary staffer, I took part in the extensive review that took place, I believe, in 2017. Indeed, the committee members at the time looked at the whole scope of this legislation, and I hope to provide some insight from my time on that committee during my remarks today.

While I am in support of Bill S-5 in the fact that it deals with the right to a healthy environment and some of the critical issues included in CEPA 1999, I would be remiss if I did not mention a juxtaposition of things happening in British Columbia at the moment.

Right now, we have a government that is purportedly concerned about the impacts of toxic substances on our lives, on our health and on the health of infants most importantly. Just yesterday I went to IKEA with my family and bought some new furniture. I know that furniture is subject to many of the schedule 1 toxic substances list, and those toxic chemicals are applied in the production and manufacturing of almost all consumer goods that we use in Canada. At the same time, though, the government has decided this year to decriminalize the use of fentanyl, which is killing hundreds, if not thousands of people every single year in my province.

Why do we care so much, on the one hand, about the application of CEPA 1999 and amending it to keep our communities safe from toxic substances, when at the same time the Government of Canada is effectively legalizing the use of a toxic substance that is killing people every day on the streets of Vancouver and throughout British Columbia?

Earlier in the debate today, a number of people spoke to the fact that the bill before us today does not address the full scope of changes that are needed to modernize the Canadian Environmental Protection Act. I would generally agree with this assumption and the concern put forward by members on all sides of the House. For example, the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, which is complicated legislation, overlaps and works in conjunction with other pieces of legislation that determine how we use products and substances in our day-to-day life, one example being the Motor Vehicle Safety Act. In the last number of years, we have seen a huge influx of electric vehicles coming into the marketplace. I think it would benefit consumers in Canada if we had updated standards on the use of the batteries, for example, that are used in these cars, and the impact it could have on the environment when they reach the end of their life cycle and have to be recycled.

Another example of things we could have been discussing is living organisms or biotechnology. I know many of my constituents are concerned about genetically modified organisms. The Canadian Environmental Protection Act is the law that deals with such substances. We have not seen a major update despite major advance-

ments in the technology regarding the products, food and even vaccines that we might ingest into our bodies that could be impacted by such provisions.

A big one is preventing water pollution from nutrients. One of the things the Department of Environment and Climate Change wanted to see addressed in 2016, when we went through the review, was the labelling of products such as bleach or other household goods that we use on a regular basis. We need to know the impact those products have when we put them down the drain, and what might happen off the coast of Victoria, for example, when they are dumped directly into the ocean. We need our Canadian Environmental Protection Act to be updated to know what we are putting into the ocean and the impact it has on marine life, especially in British Columbia.

As other members have mentioned, Bill S-5 does nothing to address marine pollution. I would be remiss if I did not ask why the government would not address that, because it is in the process of hiring hundreds of new people to work at Fisheries and Oceans Canada and Transport Canada on a marine protection plan for the Pacific coast. How in the world could it not update CEPA to work in conjunction with the billions of dollars it is purportedly spending on protecting B.C.'s coasts? It has the opportunity right here in the House of Commons.

● (1245)

Another big thing we could have done to address the environment is related to preventing pollution from the transboundary movement of hazardous waste and hazardous recyclable material. One of my colleagues from Simcoe, the secondary breadbasket of Canada, put forward a bill to try to update some aspects of CEPA as it relates to recycled goods. We have so many goods on which we could a better job of making sure they are dealt with in a respectful way.

We also need to be very careful, and CEPA could be doing this, to look at the importation of goods and whether they meet Canadian standards. An updated CEPA could give consumers more confidence in the products they are using if the government had the courage to do the hard work of updating the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999.

Another key aspect of CEPA that could have been addressed is preventing and responding to emergencies. This is particularly important to the people of Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon. One of the provisions that Environment and Climate Change Canada asked for in the last review in 2017 was to allow for field research related to environmental emergencies, and for exemptions for urgent, time-sensitive issues of national security and remedial provisions. This was really relevant to my riding when it had to replace so many culverts as it related to fish-bearing streams. There were so many applications to our environmental laws in the context of an emergency that could have been addressed if the government wanted to do the hard work.

Another area the government could have addressed, which is probably the fifth or sixth already, is environmental protection related to federal activities on aboriginal lands. Aboriginal lands and reserves, in many cases, are not subject to provincial environmental laws, and we do not know about the application of federal laws or the overlay of the two jurisdictions. We could have used this opportunity in respect of UNDRIP. Instead of just talking about UNDRIP, we could have taken the concrete administrative step of improving the application of environmental laws or their administration in the context of aboriginal lands.

• (1250)

Another area we could have looked at is strengthening the enforcement of CEPA. Since the review that took place in 2017, the Government of Canada went through a major process with Volkswagen Canada. Volkswagen was not following the laws in Canada related to the Motor Vehicle Safety Act and was not reporting on the emissions from certain vehicles. In the United States, there were billions of dollars in lawsuits after this. In Canada, our enforcement of environmental laws is much weaker. We could have used this opportunity to strengthen the enforcement of environmental protection in Canada.

Another area we could have looked at that I briefly touched upon is facilitating intergovernmental co-operation. We have a large bureaucracy in Canada. There is lots of red tape. There is overlapping jurisdiction and there are overlapping laws. Updating CEPA could have clarified how federal, provincial and territorial laws work in the context of equivalency in the administration of environmental protection in Canada.

We could have looked very closely at encouraging public participation, moving administrative barriers to allow more citizens to participate and bring petitions forward to the minister of environment, which is a very key aspect of the bill on issues of concern. We could have clarified how that would work in the Canadian context.

Finally, the preamble in Bill S-5 talks extensively about protecting the right to a healthy environment. Unfortunately, the government seems to punt all the hard work down the road. Why did it not clarify the legal definition of “a right to a healthy environment” instead of giving our public servants two years to determine the definition? We have a responsibility in committee and in this chamber to do that hard work now, not leave it for down the road. It is a failure of the government not to define “a right to a healthy environment” instead of just punting it down the road.

Government Orders

I could go on. I am quite dismayed that the Government of Canada did not do the hard work that many of its members put forward in recommendations. Unfortunately, it is too afraid to do that hard work.

• (1255)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, within the legislation there is a significant move forward in recognizing that Canadians have rights with respect to the environment. In good part, I think the legislation is seen as a very strong, positive foot forward.

Does the member have any sense of when he would like to see the legislation go to committee, where we can have more direct input from stakeholders and others and get into some of the things the member talked about in his speech? When can we start having that dialogue at the committee stage?

Mr. Brad Vis: Madam Speaker, it is the government's prerogative to determine what we debate and how long we debate matters in the House of Commons. I will note that the Canadian Environmental Protection Act is very complicated legislation that touches upon most aspects of our day-to-day lives. That requires significant debate and study of the very challenging and difficult issues that are brought forward in this legislation, which affect everything from imports and exports and consumer product awareness to the cumulative impacts of toxic substances on our lives. That requires a lot of time in the chamber.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, a consistent issue the Conservatives will bring up is that all pieces of legislation require a considerable amount of time and there should not be any sorts of limitations and so forth. We have substantive legislation that is fairly widely supported, and as far as I know even the Conservative Party is supporting the passage of this legislation, so it seems everyone in the chamber is supporting the legislation. My concern is that there are all sorts of other things we could be looking at.

I have a very straightforward question. Are Conservative Party members saying they would like to pass it out of second reading this year? Are they saying we should wait, because they have so many speakers that we might need to take it into 2023? Can the member give Canadians a sense of how long he would like to see this in second reading?

Mr. Brad Vis: Madam Speaker, I think so far we have debated this bill, in real terms, for less than 20 hours. When we are talking about a bill that may impact every consumer product in Canada, we need more than 20 hours of debate. The implications of an amendment to CEPA of the magnitude put forward by the government and supported by the Conservatives require more than half a week's worth of work.

Government Orders

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from British Columbia for raising this. It almost seems like the government believes that if all parties agree, there is no process or no point in having members of Parliament go through the legislation. This is complex legislation; it touches upon criminal law, and there are going to be different parts of the country that are going to be affected differently.

Does the member believe the parliamentary secretary seems to be one-sided, so that only one person, either him or the Prime Minister, should be in charge of everything, or does he believe we have a Parliament for a reason, which is to raise issues and to debate different aspects of the legislation?

Mr. Brad Vis: Madam Speaker, one thing I pointed out at the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs was the tendency of the government to only put up one or two speakers, who happen to be the same person, on a regular basis. What that does to debate is it minimizes it. I would love to see every member of the Liberal backbench standing up and asking for a slot to speak to this important legislation.

As my colleague mentioned, every single member of Parliament is impacted by this legislation in a very real way. There are perhaps trillions of dollars at stake here. There are consequences related to how we consume products, what products are put into our oceans and how babies are protected from toxic substances. That requires more than a couple of hours of debate, and it is incumbent upon every single member to speak up and apply this legislation to how it impacts their respective constituencies. I do not know why the Government of Canada just does not want to do that.

• (1300)

Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer—Mountain View, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a privilege and an honour to rise in the House to speak on behalf of the people of Red Deer—Mountain View, and it certainly is to do so today, as we are talking about a bill that is promoting the right to a healthy environment. I 100% agree with that. My major issue is recognizing Canadian achievements and making sure we keep that in mind as well.

As we debate Bill S-5, which would make these changes, I think it is important, as has been mentioned before, that we recognize the fact that CEPA has not been updated since it was passed in 1999. The tabling of Bill S-5 would be the first significant update, so it is important.

However, after the Senate process, Bill S-5 has been amended greatly, and I must admit, it is not for the best. I think it is important we talk about some of the Liberal track record. For example, I understand what is being advocated for in the dark green environmentalist world, but in the real world, particularly in those countries where energy security is so important and so urgent, people are clamouring for clean natural gas. They are rethinking their previous nuclear and coal objections. They are recognizing their electrical grid limitations, and they are hoping countries like us, with a reputation of using our wealth, expertise and innovation, will be there to help them during these tumultuous times.

For the more than two billion people in this world who use animal dung for their energy, and for those countries that are forced to

rely on conflict oil, will Canada use every bit of its energy know-how to bring all of our resources to their shores? Does the government have a real vision for the future where the mining and processing of rare earth minerals, our world-class reclamation expertise and our human rights records will be recognized and respected, or when the time comes, will those too be politically demonized?

All energy sources leave an environmental footprint, even the dung being used by 25% of the world's citizens for energy. We do not flood massive tracts of land for eternity for hydro power without consequences. We do not build massive windmills without using hydrocarbons. We do not build solar panels without dealing with toxic substances. We do not mine or drill oil wells without disturbance. Plus, we need energy to build each of these infrastructures, and I believe that when we discuss any energy source development, its transportation and use, its recycling and disposal, or its effect on the living things that surround it, we must analyze the entire upstream and downstream effects, from the first shovel digging it up to the last shovel covering it up.

Only then can we truly talk about the consequences of all these technologies, of EVs, hydrogen, hybrid ICE, and full battery production, repurposing and recycling. Only then will Canadians be able to make educated decisions about the energy options faced by this nation. If we take the political science out of this equation and focus specifically on the true metrics of these choices, we will have accomplished so much.

The question is if the government will ensure that, in future, all types of energy sources be subject to the same rigorous assessment as the government has demanded with Canada's hydrocarbon industry. I certainly hope it will.

I would like to take a few moments to discuss what the legislation would do and then look at the few amendments from the Senate that I have issues with.

Bill S-5 recognizes that every Canadian has the right to a healthy environment, and it would require the Government of Canada to protect that right. I will come back to one of these, as I have some comments on this. Second, Bill S-5 would add language to CEPA to highlight the government's commitment to implementing UNDRIP and to recognize the importance of considering vulnerable populations when assessing the toxicity of substances. Third, it would create a regime for highest risk substances. This would replace the list of toxic substances.

Government Orders

Fourth, it lays out a criterion for the government to look to for managing and regulating a substance. Next, Bill S-5 would require the ministers to develop and publish a plan specifying which substances should be given priority for assessing whether they are toxic or can become toxic. Bill S-5 would also ensure all new substances must be developed in 24 months if a substance is determined to be toxic.

● (1305)

The bill also streamlines risk assessment for drugs and removes redundancies in regulations. That I am a fan of. Finally, Bill S-5 allows any person to request a minister to assess whether a substance can become toxic.

We know that this legislation looked dramatically different when it was first tabled in the Senate. Some of our unelected colleagues in the other place have a habit of gerrymandering legislation to suit their own agendas. They have done so with the current vision of Bill S-5. In any event, there are significant concerns about certain amendments passed in the Senate, which I will be addressing.

The Senate passed 24 amendments, 11 of which I think are detrimental to the bill and industry. For example, plastic manufacturing items are now listed in schedule 1, part 2, of substances that need to be regulated. I cannot imagine our friends in the plastic industry are very happy about that. Plastics are used in medical devices and medical supplies, such as tubing, and in dentistry and surgeries. They are used in automobiles, cell phones and thousands of other items used daily. Common sense is required here.

I mentioned that I would circle back to the right to a healthy environment. While the Senate has added language here around mechanisms to support the protection of that right and reasonable limits, I feel this is premature and too prescriptive. It could pre-empt certain elements of consultations with stakeholders. Furthermore, the ambiguous nature of this language will spur new litigation and impact the way that CEPA is enforced. The government would be wise to clear up the language on this, as the right does only apply to CEPA, and it is not a charter right.

The next amendments I have issues with are amendments 17 and 18, which pertain to living organisms. When I was the vice-chair of the environment committee, I heard from concerned industry stakeholders that this provision creates a new obligation for industries that use living organisms to hold public consultations with the minister for each new living organism developed in Canada. Not a lot of people understand what these living organisms are all about. They are environmentally responsive. They are cells. They are changeable in growth. They are reproductive. They have a complex chemistry, and they have a homeostasis with energy processing. Those are the sorts of things that we are speaking of.

The potential for theft of intellectual property is vast here. If I were involved in this, and if my competitors required that we hold public consultations, and they are developing an organism in my space, why would I invest in research and development when it can be taken from the public consultations and tweaked slightly? I have heard from industry about the chilling effect this would have on research and development in Canada and in investment and industry in Canada. This will set a dangerous precedent for chemicals.

The next amendments that I have concern over are amendments 9 and 15, relating to schedule 1, part 1. By replacing substances that pose the highest risk language, and reference to schedule 1, part 1, the Senate has added more rigid language. Removing the words “highest risk” makes enforcement of this provision unclear. Although the right is not yet defined, and challenges exist there, the government will have up to two years after this bill passes to figure out what that right means to stakeholders.

I will be supporting the bill, but I would like to see my colleagues at the environment committee return the bill to its original state or get as close as we can. I think this is one of the critical issues that we all have to be concerned about.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member said in his conclusions that he will be supporting the bill. I appreciate the fact that the Conservatives, like the New Democrats and the Bloc Party, as I understand it, will be supporting the legislation.

The previous question I asked one of his colleagues was on how the Conservative Party seems determined to continue debate at second reading. I had posed this question: Would it like to see this legislation passed out of second reading in 2022, or is it looking at 2023?

Does the Conservative Party have any idea as to when it would actually like to see the legislation go forward, given the fact that it supports the bill and there is a lot of work and a lot of interest to try to start the committee process?

● (1310)

Mr. Earl Dreeshen: Madam Speaker, lots of times in politics one only takes part of the sentence that was presented. I said I would be supporting the bill and wanting to see my colleagues at the environment committee return it back to its original state or get it as close as we can. That basically means that all of these amendments I mentioned are the reason we need to do that.

Of course, if we are going to discuss why that is important, that is the purpose of the House. I am sure the member did not mean to take my comment out of context, but certainly that is the reason it is important for us to be able to continue this discussion.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Madam Speaker, in Quebec, in 2022, a motion was passed affirming Quebec's primary jurisdiction over the environment.

I would like to know what my colleague thinks about that. Will he support the Bloc Québécois in its efforts to ensure that there is no interference in the jurisdictions of Quebec and the provinces?

*Government Orders**[English]*

Mr. Earl Dreeshen: Madam Speaker, interference with industries in provinces is something that the government is an expert at. Those issues and things that are important in Quebec are certainly just as important in my province of Alberta. It is critical that the current federal government get off of its ideological messaging and start thinking about things that are real.

I mentioned earlier as well my concern that we never measure things. We wait until it hits the media and then we crank up the discussion with that. However, to think that any energy process that we have, any item that we have and any molecules that are being presented do not affect the environment is an issue that we should all be concerned about. Certainly the area of provincial rights is probably the best place to make sure that this is done properly.

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciate my colleague from Red Deer—Mountain View's words of wisdom. The great orator Paul Harvey said, "Self-government won't work without self-discipline."

The plastics industry has been a regulator for many years and has done tremendous work on regulating its industry. The member talked about the issues of toxic substances, etc. I wonder if he would agree that part of what is missing in this legislation is the fact that, while we put toxic products on schedule 1, part 1 or part 2, we do not have any mechanism in the legislation that would take them off it, the steps to take them off the schedule if it were found out scientifically that the products were not toxic. I wonder if the member would have any comments on that.

Mr. Earl Dreeshen: Madam Speaker, that gives me an opportunity to deal with the rest of the story. That, of course, has to do with the significance of our plastics industry.

I was at a school not that long ago and a student said, "What are you going to do about plastic straws?" I said that we can make that decision as to whether we want it that way or if we want to have the paper straws. At least, we should understand that it takes three times as much energy to produce the paper straw as it does to produce the plastic straw, so we need to understand that there are going to be trade-offs. That is really the critical point.

One of the main things that I was speaking about was that we have to make sure that we measure all things that are done, and then we make wise decisions. We can tell people that a decision has been made for this purpose, and we do not have to be always in this battle of one against the other.

[Translation]

Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am rather excited to rise today. It is always a pleasure to talk about the environment in the House, especially since I was a member of an Ecosphere fair on the environment for more than 10 years.

I ended up there when I was working for Christian Ouellet, whose work inspired me. I tip my hat to him. As an MP, he was the Bloc Qu b cois deputy critic for the environment and natural resources. I did a lot of research for him for studies on all sorts of environmental aspects when I was working on Parliament Hill. Whenever we talk about the environment, the diversity of what we might find always strikes us. It affects so many aspects of our lives.

When I agreed to be an administrator for the Ecosphere fair at the time, I found it really interesting how that helped me see the impact that common household items and personal use items have on the environment. There is a lot of talk about microplastics, construction and renovation materials, what we use for transportation, as well as all the new technology for green vehicles. This touches a very large area of activity. It also gave me the opportunity, over many years, to have many conversations and to attend many conferences on the topic.

That said, today I rise to speak to Bill S-5 on behalf of the Bloc Qu b cois. I will start by saying that we are in favour of the principle of this bill. However, the Bloc Qu b cois deems that the Quebec nation has sole jurisdiction over public decisions concerning the environment and our Quebec territory. That was brought up earlier during questions and comments, and my colleague from La Pointe-de-l' le also said it, rather eloquently: On April 13, 2022, parliamentarians from all parties in Quebec's National Assembly unanimously adopted a motion asserting the primacy of Quebec's jurisdiction over the environment. Elected representatives in Quebec unanimously oppose any federal government intervention in environmental matters in Quebec.

The Bloc Qu b cois fully endorses that position and strongly advocates for the interests and values of Quebec in the federal political arena. For us, that is really crucial, particularly as we have nothing to learn from the federal government when it comes to the environment. Quebec really has a great reputation, as I said. I realized that when working for the former member for Brome—Missisquoi, a great environmentalist who travelled internationally to represent Quebec in green architecture. We even have an international reputation when it comes to environmental matters.

That said, under our current laws, the federal government has certain environmental protection responsibilities. The Bloc Qu b cois will do everything in its power to ensure that the federal government properly carries out its duties. That obviously involves updating the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, or CEPA. This is a necessary legislative modernization, and we will give it all the attention it deserves.

We want to point out that Bill S-5 does not constitute a comprehensive review of the CEPA. In fact, not all parts of the act are covered by Bill S-5. The bill includes many elements that are particularly technical, but I will not go there today. Those elements merit serious study by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, and I think that my colleague from Repentigny, who is on that committee, will do excellent work, supported by my colleague from Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia. Together, I am sure they will do a great job on this file. We really want those members to do this work as part of the committee to ensure that the modernized law will truly allow the federal government to fulfill its environmental protection responsibilities, while respecting Quebec's environmental sovereignty.

The Bloc Québécois has been critical of some of the partisan claims inserted into Bill S-5. We are not fooled by the Liberal government's claim that modernizing the act creates the right to a healthy environment. That is absolutely not the case, even according to the senior public servants who presented Bill S-5 to parliamentarians when it was tabled. First, it should be noted that all the sections pertaining to the right to a healthy environment and to vulnerable populations are found in CEPA's preamble. Their scope is that of the act itself. They have no impact on other Canadian laws. While the bill would add the protection of this right to the federal government's mission, the proposed amendments would not necessarily create a true fundamental right to live in a healthy environment, although that is the crucial point and what more and more people are calling for.

● (1315)

If the government were serious about creating a new right and had any political courage at all, it would propose that the federation partners hold a round of constitutional negotiations to include this right in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Since 2006, Quebec's Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms has stated: "Every person has a right to live in a healthful environment in which biodiversity is preserved". Once again, Quebec is a trailblazer.

Unlike CEPA, the Quebec charter, in Quebec's political context, is quasi-constitutional in scope. This is not insignificant. Clearly, Quebec does not need Canada's help to promote and protect the fundamental rights of Quebecers.

When it comes to advancing environmental justice or strengthening environmental protection in Quebec, it is futile to pin our hopes on the Canadian government. Just look at Bay du Nord, for one thing. Look at all the money the federal government is putting into the oil sands. Look at any number of issues. While Quebec is trying to move away from oil, put money into a green transition, and support workers, the federal government continues to invest in all these fossil fuels.

Nevertheless, the Bloc Québécois does want to work with all parliamentarians on chemicals management, the list of toxic substances, improved risk management accountability, comprehensive assessment of the cumulative effects of substances, and mandatory labelling requirements to ensure that the repealed act reflects, to the greatest possible extent, the recommendations of stakeholders such

Government Orders

as environmental health protection groups and chemical industry partners.

For all these reasons, the Bloc Québécois will be absolutely vigilant in its study of the strengthening environmental protection for a healthier Canada act. Bill S-5, which amends the 1999 Canadian act, makes related amendments to the Food and Drugs Act and repeals the Perfluorooctane Sulfonate Virtual Elimination Act, was introduced in the Senate by Senator Marc Gold and went through first reading on February 9, 2022. It is now at second reading, which began on March 1, 2022.

Perhaps the bill does seek to strengthen environmental protection for a healthier Canada, but as I said, it lacks teeth. It lacks something that Quebec has already. The bill is identical to Bill C-28, which was introduced by the environment minister and received first reading on April 13, 2021, before dying on the Order Paper on August 15, 2021, when the 43rd Parliament was dissolved. That brings us back to the impacts of the 2021 election. How many bills died on the Order Paper just for vote-seeking reasons? This bill did, but many others did too. I have risen in the House often to speak out against that election, which traded four quarters for a dollar at a great cost to taxpayers.

If the government were serious about its desire to get things done, it would not always be holding up the work. In August 2020, when it decided to prorogue the House, many reports were shelved, including the report of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women on how the COVID-19 pandemic affected women. The 2021 election also resulted in a lot of reports being shelved. We see that there have been delays in far too many areas.

The bill is identical to Bill C-28, as I said. This bill, which amends the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, is divided into 12 parts. We could come back to it in a much more precise way, but it is also important to mention that in 2017, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development published a report containing 87 recommendations, including the following: recognize and enforce the right to a healthy environment, address exposures of vulnerable populations to toxic substances, and recognize the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The government dragged its feet on this UN declaration for far too long. Canada was one of the last countries to sign on. It is really sad.

My time is running out. I had so much more to say, but I will just add that on the weekend, I met with Thibault Rehn, from Vigilance OGM. He was proud of the work the Bloc Québécois is doing in denouncing all this and calling for better traceability.

Government Orders

• (1320)

He also told me how proud it makes him to hear us talk about what we eat, what we put in our bodies, the work of the member for Berthier—Maskinongé at the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food, and the work of the Bloc Québécois in general when it comes to the environment. I realize that I get fired up when I talk about the environment, I could have said a lot more—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. I am sorry to interrupt the member, but her time is up. I tried to give the member a little more time, but we have to give the other speakers time too.

Moving on to questions and comments.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, some members, from the Bloc in particular, make reference to provincial and national jurisdictional responsibilities. I think for some issues, it does not matter what part of the region we are from. We recognize that different levels of government need to come together for our communities to benefit as a whole. The environment is one of those issues.

I wonder if the member could provide her thoughts on how important it is, whether we are in a rural municipality in Quebec, in the city of Montreal, in the province or in Ottawa, for us to work together for the betterment of Canada and for the environment?

• (1325)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andr anne Larouche: Madam Speaker, it always surprises me to hear the member for Winnipeg North talk about the division of power, about what falls under Quebec's jurisdiction, as I see it, and under federal jurisdiction, as he sees it.

I have said this before, but I want to say it again for his sake. This issue has to be as non-partisan as possible because everyone has the right to a healthy environment. The problem is that the Liberals and the Conservatives politicize this issue far too often. I would even go so far as to say that the federal government has nothing to teach us. So much of what Liberal Party members do is greenwashing.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I think we have a problem. There is a flaw in the Environment Canada framework because the purpose of the bill is unclear. In the beginning, 30 years ago, it was important to maintain the list of toxic substances set out in the act. The Supreme Court of Canada rendered a famous ruling in that regard in *R. v. Hydro-Qu bec*.

It is clear from that Supreme Court ruling that we need to continue with the criminal jurisdiction approach. In order to do that, we need to protect the list of toxic substances and not divide it in two because that would make this legislation more vulnerable when the courts have to enforce it.

Can my colleague comment on my theory that this poses a serious risk?

Ms. Andr anne Larouche: Madam Speaker, that is why I pointed out that there is still a lot of work to be done by the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, particularly with my colleague from Repentigny. A lot of work still needs to be done to rethink this legislation and look at what is missing from it. That issue has already been addressed.

As I said, Quebec has basically enshrined this quasi-constitutional right in law, something that Canada has not done and should do. I hope that the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development can examine this bill and propose new improvements to address this type of shortcoming.

[*English*]

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, like many times in our history, we are at a crossroads in regard to choosing the well-being of people over profits.

Too many times, government legislators have turned a blind eye to doing better to protect the health of people. Too many times, they have chosen to protect the profits of polluters and toxic industries because they did not know better or could not see the results of their choices manifesting in harmful ways in their very own communities.

Today, we are once again at that crossroad of opportunity to do better, or to carry on with the status quo that is harming people in the name of corporate greed and profits.

Over the past 50 years, science has told us, and cancer has shown us, that there are toxins in our bodies that should not be there. This is the fact of the matter, and this is what needs to be corrected. It is not just pollution in our air, water and land, but pollutants in our bodies, blood and breast milk exist. Pollutants that were put there by unregulated industry.

While I was preparing for this speech, I was reminded of the choice of the 36th Parliament that made pollution prevention planning discretionary and not mandatory under CEPA in 1999. That was a mistake a past Parliament made, and after 23 years, after eight Parliaments, this is a decision that this 44th Parliament must finally correct.

In those 23 years, only 25 toxic substances listed in the initial act have been subject to pollution prevention planning requirements. That is a rate of about one toxic substance every year. It will take 150 years for the existing list of toxins in the act to get a pollution prevention plan. As the Canadian Environmental Law Association stated, "This is a leisurely pace to addressing chemicals the federal government regards as the worst of the worst substances in the Canadian environment."

Looking at it in decade-long timelines, it makes me wonder why Canadian governments have not done more before now to protect human health from known cancer-causing toxins. Every day 641 Canadians are diagnosed with cancer, and here we are, 23 years later, looking at the inadequacy of CEPA.

Government Orders

Canadians deserve better than the CEPA of the past, and it is the expectation of the NDP that this window of opportunity to improve environmental protections for Canadians and to offer them a right to a healthy environment is imperative to the health of us and of our children. We want a world where toxins being introduced into our bodies and the bodies of our children is not inevitable.

The NDP will be supporting the bill at second reading with the hopes that it can be substantially strengthened to reach that goal.

Bill S-5 is largely concerned with protecting the environment and human health from toxins and maintaining air and water quality. This is good, but there is widespread agreement that CEPA is overdue for substantial improvements. For one thing, it is widely considered to be unenforceable as it now stands, as there are multiple obstacles to enforcing it and remedies cannot be used by citizens. That needs to be corrected.

There are 159 countries around the world with legal obligations to protect the human right to a healthy environment, but Canada does not have those legal obligations. There are environmental bills of rights in Ontario, Quebec, Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, but there is no federal law that explicitly recognizes the right to live in a healthy environment in Canada.

While Bill S-5 seems to be a step forward in recognizing the right to live in a healthy environment, there are serious concerns that this right will not be backed up by measures that improve the enforceability of the act. In fact, the Senate committee studying the bill reported just that.

As my colleague from South Okanagan—West Kootenay previously pointed out, Canadians deserve more power to ensure that their right to live in a healthy environment is upheld. That is one of the things that my colleague's private member's bill, Bill C-219, would do.

• (1330)

Bill C-219 is titled an act to enact the Canadian environmental bill of rights, and it offers umbrella coverage to all federal legislation outside of CEPA. Specifically, it would give residents of Canada the right to, among other things, access information about environmental concerns, have standing at hearings, access tribunals and courts to uphold environmental rights and request a review of laws. It would also provide protection to whistle-blowers.

I encourage all members of the House to support Bill C-219 when it comes before the House in this session, because while it is good to see Bill S-5 here, it is important to note that adding the right to a healthy environment in a limited way under CEPA is not the same thing as ensuring, broadly, that all people have the right to live in a healthy environment, as is the goal of Bill C-219.

There remain troubling limitations in Bill S-5 on how the right to a healthy environment will be applied and how the right will be enforced. Without modernizing legislation to update chemicals management in Canada, and without the legal recognition of the right to a healthy environment, Canadians will continue to be exposed to unregulated and harmful chemicals.

Canadians are exposed to chemicals from polluting industries every day in the air, in the waters of our lakes, rivers and oceans, and even in the safety of our own homes in the products we use.

Canadians expect their government to take action to protect them and their families from toxic substances. They expect the government to ensure that all people have the right to live in a healthy environment. These are things New Democrats have been calling on the government to fix for years. While the government has chosen to do nothing, the number of chemicals that people in Canada are exposed to in their daily lives has grown exponentially.

There has been a 50-fold increase in the production of chemicals in the past 50 years, and that is expected to triple again by 2050. Personal care products are manufactured with over 10,000 unique chemical ingredients, some of which are either suspected or known to cause cancer, harm our reproductive systems or disrupt our endocrine systems. Even some disposable diapers have been shown to contain these harmful chemicals. Babies are being impacted.

Since CEPA was first enacted, Canada has also learned much more about the harmful cumulative effects of these toxic chemicals on our health. We now know that exposure to hazardous chemicals, even in small amounts, can be linked to chronic illnesses like asthma, cancer and diabetes. According to Health Canada, air pollution is a factor in over 15,000 premature deaths and millions of respiratory issues every year in Canada.

These toxins are impacting racialized communities even harder. Frontline workers, who are predominantly women or racialized, often have higher exposure to hazardous chemicals. Across Canada, indigenous, Black and racialized families are disproportionately negatively impacted by toxic dumps, polluting pipelines, tainted drinking water and other environmental hazards.

The former UN special rapporteur on human rights and hazardous substances and wastes stated, "The invisible violence inflicted by toxics is an insidious burden disproportionately borne by Indigenous peoples in Canada." This is exactly why there must be a better enforcement mechanism in this bill so that communities, families and individuals can achieve the protection outlined in law.

Government Orders

One of the most disappointing and concerning gaps in this bill is that it does not touch on the citizen enforcement mechanism. As the member for Victoria has said in the House, “The citizen enforcement mechanism is, frankly, broken. It has never been successfully used. The process is so onerous that it is essentially impossible for a citizen to bring an environmental enforcement action. Without a functioning citizen enforcement mechanism, there are serious questions about how the right to a healthy environment can be truly enforced.”

There are also other critical gaps in Bill S-5. It lacks clear accountability and timelines for how toxic substances are managed. It lacks mandatory labelling so Canadians can make informed choices about the products they use. It does not fix loopholes that allow corporations to hide which toxic substances are in their products.

• (1335)

If we want to protect our health and the environment, we have to ensure that we are following the advice of scientists and experts, not the interests of big corporations. These big corporations, made up of some of Canada’s biggest polluting industries, have been attempting to stop amendments to Bill S-5—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member’s time is up. I am sure she will be able to provide more information through questions and comments.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for those very thoughtful remarks, and for the indication that she would like to support getting the bill to committee so that it can be improved further. I agree with the hon. member on that.

Does the hon. member have a comment on the tactics that she sees the Conservatives using on the other side? There is obviously a filibuster in play. I wonder if the hon. member would have a comment on that and agree with me that we need to get the bill to committee, so that we can improve it.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Madam Speaker, the people of Port Moody—Coquitlam sent me to Ottawa to make their lives better. We know that 641 Canadians, every day, are diagnosed with cancer. I think that every day we wait for this bill is impacting Canadians in a negative way.

• (1340)

Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC): Madam Speaker, I heard the member’s speech and would agree. We are all concerned about the environment and having harmful chemicals affect our kids and their drinking water.

The Liberal member across the way asked her a question. I would like to ask her a question about the Liberal record of inaction on the environment.

What makes her think that now is going to be any different by just putting one more law in the books in regard to the environment?

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Madam Speaker, as I said, the residents of Port Moody—Coquitlam sent me to Ottawa to do the work for them. If I can save one person from getting cancer, I am going to do that work.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l’Île, BQ): Madam Speaker, as members know, the Quebec National Assembly voted unanimously in favour of a motion earlier this year, 2022, asserting Quebec’s primary jurisdiction over the environment.

Would my colleague comment on that? Is she willing to work together to ensure that this bill does not encroach on the jurisdictions of Quebec and the provinces?

[*English*]

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Madam Speaker, I did point out in my speech that I commend Quebec for the work that it is doing on the environment. I mentioned in my speech that it has stronger laws than the federal government. I commend it for that work and I admire it.

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is good that we are having this debate today. I too look forward to this legislation going to committee. As we know, on Friday we launched the poppy campaign in Waterloo. This year, the Royal Canadian Legion has launched a biodegradable poppy, which shows that every single one of us has an important role to play when it comes to protecting the environment. This is the first modernization to CEPA in over two decades, so I think every step does matter.

I would like to hear from the member how she believes that by getting this to committee steps can be taken and, if more people jump in to protect the environment and take their role seriously, we actually can do something about it, rather than be cynical, as we are seeing from the official opposition.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Madam Speaker, citizens being able to have more influence and more ability to enforce a healthy environment is important. That is why it is important to have those amendments in this bill.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am interested in the hon. member finishing her speech. If she has some more comments to make, I would like to give her that time.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Madam Speaker, I really appreciate that. Canadians cannot wait another two decades and continue to be unknowingly exposed to unregulated and harmful chemicals.

Our health is on the line. Let us hope that the 44th Parliament gets it right this time when the CEPA amendments come back to the House.

Government Orders

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a good day to join my colleagues in the House of Commons for an important debate on Bill S-5, which was known in the last Parliament as Bill C-28. In the last Parliament, I served as opposition critic for the environment and had the chance to work with many members in the chamber who are quite concerned about the environment.

Since the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, or CEPA, was first put in place in 1999, we have not seen a redo or significant amendment to it. As we all know, life is becoming increasingly more complex. What I do realize is that there are voices on both sides of the House of Commons who care deeply about the environment. Some may have concerns about its impact on industry. We have also those who have concerns about how it impacts everyday Canadians. That is particularly important for when we have these debates.

The parliamentary secretary from Winnipeg has jumped onto his feet so many times today, accusing the opposition, and in this case the Conservatives, although we just heard from a Bloc Québécois member as well as from an NDP member, of essentially filibustering. Another member from Manitoba also just did that. Let us just put that to rest right now in my comments.

Let us be mindful that CEPA actually has Criminal Code implications. When someone is charged under CEPA legislation, ultimately the mechanism is through the courts through the Criminal Code. It is extremely important for us to understand, especially considering as life has become more complicated and as different levels of government are trying to see a more environmentally friendly place for their citizens, that there are going to be more complex trade-offs.

I am a former parliamentary secretary, and I know there are two types of parliamentary secretaries. There are those who burn shoe leather trying to build consensus in the House of Commons for their government's legislation or those who burn the shoe leather of their ministers by shining their shoes. Any parliamentary secretary who is trying to say that having debate in this chamber equates to filibustering is just wrong.

I am going to get on to the actual legislation, but I think I made the point that when we have this once-in-a-legislative-lifetime ability to have conversations about critical legislation that has Criminal Code impacts, it should be taken on, and we should be celebrating those members who feel strongly about these issues.

I would like to talk a bit about some of the concerns I have.

First, I take some issue with the government's approach when it comes to the regulation of plastics. It is no surprise that in the last Parliament we went through this at the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development at length. What we found was essentially that the industry and the province, by the way, Alberta, was most affected by the changes to plastic regulation. What we have is the government trying to pivot desperately from a bad decision. That bad decision was to list manufactured plastic as a toxic substance under schedule 1. We were coming out of the pandemic.

We all know the same molecules that are used in a medical application are the same plastic molecules in a plastic straw. They are the same molecules that are used in a part for an electric vehicle, as electric vehicles are being made out of plastic more and more because it is strong and also lighter.

For the government, this created quite a conundrum, because the industry obviously resented the fact. Actually, some industry players have taken the government to court over this, and I believe the Government of Alberta has done the same. To solve this, the government has now created two schedules: the highest risk and the lowest risk. Again, it has not actually fixed the problem, which is putting in manufactured plastics that are used in our everyday lives. I could not be speaking to the House of Commons today without the use of some plastics in the computer I use or the mouse I use. Many of the members would not be able to get there without the transportation for which those plastics allow.

• (1345)

This is an area the government has complete hypocrisy and really should be held to account. It is not necessarily removing industry concerns when it comes to the new schedule, because they are still labelled as toxic. This will create a problem for the government as it tries to say plastic straws are bad and banned, but electric vehicles are good and it wants to see more investment in them. The government will have to deal with this issue at some point.

When it comes to the chemical management plan, this plan was first adopted by the Harper government when the Hon. Rona Ambrose was the environment minister. I am going to start with the good, and then I am going to get to the bad and the ugly.

The good is that the government has seen the wisdom in it and has decided to take the chemical management plan, which will allow for hazardous chemicals that have been shown conclusively can be risk managed, which means that there are plants in place and these companies are very good at it, to be utilized to make important substances we use in our everyday lives and in their chemical processes. This is important in an industrial economy. Yes, we still have an industrial economy. The Liberal government and the NDP's costly coalition has not done away with that just yet. That is an important part of it, so I am glad to see it maintained.

However, the Senate has created a number of changes to the legislation that could cause some considerable consternation, because oftentimes as legislators we will hear from different groups and try to placate some groups in how it is used by creating uncertain language.

Government Orders

For example, amendment 9 and 15 by the Senate would replace the schedule 1 substances that pose the “highest risk” language, in reference to schedule 1 part 1, with more prescriptive language. We would prefer the “highest risk” language, because it includes the term “risk”. As I said, this is a risk management process, and the removal of the words “highest risk” would make the provision's enforcement unclear. This could lead to all sorts of litigation down the road. As I said, if someone violates CEPA, it would not be just a simple slap on the wrist or issuing a fine to industry that gets passed on to consumers; it would be serious business. We need to be very careful about this.

I would like to focus on something, because a lot has been said. The NDP has been really trying to balance its rhetoric during election cycles and to its constituents with what the Liberals have put forward with the so-called “right to a healthy environment”. Essentially, the New Democrats say they are going to take the legislation to committee and make it better, because they want to ensure it is a right.

I had the opportunity in the last Parliament to have an official from Environment and Climate Change Canada come and discuss specifically another piece of legislation. I asked about Bill C-28, and I said this, on April 14, 2021, at the environment committee's 25th meeting:

I'll be as quick as I can.

When people think of rights, they think of the charter, for example, that the government cannot do this to you, those kinds of civil rights, etc. There are multiple ones, yet the right to a healthy environment, what does that mean, and are they at the same level?

Ms. Laura Farquharson said, “Bill C-28 recognizes a right to a healthy environment under CEPA, and it's set out that there will be an implementation framework to delineate how that lens will be used in the administration of the act.”

My response was, “Will the right to a healthy environment under CEPA only solely apply to the regulatory enforcement of CEPA?”

She replied, “It not only applies to regulatory enforcement; it would apply also to how policies are developed under that act, but the point is, it only applies to that act.”

I replied, “It's a limited right, or not even technically that.”

She replied, “Right.”

Again, the NDP has basically sided with the government. Its members will say they are looking for further amendments, but it is clear this is just a factor, not a right, to be taken when a bureaucrat is looking through a lens of social economic responses, either for a policy or enforcement under CEPA alone. This is not a clear cut right, like we would see in the Charter of Rights or the Bill of Rights.

Those are a few of my concerns. I hope I have brought a few concerns to the floor that others have not. I also hope that the parliamentary secretaries can understand we are here to talk about CEPA, because this is the once-in-a-generation opportunity, as parliamentarians, for us to be able to discuss this important legislation.

• (1350)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member is a little sensitive with respect to the questions I have been asking, and it is because we have a substantial legislative agenda. Whether it is tax breaks, giving GST rebates, the dental care program or the rental program, there are so many programs and pieces of legislation for us talk about.

On the legislation we are debating today, Bill S-5, I am a little anxious to find out when the Conservatives would like it to pass. Should it be this year or next year? Given the number of members who have spoken on the bill, and it seems the member has a lot of good stuff that he would love to discuss at the committee stage, why not allow that debate at committee? Let us pass the legislation and get it to committee so he can make some of those amendments, make those suggestions, and see if the Conservatives can make some changes to the legislation.

• (1355)

Mr. Dan Albas: Madam Speaker, I have many questions and comments about the member, but I will start with this. First, I am not sensitive to the member; I am just tired of him.

Second, I have been on the committee and understand how this works. There is a very small number of MPs on committee and the rest of us in this chamber, who are not on the environment committee, will not be able to raise those questions. I would like to talk about the governance changes that the government has put in the bill, where the Food and Drug Administration component of CEPA will be given strictly to Health Canada. I have some issues about the impact of endocrine disruptors on the environment and I do not know necessarily that it is a good move, but I will not be at that committee.

It is patently unfair for the member to be saying we should just move on. That is a bad-faith discussion on his behalf.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would remind members to be respectful toward each other.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Beauport—Limoulu.

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoulu, BQ): Madam Speaker, my question is actually very simple.

The Canadian Environmental Protection Act has not been updated since 1999, in other words, since the last century. A lot has changed since then, including knowledge about the toxicity of certain products and the increased health risks associated with using certain products together.

Statements by Members

Could my colleague point to something in the act that needs to be amended in order to improve it?

Mr. Dan Albas: Madam Speaker, as I said, it is important to me that the process be enriched by discussions in the House. I think that is also important to members from across the country, especially those from Quebec.

As I said, the Senate put forward many amendments.

[*English*]

We will have to discuss whether those amendments are good for the bill. I do not think they all are, but I would like to hear from other members. I respect what they have to say in this chamber, not just necessarily the voices at committee.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, this debate should have been settled a long time ago. What I find deeply concerning is that the Conservatives continually raise questions about a fundamental part of the bill, which is a right to a clean environment. I would think we would agree across all party lines to a clean environment, but apparently not the Conservatives. Also, I am very concerned about their promotion of single-use plastics and toxic chemicals, and not getting a bill through the House that would protect and keep the environment safe.

Mr. Dan Albas: Madam Speaker, we know that member is feeling the heat from the new Conservative leader, who has been putting out a message, particularly if we look at how the last election went in his neck of the woods. People are starting to abandon the New Democrats because they do not champion the regular working person and, instead, champion certain issues without necessarily having any balance whatsoever.

When I raised the concern that the so-called right to a healthy environment was just one factor that a bureaucrat would bring up in a regulatory policy, that is not really a right. If the member is pretending to his constituents that it is somehow more substantive than that, then he is kidding himself, and he is kidding himself that his leader is resonating in places like northern Ontario. Being focused on the wrong issues will be a problem the NDP will have in British Columbia in the next election.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

EMMY PRUNEAU

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, Ind.): Madam Speaker, just over two weeks ago, during question period, I brought to the Minister of Health's attention the situation of a young woman in my riding, Emmy Pruneau, who is fighting a wretched incurable cancer and who unfortunately did not have access to a medication that could increase her life expectancy.

Today, thanks to the efforts and exceptional collaboration of the Minister of Health and his staff, Emmy's doctor, Ramy Saleh of Health Canada, her father, and journalist Jasmin Dumas, I can confirm that she will now have access to the medication.

Today, I want to thank from the bottom of my heart all these people who demonstrated, with their determination and their profes-

sionalism, that anything is possible if we work together and that politics can be beautiful, effective and compassionate.

Thanks to you all, the lives of Emmy and her family and, consequently, the lives of everyone else who might find themselves in the same situation in future have taken another path, the path of hope.

Emmy, we are all with you. Keep smiling.

* * *

• (1400)

[*English*]

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR'S COMMUNITY SPIRIT AWARD

Mr. Mike Kelloway (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise in the House today to recognize my constituents of Judique, Nova Scotia, who have recently been awarded the Nova Scotia Lieutenant Governor's Community Spirit Award.

The Lieutenant Governor's Community Spirit Award celebrates the power, strength and diversity of vibrant communities across Nova Scotia. With that, it is clear to me why Judique was considered for this prestigious award. Despite being a small community, Judique has always maintained a very large presence in the realm of arts, culture and overall community spirit. From community tartan projects to the creation of custom musical reels, Judique's identity as a proud and unique community remains strong.

I am proud to represent the people of Judique within my riding of Cape Breton—Canso. I extend my sincere congratulations to Warden MacIsaac, Deputy Warden Gillis and, most of all, the people of Judique for this well-deserved award.

* * *

DEBORAH FOSTER-STAHLE

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is with great sadness that I rise to recognize the passing of local entrepreneur Deborah Foster-Stahle. Deborah had been part of our community since 2009 and was passionate about helping local business owners succeed and grow.

Being an entrepreneur was in Deborah's DNA. Deborah was the owner of BNI Ontario Central North and OfficeInc!, a place for local businesses to operate, refer business and network. In fact, in her time, Deborah helped chapter members exchange \$15 million a year in goods and services. Guided by her leadership, it is estimated that local businesses created over \$1 billion in local economic activity. Never one to sit back on her success, in 2019, she established commercial kitchens in OfficeInc! to help "foodpreneurs" bring their products to market.

Statements by Members

Deborah lived her life with passion, enthusiasm, determination and vision. She will be missed greatly by her family, friends, the business owners she stood side by side with, her Great Dane KoKo, who stood by her, and the communities and businesses she touched.

* * *

HUMAN RIGHTS IN IRAN

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Madam Speaker, on Saturday I joined the human chain in Toronto, holding hands with thousands of other Canadians across the country in solidarity with the Iranian people protesting for almost two months now. These ongoing rallies across Iranian cities and around the world demonstrate a great resistance to the suppression of democracy and human rights. I would like to acknowledge the tremendous courage, perseverance, sacrifice and selflessness of the Iranian people, who every day stand up against the Iranian regime, fighting for universal values of life and freedom.

The brutality of the regime in Iran has shown no limits. So far, hundreds of people have been killed and thousands have been arrested. We also see the Internet shutdown by the regime, accompanied by the non-stop disinformation and propaganda against dissidents and the opposition. However, mass rallies continue across Iran and around the globe.

The world shall not and cannot be silent. We all stand in solidarity with the Iranian people in their quest for freedom.

* * *

[*Translation*]

ROSEMÈRE

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today, I would like to talk about a city in my riding that deserves a bouquet of the best blooms. This city, where I live, has been making a name for itself in various ways over the past few years and has been awarded numerous prizes by the judges of the Communities in Bloom competition.

On October 22, Rosemère was declared the grand champion at the Communities in Bloom national and international awards ceremonies in Victoria, British Columbia. It also received a “5 Blooms - Gold” award and a special mention for its commemorative poetry garden.

This competition recognizes cities in Quebec and Canada that foster the nurturing of environmental sustainability, the enhancement of green spaces and heritage conservation. The City of Rosemère was given the highest possible bloom ranking. I am very proud that a city in Rivière-des-Mille-Îles has stood out among such other formidable rivals.

Clearly, Rosemère is a proud, green and prosperous city.

* * *

● (1405)

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. Marc Serré (Nickel Belt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I accompanied the Minister of Official Languages to the launch of the final report of the États généraux sur le postsecondaire en contexte fran-

cophone minoritaire. It is important for the federal government to be at the table with the provinces.

Congratulations to Lynn Brouillette of the Association des collèges et universités de la francophonie canadienne and to Liane Roy of the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne.

We consulted many stakeholders across Canada. More than 6,000 people submitted suggestions and solutions for the new action plan for official languages 2023-2028. I want to thank them for that.

I would like to note the participation of community organizations and their representatives, such as Joanne Gervais from the ACFO du grand Sudbury and Marc Lavigne from the West Nipissing Arts Council. These organizations represent the many francophones in my region of Nickel Belt.

This demonstrates why Bill C-13 and the upcoming action plan on official languages are so important. They will enable us to continue supporting communities and institutions from coast to coast to coast.

I hope that all parties in the House will support us in passing Bill C-13 as soon as possible.

* * *

[*English*]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the world is at a crossroads. The ongoing power struggle of dictatorships like Russia and China against western democracies is threatening our future and way of life. Russia's brutal and illegal war against Ukraine is the most obvious symptom of this threat. The communist regime in Beijing is weighing options on when to invade Taiwan. Both are challenging Canada in our Arctic.

Meanwhile, the Liberal government is refusing to invest in our military. It has failed to modernize NORAD and update our North Warning System. The Liberals are still making our forces fly obsolete fighter jets and sail archaic submarines. Most shockingly, according to retired General Rick Hillier, we have roughly half the number of troops we need. Our current chief of the defence staff characterized it as a crisis. I call it a catastrophe.

However, there is good news on the horizon. Our Conservative leader, the next Prime Minister of Canada, will put Canada first, give our troops the kits they need and restore honour and respect to those who serve our country in uniform.

LIGHT THE NIGHT

Mr. Tony Van Bynen (Newmarket—Aurora, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on Saturday, October 22, Canadians came together from coast to coast, in person and virtually, to celebrate the Light the Night walk 2022. Dedicated to the blood cancer community, it is a celebration of the many donors, supporters, volunteers, blood cancer survivors and loved ones lost.

The event is on a path to raising more than \$6 million for critical research, community programs and advocacy for all 137 types of blood cancer. Light the Night continues to shine a light for the blood cancer community and shows those affected by blood cancer that they are not alone.

I want to congratulate all those who participated in Light the Night 2022 for their dedication and commitment to shining a light over the darkness of cancer.

* * *

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (London North Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I pay tribute to a political colleague and friend, the Hon. Ed Holder, who was sworn in as London's 64th mayor on December 1, 2018. After much success, he decided not to seek re-election in the recent municipal election.

Before being chosen by Londoners to lead our city, Ed served as the Conservative member of Parliament for London West from 2008 to 2015 and as the federal minister for science and technology. Though we come from different political backgrounds, collaborating with Ed has been an excellent experience and one that saw us always put partisan interests aside for the best interests of Londoners.

Prior to politics, Ed served as the president of Stevenson & Hunt Insurance and dedicated himself to the community. He has held leadership positions in more than 40 community organizations and not-for-profit organizations in particular.

It has been a privilege to work with Ed. I wish him nothing but success in the future.

I say to London's newly elected mayor Josh Morgan that I know we are going to achieve great things together, and I wish him nothing but success as well.

* * *

● (1410)

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Edmonton's Veterans Association Food Bank is in need. The shelves are empty and donations are down. It has been asking the government for help.

However, what is the Liberals' spending priority? It is \$54 million for ArriveCAN. That is \$54 million for an app that could have been created by a bunch of pimply faced teenage hackers over a weekend using a Commodore 64. That is \$54 million for an app that falsely sent 10,000 Canadians, under threat of the government, into quarantine. That is \$54 million for an app that has clogged up

Statements by Members

our airports and led to long waits and missed flights. That is \$54 million for ArriveCAN while veterans turn to food banks to eat.

The government is like ArriveCAN: not working, of little use and far too costly for Canadians.

* * *

SRI GUGGAN SRI-SKANDA-RAJAH

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Scarborough—Rouge Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Sri Guggan Sri-Skanda-Rajah. Sri Anna, as he was affectionately known, worked for a better, inclusive and just Canada since coming here in 1975. He served as the president and founding member of the Tamil Eelam Society of Canada and as commissioner on systemic racism in the Ontario criminal justice system, was a member of the Immigration and Refugee Board and the Ontario Human Rights Commission, was an adviser at the Jane-Finch community legal clinic, was a facilitator at the Canadian Tamil Youth Development Centre, and volunteered with many organizations, including the Urban Alliance on Race Relations, the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants, the Ontario Tamils with disabilities and many more organizations that empowered Black, racialized, newcomer and Tamil-Canadian communities.

On a personal note, he was a mentor, a friend, an elder and a highly principled man who was universally admired. He has been recognized with many lifetime achievement awards, including from CanTYD, the Urban Alliance on Race Relations, the Ontario New Democratic Party, OCASI and OCTD.

He will be missed by his partner and soulmate, Janet, his daughter, Anya, and a grateful Tamil nation.

* * *

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the nightmare on Wellington Street continues. The government may have turned Ottawa into a ghost town, but that has not stopped all the spending. With the government it is trick or treat every day of the year. Members of the government trick Canadians into thinking they are taking action to stop inflation, and then they treat themselves to lavish hotels. They trick Canadians into using the ArriveCAN app, saying it will save lives, then they treat their friends to fat contracts. One former Liberal MP got \$237 million for ventilators we never used. They trick us with talk of climate action and then treat themselves, jetting on carbon contrails to Costa Rica.

Tonight, every child who pays the parents' candy tax will get their first taste of life in Canada. When the Prime Minister is not wearing a racist costume, he is reaching into the candy bags of every Canadian. We get tricked while the Liberals eat our treats.

*Statements by Members***2020 SHOOTINGS IN NOVA SCOTIA**

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Nova Scotia mass murder was the deadliest in Canadian history, claiming 22 lives. It was a tragedy for families, Nova Scotia residents and all Canadians.

While victims' families mourned, the Liberal government seized the moment. It had an ideological agenda to implement, after all. With the backdrop of grieving families, the Liberals implemented and played on Canadians' emotions as they introduced their misguided 2020 order in council gun ban, which fails to improve public safety. It was cold, callous, inappropriate and extremely disrespectful.

Then the cover-up began. The former minister's responses have changed from not asking for anything to there was a conversation. Now, with the recording, we know the RCMP commissioner received a demand from the minister's office, on which she failed to deliver. How could the minister even think that using a tragedy to push the Liberal agenda was appropriate?

Canadians have lost trust in a government that has peddled legislation on the graves of victims of national tragedy. The minister must resign.

* * *

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN NEWFOUNDLAND

Ms. Joanne Thompson (St. John's East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a resilient, prosperous and inclusive economy is one that fosters and promotes women and their contributions. For 25 years, NLOWE, the Newfoundland and Labrador Organization of Women Entrepreneurs, has been doing exactly that: mentoring, supporting, inspiring and celebrating women entrepreneurs.

Women entrepreneurs are building and growing successful businesses that drive Canada's economy and better our communities, yet in 2022 they are still facing and overcoming barriers every day. From small, one-person studios to large, high-tech firms, the vision, grit and tenacity of women entrepreneurs have made a real and lasting impact across the province and the country.

To Jennifer Bessell, NLOWE's CEO, and the eight deserving entrepreneur of the year award recipients, congratulations. Well done. My thanks to them for their contribution to the growth and resilience of the Newfoundland community and economy.

* * *

● (1415)

MRS. & MS. REGIONAL CANADA EMPOWERMENT PAGEANT

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this weekend women across Ontario took the opportunity to compete in the Mrs. & Ms. Regional Canada Empowerment Pageant in Sudbury. This was not the traditional pageant people are used to. It was designed for women between the ages of 25 to 65 and focused on their accomplishments, their education, their careers and their commitments to volunteer and community service. It empowered women, offered workshops and self-

care, and raised funds for a great cause, the Northern Ontario Families of Children with Cancer.

The organizers and contestants raised \$34,000 for the NOFCC, which will make a big difference for families in the north. There were many impressive contestants from my riding of Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing, including Andréane Blais from Mattice, Alex Powers from Val Rita-Harty, Rosalind Russell from the La-Cloche Foothills, and Shannon Kennedy from Manitoulin Island.

Please join me in thanking organizers Cheryl Kozera and Natalie Carriere for making this event so impactful for the contestants and for raising so much for a great cause.

Congratulations to those who were crowned as winners: Melanie Champagne, Nathalie Restoule, Sammie Barrette and Jennifer Natti.

* * *

[Translation]

LGBTQ+ RIGHTS

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I rise to acknowledge the 30th anniversary of the end of the LGBT purge. Between 1950 and 1992, LGBTQ+ members of the military, RCMP officers and other federal employees were subjected to discriminatory policies and practices based on their sexual orientation.

On this sad 30th anniversary, the LGBT Purge Fund and Egale Canada came to the Hill to raise awareness among elected officials about the rights of the LGBTQ+ community. They want the federal government to implement the recommendations set out in the report titled "Emerging From the Purge" to create a more diverse, equitable and inclusive workplace for LGBTQ+ people.

I also met with the leaders of Fondation Émergence, Laurent Breault and Patrick Desmarais. They spoke to me about the importance of the federal government doing its fair share to ensure that LGBTQ+ people are included in the civil service.

In a world where established rights are increasingly coming under attack, I urge everyone to remember this tragic anniversary so that we do not wipe out years of progress.

* * *

[English]

TAXATION

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are bracing for hard times ahead due to the costly Liberal-NDP coalition.

Its carbon tax is making everything more expensive: groceries, home heating and gas. Saskatchewan families can expect an extra \$1,500 bill. Conservatives moved a motion on October 24 to remove the carbon tax on home heating and cancel the tripling of the carbon tax.

What did the NDP do? It voted in favour of keeping these crippling taxes, yet this week the leader of the NDP flip-flopped and tweeted that he is demanding the government remove the GST from home heating. No wonder the Saskatchewan NDP did not invite the federal NDP leader to its recent convention.

By voting to triple the carbon tax, the NDP has abandoned working families and seniors in Canada.

* * *

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

Mr. Chad Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it has been 48 days since the Leader of the Opposition last spoke to the mainstream media, 48 days of ducking, dodging and hiding from basic, simple questions.

In fact, the last time the Leader of the Opposition took questions from the mainstream media, he used the exchange as an opportunity to politically profit and fundraise, telling prospective supporters, “We can’t count on the media to communicate our messages to Canadians.”

The same political playbook was used by former president Trump, who bashed and demonized the press with his nonsensical “fake news” narrative and went so far as to state that the press was the enemy of the people. Like former president Trump, the Leader of the Opposition has turned to Twitter and Facebook to sow mistrust in mainstream media and silence critical voices.

Canadians demand and deserve answers from elected officials at all levels. Freedom of the press is critical to a democracy in which the government is transparent and accountable to the people. Without it, our democracy is in trouble.

ORAL QUESTIONS

● (1420)

[*Translation*]

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the \$500-billion inflationary deficit has caused the highest rate of inflation in 40 years.

Canadians are cutting back on food so they can afford groceries, and 35-year-olds are having to live in their parents' basement.

The fiscal update presents an opportunity for the government to reverse the policies that have caused this crisis. Is it not ironic that the only solution to this crisis is for the government to reverse 100% of what it has done for the past seven years?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have a concrete plan to address inflation. It involves reducing child care fees for families, doubling the GST/HST credit, providing an additional one-time \$500 payment for housing and providing dental coverage for 500,000 kids.

What is ironic is that when the Conservatives had the opportunity to vote to support Canadians, they voted against it.

Oral Questions

[*English*]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, future Liberal leader Mark Carney has said inflation is domestically generated, and so has the Governor of the Bank of Canada. After a half-trillion dollars of inflationary deficits, the finance minister is pretending she believes, like Conservatives, that government spending is driving this crisis in the first place.

Is it not ironic that the solution to the problem the government will have to pursue if it wants to make life more affordable is to do exactly the opposite of what it has been doing for the last seven years?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on inflation, the government is taking concrete steps to reduce child care fees. In my own province, it is over \$6,000 on average per family. We are doubling the GST credit, providing a one-time, \$500 payment for renters, and 500,000 kids will get the dental coverage they have never had before.

What is ironic in the House is that when the Conservatives had the chance to vote for Canadians, they voted against them. We voted for them.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, none of what the Liberals have done has actually worked. This week, we found out that 20% of Canadians are skipping meals or cutting portions to afford groceries. In fact, 1.5 million Canadians, in one month, have visited a food bank. Speaking of food banks, the one at Jane and Finch actually got kicked out of its location, because the rent doubled.

How much pain will Canadians have to suffer before the government stops its inflationary policies?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we understand that times are tough for Canadians and that is why the government, since entering office in 2015, has lifted two million people out of poverty. We know it is not enough. We know there is more to do.

That begs the question: Why did the Conservatives vote against vulnerable kids who just wanted to get their teeth looked at? Why did they vote against people who need a \$500 top-up on their housing? Why did they vote against child care? We know they cannot wait to rip it up. We are always going to stand on the side of Canadians.

*Oral Questions***TAXATION**

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, according to a Nanos poll for Bloomberg, the largest share of Canadians in recorded history say they are worse off than a year ago. What did the NDP do as a solution to that? It voted to raise home heating bills. Yes, the NDP, along with its costly coalition partners in the Liberal Party, voted twice to make home heating more expensive by tripling the carbon tax.

The Liberals understand that the purpose of the carbon tax is to make home heating more expensive. Will the Liberals tell the NDP that it is, in fact, the plan?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can tell everyone it is nice to take a question from my friend opposite once again, but as an Atlantic Canadian it really burns me to hear this line of questioning. We are dealing with neighbours who have lost over six figures in corn crops and are trying to feed their cattle. We have seen silos come down. We have seen wharves damaged. We know that when we put a price on pollution, it puts more money in the pockets of eight out of 10 Canadian families.

If the Conservatives want to be laggards when it come to climate action, they are free to do so, but they should not be so committed to taking money from my neighbours while they do it.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the carbon tax is not a climate plan. It is a tax plan. The Liberals have not hit a single climate change target since they took office, and now they want to not double down, but triple down on their failure by tripling the carbon tax as we go into winter.

When analysts expect that heating costs will go up more than 100% for families in the member's riding who heat their homes with oil, will the costly coalition, including the NDP, finally reverse itself so Canadians can keep the heat on?

• (1425)

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with respect to the allegation that our plan to put a price on pollution is a tax on Canadian households, the member knows it is bogus. Year after year, he has been making this point in the House of Commons and year after year, it is proven to him that Canadians actually receive more of a dividend than they put out on pricing. The reality is that this is one among many measures of our climate plan.

We know it is the right thing to do, and we are seeing it in my community. Right now, it is very clear that the cost of inaction is far greater than the cost of taking action. We are going to do the right thing both by the environment and the bottom line of Canadian households.

* * *

[Translation]

HEALTH

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on Thursday, the Toronto Star revealed the federal government's health transfer strategy and confirmed our worst fears.

The Prime Minister is refusing to meet with his Quebec and provincial counterparts as long as they continue to unanimously ask for a \$28-billion increase and 6% escalator. He wants to break them. He wants to negotiate one-on-one with the provinces that are likely to give in, to force them to give up on their demand for \$28 billion in health transfers and accept his conditions. His strategy is to divide and conquer.

At a time when hospitals are bursting at the seams, why is the government plotting behind the scenes to deprive them of funding?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague is talking about divisions, but in fact, we are all united.

My fellow health ministers and I are all ministers of health. We are all working for the same citizens with the same dollars. We will all make investments to support our health workers, who really need help because of their difficult working conditions, among other things. We will take care of all Canadians, no matter where they live in this country.

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we know why they are plotting, because they were so arrogant as to tell reporters. They are plotting because they want to isolate Quebec. They want to break the provinces and force them to back down and give up on the \$28 billion they need for health care. They want to leave them nothing but crumbs.

The goal is to then go to Quebec and say, "Here is the agreement. Take it or leave it". That is the predatory federalism we know and love.

Are the Liberals aware that that is called blackmail and that sick patients are paying the price for their blackmail?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we all agree on the importance of taking action for our workers and the patients who need their help. The Government of Canada has to do its share, which it has done in recent years by investing \$72 billion on top of other health care transfers during COVID-19.

We are also still investing in rapid tests, vaccines, Paxlovid and PPE for all Canadians. That is still happening because COVID-19 is still happening. We are also investing \$2 billion to reduce surgical and diagnostic wait times. I could go on and on.

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Alexandre Boulерice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, while CEOs of grocery store chains fill their pockets, ordinary people are being forced to choose between paying rent or buying groceries. One in five people are skipping one meal a day to lower their grocery bill, and demand for food banks is through the roof. That is what it has come to.

The Liberals have allowed corporate greed to force families to make impossible choices. People are hungry, but the CEOs do not care.

In their economic statement, will the Liberals finally make wealthy CEOs pay what they owe to the public, or do they also not care?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question.

My colleague knows full well what we have done, and he does not need to politicize this issue. Everyone here in the House wants to make life more affordable for Canadians. My colleague knows full well that our interest in this is not new.

I wrote to the Competition Bureau in May, asking it to do everything in its power to ensure that there are no unfair practices going on in this country. Last week, I called for an investigation, and I talked to the CEOs of many of these grocery giants nationwide to ask them to make an effort. Everyone has to do their part to help families.

[English]

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, prices are now so bad that 20% of Canadian families are skipping meals to cut down on food costs. As interest rates continue to rise, Canadians need their government to act to reduce costs.

In the fall economic statement, the government has an opportunity to do that. It can make it easier to prosecute grocery price fixers. It can implement a windfall profit tax to ensure big companies are not using inflation as an excuse for highway robbery.

It took the government six months to take the NDP's advice to double the GST tax credit. How long is it going to take this time for the Liberals to see the light and implement these simple, helpful measures?

• (1430)

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is no need to bring politics into something that concerns all Canadians. Everyone in the House wants to do their part to bring prices down for Canadians.

I wrote to the Competition Bureau back in May of this year, asking it to use all the tools at its disposal to make sure that there were no unlawful practices in the market, and more recently I asked for an investigation. I spoke to the CEOs of a number of these chains around the country.

Everyone needs to do their part to help Canadian families in times like these.

Oral Questions

TAXATION

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Liberal inflation has one in five Canadians skipping or cutting back on meals, with more families pushed to food banks. The Liberals will punish Canadians further by tripling the carbon tax on home heating, groceries and gas.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister sings in luxurious hotels abroad and spends in four nights what an average family spends in a whole year on rent.

Canadians cannot afford this costly coalition anymore. When will the Liberals stop piledriving Canadians deeper into debt, stop inflationary spending and stop raising taxes?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that, with the rebates that Canadians get, eight out of 10 Canadians get more money back. In my own home province of Alberta, almost \$1,100 a year comes back to them.

That is why our plan on affordability, building on all the work we did in the spring, continues here into the fall: dental supports for half a million kids, doubling the GST and \$500 in rental supports for

We voted with Canadians. Conservatives voted against.

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if things are as great as the Liberals say they are, then why are almost 50% of Canadians saying that their finances have not been this bad in a decade? A 40-year high in Liberal homegrown inflation caused by the costly coalition is pushing more seniors, more children and more workers to food banks and skipping meals.

Even future Liberal leader candidate Mark Carney does not believe the Liberals who say inflation is a global issue. He knows that it is a Liberal-made issue.

Will the Liberals do the right thing, stop the pain, stop the empty words, stop the spending and stop raising taxes?

Hon. Kamal Khara (Minister of Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we recognize the challenges that Canadians and seniors are facing with paying their bills and for their groceries. That is precisely why we have been there for them. That is why we have doubled the GST credit, putting more money into the pockets of Canadians. That is exactly why we are helping them with rent and dental support. That is why we actually increased the old age security by 10% for those 75 and over.

Oral Questions

On this side of the House, we will continue to deliver for all Canadians.

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, how many more Canadian families have to visit food banks in our country? How many more young couples will have to give back their keys because they cannot pay their mortgages? How many seniors will have to cut back on the necessity of heating their homes before those Liberals and their costly coalition partnership with the NDP wake up to what is going on in Canada?

Will they stop the taxes? Will they stop punishing Canadians? Will they commit to stopping their planned tax increases and their tripling of the carbon tax?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us look at the Conservative record on taxes. In 2015, when we lowered taxes on the middle class, the Conservatives voted against. When we voted for the child care benefit, the Conservatives voted against. When we created the Canada worker benefit, the Conservatives voted against. When we lowered taxes on small businesses, how did the Conservatives vote? They voted against.

What did they do last week? Instead of supporting Canadians who needed the help the most, the Conservative bench voted against.

* * *

FINANCE

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the inflationary spending is the cause of the pain for almost every Canadian, while the Liberals pretend that everything is fine.

Remember that the Liberals told Canadians that interest rates would stay low. They told Canadians that the problem would be deflation, not inflation. We were told then that all of this was temporary so the government could continue to spend and spend. They told us that they would take on the debt so Canadians would not have to.

What else are the Liberals going to get wrong?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we need to roll the tape back in the House to the time when the House was discussing, in a hybrid Parliament, how this government, this Parliament would support Canadians in the worst pandemic in 100 years. This government had bold proposals to make sure there would be wage subsidies and individual subsidies so people would be able to keep their homes. How did the Conservatives vote? They voted with us.

Are they now saying that they wished they would have taken those votes back and not have the CERB and not have kept businesses afloat?

The Conservatives need to tell Canadians what their plan is, because we certainly have one.

• (1435)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance contradicted her Prime

Minister when she said that the government would have to tighten its belt and rein in spending. Even Mark Carney, the man who wants to replace the Prime Minister, contradicted him when he said that inflation in Canada is a Liberal-made issue. Although the finance minister wants to rein in spending, she is being pressured by the NDP and the Liberals, who are working together to continue the inflationary spending.

Will the minister commit to not raising taxes and to stopping the inflationary spending?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me be clear. Here is the Conservatives' record when it comes to taxing Canadians. When we lowered taxes for Canadians in 2015, the Conservatives voted against it. When we introduced the Canada child benefit, the Conservatives voted against it. When we brought in a plan for workers, the Conservatives once again voted against it. Last week, the Conservatives voted against our bill yet again. Their plan is to vote against Canadians. Our plan is to vote for Canadians.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we will always vote for what is best for Canadians. Every time the Liberals present measures that create economic problems, as we are seeing now, inflation rears its head. Interest rates have had to be raised because of the inflation created by the Liberals' spending in various areas. The Parliamentary Budget Officer confirmed that of the \$500 billion spent in two years, \$200 billion had nothing to do with the pandemic. The Liberals talk all the time, but when it is time to really take action for Canada's economy, they are out in left field.

When will the government take responsibility and stop its inflationary spending?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is clear that our plan during the pandemic helped Canadians get through the worst pandemic in 100 years. The Conservatives voted with us. Now they want to rewrite history to their own liking.

On this side, we know that current inflation is a real concern for Canadians, so we are providing \$500 in assistance for housing, a dental care plan for children, and double the GST credit. The Conservatives are not interested in that, but Canadians are. That is why we are taking action on this side of the House.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is going to be awkward next week when Canada walks into COP27. The UN has just released another report proving that the climate change plans being put forward by various countries will lead to disaster. At the same time, Canada announced in Washington that it will fast-track its oil and gas projects in order to export more to Europe.

Does the government realize that the UN is asking us to fast-track the fight against climate change, not climate change itself?

[English]

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for her commitment to climate action. I just want to remind her we have the most ambitious climate change plan in the history of Canada: \$100 billion invested since 2015; \$9.1 billion in the emissions reduction plan.

It is an ambitious sector-by-sector pathway to get to our 2030 targets on our way to net zero by 2050. It has broad support from environmental groups, industry and farmers in Quebec and across the country.

[Translation]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the minister could have said that he acknowledges the UN report and that he will not approve any more oil and gas projects. At the very least, he could have said that he would not fast-track them. Instead, he went on television last week to explain how he, as environment minister, could advise oil and gas companies to help them get through the assessment process faster.

In the midst of the climate crisis, is it the role of an environment minister to help the oil and gas industry get projects approved?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the world does indeed have to deal with the challenge of climate change; we have to deal with it for our children and our grandchildren. Canada has implemented a plan to fight climate change, a plan that may well be the most detailed one in the world. Yes, we need a very strong economy, but we also have to deal with climate change, and that is what we are doing.

• (1440)

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, all the countries at COP27 are going to talk about what they have done to fight climate change since the last conference. When Canada stands up to talk, our allies are going to remember that, since the last COP, Canada has approved Bay du Nord and its billion barrels of oil. They will remember Canada's announcement in Washington that it is planning not only to approve other projects like Bay du Nord, but also to fast-track them.

Does the minister realize that showing up at COP empty-handed is bad, but showing up with filthy hands is worse?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that we need to address the issue of climate change. We need to be a leader in these circumstances. I

Oral Questions

want to say that there are not very many countries in the world that have a plan that is as detailed as Canada's. We also need a plan for a prosperous economy for the future of our children, and we will work to accomplish both of those goals at the same time.

* * *

[English]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister has repeatedly claimed that neither he nor his staff ever requested the RCMP commissioner to reveal confidential evidence. He claims that he never asked for letters of support from independent police to provide political cover for the use of the Emergencies Act, yet the RCMP commissioner clearly knew that the minister was seeking these letters.

Evidence shows that she was working with him to reveal confidential evidence about the Nova Scotia mass shooting. Does the minister expect us to believe that the RCMP commissioner acted alone?

Hon. Bill Blair (President of the King's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is a very significant problem with the member's theory, which is based entirely on speculation, innuendo and conjecture.

He ignores the facts, and here are the facts. At no time did I or the government attempt to interfere in police operations. I did not direct, ask or even suggest to the commissioner that she release that information and the commissioner herself has testified under oath, "I did not receive direction and I was not influenced by government officials regarding the public release of information". Those are simply the facts.

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have received email evidence from his office that suggests otherwise. Audio recordings and text messages from the RCMP commissioner confirm this disturbing pattern. The Minister of Emergency Preparedness has repeatedly crossed the line, interfering in a police investigation and politicizing our independent police forces, all to provide political cover for the Liberal government.

The evidence against the minister is piling up. It is no wonder that the commissioner is looking for a new messenger app to permanently delete messages. The minister keeps denying, but the facts say otherwise. When will the minister finally come clean?

Hon. Bill Blair (President of the King's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have said a number of times in the House, the independence of police operations is a key principle in our democracy. It is one that our government respects.

Oral Questions

I would like to remind the House that, in May of 2020, the member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes rose in the House and demanded to know why the government was not releasing information on search warrants, production orders and closed warrants related to the Nova Scotia massacre. At that time, I was forced to rise in the House to explain to that Conservative member, as I did to all members, that our government does not interfere with ongoing criminal investigations, and the RCMP is responsible for the information that he sought.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, here are the indisputable facts.

Just 10 days after the tragic events, here is what the commissioner said to her assembled colleagues when confirming that there had been political interference in the ongoing investigation into the weapons used.

First, she said, “I shared with the Minister that...it was going to be in the...news release and it wasn’t.” Second, she said, “Does anybody realize...they’re in the middle of trying to get a legislation going?” Third, she said, “I’m waiting for the Prime Minister to call me so I can apologize.”

Why is the minister continuing with his cover up?

[*English*]

Hon. Bill Blair (President of the King’s Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): On the contrary, Mr. Speaker, I have risen in the House a number of times and simply repeated the truth to the members. I am not going to speculate on a conversation of which I was not a party.

I can simply advise the House that at no time did I direct, ask or even suggest to the commissioner of the RCMP that she should release any information pertaining to this investigation. Under oath before the Mass Casualty Commission, the commissioner has confirmed that she was not directed by me or any government official on the release of information or in the conduct of the investigation. Those are simply the facts.

* * *

● (1445)

OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this week-end, the environment minister criticized oil and gas companies for paying out huge profits to their shareholders instead of taking climate action, but it is hard to believe the minister’s fake outrage when the Liberals are still handing out billions of dollars to big oil, all while these corporations rake in record profits.

The minister will not put a windfall tax on these excess profits to invest in climate action and make life more affordable. Will the minister finally stand up to big oil by making them pay what they owe?

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know two things for certain: oil and gas emissions must come down, and energy companies are making record profits. Like us,

energy companies must put their shoulder to the wheel and begin investing in pollution reduction.

We need to work together to create the clean economy and the good jobs of today and tomorrow. We will be with them every step of the way as we meet our 2030 targets on our way to net zero by 2050.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, big oil has racked up their highest profits ever, and that is no surprise to Canadians who are getting gouged at the pumps.

How is big oil spending their loot? They are spending it on stock buy-backs, payouts to investors and automation, as they layoff thousands of energy workers. As for climate action, there is not a chance. They want taxpayers to pick up the bill.

When is the environment minister going to stop acting as an ATM for the oil lobby and hold them to account? When is he going to make the investments necessary in a clean energy transformation that does not leave Canadian workers behind?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would advise the hon. member to actually read the emissions reduction plan.

The government has invested over \$110 billion in reducing emissions around this country and in making investments to actually grow a clean economy going forward. It is something we have to think about on both sides of the equation. We must reduce emissions, but we also have to think about creating jobs and economic opportunity for the future, and that is exactly what we are doing.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Ali Ehsassi (Willowdale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, Prime Minister Trudeau stood—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. I would like to remind hon. members that, when we refer to someone in the chamber, it is by their title or by their riding.

The hon. member for Willowdale can begin from the top, please.

Mr. Ali Ehsassi: Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Prime Minister stood shoulder to shoulder with protesters who participated in the freedom rally against the Iranian regime in Ottawa.

As the Prime Minister made clear, our government will not stand idly by as the Iranian government terrorizes its own citizens. The message from our government is also consistent that Iranians have been suffocated for far too long, and we will echo their sentiments.

Could the Minister of Foreign Affairs apprise members of the House of the latest measures adopted—

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Willowdale for his solidarity with the Iranian people.

Today we announced a new round of sanctions against the Iranian regime. Those sanctions target senior officials and Iranian regime supporters who participated in human rights violations. We will continue to do everything we can to hold the Iranian regime accountable for its oppression and brutality, because impunity is not an option.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the verdict is in. The evidence is clear. The cost of government is driving up the cost of living. The Prime Minister's own Parliamentary Budget Officer said that, of the new spending, 40% was not related to COVID.

Liberal leadership members seem to agree. Mark Carney recently said that inflation is now primarily a Canadian event. Even the deputy leader, with her new religion of fiscal restraint, seems to agree. Does the Prime Minister agree?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us be clear about what the Conservatives are saying.

They are saying that they would not have put in place the CERB, which kept millions of Canadians in their homes. They would not have had the wage subsidy, which kept 60,000 businesses operating just in the energy sector alone in Alberta. They would not have had the rent subsidy, which helped—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

• (1450)

The Speaker: I am just going to interrupt for a second. I am having a hard time hearing, and when I cannot hear his voice, I know there is a problem in the Chamber. I am going to ask all members to keep it down. The hon. minister has a voice that really carries, and it is appreciated. Let us give him a chance so that we can hear his response.

I ask the hon. minister to begin from the top, please.

Hon. Randy Boissonnault: Mr. Speaker, let us be clear about what the Conservatives are saying. They do not like us telling Canadians what they are actually saying.

They are saying that they would have scrapped the CERB, that they would not have had the wage supports, and that they would not have had supports for businesses, including the 60,000 energy businesses in my province of Alberta alone. The Conservatives want to cut. They are unhappy that they supported us when they did. They are trying to revise history.

We are going to focus on Canadians who need the help the most when they need it the most. That is our job, and we will do our job.

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let me set the record straight. What Conservatives stand against is high inflation leading to the highest food bank usage, and a third of those users are children. That is what Conservatives stand against.

Oral Questions

If Liberals do not believe me, they should ask the governor of the Bank of Canada who said that high inflation is leading to hard times for Canadians, particularly the most vulnerable in our communities.

Will these Liberals stop their inflationary spending, and cancel their planned tax hikes on groceries, gas and home heating?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative plan is just to cut. What is their plan?

With our plan, we have lowered taxes on Canadians five times in our mandate. We have an affordability plan that is going to help families. If the hon. members on the other side wanted to help 500,000 children in this country, they should have done the right thing and voted for dental supports last week when they had the chance.

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are downgrading their lifestyles because of Liberal inflation. They can no longer live comfortably on their income. What is worse, some of them are no longer able to put enough food on the table. In a single month, Canadians visited food banks 1.5 million times. That is an increase of 35% compared to 2019. That is unacceptable in a country as industrialized as ours.

When will the Liberals stop impoverishing Canadians?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it does not matter that Canada has the lowest inflation rate, since that does not help Canadians here at home. That is why we have an affordability plan. The party across the aisle just wants to make cuts. That is what they want to do. They would have preferred to have no Canada recovery benefit during the pandemic. They would have preferred to forgo the wage subsidies for Canadians. They would have preferred that we not support businesses.

We are here to support Canadians. That is what we did during the pandemic, and we will do so again during this period of inflation.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals need to stop making excuses and start taking responsibility. They attacked the Canadian energy sector, and now the price of gas is nearly \$2 a litre, and winter is not even here yet. On top of that, Mark Carney, former governor of the Bank of Canada, told a Senate committee recently that inflation in Canada is domestically generated by the Canadian government. Inflation is a Canadian problem.

Will the Liberal Canadian government commit today to not raising taxes?

Oral Questions

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know very well that inflation is being caused by Russia's illegal war in Ukraine, supply chain disruptions and China's zero-COVID policy. That does not help Canadians. What does help Canadians is our affordability plan, dental care for children, and housing for the vulnerable. The Conservatives voted against these measures, while we voted for them.

Who is supporting Canadians? Our government.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, three days before the government's economic update, there is every indication that a recession is imminent. The government must remember that in the event of a recession, the best economic stabilizer is employment insurance, provided, of course, that workers who lose their jobs are covered. If nothing changes, six out of 10 workers will not be eligible. Comprehensive reform of EI is urgent, especially if there is a recession.

Will the economic update finally include this reform?

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we understand that EI must be accessible and fair to all workers in Canada. That is why we are working on modernizing this system, which is vital for our workers. It is there for our workers, and it will continue to be there for our workers.

• (1455)

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, if there were to be a recession with the same employment insurance program we have today, six out of 10 workers would be left behind.

We saw a similar scenario play out during the pandemic. The government had to create CERB because it realized that it could not abandon the 60% of people who lost their jobs.

If there is a recession, there is a risk of repeating the same scenario. That would be embarrassing, given that we saw it coming this time.

Will EI reform be added to the economic update?

[English]

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we recognize that employment insurance has not kept up with the way Canadians work, and that is why access and adequacy are key fundamental principles that we are building into a modernized approach to employment insurance. I look forward to revealing the government's plan to modernize the steps we will take to make sure every worker continues to have fair access across the country, no matter where they live.

* * *

FINANCE

Mrs. Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, whether it is home heating, groceries or gasoline, Canadians are

finding it extremely difficult just to be able to make ends meet. While I am concerned for all Canadians, there is one group in particular that has my heart and that is those who live on a fixed income. At the end of the day, as prices go up, they do not have the ability to create a greater income for themselves, which puts them in a place of trouble. Many of them are living on the edge of poverty, which is not okay.

My question is very simple. Will the Liberals demonstrate a bit of compassion today and commit to stopping their out-of-control inflationary spending spree and to stopping their punitive tax hikes on those who are finding it hard to make ends meet?

Hon. Kamal Khera (Minister of Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us look at the facts. The fact is that when the Conservative Party was in power, its plan for seniors was to raise the age of retirement to 67. The first thing we did was reverse that back to 65. The fact is that the party opposite opposed every single measure that we put forward to support seniors: the increase to the GIS, the increase to the old age security by 10% and our enhancements to the CPP. We have just moved forward on doubling the GST credit with the payments going out this Friday. We are moving forward on rental and dental support. On this side of the House, we are going to continue to deliver for Canadians, including seniors.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I do not think there is much hope in there for Canadians, so let me ask again. It is no secret that Canadians are struggling to be able to make ends meet. Just putting healthy food on the table is a struggle. We know that the number of Canadians going to food banks is skyrocketing. Meanwhile, the Prime Minister has no problem jet-setting around the world or spending \$6,000 a night on hotel rooms. Again, I would ask them to please come back down to reality.

Would the government stop its punitive tax hikes and its out-of-control inflationary spending in order to make sure that Canadians can afford to live?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, indeed, across the world, the problem of making ends meet and paying bills is being felt profoundly. What is irresponsible for those who are struggling is that the Conservatives are going to amplify their fears and anxieties and are going to mislead them about their situation.

Let us talk about inflation. When Canada has one of the lower rates in the world for inflation, that is not acceptable and does not help pay the bills. What does help is concrete actions on affordability. What does not help is amplifying an anxiety and giving no answers. Unfortunately, that is what we hear from the other side.

Oral Questions

Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is Halloween and Canadians are spooked. They are spooked by having to pay 28% more for costumes and candy and spooked by the government's indifference about the inflation crisis, which the Liberals just wave away as being globally brought into this country. The central bank governor has said inflation is now more of a homegrown problem and Mark Carney, the former central bank governor, agrees with him.

Will the government show some compassion, reduce its inflationary spending and put a pause on its tax hikes?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have met people in my community who will not take their kids to the grocery store right now because they are afraid that the cashier is going to tell them that they cannot afford what is in their cart and they do not want their kids to go through that. We are going to be there to support families in that situation.

When they talk about tax hikes, they are talking about programs like the Canada pension plan and like EI. There are people in my community who depend on EI when they fall on tough times. There are people who have worked their entire lives to make sure the Canada pension plan would allow them to age with dignity and buy groceries in retirement. We will defend low-income families today and every day. It is nice to see that they finally speak to the issues. It would be better if they actually voted for measures to achieve those ends.

* * *

● (1500)

[Translation]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since day one on the job, the Minister of National Defence has made it clear that we need to build military institutions where every member feels safe, protected and respected. That is why she accepted Madame Arbour's report in its entirety and immediately stepped up efforts to change the culture within the national defence team.

Last week, the minister announced the appointment of an external monitor. Can she tell us a bit more about the importance of this appointment?

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for that important question.

We have already established the foundations for a culture change. For example, we have started transferring cases to the civilian system. Last week, I appointed Jocelyne Therrien as external monitor. She will help us ensure that we continue to make real progress. We will keep working to protect women and minorities in the Canadian Armed Forces.

[English]

FINANCE

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals' reckless spending is driving up the cost of living for Canadians. It was \$6,000 a night for the Prime Minister's hotel room that was charged to taxpayers, and \$54 million for the arrive scam with a complete snow job on who got paid. Meanwhile, folks who are getting their first home heating oil or propane delivery are afraid they will not be able to afford a mid-winter fill up. With the costly coalition of these NDP-Liberals, food bank use is at an all-time high as Canadians choose between heating and eating.

Will these Liberals end their inflationary spending?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government has a fiscally responsible, prudent and targeted plan that is going to put money in the pockets of Canadians who need it the most. We are not only increasing the Canada workers benefit. We have doubled the GST and we have a \$500 payment going to low-income renters. We are going to help half a million kids have dental support possibly for the first time in their lives.

I do not know what it is the Conservatives have against helping kids, but on our side of aisle, we have the backs of Canadians.

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are very much worried about children, including the fact that, with record-high food bank use, more than one-third of those users are children.

The Liberals were adding more than \$171,000 of new debt every single minute of the last fiscal year, and half of that spending had absolutely nothing to do with pandemic supports. Canadians are struggling. The Liberals are making it worse. They had the NDP cheerleading them on trying to max out the national credit card. That is what happens when we have unserious, out of touch, expensive NDP-Liberals who do not care and do not know what Canadians are facing.

Canadians cannot afford the costly coalition. Will they end this inflationary spending?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I sat in opposition when the party opposite was in government. They did not talk about poverty. They did not talk about the plight of low-income families. They had no targets on poverty reduction.

This is a government that not only introduced, finally, targets on poverty reduction, but has exceeded them every single time, lifting more than two million people out of poverty. That is not enough. We must do more. The fact that the party opposite is trying to raise anxiety at a moment when we need solutions and answers is problematic. The Conservatives vote against direct measures to help those in need and then seek at every opportunity to amplify anxiety. I ask why.

Oral Questions

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when this government gave millions of dollars to Loblaw's for new fridges, I had convenience store owners, florists and small independent food store owners calling me asking how they could also apply for a fridge. I had to explain that they did not qualify. They were not a billion-dollar corporation. We do not know who got rich off the ArriveCAN app, the app with glitches that forced people into quarantine by mistake. Canadians cannot afford this costly coalition.

Will the Liberals end their wasteful and inflationary spending?

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that eight out of 10 families will be better off after the climate action rebate, but the member is from B.C. No one understands climate change better than the residents of B.C. where the costs are very high. There was a \$6-billion tab for the atmospheric rivers after drought, fires and flood, and 600 lives were lost in the interior of B.C. The price is very high.

We have a moral obligation to deal with the climate issue and an economic imperative.

* * *

• (1505)

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ms. Jean Yip (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a result of the ongoing conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, my Scarborough—Agincourt constituents and beyond are concerned about the 240 deaths and the many destroyed civilian settlements in Armenia. A ceasefire was agreed upon on September 14. However, recent reports suggest further escalation.

Our government announced it will open a full embassy in Armenia, and we are actively engaging with our Armenian partners to strengthen their democracy. Can the Minister of Foreign Affairs update us on the steps we have taken to secure peace in this area and how we are supporting the strengthening of democracy in Armenia?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for Scarborough—Agincourt for her strong advocacy for the Armenian community.

I announced back in June that Canada would be opening a new embassy in Yerevan, and that has been long awaited by many. This will also allow our countries to have stronger ties. We know there is a lot of instability and security challenges in the region. Canada will step up and be involved in making sure that we have stronger ties, and protect peace and democracy in the region and globally.

* * *

HEALTH

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last week, a North Island resident told me she is scared for the safety of her family because of the Port Hardy Hospital emergency room closures. There is not enough staff to keep it open. This is a crisis. Canadians cannot access public health care. Rural com-

munities have been left behind by underfunding for health care by both Conservative and Liberal governments.

Will the government finally listen to the pleas of British Columbians for more federal funding for public health care?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, funding public health care in Canada is not only a need but also an obligation under the Canada Health Act. We know how important it is to millions of Canadians now with the crises that we see in emergency departments across the country. We also know we need to support access to family health teams, because that is a key part of the solution. People need to have access to their family doctors in order to avoid having to go to the emergency room to treat things that should be treated or prevented before people end up in a hospital.

* * *

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, I asked a question last Friday but I did not get an answer from the parliamentary secretary. I will ask my question again, but this time I will ask the minister.

In our riding offices, we all hear from desperate people affected by illness. All parties unanimously agree that we need to extend the financial assistance provided to Canadians suffering from serious illnesses.

In its last budget, the government announced that the period for EI sickness benefits would be increased to 26 weeks. This measure was supposed to be implemented in the summer of 2022, but unfortunately, that has not happened yet.

My question is quite simple. When will that measure be implemented?

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have good news for my hon. colleague.

Beginning in December, workers will have access to 26 weeks of EI sickness benefits. The number of weeks will increase from 15 to 26. We are very pleased to announce that workers who become sick will be entitled to more support.

Government Orders

[English]

REMOVAL OF IRAN FROM UN COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there have been consultations among the parties, and if you seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That, given:

- (i) the brutal death of Mahsa Amini at the hands of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC),
- (ii) the subsequent crackdown in Iran on women's rights, civil liberties, and fundamental freedoms; and,
- (iii) a long history of grave human rights abuses and violence against women perpetuated by the Iranian state,

this House declare its support for the removal of Iran from the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women.

The Speaker: All those opposed to the hon. member's moving the motion will please say nay. It is agreed.

The House has heard the terms of the motion. All those opposed to the motion will please say nay.

(Motion agreed to)

• (1510)

[Translation]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties and if you seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent to adopt the following motion:

That the House:

- (a) reiterate its unconditional support for Iranian women who are peacefully demonstrating for their rights in Iran;
- (b) condemn the killings, intimidation, and acts of violence initiated by the Iranian state against protesters who support the women's liberation movement in Iran; and
- (c) call on the United Nations to withdraw Iran from its Commission on the Status of Women.

The Speaker: All those opposed to the hon. member moving the motion will please say nay. It is agreed.

The House has heard the terms of the motion. All those opposed to the motion will please say nay.

(Motion agreed to)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

JUDGES ACT

The House resumed from October 28 consideration of the motion that Bill C-9, An Act to amend the Judges Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: It being 3:10 p.m., pursuant to an order made on Thursday, June 23, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-9.

Call in the members.

• (1525)

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

(Division No. 206)

YEAS

Members

Aboutaif	Aitchison
Albas	Aldag
Alghabra	Ali
Allison	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arnold	Arseneault
Arya	Ashton
Atwin	Bachrach
Badawey	Bains
Baker	Baldinelli
Barrett	Barron
Barsalou-Duval	Battiste
Beaulieu	Beech
Bendayan	Bennett
Benzen	Bergen
Bergeron	Berthold
Bérubé	Bezan
Bittle	Blaikie
Blair	Blanchet
Blanchette-Joncas	Blaney
Block	Blois
Boissonnault	Boulerice
Bradford	Bragdon
Brassard	Brière
Brock	Brunelle-Duceppe
Calkins	Cannings
Caputo	Carr
Carrie	Casey
Chabot	Chagger
Chahal	Chambers
Champagne	Champoux
Chatel	Chen
Chiang	Chong
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Collins (Victoria)
Cooper	Cormier
Coteau	Dabrusin
Dalton	Damoff
Dancho	Davidson
DeBellefeuille	Deltell
d'Entremont	Desbiens
Desilets	Desjarlais
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Diab	Doherty
Dong	Dowdall
Dreeshen	Drouin
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dzerowicz
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Ellis	Epp
Erskine-Smith	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Falk (Provencher)	Fast
Fergus	Ferreri
Fillmore	Findlay
Fisher	Fonseca
Fortier	Fortin
Fragiskatos	Fraser
Freeland	Fry
Gaheer	Gallant
Gameau	Garon
Garrison	Gaudreau
Gazan	Généreux
Genuis	Gérretsen
Gill	Gladau

Routine Proceedings

Godin
Gould
Gray
Guilbeault
Hallan
Hardie
Hoback
Housefather
Hussen
Iacono
Ien
Jeneroux
Joly
Jowhari
Kayabaga
Kelly
Khera
Kmiec
Kram
Kurek
Kusmierczyk
Lake
Lambropoulos
Lamoureux
Lapointe
Lattanzio
Lawrence
Lebouthillier
Lemire
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Lighthouse
Lobb
Longfield
MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney
Martinez Ferrada
Mathysen
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McCauley (Edmonton West)
McGuinty
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod
Melillo
Mendicino
Michaud
Moore
Morrice
Morrisey
Murray
Naqvi
Ng
Normandin
Oliphant
O'Toole
Paul-Hus
Perkins
Petipas Taylor
Poilievre
Qualtrough
Redekopp
Rempel Garner
Roberts
Rodriguez
Romanado
Ruff
Sajjan
Samson
Savard-Tremblay
Scheer
Seeback
Sgro
Sheehan

Goodridge
Gourde
Green
Hajdu
Hanley
Hepfner
Holland
Hughes
Hutchings
Idlout
Jaczek
Johns
Jones
Julian
Kelloway
Khalid
Kitchen
Koutrakis
Kramp-Neuman
Kusie
Kwan
Lalonde
Lametti
Lantsman
Larouche
Lauzon
LeBlanc
Lehoux
Lewis (Essex)
Liepert
Lloyd
Long
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacGregor
Maguire
Martel
Masse
May (Cambridge)
Mazier
McDonald (Avalon)
McKay
McLean
McPherson
Mendès
Miao
Miller
Morantz
Morrison
Motz
Muys
Nater
Noormohamed
O'Connell
O'Regan
Patzner
Pauzé
Perron
Plamondon
Powlowski
Rayes
Reid
Richards
Robillard
Rogers
Rood
Sahota
Saks
Sara
Scarpaleggia
Schieffe
Serré
Shanahan
Shields

Shiple
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Small
Soroka
Ste-Marie
St-Onge
Stubbs
Tassi
Thériault
Thomas
Tochor
Trudeau
Turnbull
Van Bynen
Van Popta
Vandenbeld
Vidal
Viersen
Villemure
Vis
Wagantall
Waugh
Weiler
Williams
Yip
Zarrillo
Zuberi— 327

Sidhu (Brampton East)
Simard
Sorbara
Steinley
Stewart
Strahl
Sudds
Taylor Roy
Therrien
Thompson
Tolmie
Trudel
Uppal
van Koevreden
Vandal
Vecchio
Vien
Vignola
Virani
Vuong
Warkentin
Webber
Wilkinson
Williamson
Zahid
Zimmer

NAYS

PAIRED

Nil

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

[*English*]

Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

The Speaker: I wish to inform the House that because of the deferred recorded division, Government Orders will be extended by 12 minutes.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*Translation*]

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Mr. Marc Serré (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, a report of the Canadian Section of ParlAmericas respecting its participation in the 6th Gathering of ParlAmericas' Open Parliament Network. The virtual sessions were held on March 9, 15 and 22, 2022.

[English]

PETITIONS

OPIOIDS

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour and privilege to table a petition today on behalf of constituents from Comox Valley, Courtenay and Cumberland in my riding and those of my colleague from north Vancouver Island.

The petitioners cite that 27,000 Canadians have died since 2016 due to preventable drug poisoning resulting from a toxic drug supply. The war on drugs has resulted in widespread stigma toward those who use controlled drugs and substances, and it has allowed organized crime to be the sole provider of substances. Problematic substance use is a health issue and is not resolved through criminalizing personal possession and consumption.

They call on the Government of Canada to reform drug policy to decriminalize simple possession of drugs listed in the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, something that is recommended by the expert task force on substance use; provide a path for expungement of conviction records for those convicted of personal possession; with urgency, implement a health-based national strategy for providing access to a regulated safer supply of drugs; and expand trauma-informed treatment, recovery and harm reduction services and public education awareness campaigns throughout Canada.

CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present today.

The first petition is on behalf of Canadians from across Canada who are concerned about the Liberal Party's platform promise to revoke charitable status for pro-life organizations such as pregnancy crisis centres. They note that the Liberal government tried this once before with the Canada summer jobs grant program. They aim to raise awareness and ask the Government of Canada to ensure that charitable status is not politicized.

● (1530)

FIREARMS

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, the second petition is from Canadians across the country who are concerned about the damaging noise levels of firearms.

The petitioners are calling for the Government of Canada to recognize traditional hearing protection. They recognize that Canada is the only G7 nation that does not recognize the legal use of suppressors. They call for the Government of Canada to allow sound moderators to reduce noise pollution and noise complaints in communities with gun ranges, in rural and farm communities and in areas that use firearms for recreational activities where hunting and sport shooting are legal. They note that sound moderators facilitate a significant increase in the humane husbandry of game animals, livestock and pets as hunting companions and that hearing damage is significantly reduced when these items are used.

The petitioners call on the Government of Canada to take a stand and empower Canadians to be responsible for their own health and safety by removing the prohibition on sound moderators from the Criminal Code of Canada; to allow the legal acquisition, possession

Routine Proceedings

and use of sound moderators on firearms by all licensed firearms users in Canada; and to call on the provincial and territorial governments to amend their prohibitions and allow Canadians to use these devices.

OLD-GROWTH FORESTS

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I am honoured to rise on behalf of constituents from Saanich—Gulf Islands who are very concerned about the status of old-growth forests. This petition focuses on the different aspects of the importance of old growth in terms of climate, indigenous rights, biodiversity and the dwindling number of old-growth forests, particularly on Vancouver Island and along areas of Fairy Creek, which is slated for logging.

The petitioners call on the government to work with provinces and first nations to halt the logging of endangered old growth, to fund protection of old-growth ecosystems and to support value-added forestry initiatives that get Canadian wood to Canadian mills instead of being shipped overseas as raw logs. They oppose the use of whole trees for wood pellet biofuel production, yet another climate fraud.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 761 and 763.

[Text]

Question No. 761—**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:**

With regard to the conviction of Brock Graham for the murder of Patricia Ducharme, BC Court of Appeal, decision R. v. Graham, docket number CA023190, and RCMP File #North Vancouver 1993-22222 Oct. 12, 2005: (a) why was Patricia Ducharme not warned that she was living with an extremely dangerous suspect in a murder case; (b) does the negligence of this case fall on the RCMP or the federal government; and (c) since this issue was raised in the House of Commons on March 27, 1996, to then minister Herb Gray, what has been changed in RCMP organizational policy or the federal Privacy Act that will better ensure Canadians' safety in similar instances?

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, regarding part (a) of the question, further to a review of the Ducharme murder investigation file, it was noted through statements that Ms. Ducharme was aware that Mr. Graham was a suspect in a murder investigation.

Routine Proceedings

In regard to part (b), in British Columbia, the ministries of public safety and solicitor general, attorney general, and the children and family development collaborated on the provincial violence against women in relationships, or VAWIR, policy. The VAWIR policy was developed in 1993 and has been revised over the years. The VAWIR was updated in 1996, 2000, 2004 and finally in 2010. The B.C. RCMP abide by the VAWIR, such as through the mandatory completion of the B.C. domestic violence risk summary and supervisors conducting priority reviews of all domestic violence investigations to ensure proper investigational steps are taken and safety plans are developed.

All civil actions are assessed on a case-by-case basis, specific to the set of circumstances and the various parties involved, for example, the provincial government, the federal government and the RCMP.

Regarding part (c) of the question, the RCMP takes the issue of intimate partner violence very seriously. In 2021, following extensive consultation, the Government of Canada amended the RCMP regulations, 2014, to allow the RCMP to participate in Clare's Law regimes in provinces and territories that have enacted this legislation and where the RCMP is the police of jurisdiction. Clare's Law legislation allows police to disclose a person's prior intimate partner violence information to a current or former intimate partner, or a third party such as a parent or other relative through a provincially established process. Currently, Saskatchewan and Alberta are the only provinces who have adopted this legislation. Ontario, Manitoba and Newfoundland and Labrador have introduced similar pieces of legislation, but they have yet to be officially enacted.

The RCMP's participation in Clare's Law is in line with its obligations under the Privacy Act, which governs the collection, use, disclosure, retention and disposal of personal information by federal government institutions. The act recognizes that privacy is not absolute and is subject to exceptions provided for in the law. The act contains a number of provisions that allow government institutions to disclose personal information without the consent of the individual, such as paragraph 8(2)(b), which permits disclosure if it is in accordance with an act of Parliament or its related regulations. In accordance with Treasury Board policy, the RCMP is currently finalizing a privacy impact assessment on Clare's Law to ensure that the privacy risks of the program are mitigated to an acceptable level.

The Privacy Act also contains a provision that allows for the disclosure of personal information without consent if the public interest in disclosure clearly outweighs any invasion of privacy that could result from the disclosure. This provision, which is to be applied on a case-by-case basis, can be used in certain instances to alert the public about the risk of serious harm an individual may pose to others. In line with its mandate and commitment to keeping families and communities safe, the RCMP uses this provision to proceed with public interest disclosures in certain circumstances.

The RCMP has recently updated the violence in relationships policy, soon to be changed to the intimate partner violence policy, in order to reflect the latest legislative changes and current case law.

Question No. 763—**Mr. Arnold Viersen:**

With regard to Canada's participation in Interpol's notice system since November 4, 2015: how many green notices were issued by Canada, broken down by (i) year, (ii) type of criminal activity referred to, (iii) the country to which the notice was issued?

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Interpol Ottawa currently has eight active green notices for the period of November 4, 2015, to September 20, 2022. We are unable to account for any other green notices that may have been issued between this time frame, as they could have been removed from the Interpol system, as per article 51(3) of Interpol's Rules on the Processing of Data, which specifies that the recorded data must be deleted by the data owner once the purpose has been achieved.

Regarding parts (i) and (ii) of the question, for the calendar year 2015, as of November 4, 2015, there are no Canadian green notices active. For the calendar year 2016, three green notices remain active for criminal activity related to crimes against children, sexual offences, and assault and/or maltreatment. For the calendar year 2017, three green notices remain active for criminal activity related to crimes against children and sexual offences. For the calendar year 2018, two green notices remain active for criminal activity related to crimes against children, sexual offences, sexual exploitation and/or prostitution, and production and/or distribution of pornography. For the calendar years 2019 through September 20, 2022, there are no Canadian green notices active.

Regarding part (iii) of the question, please note that notices are broadcast globally, as opposed to individual countries.

* * *

[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, if the government's responses to Questions Nos. 760, 762, 764 and 765 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 760—**Ms. Louise Chabot:**

With regard to the issuing of passports by Service Canada and by passport offices at Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada: (a) how many passport applications were submitted and how many passports were issued, broken down by month and year, since January 1, 2011; and (b) how many public servants or full-time equivalents worked to deliver this service, broken down by month and year, since January 1, 2011?

(Return tabled)

*Government Orders***Question No. 762—Ms. Michelle Rempel Garner:**

With regard to the mandatory random COVID-19 testing for air travellers arriving in Canada resuming on July 19, 2022: (a) what are the total costs of these services to the government; and (b) what are all the details regarding the contracts signed for these services, including, for each, (i) the name of the vendor, (ii) the value of the contract, (iii) the start and end dates, (iv) the description of the services provided, (v) the date when the contract was signed, (vi) the address of the vendor, (vii) whether the contract was sole-sourced or awarded through a competitive bidding process?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 764—Mr. Arnold Viarsen:

With regard to extraterritorial offences in the Criminal Code since 1990: (a) how many charges have been laid by year; and (b) what are the details of each instance in (a), including the (i) type of offence, (ii) outcome, (iii) country in which the offence took place?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 765—Mr. Tony Baldinelli:

With regard to the purchase of Canadian flags or lapel pins depicting the Canadian flag or the Canadian coat of arms, which were manufactured outside of Canada, since January 1, 2020: (a) what specific merchandise was purchased, broken down by individual item; and (b) what is the breakdown of the purchases listed in (a), including the (i) item description, (ii) price per item, (iii) country of origin for manufacturing, (iv) quantity purchased, (v) total amount of expenditure, (vi) reason no Canadian manufacturer was chosen for the purchase?

(Return tabled)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I ask that all remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

STRENGTHENING ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION FOR A HEALTHIER CANADA ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill S-5, An Act to amend the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999, to make related amendments to the Food and Drugs Act and to repeal the Perfluorooctane Sulfonate Virtual Elimination Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoulu, BQ): Madam Speaker, the environment has always been a major concern for me. The environmental situation in Quebec, Canada and around the world is evolving at a frantic rate, so it is high time that the House reviewed the Canadian Environmental Protection Act.

In my speech, I will explain why the act needs to be modernized. I will talk about some of the concerns that have been raised by environmental groups and about some of the concerns that I had when I read the bill. I will also bring up some questions that I hope we will be able to answer when the bill is studied in committee. In case members do not already know, the Bloc Québécois supports Bill S-5 in principle.

The Canadian Environmental Protection Act has not been reviewed in 23 years. That was literally in the last century. I can safely say that many things have changed since then: technological advances; the planned obsolescence of everything we consume; the major growth of natural resource development to meet the exploding world population and the exploding levels of consumption around the world; and climate change, which is causing increasingly frequent and severe extreme weather events and natural disasters.

This legislation therefore needs to be modernized. However, I would like to raise a few important points.

Bill S-5 does not review the entire Canadian Environmental Protection Act. That, in my humble opinion, is a flaw. Every section of the act should be reviewed to ensure that it is consistent with today's realities and the changing world we live in, as well as our aspirations for tomorrow.

Quebec must be able to make decisions as a mature and responsible nation, especially when it comes to its environment and territory. All of Quebec's politicians feel that way, and they expressed exactly that on April 13, 2022. On that date, politicians from all the parties represented in Quebec's National Assembly unanimously adopted a motion asserting the primacy of Quebec's jurisdiction over the environment.

Too often, when the time came to advance environmental justice or strengthen environmental protection in Quebec, Quebecers were disappointed by the Canadian government. They have been disappointed by decisions and a vision that were more in line with those of an oil state than those of a state aware that it must legislate to leave a healthy environment for future generations.

That is why we will be meticulous about ensuring that the amendments we make not only meet the expectations of the people we represent, but also guard against the federal government once again interfering in areas under the jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces.

In its preamble and its clauses, the bill sets out to create a right to the environment, yet the senior government officials who told parliamentarians about Bill S-5 when it was introduced admitted that, contrary to the Liberal government's claims, the bill does not achieve that.

In order to achieve that goal, we need a government that is sincere and courageous, a government that will invite its partners in the federation to a round of constitutional talks aimed at adding this right to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms so that everyone can truly benefit from a healthy environment. That means opening up the Constitution. Enough with the lip service. We are done with that.

In fact, here again, Canada should follow Quebec's example. Quebec's Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms, which was enacted in 2006 and is now 16 years old, states, "Every person has a right to live in a healthful environment in which biodiversity is preserved, to the extent and according to the standards provided by law."

Government Orders

• (1535)

Unlike the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, the Quebec charter is quasi-constitutional in scope in the political context of Quebec. It is plain to see that Quebec does not need Canada's help to promote and protect the fundamental rights of Quebecers. Canada needs to follow Quebec's lead.

The bill also includes the notion of vulnerable populations, although it never properly defines the term. Reading between the lines, we believe that it refers to first nations. That said, children, pregnant women, seniors, people with immune deficiencies and people with chronic diseases or cancer are also among vulnerable populations, regardless of their skin colour or religion. Does the bill include them in its definition of vulnerable populations? We are still waiting for the answer.

I am glad to see that studies on toxic substances will be done and that they will take into account something that many groups and citizens have been fighting for for decades. The aim is to limit the use of vertebrate animals to situations where other research techniques cannot in any way be used to determine the toxicity of a substance. This is a good step forward. The bill needs to take into account the recommendations that have been made by health and environmental groups for decades, as well as the recommendations made by the chemical industry partners involved.

However, some questions came to mind when reading the bill. The need to study the impact of the accumulation of a substance comes up many times, but there is no mention of studying the effects of a combination of toxic substances. What I mean by that is that some substances are not very toxic or not at all toxic on their own, but they can become very dangerous when combined with other substances, and there is no mention of that in the bill. It would be a good idea for the bill to address the impacts of these combinations.

I noticed that the bill repeals the sections pertaining to the virtual elimination of substances. I wondered why that was so, and I understood that the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development felt that the virtual elimination approach was dysfunctional. That being said, I think that the baby is being thrown out with the bathwater here. Just because the act is dysfunctional does not mean that it is all bad. It could be improved. Why is it not being improved?

Furthermore, in several places in the bill, the wording setting out the duties of the Minister of the Environment and other relevant ministers is not forceful enough. Several clauses say that the minister "may" do something instead of saying that the minister "shall" do something, that he must take measures. I think that conducting studies and publishing reports should be a duty, not just a power.

Lastly, the bill implies that the minister must report annually on the implementation of the framework. Other reports and studies can or must also be completed by the minister. Why not use a group of organizations or independent researchers?

By using independent services, even supporting university research, we could ensure consistency in data collection and greater attention to improving mandates and research and study topics, while ensuring the impartiality of the data.

In conclusion, Bill S-5 has many highly technical components. These components deserve to be carefully analyzed by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development in order to ensure that the modernized act will truly allow the federal government to assume its own responsibilities with regard to protecting the environment, while respecting the protection of the public and the environmental sovereignty of Quebec and the Canadian provinces. I am sure that my colleague from Repentigny will do exemplary work in committee on this issue.

• (1540)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, what is in Bill S-5 is very encouraging. It is the essence of recognizing that there is a right to a healthy environment for Canadians. What I really like about the legislation is that would put in place the fact that Canadians can request that a substance be assessed. Obviously, there will be a lot of details that we have to follow through. No doubt that will come up at committee in some of its discussions.

We can talk about indigenous reconciliation when we think about UNDRIP. That is been incorporated into Bill S-5. There are issues surrounding animal testing. No doubt it is substantial legislation, but what I like is the fact that it appears that virtually all members of the major political parties in the House support its passage at second reading.

Does the member not agree that we will be able to really get down to a lot more work on the bill if we see it go to the committee stage?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola: Madam Speaker, I want this bill to get to committee as quickly as possible so that the improvements I mentioned in my speech or that other colleagues suggested can be made.

Here, in the House, suggestions are made. In committee, suggestions are made, and we vote for or against them. We improve the bill. That is the committee's job.

I do agree that the bill must go to committee as quickly as possible, and then everyone can provide their input.

[*English*]

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Madam Speaker, my friend from Beauport—Limouilou spoke on a number things. She talked about working together. Then she talked about the legislation, how the wording was so open to interpretation and how there was a lack of clarity and vague terminology throughout it. She talked about getting this to committee where we could sit down and bandy this about among ourselves.

Government Orders

Does she actually think it is going to happen? Canadians are expecting that we are sitting around, putting out ideas back and forth and coming to a mutual agreement. I wonder if the member believes that is actually going to happen.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola: Madam Speaker, I fundamentally believe in goodness, conscience, human logic and also what I would call the good character of every member of a committee.

Of course, it can occasionally take some time to flesh out certain ideas. However, when we finally come to an agreement and stop complicating things, we can do it. I am confident that with plenty of goodwill from everyone, we can come up with a bill that all members can agree on and that will serve as a model. At least, that is my hope.

• (1545)

[*English*]

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, I know my colleague is passionate about the environment. I have witnessed her at OGGO.

This is the first time I am rising since learning of the passing of the Tla-o-qui-aht Nation hereditary chief, Muuchinink, also known as Bruce Frank. I would like to pay my condolences to his wife Iris, their daughter and all Tla-o-qui-aht and Nuu-chah-nulth people and the surrounding communities, because this is a big loss to our community. Thank you, Madam Speaker, for allowing me to recognize our *Tyee Ha'wiih*.

I know that indigenous peoples are often in pollution hot spots and the bill would not do enough to address that. Maybe my colleague can speak about the importance of something that Muuchinink cared deeply about. He worried about our coastal waters and the environment and the spread of polystyrene. He also worried about the government's lack of regulations around polystyrene and that it needed to do more to protect our environment. Maybe the member could speak to that.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola: Madam Speaker, I seem to recall that there is a continent of plastic currently floating in the Pacific Ocean. Sea creatures sometimes ingest bits of it, which end up in our food. We eat animals that eat things that are not necessarily good for our health.

First nations are also affected because a large part of their diet consists of food that comes directly from the sea. We must be mindful of our environment and take care of it. By doing so, we take care of ourselves.

I hope my colleague will convey my sincere condolences to the family of the hereditary chiefs.

[*English*]

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Madam Speaker, there are times when we all wish that certain legislation was unnecessary. Certainly, that is true for this bill, Bill S-5, an act to amend the Canadian Environmental Protection Act.

It would be so nice to live in a world where there was no need for laws to protect the environment because everyone, individuals and corporations, understood their responsibilities and acted accordingly. However, we live in the real world, which means there is a need for legislators to enact laws to ensure that what should come naturally does indeed take place.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members opposite for their concern for our environment. Although there are times when we differ on the best methods of doing that, I know they have a deep concern for the future of the planet, one that is shared by me and my colleagues.

As we discuss the bill today, I hope that my contribution will be taken in the spirit in which it is given. Perhaps no legislation is perfect, but I am hopeful this bill, which has seen several revisions in the Senate, can be further improved by the contributions of members of the House.

The role of government is to protect citizens. None of us would dispute that. Bill S-5 recognizes that every Canadian has the right to a healthy environment and that the federal government has a responsibility to protect that right. That right is not defined in the act, which may give some people cause for concern, but it is good to know that the government has not forgotten the importance of the definition and that it is still to come. I hope we will see it later on.

I am surprised the minister needed two years to develop an implementation framework for how the right to a healthy environment would be considered in the administration of this bill, balanced with social, economic, health, scientific and other relevant factors, but I would rather that he take the time to get it right. Too often it seems the current government has acted hastily, to the regret of the Canadian people, so I will not complain about the delay in this case, although I should point out that the minister has had plenty of time to consider it, given that the government introduced it in the last Parliament but failed to make its passage a priority unfortunately.

What worries me is that the current government has a habit of making pronouncements that highlight its environmental plans but does not follow through. I am hoping this time it means what it says.

We all know that the Liberal government has yet to meet a single carbon emissions reduction target it has set for itself. That is nothing new. It is true. It talks about climate change, using words like “crisis” and “emergency”, but then acts as if it does not believe its own words. In fact, carbon emissions have gone up under the current Liberal government. It cannot deny it and it will not deny it.

Government Orders

The carbon tax is an absolute failure. Not only has it not reduced emissions, but the Parliamentary Budget Officer has made it clear that the majority of Canadians actually pay more in carbon taxes than they collect in rebates. So far this year, the commissioner of the environment has released 10 reports on the performance of the current Liberal government with respect to the protection of the environment. More than half of the reports showed that the government was failing to meet its targets.

It could be said that this legislation is long overdue. The last major revision to the Canadian Environmental Protection Act was more than 20 years ago. It goes back to 1999 under Prime Minister Chrétien. We know so much more today about climate change than we did then and about the need for action and making a meaningful effort.

• (1550)

This legislation would modernize the chemicals management plan in Canada. It is hard to see how anyone would disagree with that objective. Taking a risk-based approach to chemicals management is something I feel has broad-based support.

I am so pleased to see the efforts to remove unnecessary red tape from our environmental regulations. All too often, it seems the goal of the government is to make life more difficult for Canadians as individuals and for Canadian businesses. It will probably surprise many people to see that sometimes the Liberals actually take the effects of their legislation into consideration.

This bill is, I am sure, not the only legislation we will see from the government designed to strengthen environmental protection on behalf of the Canadian people. It stresses chemicals management and toxic substances, which are not the only areas of environmental protection that are concerning to Canadians.

I seem to remember the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, several years ago, made recommendations regarding national standards for clean air and clean water. Perhaps those will be included when the minister tells us exactly what is meant by Canadians having a right to a healthy environment. Certainly, one would think clean air and clean water would be essential to that.

As this bill goes next to the committee stage for further study before being brought back to the House, it would be well to consider what we would like the legislation to accomplish. As I stated previously, we are in the House committed to protecting our environment. Canada is the envy of the world for our clean water, our clean air and the natural beauty of our country. We are all committed as parliamentarians to ensuring future generations enjoy the same healthy environment we have today. Our legacy will be defined by how, and only by how, we treat the planet that has been entrusted to us.

There seems to be general agreement that revisions to our environmental protection laws are long overdue. Perhaps the government has not acted quickly enough, but it is acting. Perhaps the provisions of this bill do not go as far as some of us would have liked to see, and that is understandable.

When this bill was examined by the Senate, it was subject to considerable amendments before it was passed and given to us for consideration. Some of those amendments make sense to me. Other suggestions, such as removing the word “cost” from “cost-effective” in the precautionary principle, would seem to me to be in need of more discussion.

I understand whatever form this bill finally takes, it will not be as all-encompassing as some would hope. The reality is that rarely, if ever, we will find a perfect piece of legislation. I would respectfully suggest perfection is even less likely when dealing with the offerings of the Liberal government. However, in this case, it seems to have addressed a need. I look forward to taking questions.

• (1555)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have been asking a considerable number of questions today regarding the Conservative Party's approach and not wanting to pass it to the committee stage but rather debate it, so the member is already aware of my concern about that.

The other concern I have is the Conservatives' feeling in principle that they do not need to share with or tell Canadians what their policy is on the environment. Many believe that many Conservatives are, in fact, climate deniers. They do not recognize climate change. It is amplified by their positioning on the price on pollution. One day they were in favour of it, yet lately they are against it.

I am wondering if my friend could indicate whether, on such an important piece of legislation, the Conservative Party actually has a plan on climate? If he does, I would be more than happy to provide the leave necessary so he could expand upon it.

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif: Madam Speaker, I indicated that we are supporting this bill going to the committee stage, which we believe is very important and worthwhile.

As far as policy, I do not think the government has a plan for the environment. The government has a plan for taxation. That is exactly what the government has. It has not hit even one single target that it has been boasting about for the last seven years and beyond.

The Liberals should give us a break and stop questioning others when they are not performing on their own. Let us see the results they could generate as a government—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Rivière-des-Mille-Îles.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am hoping my colleague can explain something.

He mentioned in his speech that he is very concerned about water quality, air quality and the environment. That sounds wonderful, but his words ring hollow when I think of his party's desire to expand the oil industry. The Conservative Party may not have the best record when it comes to the environment.

Government Orders

Can my colleague explain how he reconciles these two things?

[English]

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif: Madam Speaker, on the same note, there is going to be a time, as I indicated in my speech, when we all have concerns about the environment. No one has more concerns than others in that competition toward a better environment, clean water.

I am surprised to hear the question from Quebec, where sewage is being dropped in the rivers in Quebec. Where is the Bloc Québécois on that? Why have they never raised that in the House of Commons? Why are they trying to question the Conservative Party on our vision and our belief in a better environment, cleaner water and cleaner air?

• (1600)

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Madam Speaker, this bill does not address ambient air quality standards, even though air pollution contributes to over 15,000 deaths in Canada each year and air pollution is likely one of the most common ways that the right to a healthy environment would be violated.

Would the member support including requirements that the implementation framework for the right to a healthy environment include actions that the minister would take when ambient air quality standards are exceeded?

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif: Madam Speaker, the bill is not perfect. We would like to see it perfect coming out of the committee, after all the amendments that would take place.

I also spoke about how there is no definition for rights in the bill, as far as environment, water and clean air. The bill is yet to be perfect. I hope that, through the committee and through consultation, we would get a nice piece of legislation that would really help Canadians. We could make it what it is meant to be.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, this gives me an opportunity to clarify some constitutional elements that have been misunderstood in the debate so far today.

I have heard a number of Conservative MPs say that somehow this involves the Criminal Code. I want to clarify this really forcefully: I have a lot of problems with this bill, but it does not involve the Criminal Code. It involves the head of powers, the criminal law powers, as defined by the Supreme Court of Canada back in the Hydro-Québec case. The government is entitled to legislate to protect Canadians from toxic substances and others that threaten our health. It does not involve criminality in the sense of the Criminal Code.

If my hon. colleague has any comments, I would welcome them.

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif: Madam Speaker, I have thought the Green Party has been silent on the environmental policies, and I would like to see more coming from its side.

Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Madam Speaker, today we are talking about Bill S-5, an act to amend the Canadian Environmental Protection Act and other legislation.

This initiative is welcomed because the Canadian Environmental Protection Act has not been updated since 1999, and much has happened since then. I do not want to overstate the significance of what

is going on here. This draft bill streamlines a program that is already in place and has been working effectively for many years. This is more about the administration of a program than bold, new ideas about the environment.

I want to talk about a couple positive things with this draft legislation. The preamble of the Canadian Environmental Protection Act would read, “every individual in Canada has a right to a healthy environment”. The preamble of the legislation would also recognize, “the Government of Canada is committed to implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples”.

We have no arguments with these broad, aspirational statements, but that is what they are. They are broad, aspirational statements. There is nothing in the bill that gives substance to these statements. In fact, we are going to have to wait two years to see the government's implementation framework to see what the government considers to be a healthy environment.

This is typical Liberal Party virtue signalling. It is devoid of substance. This is what Canadians have learned to expect of the Liberal Party: lofty words with little substance.

Another positive thing in this bill is that the government listened to stakeholders, and that is always welcomed. There were experts were familiar with the benefits and risks of chemicals used in the everyday life of Canadians. Toxic substances need to be used in a safe manner, and we need to listen to experts. Bill S-5 preserves the risk-based approach to chemical management as opposed to the hazard-based approach. My understanding of the distinction is that the preferred risk-based approach focuses on actual outcomes. It does a risk-benefit analysis.

Clearly, not all hazards can be removed out of our lives, but they can be managed, and that is what this bill does. That is a good thing, and we accept that. The bill also continues the tradition of being fact-based and evidence-based. We need to follow the science, use a precautionary principle, and make decisions based on the best evidence available at the time. Generally, we accept these principles. All government decisions should be based on facts, not on ideology. Unfortunately, the Liberal government has a fairly poor record.

For example, if we take Bill C-21, which is the bill that would ban all handguns in Canada, that bill is being studied at the public safety committee right now. The public safety committee has just finished a study on reducing gun and gang violence in Canada. We heard from more than 40 witnesses who are experts in the field, and not one of them said that the problem was handguns owned by lawful gun owners.

Government Orders

As a matter of fact, what we were told was that the vast majority of guns and firearms used in crime in Canada were smuggled in from the United States of America. The U.S. is the largest gun manufacturing economy in the world, with whom we share the largest undefended border with in the world. Admittedly, this creates a big problem for Canadians, but taking the frustrations out on lawful gun owners is not the solution to this problem.

Wanting to stay positive, I am now going to turn to the Conservative Party's record on the environment. It is well known that Canada's most successful pro-environmental prime minister was the Conservative, Brian Mulroney. In the 1980s, acid rain was a big problem in both Canada and the U.S. Our great lakes were dying off. The environment was suffering. Fish stocks were in decline.

Mr. Mulroney claims that his biggest and proudest achievement was the Canada-U.S. air quality agreement, which finally broke the back of acid rain. This achievement was not about virtue signalling. It was about achieving real, measurable results. It took real effort. It took co-operation with our neighbours. It took political will and stamina. It took the common-sense approach that Conservatives prefer.

• (1605)

We understand that global climate change is in fact global. We need to work with our allies, our trading partners and all peoples on this planet, as we did with the acid rain agreement.

Take plastics, for example. With the amendments to the Canadian Environmental Protection Act in the bill we are talking about today, plastic manufactured items would be listed as toxic. We knew this was coming, and here is what our Conservative Party campaign platform from last year contained: "To meaningfully contribute to tackling ocean plastic, we must recognize that plastic is a global problem". Further on, our platform said, "The current government's approach has been heavy on slogans but light on action. Declaring plastics 'toxic' isn't helping our environment but is driving jobs out of Canada." Again, this is common sense, not the flash and bang that we learned in a high school drama class. Let us get down and do the work.

The same goes for the Liberal Party's carbon tax, which ignores the international threats to our global environment. The Liberals want Canada to produce less carbon, so their solution is to leave our natural resources in the ground and let other countries rack up carbon debts, to produce less natural gas and let Russia fill the void in Europe and to produce less oil and make Saudi Arabia and Venezuela happy.

It would be one thing if the Liberals' version of a price on pollution actually had the desired effect, but despite a lot of pious talk on emission reductions, Canada is falling further behind. Now the Liberals are going to triple the carbon tax. How high does it have to go before we will actually start to see our emissions come down? Maybe in a few years' time we are going to see what effect the tripling had. Maybe it is going to have to be tripled again after that. Canada is a big and cold country. We are going to consume energy just to survive and operate.

More and more people, admittedly, live in urban ridings and can take public transit, like those in my riding of Langley—Aldergrove,

where I am very happy to say the squeaky wheel got the grease and we got a commitment that the SkyTrain will come to Langley. However, many people living in rural areas simply do not have that choice. Ask a family in rural B.C. if they will pull their kids out of hockey because the price of gas is too high. Of course they will not. They will take the pickup truck, see the price at the pumps and be reminded why they are so irritated by the federal government. Then they will drive the 100 kilometres to a hockey tournament. This is what we do. This is how we live.

I want to end on a positive note. I will be supporting this draft bill, not because I support the government's failed environmental program but because the bill would streamline the administration of an important part of the federal government's work, namely the management of risks and hazards in our natural environment. We all want a healthy environment, and the Conservatives like the idea of things being managed in the most efficient way possible. This modest bill is a step in the right direction.

• (1610)

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to rise and ask my colleague some questions about his speech today.

There are a couple of things. I am really glad that he brought up the environmental record of the Conservatives back in the nineties. It was really strong, and it continues to be probably the strongest Conservative environmental agenda in this country, provincial or federal, ever. It begs the question: Why does the current Conservative Party neglect the environment in its platform and in its lines of questioning?

Carbon pricing is world renowned as the foundation of a policy that is forward thinking, and all of my colleagues on the other side in the Conservative Party ran on a platform of carbon pricing in the last election. However, now they seem to be railing against that foundation, despite it being a rather Conservative principle, a market-based instrument and a hallmark of many Conservative governments' platforms around the world.

I wonder why the Conservative Party continues to fight against something that is so well founded in economics while pretending to be the party of common sense and to know something about how to manage an economy.

Government Orders

Mr. Tako Van Popta: Madam Speaker, I am actually quite surprised to hear the Liberals keep promoting a price on pollution or carbon tax, because clearly it is failing. If we take a look at the graph, the number keeps going up. The government fails to meet one target after another after another. Now it is going to triple the carbon tax. Is this finally what is going to break the back? Unfortunately it is going to break the backs of many Canadians who need to rely on energy just to live in this large and northern climate.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Langley—Aldergrove for his speech, in which he referred to Brian Mulroney.

I would like to hear him talk about the fact that Mr. Mulroney recently said that he no longer recognizes himself in the new version of the Conservative Party, particularly because it refused to acknowledge climate change.

[*English*]

Mr. Tako Van Popta: Madam Speaker, that is a good question. I have a great deal of respect for Brian Mulroney. He was a great leader and a great prime minister. I am very proud of the Conservative Party because we have a great tradition here in Canada. I am confident that going forward we are going to form a very good and responsible government.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I listened with great interest. I heard about guns. I heard about gangs. I heard about the carbon tax. I did not hear anything about Bill S-5, though, but that is okay because we have the privilege of being able to discuss and debate, and I thank my colleague. I am thinking that people in Northern Ireland do not have that right now. The DUP refuses to enter Stormont and they are being forced into a new election. This is because the British government is ignoring its obligations under the Good Friday Agreement.

To get back to the issue of Bill S-5, I think it is very important that Canada play a role in pushing the British government to recognize that it has international legal obligations. We can do that through trade negotiations. This is what we can do as parliamentarians. Whether the member wants to debate guns, gangs or carbon taxes, we need to be talking about democracy both here and in Ireland.

Mr. Tako Van Popta: Madam Speaker, I was listening carefully to hear if there was a question there. It was a comment, so I am just going to comment myself.

Unfortunately the member opposite did not listen to my speech. Maybe the delivery was very boring; I am not sure, but I actually said quite a bit about Bill S-5. I am saying positive things about it because I think there is good in it. I am saying that I will support this legislation because it is a modest step in the right direction.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I happen to have worked in the administration under former prime minister Brian Mulroney. I worked on acid rain and worked on the treaty that protected the ozone layer. I can contrast, from first-hand experience, why the current Liberal government is not hitting targets and Brian Mulroney's government did. At no time did we in that government decide to fight acid rain while sub-

sidizing acid rain. At no time did we say that we must make our other colleagues happy and build, for instance, more pollution into our system while trying to fight it. We cannot meet climate targets doing this.

I know the members opposite think it is important to build pipelines. We must cancel the Trans Mountain pipeline if we have any interest in making sure our emissions go down. We have to be consistent and fight for what our goals are, one of which is to make sure we have a livable world for our kids. That is not hyperbole. That is what the scientists are warning us about.

● (1615)

Mr. Tako Van Popta: Madam Speaker, climate change is a global phenomenon. Canada cannot solve it on its own but we can contribute. We have natural gas, which burns much cleaner than coal. Let us pump more natural gas and deliver it to China and other developing countries so they can get themselves off dirtier coal.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is my turn to speak to Bill S-5, An Act to amend the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999, to make related amendments to the Food and Drugs Act and to repeal the Perfluorooctane Sulfonate Virtual Elimination Act.

This is a timely bill to modernize the act and cut red tape. After all these years, it is time to revisit the Canadian Environmental Protection Act. There are some good amendments here along with some not so good ones that came out of Senate amendments. We are open to this bill, but we are going to want to see a lot of amendments in committee. Changes will have to be made. There are good things in this bill, but not everything in it is good.

For now, we are willing to give the bill a chance and let the House debate the issues that have been discussed in the other place so we can come up with a bill that will improve the environment for Canadians. However, this is not groundbreaking environmental legislation. We do still have to agree on it.

Yes, this bill does introduce some changes, particularly in terms of administrative matters, and it will facilitate many procedures. However, this is not enough to enable the government to succeed where it has failed since 2015. The government does have a record of setting targets and missing them since 2015. Many politicians are being hypocritical by saying that they are going to fight for the environment and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, when they are putting all of this effort and responsibility on the shoulders of Canadians, who will have to pay for the ideological choices of certain politicians.

Government Orders

I am saying that and talking about hypocrisy because many people are taking a strong stand and saying that we need to put an end to the use of fossil fuels and plastics, when, unfortunately, most of us will continue to use a lot of these products for as long as necessary. Canada cannot simply put an end to the use of fossil fuels.

What we, on this side of the House, think, which seems very reasonable to me, is that as long as we need to use fossil fuels, we should be using energy that comes from Canada. It is as simple as that. Rather than using fossil fuels from countries that have no respect for the environment or for standards, we should be using energy from Canada. However, it seems members would rather give grand speeches and put all of the environmental responsibility off on Canadian citizens.

The Liberals' plan is not a plan against climate change, it is a plan to tax Canadians. They want to shift the burden of fighting climate change to taxpayers. Taxpayers are people like my colleagues and me, like the people watching us, or those who do not watch us. Not too many people follow our debates, unfortunately. If that were the case, then we could reach more people more directly, explain our points of view and explain our differences.

The only thing the government is proposing at this time is to increase taxes, hoping that that will work. However, that has worked since 2015 and no one has to take it from me. In 2021, Canada's commissioner of the environment said that Canada is going from "failure to failure". I will quote what Canada's environment commissioner Jerry DeMarco said in 2021:

Canada was once a leader in the fight against climate change. However, after a series of missed opportunities, it has become the worst performer of all G7 nations since the landmark Paris Agreement on climate change was adopted in 2015... We can't continue to go from failure to failure; we need action and results, not just more targets and plans.

Since 1988, Canada has set several different climate targets, but none of them have been met. The Liberal government's latest attempt to reduce greenhouse gas emissions involves imposing a carbon tax on Canadians.

• (1620)

One reality that the government has not grasped is that we are currently in the midst of a serious economic crisis.

Inflation is at an all-time high of almost 7%. The cost of groceries has increased by 11.4%, the largest increase in the past 40 years. The cost of a litre of gas is at a record high, yet the government is quietly preparing a price increase of its own. Not only is it incapable of fighting this inflation that Canadians are experiencing, but it is also preparing to ask Canadians to pay even more by imposing a carbon tax that it will triple over the coming years.

This means that Canadians, who have already been forced to cut back on groceries and make difficult choices because they just cannot afford the things they used to buy or get before to feed their families, will have to make even more difficult choices. There are some expenses that cannot be reduced, such as driving a car to work, and heating a home in a country like Canada, where temperatures can dip under 30 degrees below zero.

In 2022, people in Canada should not be talking about turning down their heat to save money so that they can afford to feed their

families. That is not something Canadians should even have to think about. In light of all these difficulties and the problems they cause, for example problems that we are hearing about in food banks across Canada, which have a growing number of clients who unfortunately do not have enough money to buy food for themselves at the grocery store in such tough times, surely, this is not the time for the government to tell people to make an extra effort and pay an additional tax so that it can increase its visibility on the international stage by pretending to do something.

The figures speak for themselves. The Liberal carbon tax plan did not and will not work. It is going to work even less well because Canadians simply cannot afford this upcoming carbon tax.

When I call it a carbon tax, I really mean it is a carbon tax, because this money will be taken from our wallets, from Canadians' wallets, and sent to the government. The members across the way can call it what they will, but when the government takes money out of our pockets, that is called a tax, not a carbon plan. This is a carbon tax and, unfortunately, it has been repeatedly proven that this path will be unsuccessful and that Canada will not reach its targets despite imposing this plan, which demonstrates a real lack of compassion for Canadians.

However, we will support Bill S-5, and the reason is that it has nothing to do with that.

Bill S-5 is going to do things like reduce red tape to help companies do business in an increasingly competitive world. Indeed, that is one of the things that we think needs to be done. As I said, we will be looking to make amendments to the bill, looking to improve it, because right now, there are risks associated with some of the amendments proposed by the other place, and we think they may cause even more damage to the Canadian economy rather than help it. Nevertheless, overall, we look forward to seeing Bill S-5 move forward.

If all parties work together, I think we can succeed.

• (1625)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is interesting that the member said the Conservatives are going to vote in favour of Bill S-5 because it has nothing to do with the carbon tax, yet the member spent a great deal of his time talking about the price on pollution, the carbon tax. There could be a bit of hypocrisy coming from the official opposition.

Government Orders

If we think about it, with 338 candidates, part of the Conservative election platform was to support a price on pollution, a carbon tax. When the new Conservative leader was chosen, they flip-flopped on it and said the carbon tax or a price on pollution is a really bad thing. However, the price on pollution only applies to provinces that do not already have a price on pollution.

Would the member stand in his place and criticize those provinces that have a price on pollution? Would he say that they should get rid of that price on pollution, or is this standard or a new principle just on the federal backstop plan?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold: Madam Speaker, when I listen to my colleague speak, there is a word that springs to mind. It is the word “hypocrisy”, which he just mentioned.

I remember one thing. In 2015, the Liberal government was elected on a major promise: that it would run very small deficits for three years and then slowly come back to a balanced budget.

In his maiden speech, the Prime Minister said that interest rates were low and that they would stay that way for decades. He said that to justify his voracious appetite for spending. That is what I call hypocrisy. I do not think the parliamentary secretary is in any position to lecture me on that score.

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am not mean-spirited. I will not start up again on the subject of hypocrisy, and I will not accuse my colleague from Mégantic—L'Érable, whom I like too much, of being a hypocrite.

However, there is a sort of hypocrisy in what I have been hearing for a while now. It is hypocritical to not recognize that Canada is an oil-producing country, which is the reason we keep missing our environmental targets year after year. The Conservatives' solution is generally to say that we need to produce more oil.

The other atrocious hypocrisy is to lead people to believe that the carbon tax is preventing them from buying food, when we know that the greediest players in the Canadian economy are the big oil companies, which are raking in staggering profits. The Conservatives do not ask them to make an effort. The Conservatives tell them that they will encourage them and find funding for them.

Does my colleague not find that hypocritical as well?

Mr. Luc Berthold: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his declaration of love. I found it quite moving, truly. Mostly, however, I was moved by my colleague's ability to say one thing and then its opposite in under 30 seconds.

He began his question by saying that he would not be meanspirited and would not talk about hypocrisy. Then he went on to talk about just that: hypocrisy.

I am a little perplexed by my colleague's attitude. He wants me to say something that he knows I will not because I am not who he says I am.

[*English*]

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Madam Speaker, New Democrats have been pushing for a long time for more protections for Canadians, a healthy environment and an envi-

ronmental bill of rights. In this past session my colleague from South Okanagan—West Kootenay put forward again that environmental bill of rights. It is about ensuring that Canadians have the supports to know what is going on. I have been approached by many constituents who are really concerned about what they are seeing even in their own backyards.

Could this hon. member talk about whether he is going to support that colleague's push for stronger legislation than we are seeing now, unfortunately, and not just by taking incremental steps toward environmental protections but much bigger ones?

• (1630)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold: Madam Speaker, Bill S-5 recognizes the right to a healthy environment, which the Conservatives fully support.

I am from Thetford Mines, where asbestos was produced for about 100 years. For about a century, this industry provided people with a livelihood, which we now know hurt a lot more people on the planet than it helped. Therefore, we were able to recognize that we have to do something.

Unfortunately, today, governments do not recognize the liability that exists there. Today, in Thetford Mines, we still live in an environment where there are asbestos mining residues everywhere, and we are asking the government to help us transform our town so we can live in a healthy environment.

That is part of what can be done and the specific measures that can be implemented to help us have a healthy environment.

[*English*]

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to be here today and to speak to Bill S-5. Members may be aware that the Canadian Environmental Protection Act has not been updated since the 1990s. However, my colleagues have pointed out that it is more of a bureaucratic modernization effort than it is an environmental bill. Nonetheless, we as Conservatives, as my colleague just mentioned, will indeed support it.

Certainly, there is a lot of ambiguity within the bill as it would do many things, including recognize that every Canadian has the right to a healthy environment and require the Government of Canada to protect this right. This right is not defined in the act. However, this right may be balanced with social, economic, health, scientific and other relevant factors, and it would require that the minister develop, within two years, an implementation framework on how the right to a healthy environment would be considered in the administration of CEPA.

Government Orders

Unfortunately, this is not the first time that we have seen ambiguity from the government. Certainly what comes to mind at this moment is to highlight the failures of the current Liberal government on the environment in particular. I will start with the fact that the Liberal government has never met a single carbon emissions reduction target in all of its years in government. We saw the Liberals do this again in March, when they said they were going to slash emissions by 40% by 2030. They once again released an ambitious climate plan with far-reaching emissions reduction goals, yet to this date they have not met a single reduction target.

Therefore, the Liberals' plan in March answered the question of what the Liberals do when they miss their climate targets. They simply make up new ones. The Liberal government's reaction to each failed target is simply to increase them and to talk louder, as we have heard from a previous minister: If they say it loud enough and often enough, people will totally believe it.

Bigger targets do not mean action and stronger rhetoric does not get results. The Liberal plan will have devastating effects on Canada's oil and gas sector under the guise of increased stringency, which includes a capped production. This confirms the Prime Minister's pledge to phase out Canada's energy sector. As an Albertan, this is nothing new to me.

Canada has what the world needs. When Europe needs ethical energy, the Prime Minister is effectively making sure that Canada will not or cannot meet these demands. The Liberal government is spelling the end for Canada's environmentally and socially responsible energy sector, and it is in fact surrendering the global market to oil producers like Saudi Arabia and Venezuela who do not have the same care as we do in Canada for both human rights as well as the carbon footprint. Canada's world-class energy should be taking up more space in the market to keep out producers with lower standards, but the Liberal government has failed to recognize this. Under the Prime Minister, Canada will continue to sit on the sidelines and lose tens of thousands of jobs and billions of dollars to countries who do not share our values on the environment, human rights or freedom.

I will also make it clear that carbon emissions have gone up under the current government. Between 1990 and 2020, Canada's GHG emissions actually increased by 13.1% or 78 megatonnes. That is a significant increase under the current Liberal government. That certainly has to be pointed out.

As well, I will speak to the carbon tax, which we do, as Conservatives, because we want to realistically evaluate this. The carbon tax is an absolute failure. It has not reduced emissions, as I just pointed out in my last statistic. The Parliamentary Budget Officer has made it clear that the majority of Canadians pay more in taxes than they get back in rebates. Again, we see the government tax and tax. In fact, when we look at the report from the Parliamentary Budget Officer, we see that when the economic source impact is combined with the fiscal use impact, "the net carbon cost increases for all households, reflecting the overall negative economic impact of the federal carbon levy under the government's [healthy environment and a healthy economy] plan".

• (1635)

The report states:

Indeed, most households will see a net loss resulting from federal carbon pricing under the HEHE plan in 2030-31. That is, their overall costs—which now include the federal levy and GST paid (fiscal impact) and lower employment and investment income (economic impact)—exceed the rebate and the induced reduction in personal income taxes arising from the loss in income.

The government talks a lot about this rebate, yet the Parliamentary Budget Officer has come out and said that all the Liberals are doing inflicts more pain on Canadians than the good they are claiming they are doing. We are seeing in that report that even with the rebate they claim is helping Canadians, this is not the case.

In fact, in 2022 the commissioner of the environment released 10 reports on the performance of the Liberal government's protection of the environment, and more than half of these reports showed the government was failing to meet its targets, as I indicated before. A March 28 article from CBC News states, "Canada has had nine climate plans since 1990 and has failed to hit any of the targets in them." It has not met a single target out of nine plans.

The article continues, "Jerry V. DeMarco said Canada has been the worst performer among G7 nations on climate targets since the landmark Paris Agreement was adopted in 2015." I will add that the Conservatives supported it, in good faith, back in 2017.

Here is an interesting quote. The article goes on, stating that a climate plan "is a lot like a household budget, in that if one doesn't pay attention to the details, one won't achieve one's goals. 'You need a plan. You need to break it all out—what are my expenses, what do I need to achieve. And without that, you are obviously not going to stay within your budget.'"

Who said that? It was not a Conservative. Julia Croome of Ecojustice said that. Even Ecojustice, an organization that Conservatives would not usually bring up, is saying the government has failed on its climate targets, like so many things we have seen, most recently of course with inflation and the cost of living.

We are all very concerned on this side about what the fall economic statement will bring on Thursday, despite our leader's asking to stop the taxes and to stop the spending, but we have seen it is often a lack of planning that has led to this.

I will tell the House who has done their part. Industry has done its part, despite the government's demand to ask more and more of it. Enbridge has a plan to eliminate GHG emissions from its business on a net basis by 2050 and reduce the intensity of GHG emissions from its operations by 35% by 2030.

Government Orders

Cenovus is going to reduce absolute GHG emissions by 35% by year end 2035 as it builds toward its long-term ambitions for net-zero emissions by 2050, through methane reductions, carbon capture and storage, and other decarbonization, which is something of great interest to our leader.

As well, Imperial is a founding member of the Oil Sands Pathways to Net Zero Alliance, as well as determining transformational technology solutions.

The government is marred in ambiguity, and while this bill is necessary, it also is marred in ambiguity. As we have seen from the lawyer from Ecojustice, if one fails to plan, one plans on failing. While we will support this bill, let us clear up the ambiguity, not only with Bill S-5 but in government as well.

• (1640)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, number one, Bill S-5 does not deal with climate, and I recognize a big part of the debate we are having here is on sections of environmental and climate policy that are not in Bill S-5.

It is true the government has never met any target, but neither did the previous government under Stephen Harper, which picked a target in Copenhagen and said it would meet that target. It picked a target in 2006 and said it would meet that target. The Liberals claim they reduced emissions, but it was due to COVID. The Harper administration claimed it reduced emissions, but it was due to the 2008 financial collapse.

We need all the big parties to do all the things the hon. member for Calgary Midnapore has said: Have a plan, make a target and stick to it. In fact, not only have none of the governments in this country ever achieved the target, but they have not gotten the direction right. They are supposed to go down, but emissions go up. That is largely due to governments, one after the other, trying to accommodate Alberta's oil and gas industry and running into opposition.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Madam Speaker, I did not really hear a question there. It was more of a statement and a proclamation.

I will say that while we have always considered the environment, our focus at this time is inflation and the cost of living, and historically it has been the economy. The Liberal government staked its existence, its *raison d'être*, on the environment, and it has failed. It has failed in every single capacity.

Maybe the hon. member has not seen the results that she wanted from either party in their time in government, but we were realistic, with our focus set on the economy. The Liberal government set its expectation, its future, on the environment, and it has failed.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for her speech.

I want to congratulate you on your choice of dress today. It is very apt and perfect for Halloween. Your French is also excellent.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I would remind the hon. member that he must speak through the Chair. As for my robe, it is rather institutional.

The hon. member for Rivière-des-Mille-Îles.

Mr. Luc Desilets: Madam Speaker, one thing that really bothers me about the Conservatives' speeches over the past few minutes and hours is their claim that if Canada produces less oil, we will be giving Venezuela, Russia and others the opportunity to produce more and make more money, while, in the meantime, we will not make any money. That is obvious.

Since that is so obvious, does my colleague have any idea or can she foresee how the Conservative Party will transition away from fossil fuels?

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question and his comment about my dress. Even though he is not supposed to talk about my dress, I thank him anyway. I do my best to dress for the occasion.

I think that we the Conservatives are well grounded in reality. Right now, the reality around the world and in Canada is that we need energy from oil and gas. Quite frankly, I think that Quebec benefits from energy from oil.

Even if we want to go in a certain direction, we can assess the other type of energy. Right now, Canada, like the rest of the world, needs oil and gas. We need to recognize that and work together—

• (1645)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Order. The hon. member for Timmins—James Bay for questions and comments.

[*English*]

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I listened with great interest to my hon. colleague listing every climate promise. She missed some, but she did list a whole bunch of the climate promises the Liberals have made. They have failed on every single one.

I want to ask the member a question. This past month, the Alberta Federation of Labour wrote to the Prime Minister with all the affiliates of the Alberta industrial unions, IBEW, the Boilermakers, the western section of UNIFOR, District 3 of the United Steelworkers and the International Union of Operating Engineers, to say that they are already living the transition, and they are asking the government where the funds are to create the diversification in a clean energy economy that we are seeing in the United States. Calgary Economic Development would say it would create \$61 billion in opportunity for Alberta alone if that money was on the table.

Does the member support the position of the Alberta Federation of Labour, that we need to see this commitment to an energy transformation now?

Government Orders

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the member's pointing out all the climate targets that I missed.

He seems to have missed the idea of the economy entirely, as well as that we came here as independent parties, not as a part of the costly coalition.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Order. 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 Saanich—Gulf Islands, Foreign Affairs; the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, Foreign Affairs; the hon. member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, The Economy.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is absolutely an honour to rise to speak tonight on Bill S-5 and lend my voice to this important piece of legislation, which would provide a major update to the Canadian Environmental Protection Act.

It has been said by many in the House that the bill before us has not been updated significantly since it was introduced, and so it is not as up to date or as current as it could be. Although I will be supporting the bill, I think there is some requirement to have some amendments and make some changes, because the bill still misses a few things.

One of the things the bill would do, which I agree with, is recognize that every Canadian has a right to a healthy environment, and it would require that the Government of Canada actually protect this right. However, one thing it does not do is actually specify what a right to a healthy environment means.

It is worth noting that the Liberals have been in power for seven years now, and it is my understanding that this is not the first time the bill has come before this chamber. A variation of the bill, which was very similar, came before us in the previous Parliament, and it is my understanding that on this update, consultations have been going on for more than five years.

The fact that this right has not been clarified in this legislation is troubling, and it should be troubling to every single member in this chamber, because the bill actually sets out that it would provide that the minister develop, within two years, an implementation framework on this right, how it would be administered and how it would be considered. However, it is critically important to highlight that this is not the first time the bill has been before Parliament. It was before us in the previous Parliament, and the Liberals still do not have that right nailed down.

In my riding of Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, frankly, people do not trust this Minister of Environment. They know he has actively campaigned against my riding and against the hard-working men and women who go to work every single day in the oil sands and in the oil and gas industry all across Alberta, B.C. and Saskatchewan. He has chained himself to a coker on its way up to Fort McMurray. He has chained himself to and rappelled up towers.

The minister has done all kinds of things in his previous work with Greenpeace that directly affronted Canada's oil and gas sector, so the fact that it is up to him to decide that critically important piece of how it is going to be implemented is worrisome. Perhaps

he will, in fact, do a good job, but I think it would be far better that we parliamentarians, the 338 of us who were elected to be here, be the ones voting and deciding on that particular piece.

However, this piece of legislation would actually do a few things that I really enjoy. Specifically, one of the things I really appreciate is that it would make it so that an environmental risk assessment would not be duplicated, especially for any kind of drug. Before, there were so many cases in which things were being duplicated in the assessment between the Food and Drug Administration and CEPA. The fact that with the bill there would be only one assessment done provides some clarification and clarity. It would also help ensure that we have the shortest and most appropriate possible process for these kinds of things.

There is one thing that kind of concerns me, and I am not sure if the government has actually thought it all through. It is that the bill would allow absolutely any person to request that the minister assess whether a substance is capable of becoming toxic. I think this could open up a lot of abuse. It could result in hundreds of thousands of requests to the government for assessment, and we do not necessarily know how in depth these assessments are going to be. We do not know if this is going to be an onerous task that would be far beyond the capacity of the minister, because the bill does not request that the department do an assessment, but actually states the minister. The minister would direct the department, but it ultimately comes back each and every time to the minister.

I will go back to the fact that, at least among people in my riding of Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, there is very little trust that this minister has their best interests at heart in any capacity, which is a critically important piece. We would be putting a lot of power in the possession of one person, and I think that is always a dangerous space to be in, regardless of who is in power.

● (1650)

As I said earlier, it does remove some of redundancies in regulations, and in many cases, it has it so there will only be one department that will regulate a particular substance. I think we can all agree that removing redundancies and getting rid of government red tape is always going to benefit Canadians. It is going to benefit our bottom line. As long as it is done with strict protocols in place, our protections are still there. I think that is critically important.

This modernization is a good step. I am just nervous and do not understand why, after five years of active consultation, there are still such large gaps and holes. I am hopeful that the government is willing to have some amendments come forward on this and support them so we have the best possible legislation for Canadians.

I am troubled because I have been sitting here listening to debate on this legislation, and I am not hearing any Liberals get up to speak to this. I am not hearing anyone from the NDP getting up to speak. The costly coalition is miraculously silent. Its members really only jump up once in a while to ask a question.

Government Orders

It just goes to show that the Liberals are not all that engaged, or, if they are engaged, they are just here to heckle and create chaos in the chamber. They are not necessarily here to bring forward different arguments and explain why they are here and supporting this. I think this is why Conservatives are asking for some amendments to this bill.

As someone who is a new legislator who has been here for a year, it has been shocking to me to see how many pieces of legislation have been brought forward that are from previous pieces of legislation, yet we do not really have that fulsome debate. The Liberals decided that because it was fully debated in the previous Parliament, somehow we can skip through that.

Not everyone was here in previous Parliaments. Some people were elected in 2021, and we are not going to hear all of these debates because the Liberals decided that it already happened. To me, that is an affront to the democratic process and to democracy in general. I would urge my colleagues to keep that in mind as we are going forward and as they are bringing forward other pieces of legislation. It is critically important to discuss that in today's context.

When a previous piece of legislation, such as this, would have been brought forward, the major concern of Canadians on inflation was not there. The top-of-mind concern around inflation was not the burning question that faces every single person at the grocery store who is wondering whether they can pay for their groceries that week or not.

On this side of the House, we are very well aware that the environment and the economy must go together. I am going to state that because I think it is an important piece. It is really unfortunate that the Liberal government has continued to attack hard-working Canadians and making life harder for them in the name of environmental protection.

The Liberals are doing this while, in their last seven years in office, they are not meeting a single carbon tax emission reduction target. Not a single carbon emission reduction target has been met by the Liberals. They will constantly point to the fact that Harper did not do it either, but they were the ones who campaigned on being environmental champions and stewards, yet they have met zero targets. They have a track record of failure on targets.

What the government has done is introduced an ever-increasing carbon tax. Let me be absolutely clear: The carbon tax is not an environmental policy; it is simply a taxation scheme. It is a way for the government, and the costly coalition between the NDPs and the Liberals, to continue funding their high-spend agenda. On this side of the House, we are going to stand up against the carbon tax and stand up for hard-working Canadians every single day.

• (1655)

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to stand up and find common ground with my friend and colleague opposite, particularly on what she calls the carbon tax, given that we both ran on commitment to price carbon in the last election.

I think there are two things we can agree on today: that the environment is worth protecting and that the time that we have in the

House to debate important bills is limited and extremely valuable. We could stand in the House and argue against William Nordhaus' Nobel Prize on carbon pricing or something else.

Will my colleague allow this bill to go to committee so we can collectively add some amendments, if that is what is necessary? She spoke about an affront to democracy. This bill has been debated more than a budget implementation act in the House. The time has come for it to go to committee and get worked over. The time has come.

Does my colleague agree that it is time to stop debating it in this House? The democratic thing would be to allow it to pass through so it can go to committee and be improved as a bill.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Madam Speaker, I think that is rich of the member and full of hypocrisy when he supported Bill C-31 going through this process in an abridged manner after a guillotine motion was passed. We had two witnesses who were ministers and three witnesses who were government departmental officials come before the health committee for two hours. That was how long we had to study a billion-dollar bill.

Therefore, I am sorry, but I am not going to take any lessons from the member opposite. I am not going to allow him to come here to tell me that this is somehow not an affront to democracy and that we should let this pass because, when the Liberals are given the choice, they just ram things through. It is their way or the highway, and unfortunately Canadians deserve better.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, I know the member spoke a bit to the bill and also talked about the carbon tax. My concern when it comes to the carbon tax is that all parties, everybody who is sitting in the House, ran on a platform to put a price on carbon. That is unequivocal. That is what happened. People voted for everybody to be here to deliver that.

My bigger concern is that we get here and then parliamentarians, even from British Columbia, think they can remove the carbon tax, when in my home province the carbon tax is a provincial jurisdiction. It was brought into my province by the right-wing B.C. Liberals and was supported by all parties.

Does my colleague understand that the federal government does not have jurisdiction over the provincial carbon tax in British Columbia?

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. colleague for reiterating the fact that the carbon tax is a provincial jurisdiction. Unfortunately, the Liberals do not understand that, which is exactly why they forced the carbon tax on provinces such as Alberta and Saskatchewan.

Government Orders

Frankly, I was very proud to be an MLA in my home province of Alberta, where we had a tier program. Instead of having just a flat out carbon tax, we had a taxation program that taxed the highest emitters, and we had measurable environmental targets being met because of it. We were working to reduce emissions in our heaviest industries by doing so.

In fact, between 2012 and, I believe, 2021, there was a 23% drop in the intensity of emissions in the oil sands as a direct result of some of the technological advances that were put into place through the tier program. I think every member in the House would be well served to look at Alberta's model of the tier program. It is something I would have very much supported and would love to see implemented on a national scale.

• (1700)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, if we want to do a real review of Canada's environmental legislation, then is it not high time we included the polluter pays principle in the act?

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Madam Speaker, Alberta's TIER system is based on that kind of principle. It seeks to impose more taxes on bigger companies that create the most pollution. A fund to support technology is created with the taxes on pollution. This program actually funds the research and development of new technologies to help save the environment. I support that program.

[*English*]

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise in the House to speak to Bill S-5, a very important issue that Canadians are seized with today. I have appreciated the speeches and questions by my hon. colleagues today, and after reading the record of the previous legislation being debated in the House, I am pleased to have the opportunity to add my voice to the conversation.

Today is Halloween. That seems fitting as so often I read or hear of legislation brought forward by the government, and it is frightening, especially when it starts talking about the environment. I feel afraid because I wonder what new pie-in-the-sky policy or target it is going to propose now.

Some Canadians are afraid because all they have heard from the government over the last two and half years on the environment is always about fear, that they should be afraid, very afraid, because we are all doomed. Others are afraid because they wonder how much it is going to cost. They are justifiably concerned given that the government has already spent somewhere in the region of \$100 billion in its effort to fight climate change. Has it been achieved? That is negligible.

We have a carbon tax that is going to be tripled, and it has nothing to do with reducing emissions, but has everything to do with taxation and wealth redistribution. The carbon tax may not be driving down emissions, but it sure is driving up inflation. Add to that the cost of the new clean fuel standard and that will cost Canadian families an additional \$1,200 a year in gas costs.

The government's much-touted carbon action incentive payments do not come anywhere near the amounts my constituents in rural Manitoba have to pay to fill their vehicles, nowhere close. Now

there is an additional \$1,200 coming. Canadians are no closer to a clean environment. They are just poorer.

Thankfully, the Liberals have yet to accomplish banning single-use plastics, given that single-use plastics were somewhat important in fighting COVID the last two and a half years. As my friend, the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle, noted in his excellent speech on this bill earlier this month, a speech from which I will, conservatively, if not liberally, draw from, 93% of plastics that wind up in our oceans today come from 10 rivers, none of which are located in Canada. It also takes nearly four times as much CO₂ to make a paper straw as a plastic straw.

That and the whole saving trees thing, had the government managed to get a few of the two billion trees it promised to plant, may not have been a big issue. However, that is always the modus operandi of the government. They make a big splashy announcement with a nice backdrop and a myriad of ministers nodding solemnly, and something big and symbolic utterly unachievable is supposed to happen. They slap a big price tag on it, which is paid for by the taxpayers, and demonize anyone who dares question the government's plan or judgment.

To put it another way, every time the government does this, it is taking money from Canadians who pay their taxes in good faith expecting some bang for their buck, and they do not get it. It is like a giant Ponzi scheme, with the government telling Canadians to give it their money, it will invest it for them and here is the amazing unrealistic return they can expect, and they do not get it. Only the people running the Ponzi scheme reap the benefits, while those who invested just get poorer. I will put it another way. Canadian families keep getting tricked while Liberal cronies keep getting all the treats.

Speaking of treats, perhaps the next time the Prime Minister or the finance minister want to talk about how they understand the plight of Canadians who are skipping meals so their kids can eat, the Prime Minister can tell Canadian parents just what a bed in a \$7,000-a-night hotel room feels like. I am sure the meals were not that shabby either.

There are also likely to be some pretty nice hotel rooms in Egypt, as the Minister of Environment prepares for his annual pilgrimage of failure to COP27. Let us think about that for a moment. We want to reduce emissions, so let us fly 35,000 people to the Middle East. It is tough to know what will be worse: the emissions from all those private jets or the hot air from the delegates pontificating about how we are all doomed if we do not start eating bugs and insects.

Government Orders

• (1705)

After 27 years of conferences with nothing to show but some photo ops, frequent flyer miles and a noticeable increase in emissions, one would think that maybe Zoom could have been an option. However, that is just not as much fun, is it?

Speaking of fun, as we are having this debate tonight, thousands of kids are going to be out trick-or-treating this evening. We always told our kids to be careful about who they are accepting treats from and what they are receiving, and to have their moms and dads check the candy first and make sure it is safe. In this case, we have a nanny state and a government that wants to parent Canadians. It is the one providing the tricks disguised as treats that will harm them in the end.

Perhaps it is a better analogy of what our role is as His Majesty's loyal opposition—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands is rising on a point of order.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, I am very sorry to interrupt my hon. friend from Provencher, but I am looking forward to hearing anything about Bill S-5.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member has a point.

We have four minutes left for this speech. The hon. member should get to the object of the debate, please.

Mr. Ted Falk: Madam Speaker, we want to offer a careful assessment of the government's plans and policies and how they are going to affect Canadian families, and to protect Canadians from government overreach and bad legislation that ends up costing them their money, for which there is no return. When it comes to the government and the environment, we have a track record of fear and a track record of failure.

When it comes to this particular piece of legislation, I want to tell the House that I will be supportive, at least to move it to committee. Hopefully some of the real issues can be discussed there and can be given proper consideration, although I am cautiously skeptical.

The Conservatives are willing to work with the government on this legislation because it is important. We all agree that we want a healthier environment. We all care about this planet and we want to not only preserve it for our children but leave it in a better condition than we found it in. I think those are things we agree on.

As Conservatives, we have a long track record of accomplishment and enacting strong and tangible environmental protections, with no pie-in-the-sky promises and without policies based on fear-mongering and ever-moving but never-reached targets. They are real, down-to-earth, common-sense efforts with clear, achievable metrics and realistic goals that are proportionate to Canada's share of the problem.

It is that last point that I think is at the crux of the issue. The difference or, perhaps better put, potential difference between Bill S-5 and so much of what the government has put forward is that with this bill we are actually focused on Canada. That is a good thing.

I like the fact that the bill seeks to reduce red tape. That is definitely one of its redeeming factors. That is a common-sense fix that Conservatives can get behind. However, even here the government misses the mark, rather than dealing with, for example, a real, tangible health and environmental issue like the dumping of raw sewage into our rivers, which, by the way, was one of the first things the Liberal government did. It gave the City of Montreal licence to do that. The next time we hear a Liberal minister stand in the House and tout that their government's first action in office was to lower taxes for the middle class, we should think of sewage. The specific word choice is up to members, but it will point them in the right direction.

Rather than deal with that, plant the trees or, my goodness, find a way to finally provide all Canadians with safe, clean drinking water, the bill does not actually do much. It ignores the environment committee's recommendations on national standards for clean air and clean water. It has a vague reference to the right to a healthy environment. This is not an actual right, like a charter right, but it is not as though vague or undefined rights have ever caused the government a problem. We can think of MAID, vaccine mandates or indigenous issues.

There is no metric for implementing or, for that matter, adjudicating an ill-defined right that is not really a right. This point has been raised by numerous members across party lines. The member for Regina—Qu'Appelle put it succinctly: “[W]hen legislation is ambiguous, it really sets us up for litigation.” Why? Well, to play off what the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands said earlier this month, one cannot back up platitudes with legal action. Again, here I refer to our Conservative record: clearly defined and reasonable goals, with clear metrics leading to real results for Canadians. I am all for updating and slashing red tape, provided that there is clear, unambiguous and effective legislation in place to protect our water, our air and, by extension, our citizens.

• (1710)

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the hon. member represents the riding next to mine, Provencher. I am from Winnipeg South.

I just want to know if the hon. member recalls that it was Stephen Harper who added CO₂ to schedule 1 of CEPA, the gas that is primarily responsible for climate change. Given that his riding is next to mine, I know that the Red River flooded this year and half of his riding was underwater. It had the worst drought in 70 years last year and had the wettest year on record this year.

Does the member believe climate change is real, that it should be a major focus of the House and that we need to use all the tools in our tool box to combat it?

Mr. Ted Falk: Madam Speaker, it is true what my colleague said. His riding is adjacent to mine. When he needs good employees he knows where to cherry-pick them. That is not lost on me either.

Government Orders

With regard to his question, he did note that half of my riding flooded. I would say that is a gross exaggeration of what actually happened. The Red River did flood again last year, but I am surprised how often these one-in-100-year floods actually happen.

Do we recognize that there is climate change? There has always been climate change and there will always continue to be climate change. However, I think there are questions we do not address in the House: What part of climate change do we as humans impact? Do we impact it at all, or is it because of forces outside of our control?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Madam Speaker, one of the things Bill S-5 sets out to amend and improve is the list of toxic substances. I think that is important.

I would like to hear what my colleague has to say about that, especially since the goal, at the end of the day, is to ensure a healthier environment in which people, and especially businesses, stop polluting the air, as is the case in Rouyn-Noranda and in my riding. That will reduce the number of lawsuits against these companies, as well as against the government if it turns a blind eye.

• (1715)

[*English*]

Mr. Ted Falk: Madam Speaker, I think an important part of this bill looks at the list of toxins that need to be examined. These things are very important. However, we need to make sure the toxins on the list of banned substances are there for a reason. The study needs to be done and the science needs to be researched.

I am troubled a bit by the part of the bill that says any person at any time can demand that the Government of Canada examine any substance for toxicity. That is one thing that is too ambiguous. We are going to end up with a whole bunch of lawsuits, as the member alluded to. It is probably frivolous work for the government, and I think it needs to be more pointed and more direct.

Are we against toxins polluting our environment? Absolutely, we are.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, everybody ran on a platform to put a price on carbon in the last election. My colleague asked a very clear question: Does the member believe that humans are exacerbating the warming of the planet and causing climate change and the impacts of climate change? We know his party voted that climate change is not real and is not caused by human impacts. I am hoping we can get a really clear answer from my colleague on that question and where the Conservatives truly are.

Mr. Ted Falk: Madam Speaker, what I can say is actual fact. We believe there is climate change. We have always stood behind climate change. We need to do what we can, whatever our areas of responsibility are, to meet any negative impacts that the climate may be experiencing as a result of our activities.

What I am against is the dumping of raw sewage into the St. Lawrence River. I am against making a promise to plant two billion trees and not delivering on that, leaving it up to the forestry industry. For every tree they harvest they plant three. Why is it up to in-

dustry to fulfill government promises? That is more of a concern to me.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, the bill we have in front of us today, Bill S-5, has to do with environmental protection. It has to do with updating important documentation having to do with how we define toxins, which is long overdue. We know that; it has been mentioned here in the House before. It has been true since the 1990s. Unfortunately, though, the government across the way will claim that it wants to get the bill through quickly and that the Conservatives are stalling it, when the fact of the matter is that the Liberals have had five years to work on legislation and get it through the House. They have not taken that seriously. They have been slow.

Further to that, in the middle of those five years there were several elections, one of them called completely unnecessarily. Of course, that was in the fall of 2021 in the middle of a pandemic, when individuals were concerned for their health, safety and well-being. Interestingly enough, part of the bill has to do with health, which I will get to in just a moment, yet the Liberals decided that would be a good time to call an election.

Of course, elections have a way of stalling things. They have a way of putting aside legislation and making it so that it is no longer standing. It has to be called back once Parliament resumes, so here we are talking about Bill S-5. Again, it is something that has been in process for about five years. It did not need to be that way, but it was. Nevertheless, let us jump into the bill and discuss it.

There are a couple of things I want to draw attention to. Certainly there would be some new definitions brought about through this legislation, and I think overall my colleagues and I can agree to that. We see where there is some simplification achieved and we can get behind it. That said, there were many amendments made in the Senate before the bill came this way, which is the opposite of how things normally work, and we have some issues with those amendments. We will be looking to create some change around them to make sure Canadians are better advocated for going forward, but of course that will come at a later stage.

For today, I wish to speak to a part in the preamble of the bill. The preamble of the bill says that it is committed to prioritizing a healthy environment and that this is a right Canadians should have guaranteed for them. Here is the thing. First off, instead of putting this in the preamble, it should have been in the body of the legislation if it is going to have teeth, because we know that when it comes to courts of law, a judge does not make a decision based on a preamble; a judge makes a decision based on what is in the actual bill. If the current government is looking to truly be held accountable in making sure Canadians enjoy a healthy environment, it should have the courage to put this into the main component of the bill rather than in the preamble. Putting it in the preamble is simply another nicety, another platitude.

Government Orders

Speaking of that, we already have many examples. Let us look at the carbon tax, for example. With the carbon tax, there is a lot of fluffy language with regard to how the it is somehow making a difference or will make a difference, yet when we look at the actual facts, we see carbon emissions have not been reduced in our country. Actually, they have increased, so we have to ask this question: Why is there a carbon tax? We do not know, yet it continues to be in place. In fact, it is not just to be maintained but is actually increasing year over year every single April 1. That is April Fool's Day, but no one is really laughing because it is expensive to pay the carbon tax.

Canadians are reasonable people, and I think they can get behind something, even if it penalizes them a bit, if they know it is going to make a measurable or meaningful difference for them. However, the fact of the matter is that we have a report from the commissioner of the environment that says the current government has been given a failing grade on its environmental goals or objectives. It has not met any of them. This is coming out of reports that are at arm's length. I did not make this up.

• (1720)

Here is the government using platitudes, niceties and language that appears to do something but actually does nothing. Therefore, here we are again. We have this piece of legislation and in the preamble is this commitment to a healthy environment. However, the courage is lacking to give it teeth and to ensure that it happens.

Let us talk about that. If we were to truly define this vague term “healthy environment”, what might that look like in Canada? What might Canadians be able to anticipate if we were to create a healthy environment? Perhaps it would mean that we take a look not only at the thing but also at the context. For example, with plastics, those opposite me would like to put out language, and have put out language, that demonizes plastics.

However, to consider plastics in context, let us look at plastics in the way that they were used during the pandemic. During the pandemic, they were used to cover instruments in hospitals. Today they are used to cover instruments in hospitals. They are used for equipment in hospitals. They are used in daily practice to ensure that people are kept healthy. In a hospital are they toxic?

Further, during the pandemic when people were given plastic forks or plastic spoons because they could not eat in a restaurant but still needed to consume food, was that toxic? Perhaps it is, but maybe there needs to be a further conversation around context. Perhaps it is not adequate to demonize something altogether without considering time and place.

Furthermore, let us talk about a healthy environment and LNG or liquefied natural gas. Let us talk about, if we were to move entirely over to LNG and off of coal, the incredible difference it would make in terms of creating a healthy, vibrant Canada. However, the members opposite do not want to talk about that because to them oil and gas is bad. We would rather turn a blind eye to the truth that we continue to use coal because to talk about that is inconvenient. We do not want to talk about that.

We want to talk about all this greenism over here, all these plans over here and all this nice language that we have over here. Look

over here at the shiny item. However, we do not actually want to acknowledge the truth, which is to say we have something incredible called LNG. We could use it to get off coal, clean up the environment and contribute to health.

Here is another one. The government wants to impose a carbon tax and it is tripling by 2030. That will have a huge impact on Canadians. The government has said that this is going to make a meaningful difference. We have already discovered that it has not and it will not.

Meanwhile, if we were to develop oil and gas in our country, to get pipelines into the ground and to get product to market, that would be a huge help in creating a healthy environment. Do members want to know how? The growing demand would then be met domestically, rather than having to bring it in from Saudi Arabia or Russia.

Let us talk about Saudi Arabia or Russia for a moment. There are no environmental standards. There are no human rights standards. Instead, the current government is deciding to ship in blood oil because the demand for fossil fuels is not going anywhere. It only continues to grow. Is that contributing to a healthy environment? We will just bring all the blood oil over from Saudi Arabia. Let us continue to fund Putin and his war machine against Ukraine. Is that a healthy environment?

I look forward to the government giving a definition to what it means by the right to a healthy environment. It certainly should be a lot broader than the niceties or the platitudes that it uses to describe its carbon tax.

• (1725)

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have a couple of numbers for my colleague opposite and the other members who continue to debate this bill past the number of hours typically spent on a budget implementation act.

The first number is zero. That is the number of people in the House or really anywhere who have talked about banning single-use plastics from the health care sector. The number is zero because that is not what we are talking about. We are talking about things where there is a viable alternative, such as when something can be made out of paper instead. Somebody earlier said that paper straws are worse for the environment than plastic straws. We all know that is not correct. Zero people are talking about banning single-use plastics in the health care sector.

The other number that I have for my colleague is 338. That is how many members in the House of Commons went door to door in the last election and ran on a platform including carbon pricing. We should get over the fact that pricing carbon is one of the foundations for an important environmental platform because we all ran on it in the last election.

Government Orders

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: Madam Speaker, I do love the number zero. Let us talk about the accomplishments in terms of protecting the environment in Canada. It is zero. Let us talk about the units of carbon that have been reduced in terms of emissions because of the Liberals' carbon tax. Wait, that number is zero as well. Shall I continue? I like the number zero as well.

The point is that the current policies that are being implemented by the government do not help to create a healthy environment for Canadians. Instead, they are punitive in nature. Canadians are paying through the roof. They are struggling. They deserve better.

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member spoke about emissions reductions. However, I am still reeling from the fact that the Conservative colleague who spoke before her called into question whether humans are responsible for climate change. The science on the human contribution to modern global warming is clear. According to the world's top scientists and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, human emissions and activities have caused the vast majority of the warming observed since 1950.

Does the member stand with her Conservative colleague who questions whether human-caused climate change is real, or will she clearly condemn the anti-science rhetoric from her colleague?

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: Madam Speaker, the conversation in the House today has to do with what the government is doing concerning the environment—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Could we give the hon. member the opportunity to answer the question that was asked?

The hon. member for Lethbridge.

• (1730)

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: I am good.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoulu, BQ): Madam Speaker, today, I feel there is a degree of consensus around adopting this bill and referring it to a committee to make some amendments. We all understand the importance of modernizing this act, which is the same age as my daughter, 23 years old. It is not old, but it has not been updated in 23 years.

Can my colleague give us one example of an amendment that she would make to improve the bill, not tie it up in committee?

[*English*]

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: Madam Speaker, basically, the entirety of my speech talked about the provision in the preamble around guaranteeing Canadians the right to a healthy environment. It is in the preamble, which indicates that the government lacks the courage to put it in the bill and be held accountable for that.

Perhaps we could start there when it comes to amending this bill.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I noted that the hon. member did address an important point with which I agree, which is that the right to a healthy environment must be a real right, an enforceable right, which would

mean that the government has to open up section 22 of the existing Canadian Environmental Protection Act.

However, I noted her reference to blood oil. The Green Party agrees that we should cancel all imports of oil from any foreign countries and only use Canadian oil, but there is a surprisingly small component of Saudi Arabian oil coming to Canada. All of it goes to the Irving refinery in Saint John, New Brunswick. I wonder if the hon. member might want to comment on what could be done to get the worst and most human rights violating nations out of Canada's energy streams.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: Madam Speaker, I believe that if we are serious about wanting to make sure that we are taking care of our health as Canadians but also the health of world, which should be at least, in part, our endeavour, then we do need to consider our sources pertaining to oil and gas.

When we bring in, from countries that do not have high environmental standards or do not treat people with the utmost respect for human rights, then we are actually functioning in an unethical manner ourselves. We have an opportunity to correct that by—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Resuming date, the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to be here in the House to address the government's bill, Bill S-5, and more broadly to address the environmental policy approach taken by this government.

Sadly, we are seven years into the tenure of this government, and it still does not have an environmental plan. It does not have a plan to address the challenges we face in terms of climate change or various other issues. What it has in reality is a tax plan that it would like to tell us is an environmental plan. Its plan is to continue to increase its carbon tax, to triple its carbon tax, yet it wants to back away from the actual nature of that policy and the mechanism by which it is supposed to work.

Those who favour a carbon tax as a response to the challenges we face associated with climate change believe essentially that raising the price of goods that entail carbon emissions will discourage people from consuming those goods, engender less consumption of those goods and therefore entail fewer emissions overall. That is the logic of a carbon tax. It is not one I agree with, but I can at least understand that is how it is proposed by those who defend it, at least by those who defend it honestly.

Government Orders

However, entailed in that process is the idea that by increasing the price of goods, such as driving, airline flights and heating one's home, people will do it less. When we read in the news that people are suffering because of higher prices, that they are worried about whether they can heat their homes, that they are being forced to cancel vacations or trips in their car to visit or support family members, it is important for people to understand that it is not some accidental by-product of the carbon tax policy. It is actually the purpose of the carbon tax policy. It is to lead people to do fewer of those activities. It is to lead people to heat their homes less, to drive less, to travel less, etc.

The government has put in place a policy that is designed to limit the ability of Canadians to do those various things, yet we have members of this coalition, NDP and Liberal politicians, who act surprised that this is the outcome. They ask why gas prices are higher. I do not know, but maybe it is because they have imposed a tax on gas specifically designed for the purpose of raising the price. That would be one explanation of why gas prices are higher.

Now, let us acknowledge that there are many things that go into the price of gas. There are many things that go into the price of these various goods that are taxed by the carbon tax, but one of those contributing factors to the price is the tax that is put on top of it. Therefore, I wish members of the costly coalition in this place would be willing to own up to the fact that this is the consequence of the policy they have put in place.

We should also note just how grievously unfair that policy is, because the people who are going to be forced to cancel those trips and the people who are going to be forced to sit in the cold are people who are relatively less well off. Many members of the House, people who are in a better position financially, are going to be able to continue to afford to travel. They are going to be able to continue to afford to heat their homes, but many Canadians will not. Those many Canadians bear the brunt of the cost associated with the carbon tax. The carbon tax is very regressive in the way that it hits the population. It is regressive in that it imposes those costs most on those who can least afford to pay them.

This is not an environmental plan. Why do I say that? It is because the independent analyses have shown very clearly that the government's carbon tax will not achieve the environmental objectives that it wants it to. Why is that the case? Why does this logic that imposing costs on people will lead to less consumption not work? It is because many of the goods we are talking about are essentials.

We live in Canada. People need to heat their homes. Of course, there are adaptations people can make. They can make renovations to their homes, but for those who are most affected by the carbon tax, they likely struggle to afford those kinds of adaptations. Therefore, the approach we have emphasized is how we support people with new technology but also with various kinds of deductions that allow them to make those kinds of adaptations.

• (1735)

Our approach has always emphasized technology as opposed to taxes. That is why a previous Conservative government brought in the home renovation tax credit. Some of these changes are aimed at making it easier for people to afford the adaptations they need. It is

an environment-oriented tax cut instead of imposing a punitive tax on people. A tax-cut approach helps people have the resources they need to make these kinds of adaptation.

The problem is, when people are barely getting by and we increase costs on them, that is not going to lead them to make adaptations to their lives. That is not going to allow them to afford a new home with better insulation. They are struggling to get by. That is the point and that is the reality. This carbon tax is part of a politically manufactured affordability crisis that we have in this country. The government's out-of-control spending is driving up the cost of everything by driving inflation. The government is responding to that by additional punitive taxes. Of course, we know about its planned payroll taxes, but also its plan with the carbon tax.

It is particularly notable now, in the global context we are in, what a failure the government's approach to energy policy is. More and more countries are recognizing how important energy security is. We are seized with the horrific, genocidal Russian invasion of Ukraine, and we are thinking about what more we can do to support Ukraine. There are many areas the government needs to do more, but one of those areas is to work toward, as quickly as possible, increasing Canadian energy production and support our European allies by supplying them with the vital energy they need to not be dependent on Russian gas.

Canada is one of the only democracies in the world that has an abundance of natural resources. As it happens, many of the world's democracies are geographically small, populous nations that rely on the import of natural resources.

Within the community of democratic nations, because we are rich in natural resources and because we are more sparsely populated, I believe Canada has a special vocation in terms of supplying our like-minded allies with the energy resources they need to not be reliant on dictator oil and not feel forced to contort their foreign policy to access the energy that they need. Canada can play that role in displacing Russian energy in Europe.

It is not just about replacing foreign energy imports into Canada, although that is part of the picture. We should be replacing foreign energy imports into Canada and displacing dictator oil from our European partners. This is an urgent issue in terms of global security and Canada needs to step up. However, the Prime Minister and other ministers continue to throw cold water on proposals for more support to Europe in the form of natural gas production, exports and other things along those lines. It is a huge missed opportunity.

An hon. member: I was choking, too.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, the member from the NDP is making jokes about my cough. I will not take it personally, and I wish him well.

The legislation we have in front of us does not respond to—

Government Orders

• (1740)

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I was not making fun of his cough. I thought the cough was the best part of his speech.

The Deputy Speaker: As we have only a minute left, I will call on the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, there is a lot I could say about that member's contributions to the House. I will come back to it in due course, but I do want to get in some final points.

Bill S-5 is a piece of legislation that contains some things that Conservatives can support. We look forward to proposing amendments to aspects of the legislation. A major concern of my constituents is the fact that this legislation continues to allow the label “toxic” to be associated with plastic, yet we use plastic for so many everyday things that labelling plastic, in general, as toxic is just ridiculous.

Work is required. In general, I think it is clear that the government's proposals around the environment are a total failure. They are not working, and they are manufacturing an affordability crisis in Canada. We need to emphasize technology, not taxes, and we need an approach that addresses the affordability crisis and improves the environment at the same time.

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the hon. member would acknowledge that the April 1 increase on the price on pollution was 2.2¢. The illegal war on Ukraine accounts for 70% of the rise in the cost of gas, and 25% is because of provincial taxes and refining margins.

I am a fellow western Canadian. I believe the energy sector is important, not just in western Canada, but for all Canadians. The oil majors have committed to net zero by 2050. They believe in market mechanisms to drive down pollution and reduce emissions. I wonder if the hon. member agrees with them.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows that his government's plan is to triple the carbon tax over time. It tells us it is going to be tripled, and that we will get to that tripling, but only through little increases that we will barely notice.

The member is right, it is increasing on April 1, and those increases add up insofar as they impact virtually all of the goods that individuals consume. Moreover, I think people want us to take a step back and say that this tripling of the tax, which is being done a little at a time, will add up and significantly affect their bottom line.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have heard a number of speeches tonight and I am getting the impression that this is an opposition day on the carbon tax. However, we are talking about the Canadian Environmental Protection Act. I understand that the two are basically related, but I want to circle back to the Canadian Environmental Protection Act.

At the end of his speech, my colleague mentioned that there are things in the current act that he likes and things that he would like to see changed and improved. I would like him to give us an example of one thing he likes and one thing he would like to see improved.

• (1745)

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

In principle, I agree with the idea of a right to a healthy environment.

[*English*]

I also mentioned the problem with the designation of plastics as toxic in general. That is not something that is changed by the bill. It is a pre-existing problem regarding the intentions of the current government. As the member suggested, that is both a positive and a negative.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to follow up on my colleague's discussion and points on the price of gasoline. The United States has to release information each week that shows the refining capacity and cost, which it allows consumers to look at. As well, even Donald Trump used the strategic petroleum reserve to try to influence the market to lower the price of gasoline.

I wonder whether he thinks that these are basically interventions in the market, or at least positions that we should maybe look at on the Canadian side, especially requiring the information to be released so Canadian consumers can follow the product from the refinery to the pump.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, respectfully, unless the member disagrees with his party, he supports the idea of imposing increasingly higher taxes on gasoline, so I think it is contradictory of the New Democrats to say, on the one hand, that they want to impose taxes on gasoline, which are specifically designed to raise the price, but on the other hand maybe there is some other backdoor mechanism we can use to reduce the price.

I think they need to answer this question directly: Is their goal higher gas prices or lower gas prices? If it is higher gas prices, they should own it and admit it. If they want lower gas prices, I have a simple solution, which is to stop increasing the carbon tax. If we want gas prices to be lower, then we can reduce or remove the tax that is specifically designed, as it is currently structured, to increase that price. That should be fairly straightforward and simple. If we did not have a carbon tax, maybe we could ask what else we could do to lower the price, but let us first be honest about the fact that his party is pushing for a policy designed to increase the price of gas.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to use this opportunity today to address something that this bill does not look at whatsoever and something I do not think the House has addressed in any form of debate yet. I would encourage my colleagues to listen to me because what I am about to present is something this entire place will be seized with for many years to come.

Government Orders

What I am worried about this bill failing to address is two things. Number one is that we are seeing global greenhouse gas emissions rise at rapid rates, in spite of global policy that has been considered dogma for the last several years, so we do not have a solution to climate change. This bill does not address that. I am also very worried that some of the failings of the climate policy the world has put forward, particularly the Liberal climate policy, is setting us up toward a potential reset of the geopolitical order away from western democracies and in favour of autocracies.

This bill fails to address a question that I really want every person in the House to listen to. What happens if Russia, which is engaged in a barbaric war of aggression against Ukraine, does not ever turn the taps back on to Europe? That is a question that people are not asking themselves right now, and it is a problem. The prevailing wisdom right now in many corners is that, at some point, western sanctions on Russia for its war of aggression against Ukraine is going to break Russia and the ensuing fallout will lead to Russia turning the taps back on to Europe and everything kind of going back to normal.

I am very concerned that is not the case and that our environmental policy in Canada is failing the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, and we are now no longer at the point where we are just talking about the runaway inflation that people are addressing. I am worried about the effect on western democracy. This is not hyperbole, and I would like to briefly lay out my thesis here.

The west has made three major errors in its climate policy. Number one, the fact that the committee on party process has never seriously addressed the creation of substitute goods, low-cost, affordable substitutes to high-carbon consumer practices and products, at the same pace that we have increased our reliance on energy from autocratic nations while reducing our own capacity to produce carbon energy is a huge problem. In simple terms, what that means is that the people at the fancy cocktail parties forgot that, if we do not have something to replace something with, we are going to have a massive increase in price and the demand is going to be filled by something or someone. That is critical error number one, that we do not have substitute goods for carbon in a way to address or match what is happening with inflation.

Critical error number two is that the western world has just spent an enormous amount of money on the pandemic. We are having a massive parliamentary debate on whether or not that spending was justified. I would think everyone in here agrees that the western world is so in debt that we no longer have resiliency to weather another shock, which means that, at a time when we need to be addressing things like energy security, there is, number one, an unwillingness to step away from the current climate dogma of the current policy on the table, which does not address substitute goods and, number two, we cannot even get countries to talk about how we are going to address the lack of supply that has been precipitated by Russia turning the taps off.

The third critical failing in global climate policy is that we fail to understand that the west's paternalistic approach to post-colonial countries has left a dialogue that is ripe for anti-western rhetoric to take root. What do those three things come into nexus on right now? This is where we are.

• (1750)

There are three major problems.

First of all, we are seeing massive economic disaster in the European Union specifically. I encourage colleagues here today to look at the inflation numbers, particularly out of the European Union. They are grim, and they are frightening.

Second, I ask my colleagues to look at the reliance of European countries on Russian gas. In Germany, I believe it is 50% of its utilization that comes from Russia, and there is no replacement for that in sight. Why? It is because our climate policy has been short-sighted and did not say, "Look, while we are trying to find ways to replace that carbon with new technology, we should be ensuring that there is a supply from pro-democratic, western countries." Now, there is no short- or even medium-term solution for European countries from Canada or even the U.S. to meet that demand, which is a huge problem. That is a reality that is not set into our climate policy.

The other problem with this is that there is going to be civil unrest. When people cannot afford to eat or heat their homes, all the stuff we talk about here, and sometimes the theatre that engages in the House of Commons, results in civil unrest. If it does not result in civil unrest, it results in something equally dangerous, which is a ground of people, an electorate, in western countries, in democratic nations, who are open to listening to anti-democratic propaganda from countries that have an economic interest in ensuring that they have that supply.

The third thing that is very damaging about this failure in western climate policy is that now, when we are faced with the consequences, not having those substitute goods, not having that pro-democratic, western supply of carbon energy, we are now firing coal plants up again. There are coal-fired electricity plants that are being fired up in western countries with climate policies, because Canada did not produce LNG.

In all seriousness, this is what I want my colleagues to ask: What happens if Russia never turns the taps back on? If anybody thinks that is not going to happen, it is already finding new markets in China, India and Myanmar. What happens? We do not have substitute goods, and we are so in debt we do not have the ability now. How is the government going to pay for beefing up our grid infrastructure and all the things we need to do to make actual change in climate policy? We do not have that resilience. We do not even have that resilience to help people through this winter's energy crisis or this winter's food crisis.

Government Orders

I want people to think about the long-term fallout of what is going to happen here as we are putting tariffs and restrictions on petroleum fertilizer in Canada. I have talked to Ukrainian MPs who are worried about food production, and not in the short term. They say the Russians are seeding their fields with land mines.

This is serious, and the bill does not address any of this stuff. Frankly, our dialogue on climate change, on energy security, is in this theatre between one pole and the other. This government is in power right now, and it has a responsibility and a moral duty to answer the questions: We are in dire straits; what are we going to do? What happens if Russia does not turn the taps back on? We do not have an answer for that right now.

• (1755)

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, and I am profoundly sorry to interrupt the hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill, because it is an important speech, but it has absolutely nothing to do with Bill S-5.

Bill S-5 deals with toxic chemicals, and with six different parts, none touch on carbon pricing; none are about Russia, Ukraine or climate. Bill S-5 is a different bill altogether. This is an important speech, but there is no relevance to Bill S-5.

The Deputy Speaker: Well, knowing that we have only about 50 seconds left in the speech, I would ask the member to maybe wrap things up in view of the bill before us.

The hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, I could not have asked for a greater proof point than what the leader of the Green Party of Canada just gave to my argument.

Environmental policy is so out of touch; it is so far from being moored in the reality of actually achieving results while ensuring that western democratic values are protected that this is the type of comment we get. The fact that we are debating the bill today—

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I am sorry but Bill S-5 is not a sign of irrelevance for all climate policy. It happens to be the bill we are debating now.

The Deputy Speaker: I believe we are descending into debate. For the sake of 30 seconds left in the speech, maybe we will let the member finish her speech and then we will take questions and comments. I am sure there will be a lot of great comments and a lot of great answers.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Again, Mr. Speaker, that is the point. We are here spending time in debate on something that does not even come close to addressing the greatest environmental challenge and the greatest threat to the global geopolitical order in recent history. This is not a joke. This is not about points of order and whatever. This is about a call to action for every person in this place to understand that our failure on this issue means autocracies benefit. We have to get this right.

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I agree that my hon. colleague's speech is not necessarily tied into Bill S-5, but all of it is extremely important. Bill S-5 is important, and all the comments my colleague has made are issues that we all have to be paying much more attention to than we have so far.

Certainly, at various committees, work is being done. I encourage the hon. member and I know how sincere she is with her concerns that at the committee level we will continue to work through some of these issues. However, I share concern on much of what she said about where we are going and whether we have enough time to get where we need to get with the concerns she has raised today.

• (1800)

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, it is not good enough. I get where my colleague is coming from, but she is a member of the governing party. As a member of the governing party, she has influence and stature within her caucus to say that the pressure the world is under right now because of our inability to have a stable source of carbon energy at this juncture in history could actually contribute to not just massive civil unrest due to inflationary pressures but also a reset of the geopolitical order. I encourage her to use her voice within her caucus and up the food chain to persuade the government to make a difference and change its policy.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Calgary Nose Hill, with whom I recently had the pleasure of attending the 145th Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly in Kigali. She and I met with the same Ukrainian elected representatives and observed the same geopolitical issues and the rise of a kind of autocracy and anti-West movements.

I want to go back to Bill S-5 because it is crucial. We know that international conflicts, food insecurity and climate change are connected, and we know they will exacerbate global hunger issues.

I would like to hear what my colleague has to say about farmers. Farmers really want to be part of the solution to develop better food resilience and be supported through this transition. This is crucial, and it is related to what we are talking about in Bill S-5 because it has to do with the traceability of what we eat and the safety of the products we ingest.

[*English*]

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, because she is laying out the problem here. Right now, the world does not have the tools it needs to address the issues of food insecurity due to a lack of carbon energy production, particularly in light of the situation in Europe right now as well as those long-term substitute goods.

Government Orders

What the member is addressing is the issue of the price inelasticity of carbon. This is something I have been talking about in here for 10 years. We can tax and we can make the price as high as possible, but if it is a critical good that humanity relies upon to exist, if we do not have it we will get civil unrest, starvation, riots and more.

We are down that path. We need to ensure that energy security and substitute goods are an emergent, number one priority for any conversation on climate policy. I really encourage colleagues within their own caucuses, as we are approaching Canada's trip to the Conference of the Parties, to be talking about how Canada should be putting energy security at the front of its climate policy.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Alberta Federation of Labour came to Ottawa, along with its affiliates IBEW, the boilermakers, steelworkers, Unifor and the operating engineers to say that Alberta workers want a new deal, one that is based on investing in a clean energy alternative. I understand the Deputy Prime Minister has met with the Alberta workers.

I have not seen any support for the position of the Alberta Federation of Labour from the Conservatives in Alberta. Does my hon. colleague support the work of the Alberta Federation of Labour and the energy workers it represents on getting the government to invest in a clean energy future?

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, where is the money going to come from? We are broke.

I appreciate my colleague's perspective. I agree we need to have good jobs for all Canadians and an innovative look at that, but we are not resilient, and it is because of the spending. We need to make sure we have a resilient economic plan. Money does not grow on trees. We cannot print money forever. Those are realities I would ask my colleagues, particularly the Liberals and the NDP, who vote together on these matters, to address.

• (1805)

Mr. Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to start my speech tonight with an example from the real world. Let us say that Bob, for lack of a better name, was hired by a company to specifically develop targets to meet the goals of that business, and they wanted Bob to set not only the goals and the targets for that business but also the plan to achieve them. If I said that Bob had been working there for seven years, had presented numbers and targets that he was going to do for the company multiple times and failed every single time, most Canadians would rightfully think that Bob does not deserve a seventh chance. Bob deserves to be fired. The company may want to take a different approach to how they meet the goals and targets they set for themselves.

We have watched the exact same thing happen here in Ottawa for the past seven years. For seven years, we have had our own Bob on the Liberal benches. We have had numerous ministers stand time and time again, who always have nice backdrops and use every buzzword, platitude and virtue signal possible, to talk about what they are going to do for the environment on issue A or B, how they are going to set a new target and how they will meet it. Every single time, they have not met any of the targets they set when it came

to emissions reductions. One would think maybe they came close a couple of times. They did not come close even once.

During the pandemic there was a drop in emissions when we were locked down, businesses were shut down and people were at home. As we have opened up in the past couple of years, we have returned to the same failed results that the Liberal and NDP coalition have come together on: higher emissions and the absolute opposite of what their plans and targets were.

Tonight, we are on the floor of the House of Commons talking about environmental issues and, specifically, the confidence the House has in the Liberals and NDP over the course of the next couple of years, however long that arrangement may last, and the faith and confidence that Canadians do not have in them to follow through on anything they have to say when it comes to the environment.

In this country after seven years of a Liberal government, we have an emissions crisis, according to its own numbers that we need to reduce, which are going up every single year. It has a record of setting targets, never following through and breaking every single promise it has ever made on it. It also promised to cap it at \$50 a tonne. That will triple in the coming years.

Not only do we have an environmental crisis, according to the government's own targets, but we have an economic one created here too. We spend a lot of time on the floor of House of Commons talking about inflation, talking about the cost of living and, more than ever before, talking about how more Canadians are struggling to make ends meet while the environmental promises that were made, with all the right words, at the end of the day achieve very few results. It is actually the opposite. Again, they are not even coming close to what has been said and promised to Canadians.

A key piece of that plank of the Liberals' environmental platform, we argue, is not actually an environmental plan. It is a tax plan when it comes to the carbon tax. The carbon tax is driving up the price of everything, and it is now creating an economic crisis in our country when it comes to gas, transportation, home heating, groceries, rent, construction or whatever else.

We have the opportunity. When the Liberals propose and bring forward a bill on anything to do with the environment, after several years, numerous broken promises and the number of times the Liberals promised something they did not actually have the ability to deliver and follow through on, when they seek forgiveness afterward and ask for that fourth, fifth or sixth chance to say that this time they mean it and this time they have a plan to actually do what they say they are going to do, Canadians, rightfully, do not buy it anymore.

Government Orders

• (1810)

When we look at a specific piece of legislation, Bill S-5, and what the government would be tasked with doing in the coming years when it comes to the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, Canadians rightfully have watched public accounts, read the environment commissioner's reports and read the Auditor General's reports, which say the government is saying one thing and has a complete lack of ability to do the other.

We have talked about a different approach to environmental issues. We believe, and our new leader has said this several times, which is resonating with more and more parts of this country, that technology and the evolution and development of it here at home are much better than the carbon tax plan that is being supported by the Liberals, the NDP and members of the Green Party.

The reality is that everything that the government touches these days makes the situation worse and it makes it more expensive. What we need to do is not increase taxes during these challenging times.

The other side has had the opportunity, through their environmental priorities, to raise taxes in the name of a carbon tax, saying that their solution would solve this problem. They said to just trust them and they will deliver on it. The cost of living and inflation has been driven up. Emissions are going up. Still, despite setting new targets and new plans and using all of the platitudes and all the buzzwords over and over again, they are not achieving. They are failing.

We are proposing a different path. It is time not to triple the carbon tax in the coming years. It is time to actually get rid of it—

Mr. Adam van Koevorden: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, Bill S-5 is not about the carbon tax. This is not an opportunity to talk about future plans for campaigns or anything like that. Bill S-5 is about the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, and I think that if the members opposite are going to speak to it, they should speak directly to the bill.

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. member for his intervention. I will remind everyone in the chamber today that we are speaking to a specific bill, so I would maybe ask people to wrap things up. There are about two minutes left in the hon. member's speech.

The hon. member for Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry.

Mr. Eric Duncan: Mr. Speaker, I do not blame the hon. member for his intervention. I would be very uncomfortable that we are highlighting the failures of the carbon tax and the government's broken promises. I appreciate the opportunity to reiterate what I just said in my speech. The Liberals say things when it comes to the environment. They propose legislation, targets, plans, spending and taxes in the name of the environment, but every single time, when the reality comes, they get very uncomfortable about being called out on their record.

They say every word salad and buzzword out there when it comes to the environment, yet they do nothing and actually have the opposite result. They drive up the cost of living. They drive up inflation. They are perpetuating two crises, an environmental protection crisis and an economic one now too.

On Bill S-5, I will use it as a perfect example. It says in this legislation that the government will set out specific criteria for the government to look at managing or regulating a substance. It talks about ensuring that plans for new substances that may be toxic will be developed in 24 months. If we go back and look at the words that are proposed and the actual action plan, and do not take my word for it but take the Parliamentary Budget Officer's, the Auditor General of Canada's or the environment commissioner's word for it, the government says one thing and that it means well, using every good word possible, but it fails time and time again.

The Liberals and the other parties do not like talking about the failure of the carbon tax and their environmental policy. After seven years of failure, I agree with them. It would be pretty painful to talk about the economic realities they have created and the environmental record they have created in this country.

• (1815)

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I look around the chamber. One of the things that is very important while we are having debates is to ensure we always have quorum, and I do not believe we have quorum in the chamber right now.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, I always love when they call quorum, but I do not know if the member counted people who are online.

The Deputy Speaker: I will look to the Table to count the members present.

And the count having been taken:

The Deputy Speaker: We have 21, so I am satisfied that we do have quorum.

Questions and comments, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health.

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my friend and colleague opposite, during his speech on Bill S-5, raised some pretty valid concerns and some important issues that, while I was knocking on doors this weekend, I heard from my neighbours as well. However, in talking about Bill S-5, or actually not talking about Bill S-5, we are removing time from the Order Paper and talking about these issues.

My friend and colleague wanted to talk about carbon pricing, so I have a quote for him. It reads, "We recognize that the most efficient way to reduce our emissions is to use pricing mechanisms" and "we'll tie [our] carbon price...to the European Union".

Just for the record, the European price on pollution right now, the carbon price, is about 80 euros, which is much higher than the \$50 in Canada. That quote was from the "the more you burn, the more you earn" platform the Conservative Party ran on in the most recent federal election.

Government Orders

Also, I heard earlier tonight that if one does not have alternatives or something to replace it with, then one does not really have much of an argument. The members opposite had an opportunity over the last little while, as we debated Bill S-5 at nauseam, longer than one usually talks about a bill implementation act, to talk about some real world examples to help the environment, to provide a healthy environment or at least to provide people with those rights. However, I have not heard any of those ideas, so I will give my friend the opportunity.

Does he want to institute a new type of carbon price? Is there something else he would like to recommend or suggest to protect our environment, or are we just hot airing it tonight in the House of Commons?

Mr. Eric Duncan: Mr. Speaker, I thank my Liberal colleague for raising the carbon tax during this debate and giving me the opportunity to respond. I really appreciate it, because when he talks about 80 euros over in Europe and only \$50 here, it gives me the perfect opportunity to remind the Liberal benches and the NDP that they are going to triple the carbon tax in the coming years to \$170.

It gives me the opportunity to raise the Parliamentary Budget Officer report that says, “most households will see a net loss resulting from federal carbon pricing” and household costs “exceed the rebate and the induced reduction in personal income taxes arising from the loss in income.”

It gives me the opportunity to remind the Liberal government that, on every single environmental target and promise it has made when it comes to emissions reduction, it has failed. All it is doing is raising the cost of living on people at a time when they need it the least.

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, for hours, days and even weeks now, I have been hearing my Conservative colleagues talk about the carbon tax and how the oil companies are going to pass the tax on to consumers.

I might have a suggestion, and I would like to hear my colleague's opinion. We could enshrine an obligation in the act to ensure that the carbon tax is paid directly out of the oil companies' profits and not passed on to consumers. I think the oil companies can well afford it, considering their record profits.

I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on that.

[English]

Mr. Eric Duncan: Mr. Speaker, I will respectfully completely disagree with the premise and principle of what the Bloc is saying. At the end of the day, it is using the carbon tax as a tax to add to the price of doing business, whether it be in the oil and gas sector or any other sector.

What we have seen is the Liberals, NDP, Bloc and Green Party support carbon taxes over the course of the last several years. We have not seen emissions go down in any meaningful way in the right direction. What we have seen is the cost of living, groceries and home heating rise and a cost of living crisis in this country. When we talk about emissions reductions, we are talking about that coming from technology, carbon capture and storage, small nuclear

modular reactors and so forth, which can be in our energy sector. That is a good way to keep the cost of living down and keep our emissions down as well.

• (1820)

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, again, this is not about what the bill is supposed to be about, but there has been a focus on carbon tax, so I am going to ask my question about that and the fact that the Conservatives are so focused on it. My hon. colleague from the Bloc tried to ask about corporate greed.

The member is from Ontario. We saw the Conservative provincial government take the tax off gas prices in Ontario, yet interestingly, those gas prices have gone right back up. Yesterday I had to pay \$1.78 at the pumps. Maybe the member could explain to me why that occurred, if corporate greed is not the reason for that.

Mr. Eric Duncan: Mr. Speaker, what I will say to the NDP on this front is that the last thing we need is an escalation and a tripling of the carbon tax for families, including those in the city of London and across the province of Ontario.

The record that we hold up on Bill S-5 is that the NDP keeps falling for Liberal promises when they do not deliver. It is time for them to stop backing them up. It is time for them to start holding Liberals to account on the environment and everything else.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to add some comments on Bill S-5 tonight.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all of my colleagues, members of the House and our colleagues in the Senate for the hard work and insightful debate that has already occurred on this legislation. As someone who farmed for decades and who was actively involved in many agricultural organizations, I was always attuned to concerns regarding the federal government's policies and regulations.

When I was first elected in the Manitoba Legislature, Premier Filmon, now the former premier, asked me take on the role of the environment, to be the shadow minister of the environment in Manitoba. I wondered why that would be so important to him at that time. I suddenly realized, with all of my farming and agricultural background, that the environment would probably be one of the most important issues facing agriculture in the next 30 years. It certainly has been in the last 25 years or so. That was a very important role to play.

Government Orders

A lot of the time we would rely on farmer-led organizations to keep us abreast of what the government was doing, particularly on approving crop protection products that we wanted to use as farmers. Some of the time we would get news reports and would have to write our elected officials to tell us what was really happening on the regulatory side of things. Quite frankly, regulations which get determined by departments and Treasury Board cabinet committee do not get sufficient attention in this place.

As farmers know, we must take care of the soil, water and air to ensure that our operations are sustainable. My dad had a quote, something that he taught me very young. He said, “If you look after the land, it will look after you.”

Farmers are stewards of the land, not only because it is the right thing to do, but because it is good for business. In the past couple of decades, there has been a tremendous amount of innovation in the agricultural sector. From the chemical farmers use, to how they apply them, they are light years from where they were back in the days when my father started farming in Elgin, Manitoba.

On the farm, we used crop protection products all the time. One example of this might be the fact that, when I started growing peas in 1971, there were very few chemicals that could be used on them at all. Today, there is a plethora of products out there to kill things, such as thistles, millet and wild oats, and these were not available to farmers in those days.

Due to the advancements in machinery, seed technology and the use of chemicals, farmers are now producing more food per acre than ever before. Hopefully that trend will continue. As our leader, the new leader of the Conservative Party has repeatedly said, we want to make Canada the breadbasket of the world. We have great opportunities.

However, due to the illegal invasion and brutal war currently being carried out in Ukraine by the Putin regime, we recognize how important the Canadian agriculture and agri-food sector is for the world. Some of my colleagues were just referring to the importance of that food production capability earlier this evening.

A lot of the time Canadian farmers would see that crop protection products would be approved in like-minded nations, such as the United States, United Kingdom, Australia and others, while taking a considerable amount of time to get approved in Canada. One example is, when I was a farm leader, we were dealing with products that were used in North Dakota but could not be used in Manitoba because the rules were different between their environmental protection agency and our pest management review board in Canada, in those days. The one that was most important at that time, when I was a wheat grower president, was dealing with fusarium in wheat.

Due to the processes set up, there is always a concern, as I was just referring to, that delays could impede access to the newest and most effective crop protection products available for the agriculture sector. At the end of the day, farmers want—

• (1825)

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I have enormous respect for my colleague and his deep knowledge of

agriculture. I am wondering if we have gone to Private Members' Business on an agriculture bill, or are we on Bill S-5?

I am certainly very interested in agriculture. I just do not see that he talking about Bill S-5.

The Deputy Speaker: I will continue to remind folks to stick to the bill at hand, but I am giving them lots of leeway here as well.

The hon. member for Brandon—Souris.

Mr. Larry Maguire: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his concern and for raising that with me. I do appreciate that fact, but I want to point out that we are in favour of moving the bill through second reading. I am, at least, and I am sure my colleagues are as well. However, I think this is very relevant because I am coming to the point where I want to say what I hope happens at committee with the bill. At the end of the day, farmers want a science-led approval process that is based in fact rather than hyperbole.

With that in mind, I will reference some very sage words that my friend and colleague Senator Robert Black said while debating this legislation. His words are incredibly important, so I would like to quote him directly because we have not really had a review since back in the 1980s with regard to soil science in Canada. He said:

...I have recently learned from a few agricultural stakeholders that there are minor concerns about the inclusion of and language around a precautionary principle throughout the bill, particularly since it states that a weight-of-evidence approach and a precautionary approach should be taken.

Members of the agricultural community are concerned that it's commonly understood that a precautionary approach is used in the absence of data. A weight-of-evidence approach, on the other hand, suggests there is evidence in place.

While the balance between the precautionary principle and weight-of-evidence approaches referenced in the bill isn't new, as it already is in CEPA, there is a need for clarity as to how it is to be applied to the broader subset of potentially toxic substances this bill brings into CEPA consideration.

It is important to note that there is existing guidance on how the two are balanced by Environment and Climate Change Canada. However, agricultural stakeholders have highlighted the critical need to ensure the end result is as fully informed decision making as possible. And I agree with their concern that Canadian regulators should have a clear mandate to pursue additional evidence where it's found lacking.

Ultimately, given the important role this bill will play in evaluating substances present in our environment, I believe that where there is an absence of data, there should be legislated processes and mechanisms to request more data. I am hopeful that members of this chamber will consider such a matter at committee and investigate how we can possibly strengthen this bill to ensure its success.

Government Orders

I will close by saying that I echo what Senator Black had to say, and I hope the committee that ultimately studies this legislation, which is what I referenced earlier, invites numerous agricultural witnesses to get a fulsome analysis of their views on the bill. A prime example, in reference to Senator Sparrow, is the study he did and the books he wrote about the development and protection of our soils, which are completely relevant in this whole area. Although some may say that the agricultural industry is a bit of a stretch from Bill S-5, it is completely relevant if we listen to my colleagues who have already spoken to the bill. They noted food security in the future and being able to make sure that we have fertilizer for use in production and for maintaining but hopefully increasing the food supply in the world, because it is under attack as we speak.

I, for one, welcome the modernization management plan in Canada, if done correctly, with the aim of improving the environment and having an efficient process for crop protection products to be approved.

• (1830)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have been sitting for a number of hours today listening to members, particularly from the Conservative Party, talk about this legislation. Many of their comments have been brought to our attention over issues of relevancy. What I have found throughout the debate is that members have talked about passing this bill and getting it to committee, recognizing that there is a need to look at the possibility of amendments. However, it seems the Conservative leadership behind the curtains in the back room is determined not to allow the bill to get through second reading.

Given the fact that it has been before Parliament now for many months and that everyone in the chamber, at least by party, is supporting the legislation, it seems to me that this is the type of legislation that should pass into committee. I wonder if my friend could provide his thoughts on the need or desire of the House to see the bill looked at in committee.

Mr. Larry Maguire: Mr. Speaker, the bill is before the House. Many of us on the Conservative side of the House have stated we are in favour of the bill. I even pointed out in my presentation the types of witnesses that I hope go before the committee when it is discussing Bill S-5, this environmental management bill. None of us wants toxic substances.

I pointed out very clearly in my presentation tonight what is required in the agricultural industry to keep it vibrant. There have been huge technological changes and improvements made in the environmental use of products in the agricultural industry, and I use it as an example only because it is one I am familiar with. The same thing applies in forestry, mining and many other industries as well.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in the context of legislation to protect the environment, transparency is very important, particularly regarding access to data. We need to know what we are talking about.

Would the member be in favour of making data on the environmental impacts of various industrial sectors, including agriculture, more accessible?

Perhaps people might realize that our farmers can also be part of the solution, particularly through agroforestry, and realize how carbon capture can be done through agriculture.

[*English*]

Mr. Larry Maguire: Mr. Speaker, of course I do. I believe we need to make sure we have as much clear data as possible. That is why I asked for certain types of individuals to come forward in the debate on this very bill. We need that expertise, as the member said, not just in the agricultural industry, but in mining, forestry and others as well, to see how it will impact not only the land but our other natural areas, such as waterways and the air in many of our cities and industrial areas.

• (1835)

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I remember being a city councillor in Penticton, where the Department of Fisheries and Oceans told the Penticton planning department that there was a fish habitat area in a chunk of land where we wanted to put in some stairs and it was prohibited. It turned out it was just a golf course's water hazard. There are issues when Ottawa says something falls under a particular definition that is not conducive or recognizable by the locals.

Amendment 19 introduces a new term, “vulnerable environment”, in reference to products that contain a substance or release a substance into the environment. If I were a farmer and someone in Ottawa started talking about vulnerable environments, especially at a time when farmers are having to put resources into new capital, new techniques and different types of new harvesting methods, to suddenly have these uncertain terms being injected into it would concern me. Does it raise the concerns of the member and does he think it raises the concerns of his constituents?

Mr. Larry Maguire: Mr. Speaker, part of my presentation tonight was to make people aware of the concern the agricultural industry has. I pointed out that we need to have people on the ground who are utilizing these products and systems, because there are many land-use systems that we could be using to improve the types of agriculture production that we are using today, which would help solidify food security in the world. That is what I am referring to here.

We cannot do things that inhibit farmers from being able to feed the world. We are fortunate in Canada that we always have enough food, but we cannot take that for granted, as some of my other colleagues have said tonight. We need to make sure people know the rules around what can be used to produce food.

Adjournment Proceedings

Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I understand I have five minutes, so I will pick and choose my talking points. I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak to this bill on behalf of the good residents of Brantford—Brant.

By way of background, the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999, has not been significantly updated since it was passed in 1999. Bill S-5 is the first major update since that time. The Liberals have had five years to bring this forward, and they failed to do so in a timely manner.

The bill recognizes that every Canadian has the right to a healthy environment and requires the government to protect this right. However, the right is not defined in the act, and may be balanced with social, economic, health, scientific or other relevant factors.

Bill S-5 also puts in language to highlight the government's commitment to implementing UNDRIP and recognizing the importance of considering vulnerable populations when assessing the toxicity of a substance, as well as the importance of minimizing risks posed by exposure to toxic substances.

I want to highlight that this is an environmental bill. I would like to take the opportunity with the time I have remaining to highlight the government's failures on the environment.

The first is that the Liberal government has never met a single carbon emissions reduction target in all of its years in government.

The second is that carbon emissions have gone up under the Liberal government.

The third is that the carbon tax is an absolute failure. It has not reduced emissions, and the Parliamentary Budget Officer has made it clear that the majority of Canadians pay more in carbon taxes than they get back in rebates. That is a fact, but what we routinely hear on that side of the House is that the Liberals like to rewrite that narrative.

In 2022, the commissioner of the environment released 10 reports on the performance of the Liberal government in terms of protecting the environment. More than half of the reports show that the government was failing to meet its targets. To echo the comments of several of my colleagues today and on other days, the Liberal government has never had an environmental plan; it has a tax plan.

With respect to Bill S-5, we Conservatives have some concerns about the amendments passed in the Senate. The Senate passed 24 amendments, 11 of which made the bill significantly worse.

I want to go over some key points:

Canada's chemical management plan is a leader in the world.

Bill S-5 modernizes the CEPA and will ensure that a risk-based approach to chemical management is preserved in Canada.

Canada has completed more risk assessments and introduced more risk-management instruments than any other jurisdiction.

The bill recognizes a right to a healthy environment, which we fully support.

Ultimately, the Conservatives will support this bill, but we will be seeking amendments. The bill talks about a healthy environment, but it says nothing about healthy water. I want to point out, as another failure of the government, that when we look at the long- and short-term water advisories across this country, we still have 29 long-term drinking water advisories.

I will end there, as my time is up.

● (1840)

The Deputy Speaker: When we return, the member will have five minutes remaining and then five minutes for a question and answer period.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[*English*]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to pursue a question I initially asked in the month of May relating to the upcoming June session, the first session, of the conference of the parties within the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. I asked the question as to whether Canada was going to attend. I was following up on a question from the hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona, who had just asked a similar question. The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs in his response said that the Government of Canada was going to maintain an unwavering commitment to nuclear disarmament.

In the end, Canada did not send a delegation to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. We did not even send an unofficial delegation of observers. This was a profound disappointment to the community within Canada that is looking to the government to stand up and work against the threat of nuclear war.

We have had a nuclear non-proliferation treaty in the world since 1970. We had historic progress made. At the time the United States was under President Ronald Reagan and the then-nation of the U.S.S.R. was under Mikhail Gorbachev, they decided together to work to eliminate nuclear weapons. We have had significant backsliding since then from both the U.S. government and, of course, the U.S.S.R. is no longer. Mikhail Gorbachev, God bless and rest his soul, is no longer with us. The appallingly militaristic and brutal dictator within the alleged democracy of Russia, Vladimir Putin, is now bringing us closer to the threat of nuclear war than we have been at any time for very many decades.

I note that, as time has passed before I could pursue this question, ironically today's date places us very close to the anniversary of the Cuban missile crisis, which took place in late October of 1962. Here we are in 2022. What have we learned and what have we done? We must do more to end the threat of nuclear war. As we look at Canada's role as a member of NATO and what is happening right now with Vladimir Putin mentioning specifically the potential threat of using nuclear weapons, that must be denounced so strongly at all times.

We know one of the reasons the U.S. government put forward to oppose the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was that it could "delegitimize the concept of nuclear deterrence upon which many U.S. allies and partners depend". That is something for us to actually focus on regarding the importance of signing on to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, that it would, in the words of the U.S., under former president Donald Trump, "delegitimize the concept of nuclear deterrence".

That is certainly something we should support. We must delegitimize the notion of nuclear war, nuclear deterrence or nuclear strikes, if we are going to have a peaceful world. There is no question in my mind, and I will be interested in what the government representatives say to this tonight. Had we pursued aggressively the work we should do as a non-nuclear state without being so subservient to our nuclear state neighbour, as we did in the Ottawa Treaty to ban landmines, we could perhaps have kept the world much safer from Vladimir Putin.

• (1845)

Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands for both her original question and her statements tonight.

I want to be clear that Canada has always had a clear policy of disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful use of nuclear energy. The 52-year-old Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the NPT, a treaty with near-universal adherence, is at the root of Canada's nuclear policy. It is also unquestionably the cornerstone of the international nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime.

Canada clearly acknowledges the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, the TPNW, last year, and the first meeting of the states parties in late June of this year. We understand and appreciate the sentiment behind the TPNW, but I will reiterate tonight that Canada is not a state party to this treaty, as several of its provisions are incompatible with our NATO commitments.

NATO is a defensive alliance and, whether we like it or not, nuclear deterrence is currently a reality. However, we must and will continue efforts to strengthen the international arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament architecture. The best way to do that is through a step-by-step approach.

Under the current framework of the NPT, Canada is a very active member of both the ministerial-level Stockholm initiative and the non-proliferation and disarmament initiative. These groupings are cross-regional and bring a variety of different but valuable perspec-

tives. These groups put forward concrete proposals to advance nuclear disarmament, many of which were widely supported at the NPT review conference in August in New York.

Adjournment Proceedings

The Stockholm initiative in particular has served as a unifying force on nuclear disarmament. I have attended several meetings of the initiative and recognize that the short-term concrete actions recommended by the initiative have great potential to make real progress in our overall objective of a nuclear weapons-free world. This includes important risk-reduction measures that nuclear weapon states can take to reduce the risk of possible use of these weapons, which is all the more urgent given the current international context.

Canada is and will remain an active participant in multilateral efforts to develop nuclear disarmament verification processes and capacity. We provide financial and expert support to the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification and are part of the UN group of government experts on this issue. Co-operation in these fora on technical issues between nuclear and non-nuclear weapon states builds trust and confidence and lays the groundwork for future disarmament work.

While the current international environment remains extremely difficult and even precarious, Canada will continue to take a constructive and ambitious approach to nuclear disarmament. Russia's obstructionism in international fora and its continual and reckless nuclear sabre-rattling pose a direct challenge to the rules-based international order of which the NPT is an integral part. Canada will work with all states, including TPNW proponents, to further our collective ambitions for nuclear disarmament.

There is a wide range of views on how we can make progress on nuclear disarmament. I saw that first-hand when I met with groups of Canadian civil society leaders on this issue earlier this year. We are listening continually to advocates on the subject, but in light of the precarious international situation, Canada's approach will continue to be one that engages diverse stakeholders and attempts to value all perspectives. Creativity is needed in this field to overcome the stalemates and abuse of fair process by bad faith actors. We are committed to engaging in reform and refreshing our international system. With that in mind, Canada will continue to engage with a broad coalition of countries to push for a nuclear weapons-free world.

Adjournment Proceedings

• (1850)

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, who is truly an hon. colleague and parliamentary secretary, but I am very disturbed that we did not even send observers to the Vienna conference for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. I think we need to look much more closely at how much more precarious our situation is now and how much less we were able to assist Ukraine because we could not say we would have a no-fly zone over Ukraine without increasing the risk of nuclear war.

We need to recognize that perhaps NATO is, in another reference, muscle-bound. It was unable to help deal with the Ukraine situation. Yes, of course it sent weapons to assist Ukraine, but we cannot risk getting involved and subjecting the people of Ukraine to a protracted brutal war. We need to find a route to peace, and perhaps we should start talking about why we are in NATO if it requires us to support nuclear weapons.

Hon. Robert Oliphant: Mr. Speaker, I would simply reiterate that Canada's commitment to advancing nuclear disarmament is unwavering. Indeed, we were very aware and took very strong note of the first meeting of the state's parties of the TPNW. Important conversations were had. We are well aware of them, but with 191 states having joined the NPT in over 52 years of history, we are focused on continuing to strengthen that treaty regime.

As I have outlined, we are working through long-standing partnerships, such as the non-proliferation and disarmament initiatives and, more recently, established the Stockholm initiative on nuclear disarmament. These are important multilateral bodies that are trying to make a difference to move the needle on this significant issue. The diverse membership of these groups is their strength. Canada will be there.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the people of Iran are at a critical point in their history. The protest movement in Iran, aimed at ousting the radical dangerous regime, has an incredible amount of momentum right now. I salute the courage and the heroism of the people involved in this movement. At the same time, the horrors of this regime have been going on for decades. There have been various protest movements over the years where the Iranian people have stepped out to fight for freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law. Sadly, in the past these protests have not succeeded in achieving their fundamental objectives, but I am hopeful and optimistic that this movement seeking fundamental political change will succeed.

The fact that this repression, and the response from the people, had been going on for a number of years, led to the proposition of a motion in the House, which I put forward four years ago, to list the IRGC as a terrorist entity within the Criminal Code. That was back in 2018. Now, on that motion to list the IRGC as a terrorist entity, the Prime Minister, the cabinet and the entire Liberal caucus voted in favour of that motion to immediately list the IRGC as a terrorist entity.

In the intervening four years, not only did the government not list the IRGC, but we also saw no application of sanctions. We saw no action whatsoever. Up until recently, there was not a single official associated with the Iranian regime that even had Magnitsky sanc-

tions applied. We periodically ask the government why. What is the plan? Why has it not listed the IRGC? Why are there no Magnitsky sanctions? Why has it not taken the steps that are vitally required?

Most recently, we had the murder of Mahsa Amini, which grabbed the public's attention around the world. The result of that was significant political pressure on the government, with tens of thousands of people rallying. These events were largely ignored by the government, but the political pressure mounted.

Then it wanted to look like it was doing something, so now we see this effort by the government to wrap itself in the image of this movement. The Prime Minister himself attended an event this weekend. I think protesters wanted to see what the government was going to do to take action. The Prime Minister will still not list the IRGC, so great, he showed up at an event weeks after the fact.

What I want to know from the government is, aside from the photo ops, aside from the lobbed questions, where is the substance? Why did it take so long for the government to do anything? Moreover, when will it actually list the IRGC as a terrorist organization?

It is bizarre to me. We had the Deputy Prime Minister make an announcement to say that the government recognized that the IRGC is a terrorist organization, so it would list it as a terrorist organization in the Immigration Act, instead of listing it in the Criminal Code. If the Deputy Prime Minister acknowledges that the IRGC is a terrorist organization, then why can we not list it as a terrorist organization in the Criminal Code?

All I can conclude from this is that the government wants to intentionally create some ambiguity. It says that it is listing the IRGC in the Immigration Act, instead of listing it as a terrorist organization in the Criminal Code, which is precisely what the Liberals voted to do four years ago, yet they have failed to act on that.

Is the government going to list the IRGC as a terrorist organization? Can we get a clear answer? If it acknowledges that it is a terrorist organization but refuses to list it, could the government finally explain to us why. What is its position on listing the IRGC as a terrorist organization, and why?

Adjournment Proceedings

● (1855)

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on October 4 we marked 1,000 days since the downing of Ukrainian International Airlines flight 752, and our thoughts continue to be with the families of those who were killed. Keeping Canadians safe is of paramount importance to this government.

Iran's nefarious influence in the region and its support of terrorism must be addressed, and we are working with like-minded countries to continue to keep pressure on Iran to cease its unlawful behaviour. The brutal killing of Mahsa Amini by the so-called morality police and the Iranian regime's deadly response to the peaceful protests are once more displaying Iran's shameless disregard for human rights and the regime's support for terror.

The government, along with its international partners, is committed to holding Iran accountable for its actions in accordance with international law. I would like to reiterate the robust measures Canada has imposed against Iran and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, or IRGC, in response to these recent incidents, as well as long-term actions against Iran's systemic human rights violations and ongoing behaviour that destabilizes regional security.

Canada imposes vigorous sanctions against the Iranian regime and its leadership under the Special Economic Measures Act, or SEMA, which explicitly targets the IRGC and several suborganizations, including the IRGC air force and air force missile command. Since the beginning of October, Canada has already listed 42 individuals and 12 entities under SEMA, in addition to the 202 previously listed Iranian entities and individuals. Measures under SEMA prevent Canadians from dealing in any property belonging to listed persons. This effectively freezes all assets in Canada that belong to the sanctioned persons. Contravention of these provisions can carry heavy criminal penalties.

Additionally, Canada lists Iran as a state supporter of terrorism under the State Immunity Act. This listing, together with the Justice for Victims of Terrorism Act, allows victims to bring civil actions against Iran for losses or damages related to terrorism.

Once Bill S-8, an act to amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, becomes law, it will align the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, or IRPA, with SEMA to ensure that all foreign nationals subject to sanctions under SEMA will also be inadmissible to Canada.

Further, on Friday, October 7, the Prime Minister announced that Canada will be pursuing a listing of the Iranian regime, including the IRGC leadership, under the most powerful provision of the IRPA. The Iranian regime, including its top leaders, more than 10,000 officers and senior members, will be inadmissible to Canada in perpetuity for their engagement in terrorism and systemic and gross human rights violations. Moreover, the UN Security Council passed a number of resolutions to impose sanctions on Iran, which are implemented into Canadian law under the United Nations Act.

The Criminal Code also sets out a terrorist listing regime to help prevent the use of Canada's financial system to further terrorist activity and to assist in the investigation and prosecution of terrorist

offences. Several of Iran's key proxy actors are captured by this scheme.

For example, Canada has maintained the Criminal Code listing of the IRGC Quds Force as a terrorist entity since 2012. The Quds Force is recognized as responsible for terrorist operations and providing arms funding and training to other terrorist groups. We are committed to holding Iran accountable for its heinous crimes and human rights violations, and for threatening peace and security in the region and in Canada.

● (1900)

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, the reality is that now is not the time for half measures. The Deputy Prime Minister said that this is a terrorist organization. We have, as the parliamentary secretary mentioned, a terrorist listing regime in Canada, and the government has persistently refused to use that terrorist listing regime to list the IRGC as a terrorist organization.

The question is, why? Why acknowledge the reality that this is a terrorist organization and then refuse to bring in measures that the government itself voted for? The parliamentary secretary cites actions taken by the previous Conservative government, such as the listing of the Quds Force, and she says they have maintained the listing. Bravo. They did not unlist organizations that had been previously listed.

The House voted in 2018 to list the IRGC in its entirety. That was before the downing of flight PS752. That was before the murder of Mahsa Amini, and it was before the recent protest movements. Could the parliamentary secretary clearly tell us when the government will end the half measures and list the IRGC as a terrorist organization, as it voted to do, recognizing what the Deputy Prime Minister has already said?

Ms. Pam Damoff: Mr. Speaker, listing under the Criminal Code provides the legal and institutional framework to implement measures to freeze and forfeit terrorist property and to help investigate to potentially prosecute someone for certain offences.

Canada's listing of the IRGC's Quds Force and other Iran proxies is in line with the actions of our like-minded international partners, which also sanctioned elements of the IRGC under their domestic regimes. Listing under the Criminal Code is just one instrument in Canada's international and domestic counterterrorism strategy tool box in ensuring the safety of Canadians.

Adjournment Proceedings

Canada is committed to standing up for human rights and to intervening against those who violate them. This includes ensuring that sanctioned senior members of the Iranian regime and its agencies do not benefit from or receive any economic or social support from Canada or its citizens.

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am rising during today's adjournment proceedings to follow up on a question that I asked the government on October 17, a few weeks ago.

That was the same day that the NDP brought forward its successful opposition day motion. Basically, the gist of my question was the fact that, under successive Conservative and Liberal governments, we have seen CEOs and corporations increasing their share of wealth. It is really a question of fairness. My question to the government that day was whether the government would finally admit that it has let corporate greed go unchecked by finally voting with the NDP to defend Canadian families.

In that opposition day motion vote that we had following question period, I am very pleased to report that the motion was passed by the House unanimously. I believe the vote was 327-0, which was amazing because it showed that the Conservatives, the Liberals, the Greens and the Bloc Québécois are following the NDP's lead. They are listening to their constituents and understanding that this is an issue.

To reference that motion, it asked the government to basically force CEOs and big corporations to pay what they owed and to close the loopholes that have allowed them to avoid paying \$30 billion in taxes in 2021 alone. It asked the government to launch a fair and affordable food strategy that tackles corporate greed in the grocery sector and to also support the agriculture and agri-food committee, where I also managed to pass an unanimous motion for study into this very issue.

We always see those news items that come out of social media, either on January 1 and January 2 of every year, which show that the average CEO has already made, in the first couple of days, more money than the average Canadian. That is why I really want to centre on this theme of fairness.

Canadians For Tax Fairness found that in 2021, 123 of Canada's largest and most profitable corporations managed to evade even more taxation than they had paid in the three years before COVID-19. That is inclusive of 2017 to 2019. This was done in a variety of ways. There are tax havens they take advantage of. There are deductions for business meals, entertainment and other expenses. Even the executives' pay itself, businesses can claim as an expense.

If we think about what \$30 billion would have done, what that lost revenue that the Canadian treasury missed out on could have paid for, we could have protected and expanded even more ecosystems. We could have helped workers and communities adapt to and mitigate climate change. We could have increased the minimum wage for federally regulated industries. We could have paid more on the national debt, reduced our deficit and increased transfer pay-

ments to provinces. The list goes on as to what we would have been able to do.

I believe we need to get serious about this. The government has already followed through on some initiatives that have long been NDP demands, but I believe it needs to go further. It needs to start implementing things like a tax on extreme personal wealth. It needs to bring in a windfall profits tax to get at that money that so many corporations have been able to benefit from over the last couple of years and to really tackle those extreme profits.

We believe added resources are needed for the CRA. We need to see those higher taxes so that we can have this fair and level playing field instituted while so many Canadians are struggling to get by right now.

Again, my question to the parliamentary secretary is this: Will she, on behalf of her government, admit that corporate greed has gone unchecked and will she put in policies to address it?

• (1905)

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his motion, which was debated in this place earlier in the month. I was pleased to see it received unanimous support.

My colleague across the way is right. Canadian families are struggling with the rising cost of essential purchases. For seven years now, our government has been working to build an economy that works for everyone, and for seven years we have been doing just that. We have introduced measures that have helped grow the economy, created jobs and created a fairer and more level playing field for Canadians.

Our government is keenly aware that rising prices, which have been seen around the world, are impacting Canadians. High inflation is a global phenomenon caused by events beyond our control. The root of the problem is not Canadian, but we have a made-in-Canada solution to help people who need it the most.

Now that Bill C-30 has received royal assent, individuals and families receiving the GST credit will receive an additional \$2.5 billion in support starting in early November.

With Bill C-31 and the support of the New Democratic Party, we are proposing to create the Canada dental benefit for children under 12 in families with annual incomes under \$90,000 who do not have access to a private dental plan. The bill also proposes a one-time top-up to the Canada housing benefit, which would put \$500 in the pockets of nearly two million renters who are struggling to pay their rent.

These two bills stand as a testament to what can be achieved in this place when members from all parties work together, and I am sure the hon. member can appreciate the impact these measures will have for Canadians who are struggling to make ends meet.

I am also happy to see the Competition Bureau has launched a study on food pricing in the grocery sector. It is completely unacceptable to take advantage of a crisis to raise prices on consumers. We expect the Competition Bureau to act swiftly if there is evidence of unlawful or anti-competitive behaviour in the marketplace. If there is evidence of anti-competitive behaviour, the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry will ask the Competition Bureau to investigate promptly and take appropriate action.

We brought in universal child care that is helping young families, including my own, as my son and his family benefit from the program. I would also like to reassure my hon. colleague our government firmly believes in tax fairness. Since 2015, we have worked to ensure the wealthiest people and businesses pay their fair share, and we will continue to do so.

In budget 2022, we announced a permanent increase in the corporate income tax rate by 1.5% on the largest, most profitable banks and life insurance company groups in Canada. Budget 2022 also announced a temporary Canada recovery dividend, under which banks and life insurance groups would pay a one-time 15% tax on the 2020 and 2021 average taxable income above \$1 billion to recover some of the benefits conferred to financial institutions from the government's pandemic supports.

Later this week, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance will release the fall economic statement, which will lay out some of the steps our government will take toward a brighter future for our country. Our government is doing everything we can to make life affordable for Canadians. We will also continue to make the Canadian tax system fairer so we can continue to deliver the effective programs and services Canadians deserve.

• (1910)

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Mr. Speaker, a record number of Canadians are having to resort to food banks right now. This is a

Adjournment Proceedings

shocking statistic for a country as wealthy as Canada. We can juxtapose that with the record profits grocery chains are making. Canadians are seeing the high prices of food, looking at the record profits oil and gas companies are making and juxtaposing that with the high prices Canadians are paying at the pumps.

I am glad to see the Liberals followed our lead and agreed to bring in things such as dental care, the rental benefit and doubling the GST credit. These are things we have been calling for for quite some time, and I am glad to see the Liberals follow our lead on this, but more needs to be done.

More needs to be done, and Canadians need to see their government will no longer let corporations and rich CEOs pad their wallets and use inflation as an excuse for doing so. Therefore, I am looking for a commitment from the parliamentary secretary to see that instituted, followed up on and brought forward in the fall economic statement.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Mr. Speaker, the government knows the cost of living is a real concern, and the rising use of food banks is simply unacceptable. That is why making life more affordable was at the heart of budget 2022 and has been at the heart of our actions ever since the budget was tabled. On Thursday, the fall economic statement will provide further details on our plan to continue building an economy that works for everyone. Canadians from coast to coast to coast can count on us to continue supporting them through this period of global inflation.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: The motion that the House do now adjourn is deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:12 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Monday, October 31, 2022

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Telecommunications Act

Mr. Mazier	9039
Bill C-288. Second reading	9039
Mr. Lamoureux	9041
Ms. Michaud	9041
Mr. Bachrach	9041
Mr. Lamoureux	9042
Mr. Lemire	9043
Mr. Bachrach	9044
Mr. Nater	9045
Mr. Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	9047

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Strengthening Environmental Protection for a Healthier Canada Act

Bill S-5. Second reading	9047
Mr. Kurek	9047
Mr. Duguid	9048
Ms. Michaud	9048
Mr. Albas	9049
Mr. Kmiec	9049
Ms. Gaudreau	9050
Mr. Lamoureux	9051
Mr. Cannings	9051
Mr. McLean	9051
Mr. Lamoureux	9053
Mr. Cannings	9053
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	9053
Mr. Vis	9054
Mr. Lamoureux	9055
Mr. Albas	9056
Mr. Dreeshen	9056
Mr. Lamoureux	9057
Mr. Beaulieu	9057
Mr. Kitchen	9058
Ms. Larouche	9058
Mr. Lamoureux	9060
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	9060
Ms. Zarrillo	9060
Mr. Duguid	9062
Mr. Zimmer	9062
Mr. Beaulieu	9062
Ms. Chagger	9062
Ms. Kwan	9062
Mr. Albas	9063
Mr. Lamoureux	9064
Mrs. Vignola	9064
Mr. Angus	9065

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Emmy Pruneau

Mr. Rayes	9065
-----------------	------

Lieutenant Governor's Community Spirit Award

Mr. Kelloway	9065
--------------------	------

Deborah Foster-Stahle

Mr. Brassard	9065
--------------------	------

Human Rights in Iran

Ms. Sgro	9066
----------------	------

Rosemère

Mr. Desilets	9066
--------------------	------

Official Languages

Mr. Serré	9066
-----------------	------

National Defence

Mr. Bezan	9066
-----------------	------

Light the Night

Mr. Van Bynen	9067
---------------------	------

Municipal Elections

Mr. Fragiskatos	9067
-----------------------	------

Government Spending

Mr. McCauley	9067
--------------------	------

Sri Guggan Sri-Skanda-Rajah

Mr. Anandasangaree	9067
--------------------------	------

Government Spending

Mrs. Gallant	9067
--------------------	------

2020 Shootings in Nova Scotia

Mr. Motz	9068
----------------	------

Women Entrepreneurs in Newfoundland

Ms. Thompson	9068
--------------------	------

Mrs. & Ms. Regional Canada Empowerment Pageant

Mrs. Hughes	9068
-------------------	------

LGBTQ+ Rights

Ms. Larouche	9068
--------------------	------

Taxation

Mr. Waugh	9068
-----------------	------

Freedom of the Press

Mr. Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	9069
--	------

ORAL QUESTIONS

The Economy

Mr. Poilievre	9069
---------------------	------

Mr. Boissonnault	9069
------------------------	------

Mr. Poilievre	9069
---------------------	------

Mr. Boissonnault	9069	Ms. Joly	9074
Mr. Poilievre	9069		
Mr. Boissonnault	9069		
Taxation		The Economy	
Mr. Poilievre	9070	Mr. Lawrence	9075
Mr. Fraser	9070	Mr. Boissonnault	9075
Mr. Poilievre	9070	Mr. Lawrence	9075
Mr. Fraser	9070	Mr. Boissonnault	9075
		Mr. Martel	9075
		Mr. Boissonnault	9075
Health			
Mr. Therrien	9070	Taxation	
Mr. Duclos	9070	Mr. Martel	9075
Mr. Therrien	9070	Mr. Boissonnault	9076
Mr. Duclos	9070		
The Economy		Employment Insurance	
Mr. Boulerice	9071	Ms. Chabot	9076
Mr. Champagne	9071	Ms. Qualtrough	9076
Mr. Blaikie	9071	Ms. Chabot	9076
Mr. Champagne	9071	Ms. Qualtrough	9076
Taxation			
Mr. Hallan	9071	Finance	
Mr. Boissonnault	9071	Mrs. Thomas	9076
Mr. Hallan	9071	Ms. Khera	9076
Ms. Khera	9071	Mrs. Thomas	9076
Ms. Lantsman	9072	Mr. Holland	9076
Mr. Boissonnault	9072	Mr. Chambers	9077
		Mr. Fraser	9077
Finance		National Defence	
Ms. Lantsman	9072	Mrs. Shanahan	9077
Mr. Boissonnault	9072	Ms. Anand	9077
Mr. Paul-Hus	9072		
Mr. Boissonnault	9072	Finance	
Mr. Paul-Hus	9072	Mr. Barrett	9077
Mr. Boissonnault	9072	Mr. Boissonnault	9077
		Mr. Barrett	9077
Climate Change		Mr. Holland	9077
Ms. Michaud	9073	Mrs. Gray	9078
Mr. Duguid	9073	Mr. Duguid	9078
Ms. Michaud	9073		
Mr. Wilkinson	9073	Foreign Affairs	
Ms. Michaud	9073	Ms. Yip	9078
Mr. Wilkinson	9073	Ms. Joly	9078
Public Safety			
Mr. Lloyd	9073	Health	
Mr. Blair	9073	Ms. Blaney	9078
Mr. Lloyd	9073	Mr. Duclos	9078
Mr. Blair	9073		
Mr. Deltell	9074	Employment Insurance	
Mr. Blair	9074	Mr. Rayes	9078
		Ms. Qualtrough	9078
Oil and Gas Industry			
Ms. Collins (Victoria)	9074	Removal of Iran from UN Commission on the Status of Women	
Mr. Duguid	9074	Ms. Lantsman	9079
Mr. Angus	9074	Motion	9079
Mr. Wilkinson	9074	(Motion agreed to)	9079
		Ms. Larouche	9079
Foreign Affairs		Motion	9079
Mr. Ehsassi	9074	(Motion agreed to)	9079

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Judges Act

Bill C-9. Second reading	9079
Motion agreed to	9080
(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee) ..	9080

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Interparliamentary Delegations

Mr. Serré	9080
-----------------	------

Petitions

Opioids

Mr. Johns	9081
-----------------	------

Charitable Organizations

Mr. Viersen	9081
-------------------	------

Firearms

Mr. Viersen	9081
-------------------	------

Old-Growth Forests

Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	9081
--------------------------------------	------

Questions on the Order Paper

Mr. Lamoureux	9081
---------------------	------

Questions Passed as Orders for Returns

Mr. Lamoureux	9082
---------------------	------

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Strengthening Environmental Protection for a Healthier Canada Act

Bill S-5. Second reading	9083
Mrs. Vignola	9083
Mr. Lamoureux	9084
Mr. Kitchen	9084
Mr. Johns	9085
Mr. Aboultaif	9085
Mr. Lamoureux	9086
Mr. Desilets	9086
Ms. Collins (Victoria)	9087
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	9087
Mr. Van Popta	9087
Mr. van Koeverden	9088
Ms. Larouche	9089
Mr. Angus	9089
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	9089
Mr. Berthold	9089
Mr. Lamoureux	9090

Mr. Simard	9091
Ms. Mathysen	9091
Mrs. Kusie	9091
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	9093
Mr. Desilets	9093
Mr. Angus	9093
Mrs. Goodridge	9094
Mr. van Koeverden	9095
Mr. Johns	9095
Mr. Lemire	9096
Mr. Falk (Provencher)	9096
Mr. Duguid	9097
Mrs. Vignola	9098
Mr. Johns	9098
Mrs. Thomas	9098
Mr. van Koeverden	9099
Ms. Collins (Victoria)	9100
Mrs. Vignola	9100
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	9100
Mr. Genuis	9100
Mr. Duguid	9102
Mrs. Vignola	9102
Mr. Masse	9102
Ms. Rempel Garner	9102
Ms. Sgro	9104
Ms. Larouche	9104
Mr. Angus	9105
Mr. Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	9105
Mr. van Koeverden	9106
Mrs. Vignola	9107
Ms. Mathysen	9107
Mr. Maguire	9107
Mr. Lamoureux	9109
Mr. Lemire	9109
Mr. Albas	9109
Mr. Brock	9110

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

Foreign Affairs

Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	9110
Mr. Oliphant	9111

Foreign Affairs

Mr. Genuis	9112
Ms. Damoff	9113

The Economy

Mr. MacGregor	9114
Ms. Damoff	9114

Published under the authority of the Speaker of
the House of Commons

SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

The proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees are hereby made available to provide greater public access. The parliamentary privilege of the House of Commons to control the publication and broadcast of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees is nonetheless reserved. All copyrights therein are also reserved.

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the Copyright Act. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the Copyright Act.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

Also available on the House of Commons website at the following address: <https://www.ourcommons.ca>

Publié en conformité de l'autorité
du Président de la Chambre des communes

PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

Les délibérations de la Chambre des communes et de ses comités sont mises à la disposition du public pour mieux le renseigner. La Chambre conserve néanmoins son privilège parlementaire de contrôler la publication et la diffusion des délibérations et elle possède tous les droits d'auteur sur celles-ci.

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la Loi sur le droit d'auteur. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre des communes.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la Loi sur le droit d'auteur.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

Aussi disponible sur le site Web de la Chambre des communes à l'adresse suivante :
<https://www.noscommunes.ca>